

Make Disciples - John 17:6-19

The Relational Way of Jesus

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This is our sixth message in the “*Becoming a Disciple*” series. We are roughly following the book by Greg Ogden called “*Essential Guide to Becoming a Disciple*.” This week our message is called “*Make Disciples – The Relational Way of Jesus*.”

In every one of these messages we start with a core truth and a question to help us get thinking in the right direction.

Here is our core truth today.

Mark 3:14 (NKJV)

14. Then He appointed twelve, that they might... (hold on a minute)

Jesus chose the original 12 Disciples that they might . . .

How would you finish that sentence? That they might

Start the New Testament Church?

Be in charge of the other disciples?

How about - *Spread the Good News?*

Or - *Tell the world about Jesus?*

No – none of that is why Jesus *initially* chose the twelve. But here is *why*...

Mark 3:14 (NKJV)

14 Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him . . .

During his 3 ½ years of ministry on this earth... Jesus spent – by far – *most of his time* with these twelve disciples. That was God’s plan to take the Good News of salvation to the entire world. Jesus would spend (by far) *most of his ministry time* on earth *with twelve* of his followers.

Not most of his time building a Mega church (or hoping to)

Not most of his time administrating the best programs and best events in order to draw the biggest crowds

Not even did Jesus spend most of his time preaching to the crowds.

Jesus had 3 ½ years of ministry time on earth between the Baptism and the Cross. And he (being God and knowing all things) chose to spend (by far) most of his time pouring his life into twelve of his followers.

So, here is our question today.

Looking at the Life of Jesus, HOW are we to go about making disciples?

The easy answer is – *the same way Jesus did!*

Jesus made disciples through *intentional, committed relationships*.

NOT *Thousands* of relationships

NOT *Hundreds* of relationships

NOT even *Dozens* of relationships

Just ONE dozen (12) relationships.

Jesus spent the majority of his ministry time on earth with twelve disciples... why?

Because it was the *only way* to permanently transfer

His METHOD

His MESSAGE

His MISSION . . . INTO their Lives

It's by following Jesus' model that Greg Ogden writes his definition of "making disciples."

Greg Ogden

"Disciples are made through intentional relationships where we walk alongside one another, encouraging, equipping and challenging each other to grow toward maturity in Christ,"

That is exactly what Jesus did with the first twelve disciples. His relationship with them was *very intentional* and they walked alongside one another *every day*. And Jesus *encouraged, equipped and challenged* each of them to grow toward maturity *in him*.

During his earthly ministry, Jesus *impacted* thousands – but he *trained* primarily *only twelve*. Jesus *gave his life* on the cross for the world. But the world would only know him because he primarily poured his life into just *twelve* followers.

Turn over to John 17 and we'll see how Jesus says it himself. We've looked at this "High Priestly Prayer" of Jesus once already – today we'll look at a different section. Again, this is Jesus praying to the father right before his arrest in the Garden.

John 17:6–8 (NLT)

6 ***"I have revealed you (made you known) to the ones you gave me from this world** (referring to the 12). ***They were always yours. You gave them to me, and they have kept your word.****

7 *Now they know that everything I have is a gift from you,*

8 *for **I have passed on to them the message you gave me.** ***They accepted it and know that I came from you, and they believe you sent me.****

Jesus says – to the Father – referring to the twelve disciples

(verse 6) **I have revealed you** (made you known) ***to the ones you gave me . . .***

(verse 8) **I have passed on to them the message you gave me**

That – is making disciples!

Can we say that – in our **OWN Discipling Relationships?**

Lord, I have 'Made you Known' to the ones you gave me and I have passed on to them the message of your Word

This is what *Jesus* says to the Father about those he discipled and this is what *we can* say to the Father about those he has given *us* to disciple.

Continuing in John 17:9.

John 17:9 (NLT)

9 ***"My prayer** (this particular prayer) ***is not for the world, but for those you have given me, because they belong to you.****

Jesus is praying for those God gave him to disciple.

I wonder – do we **FEEL ANY** similar **responsibility** for **those God** has **GIVEN US** to Disciple?

Do we feel a responsibility to God *for us to walk alongside, and encourage, and equip, and challenge them to grow toward maturity in Christ?*

And then, in verse 10, we see the ultimate goal of *all* discipleship.

John 17:10 (NLT)

10 (Jesus says to the Father) All who are mine belong to you, and you have given them to me, so they bring me glory.

The ESV helps clarify what Jesus is saying here.

John 17:10 (ESV)

10 All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them.

The ultimate goal of *all* discipleship is to glorify Jesus in our lives. To *grow* more and more in the *Fruit of the Spirit* and to *crucify* more and more of *our own flesh* so that our lives will more and more *glorify Jesus* and be less and less *focused on ourselves*. And we've got to remember that when our discipleship groups turn into *self-focus* or *complaint sessions*.

If we are not spurring one another on to truly *glorify Jesus* in our lives, then there is *no discipleship* actually occurring.

Next (in verse 11) Jesus prays that his disciples would be *protected by God so that* they will be *as united as God is*.

John 17:11 (NLT)

11 Now I am departing from the world; they are staying in this world, but I am coming to you. Holy Father, you have given me your name; now protect them by the power of your name SO THAT they will be united JUST AS we are.

The words “just as” mean: *In the same way* - or *-to the same extent*

Protect them Father – so that they will be UNITED in the same way and to the same extent – AS WE ARE.

Is there a chance that someone is failing in their discipleship when it comes to teaching Christians that we are to *be one*, that we are to *be united – just as the God-Head is*? I think there might be some Christians around missing that whole message. (Watch out for them).

Let's skip to John 17:13.

John 17:13 (NLT)

13 (still Jesus praying to the Father) “*Now I am coming to you. I told them many things while I was with them in this world so they would be filled with my joy.*”

Do we BELIEVE that?

THAT IF we **GENUINELY** - **Receive God’s Word** **THAT WE** will be **FILLED** – **with HIS JOY?**

And are we encouraging one another with *that* great truth?

And then verse 14. And remember, we’re talking about *how* Jesus taught us to *make disciples*.

John 17:14 (NLT)

14 *I have given them your word . . .* (let’s stop there a minute)

Do you give people (especially people you’re discipling) *God’s Word* or *your opinion*?

Guys, every church I know constantly has people *complaining, criticizing* and *judging* how the church does *this* or *that*. And like every church, we’ve always had that here at varying levels (at times very low levels, praise the Lord). But we have it here pretty bad right now, especially in the *nursery* (so really watch out in there) and like every year, we had a “normal” amount during Vacation Bible School.

But here’s one of the things I love about this church. We have real *spiritually mature* people in this church who will refuse to give people *their opinion* but instead will give them *God’s Word*.

And so, please, if God puts someone in your path that you feel *any* responsibility to help them follow Jesus, when they start talking in a way that you know is *un-Godly* and *un-Biblical* – in love – give them the truth of God’s Word. This is a central part of making disciples.

We must speak the truth of God’s Word. *Not our opinion.*

And if you need to know God’s Word on a certain matter, just call me and I’ll help you find it and then you can share God’s Word with whomever God puts in front of you.

Okay. Now, let’s read all of John 17:14-17.

John 17:14–17 (NLT)

14 I have given them your word. And the world hates them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world.

15 I'm not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one.

16 They do not belong to this world any more than I do.

17 Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth.

(verse 17) *Make them holy (means: 'set apart') by your truth; & teach them your word, which is truth.*

That is how we make disciples!

In tight knit, intentional relationships we teach each other God's Word – which *is truth* and then *by God's truth* we are *set apart for God's use!*

Which is exactly what we see in the next verse.

John 17:18 (NLT)

18 Just as you sent me into the world, I am sending them into the world.

This is us *being set apart – for God's use.*

God's goal for every disciple is that they would be *sent* into *their world* *JUST AS* Jesus was *sent* into *our world*.

Jesus poured *his life* and *his spirit* into twelve. Then – he *sent* them into *their world* and ultimately *that process* brought Jesus into *our world* and then as we *become disciples*, ultimately, we are *sent* (by Jesus) into *our world*.

And prayerfully we go *transformed*
by the *life* of Jesus and
the *Word* of God and
the *fruit* of the Holy Spirit.

Then *we go* and *make other disciples* whether it's in our *home*, at our *work* or at *church*.
We go and make disciples in *our world* that God has *put us in*.

And in our last verse today is the commitment of Jesus to *make that possible*.

John 17:19 (NLT)

19 And I give myself as a holy sacrifice for them so they can be made holy by your truth.

Remember, HOLY (here) means: “*set apart for God’s use.*” And Jesus says “***I give myself as a holy sacrifice, so that they can be (set apart) FOR your USE, and BY your TRUTH***”

Set apart to go and make disciples!

This is exactly what we tried to do this past week at VBS. In five short days, many of us became so connected to the children here that we were able to “*Show them Jesus*” and we were able to “*Teach them his Word.*” We were able to take the beginning steps of discipling them in five short days and honestly, I loved seeing God move in those kids lives so much – that I would easily give up this role for the next six months and go disciple those kids every Sunday in Children’s ministry.

And so, to all of you who poured Jesus into those kids this past week, thank you for making Jesus known to them and teaching them his Word. It was incredible.

And it wasn’t just the kids we were discipling. We were also trying to disciple the adults. And honestly, some of the adults may have had a little harder time with it. But I promise you, in all we do, we are genuinely and honestly and in love trying to make disciples – either introducing children to Jesus or trying to help adults crucify their flesh. I promise you; we are doing all we can to do what Jesus has called us to do.

And we all need more of that in our lives.

We need MORE Real Life

JOINING together – and

SERVING Jesus together

Because THAT is where we Truly LEARN

How to GROW in Spiritual Maturity – and

How to GROW in Christ-Likeness

So, get out there in the real world – with us and get out there *with* the support of a discipleship group and look for the *Fruit of the Spirit* coming out of your life.

Whether it’s in a strenuous week of VBS

Or a strenuous week on the JOB

Or a strenuous week in the HOME

OUT there – in the real world - is where:

You *LEARN* to be *more like Jesus* - and

You *TEST* your true *spiritual maturity*.

I encourage you today, strongly, to start or join a discipleship group and commit to *be transformed* by Jesus by walking through life *with* other Christ-followers.