

Making the Four E's Easy Series:

Learn from Me (Mt. 11:28-30)

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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.

Learn from Me

I. Introduction

A. Illustration: A House of Mirrors

1. Have you ever felt like following Jesus was like walking through a house of mirrors? A house of mirrors is a maze of pathways with mirrors for walls. A person attempts to make their way through the maze without knowing where they are going. At one intersection, they may turn right or left. Weighing the options while deciding right, left, or straight ahead doesn't really help because you don't know where the exit is or even which direction you should be traveling.
2. To make matters worse, the walls made up of mirrors make it hard to even identify where the pathway is. Plenty of people walking through a house of mirrors hit their head, nose, and body, on a mirror, thinking there was an open pathway ahead of them. It can hurt bouncing off a mirror and getting redirected after making an error. Trying to move through the pathways quickly, or even running, is typically a bad strategy. Some people, after a few bumps, end up walking with their hands out in front of them, feeling their way around so they don't get hurt.
3. It is possible to get so frustrated trying to move through a house of mirrors that people might either give up and try to retrace their steps back to the entrance or stand still feeling angry, depressed, or even claustrophobic.

B. Many disciples journey through the Christian life in a similar way to a house of mirrors because they are left to themselves to figure out what it means to follow Jesus. They don't really know where they are going, they can't always identify the path forward, there are painful bumps along the way, and they don't even know if they are making progress or not. They choose a path and hope for the best.

C. What does a person do after they hear the gospel message of Jesus and accept it? To those who commit to following Jesus, Jesus makes another invitation. This offer during the second step of the discipleship process is found in Matthew 11:29-30. This is what we call the Educate stage of the Christian life. Reaching the point of being willing to accept and trust Jesus is only the first step in a relationship with Jesus. Unfortunately, this is also where a lot of people stop pursuing Jesus and hit the cruise control. It is important for us to hear and understand this second invitation of Jesus so we can be pointed in the right direction for continuing the Christian life.

II. Explanation

A. In the first message of this series the focus of the first step in the discipleship process was explained. People who become curious about God do so because God is working in them to motivate this interest. Jesus meets those who are open and searching with the invitation "Come and see". Those with interest are encouraged by Jesus to have contact with Him by hearing what He says and seeing what He does. The main question being asked and answered at this stage of the discipleship process is, "Who is Jesus?". Those who are making disciples with individuals in this stage seek to help another person form a strong personal conviction about

Jesus' identity. Disciple makers give other people opportunities to be guided on a self-discovery journey to decide who Jesus is and how they will respond to Him.

- B. Once a person has learned enough about Jesus to have an accurate and informed perspective, they may decide to commit their soul, eternal condition, and lifestyle to following Jesus and His message. Those who make this commitment enter the second stage of discipleship. This is the Educate stage for Community Alliance Church in which a person becomes a student of Jesus as they learn how to live the way God wants as explained by Jesus. At this point in the spiritual life, individuals make the conscious choice and take intentional action steps to follow Jesus' way of life. They discover what it means to live their lives under the influence of God.
- C. The second step of discipleship with Jesus can be summarized in this statement made by Jesus:

²⁸ Come to Me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For My yoke is comfortable, and My burden is light.
(Mt. 11:28-30)
- D. Once again, we observe a summary statement from Jesus capturing the core of the second step in the discipleship process. People are invited to learn from Jesus for their own benefit ("learn from Me", v. 29). Entering a learning posture toward Jesus is to become a student of His by increasing our understanding of His teachings.¹ Pay careful attention to the fact that disciples don't just learn ABOUT Jesus, they also learn FROM Jesus. There is a relational interaction between Jesus and the individuals that is characterized by a humble, submissive attitude by the student and an authoritative and instructive posture by Jesus. Jesus summarized this stage of discipleship as, "teaching them to follow all that I commanded you" (Mt. 28:20). As we will see again later, being a student of Jesus and learning from Him emphasizes both how a person thinks (convictions) and how a person lives (conduct). Disciples don't just learn what Jesus taught or commanded, they also learn how to put it into practice in their lives.
- E. The motivation to learn from Jesus comes from a realization about how wonderful a person Jesus is ("for I am gentle and humble in heart", v. 29). The more a person appreciates Jesus, the greater their desire to learn from Him will be. Those with an informed perspective of Jesus and a good attitude toward Him will have love and affection for Jesus, which ignites a passion to spend time with Jesus and learn from Him. Jesus isn't a harsh critical person who wants to boss people around. Rather, He lovingly convinces those who are following Him of His good intentions to teach them how to live in a way that causes life, peace, and joy to flourish. Jesus teaches His disciples how to live in a very patient and kind way because that is who He is.
- F. Not only are disciples motivated to learn from Jesus because of who He is, we also discover the personal benefits and advantages of what is learned from Jesus. Jesus promises to provide those who learn from Him a unique and special blessing. The teachings of Jesus provide an internal quality of life that has a positive impact on our soul and blesses us ("you will find rest for your souls", v. 29). The quality of life we experience on the inside with Jesus moves us from life feeling like we are running down and growing tired from carrying heavy burdens to finding a

¹ Logos 10 Bible Study Software Exegetical Guide on Matthew 11:29 "learn"

break that refreshes us.² The more we learn the way of life taught by Jesus, the more we discover obeying Him lightens the feeling of our internal quality of life. While Jesus adds duties and responsibilities to our lives, they are not heavy (“For My yoke is comfortable, and My burden is light”, v. 30).

- G. Jesus provides disciples with the presence and power of the Holy Spirit which pours God’s divine quality of life into our souls. As the Holy Spirit works in the lives of disciples, they are strengthened in the inner person (2 Cor. 4:16, Eph. 3:16). Our souls are filled with righteousness, peace, and joy (Rm. 14:17). The fruit of the Spirit grows to dominate the internal experience of a person (Gal. 5:22-23). The resources God provides through Jesus are sweet and they can’t be found anywhere else. Those who have experienced the benefits of learning from Jesus become consumed with Him and keep learning from Him the rest of their lives.
- H. Jesus describes this stage of discipleship this way:
 - ³¹ So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, *then* you are truly My disciples; ³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” ³³ They answered Him, “We are Abraham’s descendants and have never been enslaved to anyone; how *is it that* You say, ‘You will become free’?” ³⁴ Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin. ³⁵ Now the slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. ³⁶ So if the Son sets you free, you really will be free. (Jn. 8:31-36)
- I. Jesus is talking to those who expressed some form of belief in Him (“Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him”, v. 31). We must remember that there are different ways people can “believe” in Jesus, and not all types of belief in Jesus are the same. Some people believe in Jesus yet never become spiritually fruitful (Mt. 13:3-9, 18-23, Mk. 4:2-9, 13-20, Lk. 8:4-8, 11-15). Others who are called disciples and who followed Jesus for a time end up rejecting some of Jesus’ teachings and walk away because they don’t believe in Jesus the right way (Jn. 6:60-64). Some people believe in Jesus but do not stay connected to His word (“If you continue in My word”, v. 31). Jesus desires those who believe in Him to stay connected to His words and the word of God. Discipleship in the Educate stage requires a person to stay connected to Jesus over time through His word.
- J. Once again, we see the combination of learning intellectual content (“you will know the truth”, v. 32) combined with improved ability to act in life (“the truth will set you free”, v. 32). Disciples have knowledge of what is real and dependable, which causes and results in being granted freedom.³ The word of God communicated through Jesus will have a profound impact on those who stay connected to it. Disciples who regularly and consistently learn from Jesus by staying connected to the word of God will grow in their understanding, their spiritual maturity, and their capacity to act the way Jesus instructs people to act.
- K. To clarify what Jesus meant by the type of freedom He provides, He says it is a moral freedom from sin (“everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin”, v. 34). The person who acts on a wrong behavior is a person who is influenced, dominated, and controlled by the internal human

² Logos 10 Bible Study Software Exegetical Guide on Matthew 11:30 “rest”

³ Logos 10 Bible Study Software Exegetical Guide on John 8:32 “know”, “truth”, “set you free”

tendency to act contrary to God's character and commands (called sin).⁴ This moral corruption that is part of human nature is the most fundamental and serious problem facing humanity. Jesus is the only person capable of fixing this problem. Our immoral desires and impulses operate within us in a way that we are powerless to stop. This is why we do wrong on a regular basis, not just once or twice. Jesus likens this moral corruption to slavery.

- L. If a person learns from Jesus the way they should, Jesus promises to set them free, and they will experience a lifestyle that is not controlled or dominated by doing wrong ("if the Son sets you free, you really will be free", v. 36). Moral freedom through the progressive overcoming of sin is at the core of the second stage of discipleship. Learning how to live the way God wants and increasing our ability to do so is the intended outcome of the Educate stage. Jesus tells the truth, and He has the power to do what He says He can do. As we follow Jesus, we may need to remind ourselves often of this promise of Jesus. We may need to return to this truth frequently to remind ourselves that, even though we fail at times, we are on a path of freedom from sin. While this freedom doesn't mean perfection, it does mean that living under the domination of sin is contrary to our identity as disciples, and it is only a matter of time before the power of Jesus sets us free. Jesus wants us to live the Christian life confidently, not in discouragement.
- M. One of the primary focuses of this stage of discipleship is a person's individual spiritual growth and the development of their own relationship with God. There is a shift from discovering who Jesus is and determining His identity to sanctification. Disciples learn to live their life the way God wants with His help. This personal spiritual growth happens only in connection with the word of God and truth (Jn. 17:17). After a person accepts Jesus, they begin the work of getting their lives in order according to God's word with the help and power of the Spirit working in them. As Coline Marshall and Tony Payne express in their book, *The Vine Project: Shaping Your Ministry Culture Around Disciple-Making*, discipleship is, "Transformative learning through the word of God in the power of the Spirit of God."⁵
- N. How do we learn from Jesus practically? Is there anything we can do that is under our power and control to learn from Jesus? Yes, there is. Jesus tells us there are three requirements that a person must meet for Jesus to reveal Himself to us (Jn. 14:21). Jesus decides if He will reveal Himself to us ("I will love him and will reveal Myself to him", v. 21). A disciple must have genuine attitudes and feelings of affection for Jesus ("the one who loves Me", v. 21). If we do not love Jesus, Jesus will not reveal Himself to us. A person must also have knowledge of and understand the commands of Jesus ("The one who has My commandments", v. 21). It is impossible for Jesus to reveal Himself to a person who is ignorant of what He says. The word of God is the primary means by which Jesus reveals Himself. The third requirement we need to fulfill if Jesus is going to reveal Himself to us is to faithfully live according to what we know of the word of God ("and keeps them", v. 21). Just because a person has access to and an intellectual knowledge of what Jesus said doesn't mean Jesus will relationally interact with that

⁴ Logos 10 Bible Study Software Exegetical Guide on John 8:34 "commit" and "sin" Violations of God's character or commands can happen in thought, emotion, attitude, desire, motivation, speech, or action.

⁵ Colin Marshall, Tony Payne, [*The Vine Project: Shaping Your Ministry Culture Around Disciple Making*](#) (Sydney, AU: Matthias Media, 2021), 74

person by revealing Himself. A person's heart must be set on pleasing Jesus by doing what Jesus told them to do. Without obedience, it is impossible to truly know Jesus. When all three of these requirements are met, Jesus will delight in revealing Himself to us.

III. Example

- A. Those who are in this stage of the Christian life and discipleship are trying to answer the question: how does God want me to live? While this question is asked by different people in a variety of ways, it was asked by a group of people who heard the message of Jesus, felt the weight and implications of Jesus, and desired direction in the first steps of following Jesus (Ac. 2:37). The Educate stage of discipleship focuses on learning what a life lived God's way looks like. Primarily, this will involve learning from the example of Jesus and hearing what Jesus taught about following Him. The teachings of Jesus help us understand what God desires from us and what a relationship with God entails.
- B. A helpful and important example of Jesus making disciples in the Educate stage can be seen in this situation:

¹⁴ And *the disciples* had forgotten to take bread, and did not have more than one loaf in the boat with them. ¹⁵ And He was giving orders to them, saying, "Watch out! Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and the leaven of Herod." ¹⁶ And they *began* to discuss with one another *the fact* that they had no bread. ¹⁷ And Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why are you discussing *the fact* that you have no bread? Do you not yet comprehend or understand? Do you *still* have your heart hardened? ¹⁸ having eyes, do you not see? and having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember, ¹⁹ when I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces you picked up?" They said to Him, "Twelve." ²⁰ "When *I broke* the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of broken pieces did you pick up?" And they said to Him, "Seven." ²¹ And He was saying to them, "Do you not yet understand?" (Mk. 8:14-21)
- C. The way Jesus is interacting with and teaching His disciples in this situation is packed with significance. Jesus made disciples by teaching them during the normal, everyday life activities ("the disciples had forgotten to take bread, and did not have more than one loaf in the boat with them", v. 14). Jesus and the disciples were traveling by boat from one location to another. As they are traveling, they will need to eat. A failure in travel preparation was used by Jesus to instruct the disciples in the importance of carefully choosing their sources of spiritual instruction ("Watch out! Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and the leaven of Herod" v, 15). Not all spiritual teachers are equal. Some who claim to teach about God get God wrong. Jesus used the daily activities of life to draw the disciple's attention to spiritual realities that matter. Jesus encourages the disciples to think about God and pulls the influence of God into the normal daily activities of the disciples.
- D. Since the disciples are in the process of learning to set their minds on the things above (Col. 3:2), they still naturally operate and focus on the things that are on earth. They are wrapped up in the activity of this life ("they began to discuss with one another the fact that they had no bread", v. 16). Jesus is talking about something spiritual, while they are thinking about

something physical. This discrepancy of focus causes confusion in the disciples, which Jesus works to correct. In Matthew's version, this dynamic is clear when Jesus asks, "How is it that you do not understand that I did not speak to you about bread?" (Mt. 16:11). With Jesus' help, the disciples eventually figured out Jesus was warning the disciples about the false and harmful teachings of spiritually unhealthy groups ("Then they understood that He did not say to beware of...but the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees", v. 12).

- E. As Jesus is encouraging the disciples to view themselves and their lives from God's perspective in a way that moves them forward spiritually, His teaching applies Scripture to the disciples' spiritual condition and situation. Jesus quotes from Jeremiah 5:21 and applies spiritual dullness to the disciples as He points out a problem that is holding them back from making spiritual progress ("Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear?", v. 18). Through Scripture, Jesus is informing these disciples about the spiritual dynamics that are currently impacting them. The disciples, through their own spiritual failures, are slowing down the learning process that Jesus is providing them. The spiritual insensitivity and incorrect focus are making the learning process more difficult than it needs to be.
- F. Jesus also appeals to the disciples past experiences with Jesus. Part of Jesus' Bible-based instruction for the disciples involves helping them interpret their past experiences through the perspective of God. Jesus expected His disciples to gain spiritual insight through their experiences with Him (Mk. 6:52). Jesus referred to two specific experiences the disciples had that demonstrated Jesus' identity and abilities ("when I broke the five loaves...When I broke the seven", vv. 19-20). He is referring to the times when Jesus provided enough bread to feed two large crowds; therefore, it should be clear Jesus is not concerned about finding bread to eat. Jesus expected the disciples to have learned spiritual lessons from their past experiences with Jesus, but the disciples had failed to learn what was expected of them. The disciples should have been able to understand the current lesson Jesus was teaching, but due to past failure, the disciples didn't understand the current teaching.
- G. We must realize that any hard-heartedness toward God, any resistance, and a lack of openness toward God and His word will prevent and hinder our ability to learn and understand the things Jesus wants to teach us ("Do you not yet comprehend or understand?" and "Do you still have your heart hardened?", v. 17) Learning from Jesus and understanding spiritual truths and principles is not merely an intellectual exercise; the intellectual is greatly impacted by our attitudes, dispositions, and responses to God. The spiritual condition of a person powerfully and directly impacts how they think—the intellectual. The reason the disciples are not gaining insight and understanding from the instruction of the best teacher to ever live, Jesus, is due to the disciples' hard-heartedness, which causes a lack of attention and insight.
- H. Jesus is attempting to help the disciples move forward in their understanding and relationship with God in a healthy way, and He uses the word of God to do it. Disciples who are students of Jesus with a desire to learn from Him are taught by Jesus through personal experience, regular activities of life, instruction from the word of God, connecting and applying the word of God to us and our lives, helping others understand the spiritual dynamics impacting their life, and providing what is needed to move forward spiritually from where a person is currently at. All

these educational elements are used by Jesus in the Educate stage of discipleship so individuals will learn to live with a healthy relationship with God.

- I. How soft and receptive is your attitude toward God? Are you humble, open, and teachable? Are you resistant and argumentative toward what God says? Those with a willing and moldable posture toward God will be constantly learning truth and spiritual lessons from the word of God. They will be gaining insight and ability in connecting the spiritual lessons from the word of God and the way they live in the world. Their understanding of God will help them see everything more clearly and navigate life more effectively.
- J. Those who are quick to complain, criticize, dismiss, or reject what the word of God teaches will remain confused about the things of God. They will not make much progress and growth in their understanding of God. They won't benefit from the learning opportunities they do have.

IV. Exemplify

- A. If we are going to imitate Jesus as we are making disciples of others, we will focus on helping those who have made the decision and commitment to follow Jesus to learn from and live in the perspective of God from His word. Like Jesus, we will connect the spiritual lessons learned from Jesus to the way other people think and act. We will figure out where those we are having an influence on are at in their relationship with Jesus, help them navigate life where they are at, and provide them what they need to move forward in their relationship with Jesus. How do we help another person learn from Jesus?
- B. Here are some key takeaways and action steps from the example of Jesus teaching His disciples we just looked at. First, we must learn to bring the influence and impact of God into the activities of life we are already engaged in. Too many people hear about discipleship or realize Jesus wants them to be involved with making disciples and they think it is something new they need to start doing. Making disciples is an activity that needs to be added to their already busy schedule. When we grow in spiritual maturity, we will probably end up devoting more time, energy, attention, and resources to the priorities of God, but that isn't a requirement to get informed in making disciples. An important element of Jesus' disciple making strategy was to bring God into the daily activities of normal life that He was already doing with others.
- C. Sitting in the stands of a kid's sports event can be turned into an opportunity for disciple making when we intentionally move a conversation with others toward spiritual topics when it is appropriate to do so. Traveling in the car as a family can be used to spiritually invest in the lives of others through conversation, listening to a Bible-based podcast, worshipping together with music, or any other activity that will draw our family's attention to God. Inviting a neighbor over to join us while we are working on our vehicle and looking for an opportunity to help them better understand the identity of Jesus is disciple making. All these examples don't require more time or adding events to our calendar; we've be doing these activities anyway.
- D. Second, we may realize that our understanding of God, His word, and the way He works in people's lives is insufficient to do what Jesus did. As we take our first steps in making disciples and spiritually investing in the lives of others, we will likely discover the shallow knowledge of the word of God we have isn't adequate to be effective in doing what Jesus expects us to do. Even those who think they know the Bible well will find out how ill equipped they are to

spiritually care for others. While uncomfortable, this is an important lesson to learn. Like the disciples, we haven't adequately learned all the spiritual lessons Jesus wanted to teach us in the past, and we have some catching up to do. The more we try to help others, the more we will realize we need to keep growing and develop to be equipped for effectiveness in ministry.

- E. Third, disciples who desire to participate in kingdom expansion of God on earth will need to develop the skill of connecting the truth of the word of God with life in the modern world. Like Jesus, we need to ability to take truth and principles from Scripture, understand where it is relevant for people today, and apply it to specific situations in people's lives in ways that are consistent with God's original message. Disciple makers don't just need a knowledge of the facts of the word of God; they need to be able to use the word of God to response to modern day issues. Being able to instruct others in implementing the word of God in their own lives is critical at this stage of discipleship.
- F. Fourth, following Jesus' example of making disciples requires us to help others conform the way they think to the truth of the word of God. In a culture where Biblical literacy and knowledge is as low as it has been for generations, this is a big task. We can't assume people know much of anything about God and the Bible. Many people don't have the basics of a Bible-grounded perspective, even though they've been part of the church for a long time. The life of the mind has been dismissed and devalued within the church since the so-called Enlightenment. While the importance of Biblical thinking is making a comeback in the church recently, there is still a long way to go. It is likely we will have to encourage and convince others that thinking from a Biblical perspective is even important. More often than not, people will simply want to be told what to do—to be given direct orders from God—rather than develop a Bible based way of thinking with which to operate in life. Jesus worked hard at helping His disciples think from the perspective of God and used the word of God to develop that type of thinking.

V. Conclusion

- A. Once a person develops an informed understanding of Jesus and they commit themselves to becoming a student of Jesus, they will need begin and continue the process of learning from Jesus. The necessary and primary way to learn from Jesus is to stay connected to His word—not just the words of Jesus in the gospels but the entire Bible.
- B. Jesus regularly and repeatedly brought people's attention back to the word of God to help others understand how God instructs them to live. He cleared up misunderstandings people had about the message and heart of God. He provided new insights and information others could progress in their relationship with God. He deepened His disciples' understanding by drawing on and adding to what people already knew of the Bible. Jesus instructed others toward the end of them adopting and living according to the perspective of God.