

A LIFE-GIVING CALLING

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Today's Treasure

And He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." Immediately they left their nets and followed Him.

Matthew 4:19-20

I have lots of interesting conversation pieces in my office. One I reference every day is a little brass hinge that is framed on my desk. What, don't you have a piece of hardware framed in your office? Sure, it may not be a piece of art, but it is glorious and significant to me. It reminds me that my calling as a leader is to be a hinge. A hinge's utilitarian function is to attach or connect two things. It is hidden in the gap of a door or cabinet. When a hinge does its job, it is rarely noticed or thanked. But when it doesn't work or squeaks loudly, you are very aware of its presence. My role as a leader is to be a hinge between people, generations, and resources. Really anything that needs to be connected. It is my greatest joy when I get to connect any of these people or things to Jesus. Being a hinge for me is all about discipleship. **Leadership development is synonymous with discipleship.**

When Jesus called his disciples, He wanted to connect them to a higher calling. Sure, they were good fishermen but Jesus has an entirely different type of fishing in mind. He utters these words for the first time in the gospel, "Follow me". He uses this word in the context of discipleship. It is the same invitation a life-giving leader should offer to others, "Follow me as I follow Christ." But it is this next part that gives me comfort when I feel ill-equipped as a leader. He utters those sweet words, "I will make". The disciples were willing but not able. Jesus had a plan to make them His disciples. **A disciple is one who follows and learns from Jesus.** We are not smart enough to make ourselves fishers of men. He will make us fishers of men. How do you and I become His disciples? A disciple learns from Jesus, a learning that involves a process of imitation. Paul says that the disciple is to so imitate Jesus that he is to be conformed to the image of Christ. "For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son..." (Romans 8:29). Discipleship involves a process in which we learn to become more and more like Jesus. We were predestined in Him before the foundation of the world to be shaped more and more to look like Him. We don't need to follow a strategic man-made plan, we simply need to follow Him, and as we do He puts us on the mission.

When does the mission begin? They immediately left their nets. They left their livelihood behind. Fishing is all they had ever done up to this point. It was their only skill set. They surrendered everything to follow Him. **Life-giving leaders are instantaneously obedient.** They waste no time getting about the Father's business. The end of Matthew is the other discipleship bookend. "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20). As Jesus leaves His disciples He calls them to go, to be a hinge and connect others to Christ, and to follow in His footsteps and make disciples. We invite them to imitate us as we imitate Christ. We teach them His Word and His ways, and we are assured of the comfort of His presence as we go.

LIFE-GIVING ENCOURAGEMENT

- Is God giving me an opportunity to be a hinge and connect those around me to Christ and His Word?
- Am I following Christ or am I following others and their agendas for my life?
- When God calls me do I instantly obey or am I hesitant to follow?
- Where is God calling me to go this week and make disciples?

