

"So What?"  
Pastor Dan Erickson  
June 26, 2022

Joe feels he is making some good progress in his spiritual life. After years of inconsistent quiet times, he has been reading his Bible at least 45 minutes every day, and he spends time praying each day as well. No, he has not been going to church, but he has been watching recorded services from three different congregations every week. There are five different preachers he is listening to regularly on their You-tube channels, and there are three Christian books on his nightstand that he is reading right now. Best of all, he seems to have finally conquered the pornography addiction he has struggled with for years. Joe is learning so much and feels good because he is confident he is finally becoming the type of disciple the Lord wants him to be.

What do you think? Is Joe the type of disciple the Lord wants him to be? Some of you are thinking, "Well, no he has not been attending worship services at church." That is true, he probably should, but I don't think this is the main issue. Others are maybe thinking, "He is listening to too many different pastors and teachers. He will get confused. He should just listen to Pastor Dan." No, that is not the problem. Folks, I think Joe is doing some very good things. He is getting a lot of spiritual input into his life. In fact, I know it is good, solid, healthy, input, but that is the problem, it is all input. There are a lot of things going in, but nothing is coming out. His spiritual life revolves solely around himself and seems unconnected to people around him. He is ignoring a basic truth we have been talking about the past few weeks, "You are not a faithful disciple of Jesus, unless you are a disciple maker." In other words, Joe is not the type of disciple the Lord wants him to be, because he is not seeking to make disciples.

Let's do a quick review of what we have covered the past three weeks. Our basic purpose in life, God's will, is that each of us love Him with our entire being and love other people as much as we love ourselves. These are the commandments Jesus spells out in Matthew 22:37-39 and which we sum up as love God, love others. The first step in doing this is trusting in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Unless you have experienced that amazing saving grace you cannot even begin to love God and other people as you should. Once

you do that and, are to any degree, seeking to love God and others you have a desire to fulfill Jesus' great commission and make disciples **Matthew 28:19, 20a Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.**

Jesus tells us, **John 14:15 If you love me, keep my commands.** One of Jesus' most basic commands is "make disciples." If we are not seeking to do that, any profession of love for the Lord is pretty empty. And since Jesus also tells us that He is the only way to heaven, "No one comes to the Father except through me" any profession of love for other people is pretty empty if we are not seeking to help them become disciples of Jesus Christ. Last, week, Pastor Mark reminded us that the apostle Paul not only urges us to be disciple makers but tells us to make disciples who will make other disciples. **2 Timothy 2:2 What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful me, who will be able to teach others also.** We are to not only teach others to be disciples, but we are to train them to be disciple makers. This is how the church grows and God's kingdom expands. The kingdom expanding is what God desires. It is what those who love God desire. It is what those who love other people desire. And it all revolves around making disciples.

Folks, this is what we have talked about the past three Sundays. The question I want to focus on today is, "So what?" What does all this disciple making talk mean for Chisholm Baptist Church? What does it mean for you? What is the next step the Lord wants you to take? Those are questions I want to try and answer this morning, but first let's pause and pray the Lord would help us better understand and apply the truth.

First, we, as a church, want to focus on intentional disciple making. Making disciples is not something new to Chisholm Baptist Church. This church has been about doing this for its entire 116-year history. For example, we just finished five days of one of the most important disciple making events any church can do – Vacation Bible School. We were seeking to help 120 children

become believers in and followers of Jesus Christ. Plus, there were 78 VBS staff who were not only involved in making disciples but were growing in their own faith as well. And we also had the opportunity to share Gospel truth with parents and other family members when they joined us on Friday. We are making disciples, not only through VBS but through many other ministries and events as well. Yet, as the Pastors and Deacons have prayerfully pondered what the Lord wants our church to be have concluded, we need to be more focused on disciple making. We need to be more focused on helping people believe in and follow Jesus Christ. We need to be more *intentional* about that. Yes, disciples are sometime made in informal contexts, where people are just doing life together and that is great. Yet, in the very spiritually challenging world in which we live, it is becoming clear that disciple making is something far too important to just go with the flow. We are swimming up stream in this culture and if we are content to just float along, we will miss out on some wonderful opportunities.

Despite the strong ministry Chisholm Baptist Church has long had in this area there are still many, many people around us, including family members and friends, who are not believers in Jesus. And not only that, many of them don't have a clue as to what that actually means. Even among those who would "label" themselves as Christian, there is often little understanding of the Gospel of grace, and a lot of talk about trying to be a good person. We face a task unfinished right on the Iron Range. Within the church I see a lot of folks that I think are genuine Christians, but who are *really struggling*. Oh, they might smile on Sunday morning, but their souls are wounded. They need to be encouraged and they need to be taught the things that Jesus commanded us. All too often people are developmentally delayed in their spiritual life. We cannot just be okay with that. By God's grace we want to be focused and ore intentional about making disciples, about helping people trust and follow Jesus.

Second, we want you to be a disciple maker. So, what does that mean? What do you need to do? First, make sure you are truly a believer in Jesus Christ. Only those who are born of God, born again, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, are empowered by that Spirit to make disciples. If you are not a

believer in Jesus, or not sure you are trusting in Him for salvation we need to chat real soon.

Second, make sure you realize that God wants you to be a disciple maker. I mentioned this a couple of weeks ago. Jesus did not give the great commission just to the apostles. If you are a believer in Jesus, it is a commission to you. God wants you to help others become believers in Jesus, and He wants you to help other Christian believers grow in their faith and follow Jesus more closely. Now, some of you are thinking, "That is just not me. I am not a pastor like you. I am not even a Sunday School teacher. I don't have the gifts or personality for that." Friends, I hear you. A lot of you are not like me, and that's a good thing. But you can be a disciple maker. A passage in the Bible that illustrates this is **John 1:40-42a One of the two who heard John (the Baptist) speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means Christ). He brought him to Jesus.**

Now, I don't think Simon Peter was the first Pope, like the Roman Catholic Church teaches. The Bible does tell us, however, that Peter was the leader of the 12 Disciples. In fact, Jesus chose him to lead the church in Jerusalem. On that day of Pentecost, he preached a powerful sermon and 3000 people became Christians, they repented and trusted in Jesus. Eventually, he wrote two letters that became books in the Bible bearing his name. But how did he become a follower of Jesus? Through his brother Andrew. We don't read about Andrew preaching any sermons in the New Testament, but we do know that he brought Peter to Jesus. Friends, very few of you are going to be anything like Peter. But everyone of you can be like Andrew. You can introduce your family members and your friends to Jesus. You can help them be disciples, people who believe in and follow the Lord Jesus. You can be a disciple maker. It is God's will that you be a disciple maker.

Third, continue to grow as a disciple. To be an effective disciple maker, you need to be someone who loves the Lord Jesus and finds joy in following Him. I mentioned earlier how it is not enough to fill our minds with Bible and theological truth. Yet, filling our minds with that truth is part of how we keep our souls healthy and nurture our love for the Lord. Regular attendance at worship services,

being consistent in your personal quiet times or devotions, and being part of some type of small group Bible study are all part of being and growing as a disciple.

There is another important part of maintaining spiritual health that we often neglect. That is accountability. These are relationships where we are comfortable sharing our struggles and confessing our sins to each other. Sometimes the accountability is very structured. For example, Joe says, “Dan, here is my login information. Please check my internet history once a week to make sure I am not looking at pornography.” Other times the accountability is more informal where we just have the freedom to point out what might be blind spots to a friend. Joe says, “Dan, I think you should travel to Wisconsin more often to visit your mother. After all she is 89 years old. You don’t know how long you will be able to do that.” Now, Joe’s opinion is not necessarily right, but because Joe and I are accountable to each other, I will at least seriously consider what he says. Accountability is not always something we enjoy, but it can be very important to our spiritual health.

In the past couple of years numerous folks at Chisholm Baptist church have benefitted a great deal from the “Every Man a Warrior” and “Cultivating Holy Beauty” small groups. These are groups of four or five people, specifically geared not only to Bible studies, but also to provide encouragement, support and accountability. Those are important for growing as a disciple and making disciples. If you would like to be part of an “Every Man a Warrior,” that is for guys, or a “Cultivating Holy Beauty” group, that is for gals, just let Pastor Mark or me know. If you have already gone through these studies, I encourage you to prayerfully ponder teaming up with someone and lead a group that the Lord could use to make disciples.

Fourth, identify people you believe the Lord wants you to help trust and follow Jesus. I suggest you make a couple lists. You can do it on paper or in your head if you have a good memory. The first list is people you know, who don’t know Jesus. These are folks you might be able to introduce to Jesus, just like Andrew did with Peter. The second list are people who profess to be Christians but are struggling to follow Jesus. These folks may be here at church, or maybe they don’t go to church

at all. Your desire is to help these people follow Jesus. The names on your lists will be individuals in your circle, your sphere of influence. They might be family members, friend, co-workers, fellow students, neighbors, parents who have kids on the same sports teams as yours are on. Most of us have at least a few names that we can put on these lists.

Then pray the Lord would help you care about these people, that He would give you a burden for their spiritual well-being. Maybe the biggest barrier to disciple making is Christians being so absorbed with their own lives, work, hobbies, vacation, family activities, entertainment, etc. that they don’t even think about the spiritual well-being of the people around them. Again, why love for God and love others is the foundation of making disciples. Just making those lists of people you know who have spiritual needs will help you remember **Philippians 2:4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.** And when you make it a habit of praying for those people on your lists, it will mean you are looking out for their interests.

Fifth, be creative in your efforts to make disciples. Ask the Lord to help you be creative and effective in helping people trust and follow Jesus. Over the years, churches have often tried to develop a one size fits all tool for evangelism and disciple making. For example, Campus Crusade had the four spiritual laws booklet. The idea was that when talking with someone who was not a believer, the best thing to do was just share that booklet with him/her. Maybe that was okay back in the 70’s, but it often doesn’t work now. The booklet begins, “God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life.” In a culture where only about half the people think the God the bible describes even exists, that statement doesn’t really make sense. When you are in a conversation with a non-believer the best thing to do, in most cases, is start with questions. Find out what that person believes or doesn’t believe about God, about Jesus and why he/she thinks that. From there you can prayerfully ponder how you might be used by the Lord to help that person get closer to Jesus.

Now, if your friend or family member is already a believer in Jesus, encouraging or challenging them to grow is often fairly straightforward. It is not always easy, but it is not rocket science.

Talking to people who don't know Jesus can be more difficult. Most of the time it involves more than just inviting that person to church. That is a great thing to do, but many times he/she may be more open to come to your home or meet you for lunch. Now, some of you are thinking, "Pastor Dan, I don't have any idea of what to say if I am talking to someone who is not a believer in Jesus." That's okay. That is part of what the pastors, deacons, and deaconesses in our church are for, why we get paid. Well, only the pastors get paid, but we all would be glad to help you think about how you can share the gospel of Jesus Christ with people around you.

Let me give you a couple of tips this morning: Always remember that even though a lot of your family and friends will say they are not interested in religion or in Christianity, trusting in Jesus Christ provides important things all people ultimately need and desire. The four big ones are meaning and purpose in life, freedom from guilt, an experience of unconditional love, and hope in the face of death. Look for ways the people you know are expressing one of those needs and then start a conversation on that topic. You can talk about how the Lord Jesus has met that need in your life.

Another thing to do is challenge someone to read the Bible. Often, non-believers have not read and know little about the Bible. Challenge them to read it. I think the best place to start is the Gospel of Mark. It is a concise, fast paced summary of the story of Jesus. You say, "How about if you read the Book of Mark for the next couple of weeks, and then let's get together for lunch and you can tell me what you think." Or if they don't seem interested in that, ask them to watch the film "The Chosen," with you. Again, it is not the Bible, but it might be a good way to start a conversation.

Sixth, always be praying. An important part of the great commission that I didn't read earlier is the end of **Matthew 28:20b** **And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age.** Those are Jesus' words right before He leaves this earth. Yet, it is a promise He keeps through His Holy Spirit who never forsakes those trusting in Jesus Christ. Always by praying that the Lord would give you boldness, wisdom, and clarity in any conversation you have as you seek to help people trust and follow Jesus. Always be praying the Lord would work in the hearts and minds of the folks you are

trying to help. Ask Him to soften their hearts, giving them a desire to know God. Ask that He would open their eyes and minds, so they can understand spiritual truth. Or you can pray that God would turn the light on, shine it in their hearts, in Paul's words, **2 Corinthians 4:6b (to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.)**

Seventh, don't waste your life. To some of you all this talk about disciple making just seems a little overwhelming. Maybe you are a busy parent and already have too much in your schedule each week. You cannot imagine adding anything else. Or maybe you just retired and have decided you are just going to enjoy whatever time you have left on this earth. You plan to focus on some hobbies and spending time with your family. Friends, I want to encourage you, no matter what age you are or stage of life you are in, *be a disciple maker.* As Chisholm Baptist Church focuses on making disciples, I urge you to say, "Yes, Pastor Dan, I am in. That is what I want to do." And then have a conversation with one of the pastors or one of the other leaders in church about how you can be involved.

How can I persuade you to do that? Well, I cannot think of any threats and that is okay. But I will tell you this, if you commit yourself to being a disciple makes, again not like Peter, but Like Andrew, you will find it to be the most fulfilling thing you have ever done. If you help a friend or family member, someone you care about, trust and follow Jesus you are giving the best gift you could ever give that person. What he/she will find in Jesus Christ is something worth more than anything or everything else they have. And best of all, if by God's grace you are faithful in seeking to make disciples, you will one day, maybe soon, hear the most magnificent words that anyone has spoken to you. When the Lord Jesus Himself says, "Well done, good and faithful servant."