

# The Four E Disciple Making Plan Series

## The Four E Disciple Making Plan (Eph. 4:15)

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By  
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### At A Glance:

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*These sermon study notes are designed to be a tool used after listening to the sermon. This resource is a guide to help deepen understanding regarding the Scriptures and ideas presented in the sermon. Those who use these study notes are encouraged to look up, read through, and think about Scripture references in this guide. There is more information in these notes than what is presented in the sermon. These study notes are designed to be used as an independent study tool to help the formation of Biblical convictions, character, and conduct.*

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# The Four E Disciple Making Plan

## I. Introduction

### A. Illustration: Learning Disciple Making

1. Have you ever tried to disciple another person? I remember my first attempts. Unfortunately, I made a lot of mistakes along the way, and it took time to learn many lessons. When I started out trying to have a positive impact on others for Jesus by helping them move forward in their Jesus journey, I felt lost because I didn't know what I was doing. I had the desire, but I lacked ability and knowledge. I tried to follow Jesus' example, but soon discovered He was so much better at making disciples than me—and He still is!
2. I attempted to disciple one young man for a year and a half. I tried several different strategies. I started by trying to convince him that Christianity was true by providing good reasons that Jesus can be trusted and that Jesus got His perspective on life right. He responded by saying he didn't understand and it was too difficult.
3. I shifted gears, observing his continual lack of interest in the things of God, so I tried to meet him in the things he was interested in. I attempted to use an element of Jesus' disciple making strategy by addressing what is currently going on in his life, meeting him where he was at currently, and helping him think about his needs, concerns, and life situations from God's perspective. Like the woman at the well, I tried to redirect His attention from himself and his life to Jesus. While he was slightly more interested, it was a real struggle getting him to pay attention to the difference God makes on his circumstances.
4. As we progressed, I considered ending the disciple making several times because I became convinced he wasn't interested in following Jesus—I didn't have any good reason to think he was a Christian. I didn't observe any real spiritual fruit. However, each time I thought about this, there seemed to be a glimmer of hope that maybe he was becoming responsive, so I pressed on. Also, he was still eager and willing to continue to get together—which is a rare quality.
5. After all this time and effort, he got a job as a traveling construction worker (his dream job) and moved away. I found out a few years later that his life had spiraled and he had completely walked away from God and had no interest in anything spiritual. As far as I know, he still hasn't returned to God. Through this young man, I learned that it is impossible to disciple someone who isn't spiritually alive, and those who we invest in need to be chosen with care and discernment. God must be at work in the hearts of those we disciple.

- B. Why did I spend so much time and effort trying to figure out how to have a positive spiritual impact on others? Because Jesus said that is what I was supposed to be doing with my life. Also, I eventually discovered the joy and satisfaction that comes when giving my life to what matters most—eternal purposes connected to God. It is the reason all of us are here: to serve God in His kingdom while on earth.

- C. Here is a well-known passage that is highly emphasized in our denomination and in the church in general, which gives disciples our job in life from Jesus:

<sup>18</sup> And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. <sup>19</sup> Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to follow all that I commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Mt. 28:18-20)

- D. Jesus communicates the mission of every Bible focused church: “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations” (v. 19). After this, Jesus left our world and returned to the Father in heaven. This was Jesus’ mic drop moment. After these words were spoken, the torch had been passed, and the responsibility is up to us. While church mission statements can have much variety, at their heart, they are all essentially variations of the theme of making disciples. Disciple making is why the church exists.
- E. Even if we know God wants us to be making disciples, the most common response is feeling inadequate and ill equipped. Where do I start trying to make a disciple? How are disciples made, and what do I do with someone? What is my strategy and plan? Hearing that we have the responsibility to make disciples might feel overwhelming. You may think it is a large and impossible task that only pastors or trained professionals can do. That’s okay; we are going to provide you with everything you need to be able to do it effectively using a guided plan, the Bible, and reliance on God’s Spirit.
- F. Much thought, time, and effort have been put into the resources that have been developed to help you be able to make disciples, even if you don’t know how to do it and you don’t yet understand the process. All you will have to do is follow what is provided. These resources have been designed to be immediately implementable. You don’t have to know all the details of spiritual formation or have a working knowledge of how people grow spiritually; all that work has been done for you—just follow the plan! Our disciple making plan provides a wonderful opportunity for anyone to be able to participate in having an impact for Jesus in the lives of others and to be moving forward with Jesus ourselves.

## II. The Big Picture

- A. To help us understand our Four E Disciple Making Plan, we will begin with the big picture. Community Alliance Church understands the big picture of the Christian life through the lens of our Four E’s which are each a distinct stage of spiritual growth: Expose, Educate, Equip, and Engage. Every person who connects and responds to Jesus in a healthy way will work their way through these stages of soul development. The Jesus journey starts when we learn about who Jesus is and what He claimed about Himself. After we accept Jesus for the person He claimed to be, we begin to learn what Jesus taught and how He lived. Once we understand how Jesus wants us to be living our lives, we need to develop the knowledge and skills to obey and follow Jesus’ example. When we’ve grown spiritually to the point that we are living a healthy Christian life ourselves, we are then able to effectively help others through their own Jesus journey. This progression is captured in the Four E’s.

- B. The Four E understanding of the Christian life has been built into a specific plan for making disciples, our Four E Disciple Making Plan. This organization and structure are designed to meet core spiritual needs at every stage of spiritual development. The overall structure of our Four E Disciple Making Plan includes four Bible study books for each of the E's. There are four books of thirteen studies in the Expose stage, four books in the Educate stage, four in the Equip stage, and four in the Engage stage—sixteen books in total. Each book has a spiritual growth purpose behind it. Each book progresses step by step through a thirteen-week reading plan on a specific topic. Here is the overall structure of our plan:
1. Expose:
    - a. Book 1: The Claims of Jesus
    - b. Book 2: The Reasons of Jesus to Believe
    - c. Book 3: The Inspiring Character of Jesus
    - d. Book 4: Jesus on Getting Right with God
  2. Educate:
    - a. Book 1: Jesus' Understanding of the Bible
    - b. Book 2: Jesus on Following Him
    - c. Book 3: The Commands of Jesus
    - d. Book 4: What Jesus Expects from Us
  3. Equip:
    - a. Book 1: Developing God Centered Priorities
    - b. Book 2: The Spiritual Habits of Jesus
    - c. Book 3: Jesus on Resisting Sin
    - d. Book 4: Jesus on Godly Living
  4. Engage:
    - a. Book 1: Jesus Sharing His Message
    - b. Book 2: Jesus Training Others to Share His Message
    - c. Book 3: Jesus Making Disciples
    - d. Book 4: Jesus Training Others to Make Disciples
- C. As individuals and groups complete, discuss, process, and apply these Bible guides, we anticipate a movement and progress through the various stages of spiritual development of the Christian life. The purpose of these resources is to guide people through the maturing process of the Christian life. The point is not to simply complete each study and fulfill a particular curriculum; it is for people to understand and apply the material being covered so they can move forward in their relationship with Jesus. These studies are simply a tool to be used, not an end to be completed. The focus is on the progression of the individual, not merely answering all the questions.
- D. Remember Community Alliance Church's mission statement theme verse:
- <sup>28</sup> We proclaim Him, admonishing every person and teaching every person with all wisdom, so that we may present every person complete in Christ. <sup>29</sup> For this purpose I also labor, striving according to His power which works mightily within me.  
(Col. 1:28-29)

- E. Our goal in disciple making is to help people be transformed so they can be mature and made to be like Jesus (“so that we may present every person complete in Christ”, v. 28). This is accomplished through Biblical instruction centered around Jesus (“We proclaim Him, admonishing every person and teaching every person with all wisdom,” v. 28). This is how we work hard for the kingdom of God (“For this purpose I also labor, striving according to His power which works mightily within me”, v. 29).
- F. Our desire is for these disciple making studies to become the main element of our disciple making efforts here at Community Alliance Church as we follow the disciple making pattern of Jesus. The leadership of CAC understands that we will have to learn how this is going to work together, as this disciple making emphasis requires a significant cultural shift for our church and the way the modern Western church typically operates. As we’ve mentioned for the past few years, we want to emphasize people over programs. While programs can be useful, we want to make disciples by being people-focused, through the strategic use of relationships. Our hope is that everyone who connects with Community Alliance Church will participate in these Bible studies, ideally with one or two other people—in community. This Four E Disciple Making Plan is going to be our primary method of investing in people’s lives. Remember, consistent contact with the word of God, over time, is the single most transformative spiritual habit a person can develop. We want to more strongly encourage this to be happening on a regular basis in every person’s life.
- G. All these self-guided Bible reading and spiritual conversation aids can be obtained through the church office. Currently, these studies are only formatted to be printed in booklet form. We are hoping to be able to make these available digitally on mobile devices soon to make them more easily accessible. We ask if you are using any of these studies with another person, please let us know which book you are using, who is doing the study with you, and when you finish so we can track our progress!

### III. COMA Method

- A. Our Four E Disciple Making Plan uses an effective method of studying the Bible called the inductive study method. This method of Bible study looks carefully at the details of a particular passage to learn more about the big picture (process of moving from the particular to the general). Inductive Bible study is the type of method we will be using, but the specific method is called the COMA method of studying the Bible. While reading the Bible, we don’t want people to fall asleep and enter a coma. Instead, COMA provides and highlights an effective method of inductive Bible study. COMA is an acronym that stands for each step of the study process:
  - 1. Context
  - 2. Observation
  - 3. Meaning (interpretation)
  - 4. Application
- B. Each of the Four E Bible studies follows this same pattern. We begin by asking a few questions about the context of each passage. Every Bible verse is connected to those around it, and even themes that are found throughout the Bible. As we read Scripture, it is like walking into the middle of a conversation that started without us. We first need to determine what we are

talking about, what has already been said about what is being talked about, and even what other people have said in the conversation besides what the current speaker is saying. If we are going to get up to speed in the “conversation,” we need to be aware of the context and flow of thought going on in each passage of the Bible. If we fail to pay attention to the context, it will be easy to misunderstand the meaning of the passage, just like when a person’s words are taken out of context.

- C. Following a few initial context questions, good Bible study requires that we pay careful attention to the details of each text of Scripture. As good readers, we need to get our facts straight. Spending sufficient time observing what God is saying is of critical importance. Observation questions are designed to help you notice specific elements of the passage and see details that you may have otherwise missed on your own. Using questions, your attention will be drawn to the elements of each passage being emphasized for each study.
- D. After each person has a good understanding of the passage and what God is saying through it, we must figure out what the passage means. That is, what is the best way to understand what is being communicated by God to the original audience? This process is called interpretation. Just because a person has heard the words of a conversation doesn’t mean they have accurately understood the message the speaker is trying to communicate. Miscommunication happens in conversation, and it happens with reading the Bible. Just because we have the correct facts doesn’t mean we will have the correct understanding of what the facts are pointing to. Meaning questions will help us understand what God is communicating in the passage being examined.
- E. Finally, we must realize that it is Jesus’ intention for us to respond to what God says through His word by putting it into practice in our lives—we must act on what we have learned. This is called application in Bible study. Hearing and learning intellectually what God has to say is not enough; God’s word must change us. God works in us to make a difference in our lives. Application questions enable us to take what the Bible says and put it into practice in our lives in culturally relevant ways. Throughout these studies, we will be encouraged to act in accordance with what God says in our day-to-day activities. The emphasis is on transformation through education.

#### IV. An Example

- A. Each book in the Four E Disciple Making Plan is a series of thirteen Bible studies designed to guide you in a self-discovery process that progressively moves you through the stages of spiritual development connected to the Christian life. Our goal is to partner with you for a period of four years, assuming one Bible study is being completed per week, to help you grow into a knowledgeable and experienced disciple. This disciple making process can be completed in a shorter time if more than one study is done per week. The quickest this process might be completed would be less than a year if a person did one study each day—this would be an intense pace. Again, the goal is to grow in relation to Jesus, not complete a series of steps as quickly as possible. Once each person has gone through this disciple making plan themselves, it is our hope that they will turn around and lead someone else through the same process they have benefited from. Multiplication is an important part of disciple making.

- B. Let's take a closer look at the Educate stage Book 1 on Jesus' Understanding of the Bible. To understand Jesus, we must understand how much His life, message, and ministry were structured and organized around the Bible. God's word was a central core feature of everything Jesus did. In week five, the study answers the question, "Does Jesus think the Bible presents an accurate picture of reality—the way the world is?" based on Luke 10:25-28. Every lesson starts by reading the passage in its entirety, then using the booklet to write down the answers to all the questions. Usually, other Scriptures are brought in to provide further insight into the passage being studied. Answers aren't provided, so everyone is forced to do the work themselves and discover their own responses to each question. After the study is finished and all the answers are written down, this can be used as an answer key when working with others through the same material.
- C. Questions will fall under the COMA categories mentioned above. There are questions on context to help us understand the setting and background of each passage being studied. There are observation questions that help us dive deeper into the text and point us in the direction of the lesson focus. This is followed by questions about meaning that help us gain greater insight into what the proper interpretation of the passage is. The questions in this section help us think more carefully about how to understand what God is communicating. Finally, there are several questions related to putting the content of what is being learned into action in our lives in a way that is meaningful for our unique situation. All this is accomplished using Scripture and carefully worded questions designed for self-guided discovery.
- D. Are you familiar with the term passive income? Passive income refers to the ability for a person to earn money without having to spend time or effort to get it. While time and energy may be needed to set up the opportunity to earn money, once everything is in place, money can be earned without effort. Writing a book or making a movie is an example of passive income. While writing or producing takes time and effort, once all the work is done, money can be earned when others buy the book or movie without any further effort on the part of those who developed it. Money can be earned twenty years after all the work is completed. Passive income is opportunities to make money on an ongoing basis while doing nothing.
- E. I'm convinced there is such a thing as passive income in kingdom of God as expressed in the Parable of the Seed in Mark 4:26-29. Like the farmer who is sleeping at night, yet the crop is growing by itself, these Bible studies will provide lots of opportunities for passive kingdom income. The elders or other leaders in the church do not have to be present for the Holy Spirit to be using these Bible studies to work in the lives of disciples. A person could be working through one of these studies at 10 pm on Tuesday night at home by themselves and be growing as a result without any effort on the part of the leadership of CAC. Perhaps on a Friday morning at 6 am, another person is going through a different study and being transformed by God. All this is passive kingdom income. These Bible studies have unlimited potential to create spiritual fruit if they are being used and people are being responsive. God will work. This is why time and effort were invested in putting this plan together all based on Biblical convictions.

**V. Conclusion**

- A. Have you developed a desire to participate in this disciple making initiative? Will you come along with us in this adventure of becoming a church that is focused on a disciple making culture? How are you going to personally participate in what we are doing?
- B. If you are someone who is currently learning about Jesus and investigating the truthfulness of Christianity or you are a newer disciple who feels their need to be helped along your Jesus journey, be encouraged to find someone who you are comfortable with that is also further along on their Jesus journey and ask them to use The Four E Disciple Making Plan with you.
- C. If you are an experienced disciple and have been following Jesus for a while, pray for God to open your eyes to someone you can make a positive spiritual impact on. Reach out to someone who you think is not as far along as you are in their Jesus journey, perhaps someone newer to our church, and invite them to join you in using these studies. Commit to getting together regularly to read and discuss the Bible.
- D. We will discuss how to use these studies in a very practical way in the next message. The desire is to prepare you and help you feel equipped, comfortable, and prepared to use our Four E Disciple Making Plan with others.