



CREW LIFE DISCIPLESHIP

LESSON 1

WHY GOD ESTABLISHED THE CHURCH

God's Plan, Our Purpose, His Glory



GROW



FISH



REPEAT

CREW LIFE

Introduction: Welcome to Angler Church



Every journey has a beginning. Some journeys begin with a single conversation, others with an unexpected invitation, and many begin with a simple decision to take one more step. For each of us, our spiritual journey began the moment God started drawing us toward Himself. Whether that happened years ago or only recently, every believer has a story of God's grace reaching into their life.

Welcome to Crew Life.

We are honored that you have chosen to begin this journey with us. Whether you have attended Angler Church for many years or are just beginning to explore what God is doing here, we want you to know that you are valued, loved, and welcomed into this church family.

Crew Life is much more than a class. It is the discipleship culture of Angler Church. It is the way we intentionally grow together as followers of Jesus Christ. Throughout this journey, our desire is not simply to share information but to help each person become a mature disciple of Jesus Christ.

That statement is the heartbeat of everything we will do together.

The goal of Crew Life is to help people become mature disciples of Jesus Christ.

Everything else grows from that single purpose.

Before Jesus ascended into heaven, He gave His followers one final command. He instructed them to go into all the world and make disciples. He did not simply tell them to gather crowds or establish organizations. He called them to invest in people, teaching them to follow Him and obey His Word. That commission remains the mission of the Church today.

At Angler Church, we believe discipleship is not reserved for pastors, ministry leaders, or those who have been living for God for many years. Every believer is called to become a disciple, and every disciple is called to help make disciples. This is not something reserved for a select few. It is the calling of every follower of Jesus Christ.

Because of this, Crew Life is not a program that you complete. It is not something you graduate from or leave behind after a few weeks. Crew Life is a lifelong journey of growing in your relationship with Jesus, learning His Word, serving His Kingdom, and helping others experience the same transformation that He has brought into your own life.

At Angler Church, we often describe that journey with three simple words:

Grow. Fish. Repeat.

We grow in our relationship with God. We become fishers of men by sharing His love and making disciples. Then we repeat the process by helping others grow and follow Christ.

This rhythm continues throughout our lives because discipleship is never finished. As long as we are living, there will always be new opportunities to learn, to serve, and to become more like Jesus.

The name “Angler Church” is more than a creative name. It reflects the invitation Jesus gave to His first disciples when He called ordinary fishermen to follow Him. Jesus said, “Follow ME, and I will make you fishers of men.” Those words remind us that following Jesus always leads us toward His mission. He transforms us so that we can help transform others.

Everything we do at Angler Church flows from that calling.

Our worship services exist to draw people into the presence of God. Our preaching and teaching are designed to help people understand and apply God’s Word. Our prayer gatherings strengthen our relationship with the Lord. Our ministries provide opportunities to serve others. Our fellowship creates meaningful relationships that encourage spiritual growth. Every part of church life is connected to the mission of making mature disciples of Jesus Christ.

As you continue through Crew Life, you will discover what Angler Church believes, why we exist, and how you can become part of what God is doing here. You will learn about our mission, our values, our commitment to biblical truth, and the importance of living a Spirit-led life. More importantly, you will be encouraged to discover the unique purpose God has placed within you and the role you have to play in His Kingdom.

Our hope is that Crew Life becomes more than a learning experience. We pray it becomes a season of spiritual growth that strengthens your faith, deepens your relationship with Christ, and connects you more fully to His Church.

As you begin this journey, we encourage you to come with an open heart. Ask God to teach you through His Word. Be willing to grow in areas where He is calling you forward. Build relationships with those around you. Look for opportunities to serve. Above all, remember that discipleship is not about reaching a destination. It is about faithfully following Jesus every day.

By the end of Crew Life, our prayer is not simply that you know more than you did when you started. Our prayer is that you love Jesus more deeply, trust Him more completely, serve Him more faithfully, and become more committed to helping others follow Him as well.

Welcome to Crew Life! — Welcome to the journey!

Lesson Objective

By the end of this lesson, you will understand that Jesus Christ established His Church to make disciples. You will recognize that Angler Church exists to faithfully continue that mission by helping people become mature disciples of Jesus Christ. You will also begin to see yourself as an active participant in Christ's mission—not simply an attendee of a church, but a disciple called to grow, serve, and help others follow Jesus.

Big Idea

Jesus established His Church to make disciples, and Angler Church exists to faithfully continue that mission.

Focus Scriptures

- Matthew 4:18–22
 - Matthew 16:18
 - Matthew 28:18–20
 - Acts 2:42–47
 - I Corinthians 12:12–27
 - Ephesians 4:11–16
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Lesson 1 — Why God Established the Church...and Why Angler Church Exists

Before we can understand why Angler Church exists, we must first understand why Jesus established the Church. Every local church should find its purpose within Christ's purpose. If we begin with our own vision before understanding His mission, we risk building a church around ourselves rather than around the Kingdom of God.

When many people think about church, they immediately picture a building, a worship service, or a weekly gathering. While those are important expressions of church life, they are not what the Church truly is. According to Scripture, the Church is the redeemed people of God who have been called together through the Gospel and commissioned to continue the ministry of Jesus Christ in the world.

Jesus first revealed His intention to establish the Church in Matthew 16:18 when He declared, [“I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”](#) This statement establishes an important truth that serves as the foundation for everything we believe about the Church. The Church belongs to [Jesus Christ](#). It is His [Church](#), His [mission](#), and His [Kingdom](#).

We do not own it, and we do not define its purpose. Our responsibility is to faithfully participate in what He is already building.

One of the most remarkable observations in the Gospels is that Jesus began preparing for the Church long before He ever announced that He would build it. His first priority was not constructing an organization or establishing a religious movement. Instead, He began calling people into relationship with Himself.

As Jesus walked along the Sea of Galilee, He called ordinary fishermen with an extraordinary invitation: “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” These men were not chosen because of religious education, influence, or social position. They were chosen because they were willing to follow.

Jesus’ invitation reveals a pattern that remains true today. He first called people to follow Him. As they followed, He transformed their lives. Only then did He send them to reach others. This pattern reminds us that before Jesus built His Church, He built [disciples](#). [Healthy](#) churches have always been the result of [healthy](#) disciples.

This understanding helps us see the true mission of the Church. Before Jesus ascended into heaven, He gave what we now call the [Great Commission](#). In Matthew 28:19–20, He commanded His followers to go into all the world, [make disciples](#), baptize them, and teach them to obey everything He had commanded. His instruction went far beyond simply increasing attendance or gathering converts. His desire was to establish a community of disciples who would continue reproducing themselves in every generation.

This distinction is essential. A convert is someone who has responded to the Gospel. A disciple is someone who continues to grow in Christ throughout every season of life. Salvation marks the [beginning](#) of the journey, but discipleship describes the [lifelong](#) process of becoming more like Jesus Christ.

The Book of Acts demonstrates what this looked like in the early Church. Acts 2:42 tells us that believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers. Their lives were centered on learning God’s Word, worshiping together, building relationships, and living in authentic Christian community. As they grew spiritually, the Lord continued adding people to the Church. Growth was the natural result of healthy discipleship.

The Apostle Paul expanded this understanding by describing the Church as the Body of Christ. In 1 Corinthians 12, he teaches that every believer has been placed within the Body according to God’s design. Every member has [value](#), every member has [purpose](#), and every member contributes to the health of the whole.

Likewise, Ephesians 4 explains that Christ has given spiritual leaders to equip believers for the work of ministry until the entire Body grows into [spiritual maturity](#). God’s goal has never been simply attendance. His goal is maturity.

This biblical foundation explains why Angler Church exists. We are not trying to build a church around personalities, programs, or preferences. We desire to be a church that faithfully participates in the mission Jesus gave His Church. Everything we do is centered on helping people encounter Jesus Christ, experience the transforming work of the Holy Spirit, grow in biblical truth, discover the grace God has placed within them, and become mature disciples who help others follow Him.

Our name reflects that mission. Jesus intentionally called fishermen to become “fishers of men.” Their occupation became an illustration of their new purpose. In the same way, Angler Church exists to remind us that every follower of Jesus has been called to participate in His mission. We are not spectators within God’s Kingdom. We are participants in the work Christ continues to accomplish through His Church.

This conviction shapes every ministry within Angler Church. Our worship leads people into the presence of God. Our preaching is centered upon Scripture because God’s Word transforms lives. Our prayer expresses our dependence upon the Holy Spirit. Our fellowship strengthens the Body of Christ. Our ministries provide opportunities for every believer to faithfully steward the grace God has given them.

This is also why Crew Life exists. Crew Life is not simply an eight-week class. Crew Life is a part of the Angler Church [culture](#). It provides an [intentional](#) pathway that helps believers establish [biblical](#) foundations, [deepen](#) their relationship with Christ, [discover](#) their place within the Body of Christ, and [faithfully](#) participate in His mission.

Although these eight lessons provide a starting point, discipleship never truly ends. As long as we follow Jesus, there will always be another step to take, another lesson to learn, and another opportunity to help someone else grow.

For that reason, the defining purpose of Crew Life can be summarized in one statement: The goal of Crew Life is to help people become [mature](#) disciples of Jesus Christ. Everything we do at Angler Church grows from that foundation.

Crew Discussion

1. Matthew 4:18–22

Why do you think Jesus chose ordinary fishermen instead of religious experts? What does His choice teach us about the people God delights in using?

2. Matthew 16:18

Jesus said, “I will build my church.”

Why is it important to remember that the Church belongs to Christ? How should that truth influence the way we view our local church?

3. Matthew 28:18–20

What is the difference between making converts and making disciples? Why do you think Jesus emphasized discipleship?

4. Acts 2:42–47

What practices helped the early Church grow spiritually? Which of those practices are still essential for the Church today?

Fill in Crew Notes

1. The Church belongs to _____. It is His _____,
His _____, and His _____.
2. Before Jesus built His Church, He built _____.
3. _____ churches have always been the result
of _____ disciples.
4. One of the elements of the mission of Angler Church is to
make _____.
5. Before Jesus ascended into heaven, He gave what we now call
the _____.
In Matthew 28:19–20, He commanded His followers to go into all the world,
_____ baptize them, and teach them to obey everything He
had commanded.
6. Salvation marks the _____ of the journey, but discipleship
describes the _____ process of becoming more like Jesus
Christ.
7. Every member has _____, every member has
_____, and every member contributes to the health of the whole.
8. Ephesians 4 explains that Christ has given spiritual leaders to equip believers for
the work of ministry until the entire Body grows into _____.
9. Crew Life is a part of the Angler Church _____.
10. The goal of Crew Life is to help people become _____ disciples
of Jesus Christ.
It provides an _____ pathway that helps believers establish
_____ foundations, _____ their relationship
with Christ, _____ their place within the Body of Christ, and
_____ participate in His mission.

Crew Life Culture

Healthy Churches Are Built One Disciple at a Time

At Angler Church, we believe that healthy churches are not built primarily through bigger buildings, larger crowds, or better programs. They are built by helping people become mature followers of Jesus Christ. As disciples grow spiritually, healthy ministries develop, strong families are strengthened, and communities are impacted by the Gospel.

Final Discussion

How is this perspective different from the way success is often measured in our culture? What would change if every believer focused on becoming a mature disciple rather than simply attending church?

Living the Culture

This week, spend time reading Matthew 4, Matthew 16, Matthew 28, and Acts 2. Ask the Lord to show you where you are in your own discipleship journey. Write down one practical step you can take this week to become a more intentional follower of Jesus, and be prepared to share that step with someone in your Crew next week.

Memory Verse

Matthew 4:19 — “And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”