

Developing Disciples of Nations & Generations

God is not calling Christians to be a holy huddle content to care for our own families. Instead, we should share the heartbeat of God, the salvation of all nations & generations.

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teachingnotes

* All Scripture is from CSB (Christian Standard Bible) unless otherwise noted.

While there are many wonderful aspects to this life, *we're still stuck with sin, sickness, & death*, which leads most people to see that *something's wrong and it shouldn't be this way!* Contemporary Christians must walk through the good days and the difficult days, just like the first followers of Jesus did. Remember what Jesus prayed for them...and for us.

John 17:15-18 I am not praying that you take them out of the world but **that You protect them from the evil one**. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ Sanctify them by the truth; Your word is truth. **As You sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.**

Moments later Jesus prays these words:

John 17:20-23 I pray not only for these, but also **for those who believe in me through their word**. May they all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us, so that the world may believe you sent me. I have given them the glory you have given me, so that they may be one as we are one. I am in them and you are in me, so that they may be made completely one, **that the world may know you have sent me** and have loved them as you have loved me.

Jesus was praying that His 1st century disciples, as well as 21st century disciples, would be people who were **Living' Forgiven in a Fallen World**, taking His light into the darkness.

Through the days of **TRIUMPH** and days of **SUFFERING**, the first followers of Jesus remembered **WHAT WE SHOULD REMEMBER - The CROSS always outweighs our circumstances**. God's love does not change with our circumstances.

The first followers of Jesus lived out what Jesus had taught them, to **Love God, Love People, & Develop Disciples** who loved God, loved people, & developed disciples.

To *Love God*, we must **KNOW Him, OBEY Him, & GROW in Him**.

- ➡ God is to have 1st place in our lives, to love Him above all others - even our family.

To *Love People* includes family, friends, new acquaintances, and even enemies.

- ➡ **LOVE is NOT feelings of affection. Love is an ATTITUDE & ACTION that both desires & demonstrates that you want the best for another person.**

Develop Disciples. **A disciple is an imitator of the Teacher.**

"Disciple" is the primary term for followers of Jesus (*used 269 times in the New Testament; "Christian" only 3 times*). You can't be a Christian without being a disciple - they are synonymous.

Discipleship must start @ home, where we are to... **Love God Passionately & Lead Children Diligently**

- We discovered **How Jesus Developed Disciples**, 5 steps that we can follow.
- **Disciples Do Life Together** by Accountability, Growth, & Sharing Burdens.

Developing Disciples of Nations & Generations

Matthew 28:19-20 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 everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Just as Jesus poured his life into His disciples over many days, weeks, months, & years, so His disciples poured their lives into others...all **nations** (Greek *ethne* - many people groups) and generations.

BIG TRUTH: The heartbeat of God is the salvation of all nations & generations

Reading through Acts we have seen many different ethnicities trust Jesus as Messiah, an Ethiopian man from over 1000 miles away - likely with black skin; Simeon call Niger (a Latinism meaning "black"¹). We also read about many Gentiles like Cornelius coming to trust Jesus, so that Jews who followed Jesus have to meet to determine how this could be (Acts 15 Jerusalem Council)..

This is the heartbeat of God, *to make disciples of all nations*. We start with God's covenant to Abraham. God told Abraham to leave his land into go to another (Gen.12:1). He promised Abraham...

Genesis 26:4 I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of the sky, I will give your offspring all these lands, and **all the nations of the earth will be blessed by your offspring**,

*In the LXX (*Septuagint* - Greek translation of Hebrew Scriptures) **nations** is here the Greek *ethne*, just as in the Great Commission - to make disciples of all *ethne*. Hundreds of years later God spoke these words to Isaiah:

Isaiah 49:6 He [YaHWeH] says, "It is not enough for you to be my servant raising up the tribes of Jacob and restoring the protected ones of Israel. I will also make you **a light for the nations, to be my salvation to the ends of the earth.**"

* Again, **nations** is *ethnon* (ἔθνων) coming from the same root word as Gen. 26:4 & Matt. 28:19-20.

The heartbeat of God is the salvation of all nations & generations

By Jesus' day many of the Jews had become selfish & prideful. Instead of being a light to the other *ethnos* (i.e. nations), they were a barrier to other ethnicities who wanted to seek Yahweh, the One true God. We see this played out at God's temple where non-Jewish people of other nations weren't very valuable. This infuriated Jesus and THAT'S why He started throwing tables & driving out people and animals with a whip. That happened in the place where Gentiles...other nations could gather.

Mark 11:17 He was teaching them: "Is it not written, *My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations?* But you have made it *a den of thieves!*"

While the primary mission of Jesus was to make disciples of Jewish people, He made it clear that He expected His disciples to develop disciples of all nations. After raising from the dead Jesus explained how the Old Testament Scriptures pointed to the worldwide mission of the Messiah [Christ].

Luke 24:45-47 Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. He also said to them, "This is what is written: The Messiah would suffer and rise from the dead the third day, and **repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in his name to all the nations**, beginning at Jerusalem.

In the writing called **Acts**, we see that play out - as disciples take the message of Jesus from Jerusalem, to Judea, to Samaria, and all over the Roman Empire (Acts 1:8). Jesus didn't die for one people group, but to save all nations. The 1st century Church understood that **the heartbeat of God is the salvation of all nations & generations**.

They faced persecution & tough times to carry that message to others, sometimes across the sea, and often across the street.

Current Leaders Equip Future GENERATIONS.

2 Timothy 2:2 What **you** have heard from **me** in the presence of many witnesses, commit to **faithful men** who will be able to teach **others** also.

Paul didn't just teach Timothy what to *BELIEVE*; he showed Timothy how to *BEHAVE*. Paul had equipped Timothy to impact people Paul might not meet until heaven. Paul reminds Timothy that he must continue to pass the BATON to **faithful men** who would then pass it on to **others**.

🕒 That's **4 generations of disciples that were committed to the salvation of all nations & generations!**

¹ Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 392.

Less than 40 years after the death, burial, & resurrection of Jesus, the gospel message had spread throughout the known world! And despite the persecution they faced, all nations and generations would continue to be reached in the days to come! **Revelation was written to challenge and encourage to the 7 churches who were going through difficult days & saw more on the horizon.** Their faithfulness to develop disciples of all nations and generations would not end in failure.

Revelation 7:9-10 After this I looked, and there was a vast multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language, which no one could number, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were clothed in white robes with palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: Salvation belongs to our God, who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!

This was a GREAT ENCOURAGEMENT to them, and should be to us! Now, 6000 miles & 2000 years removed - many ethnicities - including us - have been blessed by the truth of Jesus.

The heartbeat of God is the salvation of all nations & generations

And now we get to participate in His pulse.

Rather than becoming a holy huddle, we must develop disciples of

- 1) **all nations** - "red, & yellow, black & white they are precious in His sight." We should cross the street and cross the oceans to share with other ethnicities.
 - 2) **all generations** - We should care/share with the oldest, the youngest, and everyone in between. We must pass the baton to the next generation and the next and the next.
- ☞ How might God open the floodgates with people who need to know Jesus when we prepare 'the Nursery' as we **share God's heartbeat - the salvation of all nations & generations.**



In light of what you have heard today....will you?

1. **Pray:** Ask God to give you His heartbeat for the salvation of all nations & generations.
2. **Give:** Give money to help carry the message of Jesus to others. We partner with multiple ministries across the globe from South America to Alaska to Ethiopia to Cambodia. A percentage of everything you give to Fellowship goes to help fund missionaries in the US and overseas.
3. **Go** to our Community & beyond. Help us develop disciples right here @ home. You might volunteer to serve with our children, student, or adult ministries.