

Making the Four E's Easy Series: I Will Make You (Mt. 4:18-20)

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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.

I Will Make You

I. Introduction

A. Illustration: Aptitude Test in High School—what are you going to do with your life?

1. In high school, there was a career aptitude test that everyone took such as CareerExplorer or the MAPP Assessment. This evaluation was designed to help us answer the question, what are you going to do with your life? To the best of my memory, this career aptitude assessment was given during our junior year. That way, we would have an idea of what career choices would best fit us as we thought about college majors and schools throughout our senior year.
2. At that point in my life, I had no idea what career path I wanted to pursue. I didn't have much life or work experience, so making decisions about the direction I wanted to point my life was a guessing game. I was looking for all the help I could get, and I was excited to get my results.
3. When the aptitude results came in, the assessment gave us the top three career fields that we were most suited to considering the information that was provided. I was hoping I had aptitude for a job that I would also find enjoyment in. Recommended job number one: lawyer. At the time, this job choice made no sense to me. It didn't seem to fit. I briefly thought I could use the role of being a lawyer to do good for others and promote justice for God, but I quickly moved on thinking the assessment was wrong and this choice was irrelevant. In hindsight, this choice makes a lot more sense and I understand in a much deeper way why being a lawyer fits who God has created me to be.
4. The second career option was that of a pilot. This job immediately seemed fun and exciting to me. Adventure and a lot of possibilities came with this type of job. Thinking about being a pilot filled me with a sense of freedom. I could travel the world and get paid for it. The life of a pilot seemed glamorous. As a pilot, I could help other people enjoy trips and do business to provide for their family. Being a pilot seemed to have less opportunity to do good for others than being a lawyer.

B. While many people spend significant time thinking about what their job and career path will be, especially in the later high school, college, and initial post college years, we often think of our job choices in terms of earning money, enjoyment, benefits, and practical concerns. What if we also thought about how our job and career choice would enable us to serve and glorify God? Would it make a difference in our job choices if our aim was to have the greatest impact on others for Jesus?

C. We can take connecting Jesus to our job choice a bit further. While almost everyone asks themselves about what their job choice should be, have you ever asked yourself the question, "What is our job as a disciple—a student of Jesus?" Regardless of how we make money, if we have committed our life to Jesus, He has work for us to do. Jesus essentially told people that their job is to go into the world and work for Him through the Parable of the Laborers (Mt. 20:1-

16). According to the Parable of the Talents, disciples are to do God's business with what they have been given until Jesus returns (Mt. 25:14-30).

- D. Jesus invested in His disciples by training them to effectively carry out their job. From the very beginning, Jesus invited the disciples to follow Him for a specific purpose (Mt. 4:18-20). In the third stage of discipleship, the Equip stage, Jesus helps the disciples develop the knowledge, skills, and competencies they will need to be spiritually fruitful as they work for the kingdom of God. We can learn how to be equipped and train others to work effectively for Jesus as we become disciple multipliers.

II. Explanation

- A. We are examining the blueprint for the Christian life. The whole discipleship process is being viewed from a bird's eye view to help us understand the path and progression of the Christian life. Before we continue to the third stage of discipleship, let's do a quick review of the first two steps, and we'll add a preview of the third step:

1. Expose Stage

- a. Invitation: Come and See
- b. Question: Who is Jesus?
- c. Goal: Personal conviction about Jesus
- d. God's Role: Father draws

2. Educate Stage

- a. Invitation: Learn from Me
- b. Question: How do I live?
- c. Goal: Understand Jesus' way of life
- d. God's Role: Jesus reveals

3. Equip Stage

- a. Invitation: I Will Make You
- b. Question: How do I serve?
- c. Goal: Be equipped for every good work
- d. God's Role: Jesus enables

- B. The third step of discipleship with Jesus can be summarized in this statement made by Jesus:

¹⁸ Now as *Jesus* was walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon, who was called Peter, and his brother Andrew, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. ¹⁹ And He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of people."

²⁰ Immediately they left their nets and followed Him. (Mt. 4:18-20)

- C. Jesus' invitation to disciples at the Equip stage of discipleship is to be trained to carry out tasks related to making disciples ("I will make you fishers of people", v. 19). Jesus used the language and imagery that the disciples He was speaking with would understand. These professional fishermen would shift their focus to "fishing for people". Jesus is promising to train the disciples to be a person who is adequately prepared to perform tasks related to the kingdom of God. There is an emphasis on personal development, "I will make YOU". Jesus will shape His disciples in specific ways, so they are capable of spiritually impacting others. This is a ministry training

process that is built into discipleship so the disciples will become a particular type of person who can carry out specific tasks (Mk. 1:17).

- D. In these words, Jesus intends more for disciples than simply following Him. Jesus is followed for a purpose—movement toward a clearly identified outcome. Disciples intentionally, not blindly, follow Jesus. This element of training and equipping as part of the discipleship process is applied to all disciples, not just the apostles. When some general discipleship instructions are provided, Jesus expects a person who is only mentioned briefly to carry out the same type of work as the twelve closest disciples to Jesus—the apostles (Lk. 9:59-62). Regardless of how much or how little contact disciples had with Jesus, He expected the same type of work to be carried out by all disciples.¹ Jesus had the universal expectation of all disciples: “We must carry out the works of Him who sent Me” (Jn. 9:4).²

- E. Jesus explained this stage of discipleship this way:

¹ I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. ³ You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. ⁴ Remain in Me, and I in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself but must remain in the vine, so neither *can* you unless you remain in Me. ⁵ I am the vine, you are the branches; the one who remains in Me, and I in him bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not remain in Me, he is thrown away like a branch and dries up; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. ⁷ If you remain in Me, and My words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. (Jn. 15:1-8)

- F. The spiritual goal that Jesus is aiming at with His disciples in the Equip stage is spiritual effectiveness and productivity—fruitfulness (“bear fruit”, “bears fruit”, and “bear more fruit”, v. 2).³ The question being answered here is, “How do I serve?”, instead of the question many disciples ask of the church, “How do I get served?” The type of spiritual fruit Jesus has in mind here includes obedience to Jesus’ commands (Jn. 15:10), joy produced by Jesus (Jn. 15:11), peace from Jesus (Jn. 14:27), love for other disciples (Jn. 15:12), answered prayer (Jn. 15:16) and sharing the message of Jesus with others (Jn. 15:27). Individuals with spiritual life growing in them through the Spirit will produce real and meaningful spiritual fruit. Jesus enables and guarantees it.
- G. If any person is going to produce the fruit Jesus is talking about, they can’t do it by their own power or ability (“Just as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself but must remain in the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in Me”, v. 4). Spiritual fruit can only be produced by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit only comes through Jesus (“the one who remains in Me, and I in him bears much fruit”, v. 5). Jesus had previously taught how this works through the Spirit (Jn.

¹ The kingdom works each individual disciple carries out will be expressed differently based on ability (Mt. 25:15, Ac. 2:4), level of freedom (Jn. 9:4, 1 Pet. 2:16), gifting (Rm. 12:4-6, 1 Cor. 12:4-7), personality (1 Cor. 15:10), and position in life (1 Cor. 3:5, 2 Cor. 10:13). While each disciples’ work will be variously expressed, all disciples are on the same team doing the same type of work.

² Ephesians 2:10

³ It is likely Jesus is using the imagery from Psalm 80 to explain His relationship and role with the disciples.

14:16-23). To remain in Jesus is to act in ways that make Jesus our dwelling place—the location where we live (our residence).⁴ Jesus is to us like water is to a fish. He is the environment in which we live. Those who are attached to Jesus live in His presence continually. Disciples continue in the state of attachment to Jesus.⁵ Minimally staying connected to Jesus includes contact with Jesus’ words (Jn. 15:7), praying to Jesus (Jn. 15:7), loving and receiving Jesus’ love (Jn. 15:9), and keeping Jesus’ commandments (Jn. 15:10). This is what a relationship with Jesus is.

- H. What does God do in this stage of discipleship? God the Father works in a disciples’ life so they grow, develop, and increase their fruit producing capacity (“every *branch* that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit.”, v. 2). Jesus enables and empowers disciples to bear spiritual fruit—and not just a little fruit, but a lot of fruit. The purpose of the Christian life and a person’s attachment to Jesus is to glorify God the Father along with Jesus (“My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.”, v. 8). Jesus, God the Father, and the Holy Spirit are all working together in the life of every disciple to move them toward the same spiritual objective: fruitfulness. Spiritual fruitfulness is the indication of good heart soil that is receptive and responsive to the word of God (Mt. 13:23).
- I. The critical point Jesus is making is: there are no true Christians without some measure of fruit. Fruitfulness is an infallible mark of true Christianity.⁶ If a person is not fruitful spiritually, it is because they are disconnected from Jesus and not being nourished by Him. They may be spending lots of time and energy trying to do what God wants apart from Jesus, but they aren’t producing genuine, lasting fruit.⁷ All true disciples are appointed by Jesus to bear eternal fruit. Jesus assigns us our duties, responsibilities, and obligations for all the fruit He rightly expects us to produce.⁸
- J. Healthy disciples glorify God through spiritual fruitfulness. The primary task of the disciples is to glorify Jesus who glorifies God.⁹ If you were to examine your life and the strength of how strongly attached to Jesus you are, how spiritually fruitful are you? How much does your life glorify God? Are you bearing any fruit? A little fruit? Much fruit?
- K. How does a disciple become fruitful? Receiving answered prayer from Jesus. How do we receive answered prayer from Jesus? Aligning our life with His priorities. There is a direct connection between how a person prays and the primary commitments and priorities of our life.¹⁰ Disciples who are living in Jesus will have an impactful prayer life because they are obeying Jesus. As our heart is transformed to desire, value, delight in, and care about the priorities of Jesus, we will pray in alignment with His will. This orientation produces the type of prayers that Jesus delights to answer.

⁴ Craig S. Keener, [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament](#), Second Edition (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic; An Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2014), 292.

⁵ Logos 10 Bible Study Software Exegetical Guide on John 15:4 “remain”

⁶ D. A. Carson, [The Gospel according to John](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: InterVarsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991), 515.

⁷ Jn. 6:27, 15:16

⁸ Logos 10 Bible Study Software Exegetical Guide on John 15:16 “appointed”

⁹ Gerald L. Borchert, [John 12–21](#), vol. 25B, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2002), 146.

¹⁰ Gerald L. Borchert, [John 12–21](#), vol. 25B, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2002), 145.

III. Example

- A. Now that we are familiar with how Jesus explained this stage of the discipleship process and know what happens and the direction that a disciple moves, we can see how this stage plays out in the life of the disciples as Jesus spiritually invests in them.
- B. Here is an example of Jesus making disciples in the Equip stage:

³⁸ John said to Him, “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we tried to prevent him because he was not following us.” ³⁹ But Jesus said, “Do not hinder him, for there is no one who will perform a miracle in My name, and be able soon *afterward* to speak evil of Me. ⁴⁰ For the one who is not against us is for us. ⁴¹ For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because of your name as *followers* of Christ, truly I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward. (Mk. 9:38-41)
- C. As the disciples are being trained to influence others for Jesus, mistakes were made along the way. Jesus spent considerable time and effort equipping the disciples to do the work He wanted them to do in the way He required that work to be done. Jesus offered many course corrections throughout this stage of discipleship, and this is an example of one. As the disciples are being trained by Jesus to impact others, they are starting to understand the work Jesus wants them to do, and they take their first steps in acting on what Jesus is equipping them to do.
- D. As the disciples are serving Jesus, they are concerned about and focused on their own status and importance. They didn’t want competition. They had a small vision for the work Jesus intended to do in the world. All this impacts how the disciples treated another person who was serving Jesus (“we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we tried to prevent him because he was not following us.”, v. 38). The disciples thought they were part of a special club, and they were the only ones who were supposed to be serving Jesus. Another person was considered an outsider because they were not part of their group. The disciples were already starting to become inwardly focused.
- E. Jesus corrects this mistaken perspective and priorities by helping the disciples realize the work Jesus intended to do was much bigger than just the disciples (“Do not hinder him, for there is no one who will perform a miracle in My name, and be able to soon afterward to speak evil of Me”, v. 39). In other words, it is okay for others to serve Jesus, and the disciples don’t need to be jealous or competitive (“For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because of your name as followers of Christ, truly I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward”, v. 41). Other kingdom workers who have the right attitude toward Jesus and the right motivation for serving the people of God are on the same team (“For the one who is not against us is for us”, v. 40). Jesus is wanting the disciples to expand their vision for serving Jesus beyond their immediate group. Jesus is developing the disciples’ understanding of ministry, their priorities, and their ministry practices.
- F. While the disciples were doing the right actions as they served Jesus, they didn’t yet have the right perspective, desires, or motives. Jesus is working with the disciples to prune them so they can become even more fruitful in the future. Rather than a self-focused, competitive attitude, the disciples should generously try to encourage as many servants of Jesus as possible. The more people there are serving the followers of Jesus, the better. God is generous enough and

has enough resources to be able to reward every act of faithfulness done by every person serving Jesus. Competition and jealousy are pointless because every worker will be rewarded adequately for their work.

- G. Courageously pray this bold prayer every day: Jesus, give me opportunities to be spiritually fruitful for you today. Help me have eyes to see these opportunities. Provide me the strength, courage, and determination to make the most of these opportunities. Continue to equip me for every good work you have prepared for me so that I can walk in each one. Amen.
- H. Expect God to show up and answer that prayer. Be ready. Be on the lookout for others in whose life God is working. They will be spiritually interested and hungry. They will be open as they are searching for and pursuing God. They won't be easily distracted or discouraged from the things of God. As you faithfully respond to the opportunities God gives you, He will work in you to make you increasingly fruitful.

IV. Conclusion

- A. People will be identified and known by the fruit their life produces (Mt. 7:16-23). Just because a person claims to love and follow Jesus doesn't mean their life is producing the right kind of fruit. We must be empowered by Jesus to do the will of the Father so we can bear good fruit with our lives.
- B. We need Jesus' help to transform our hearts to be a storage place of good treasures from which we can draw good fruit (Lk. 6:43-45). We can't do this by ourselves. Working hard and self-reliance will never produce a life of good fruit. Only God can work in us to make that happen.