

## **03 | Multiplying Discipleship Groups**

### Multiplying Churches and Leaders

You'll notice a real focus on groups as we began to talk about discipling, and there's a few reasons for that. One of the big ones is that that's what Jesus modeled for us. He disciplined in groups. In fact, you almost never see a story or an encounter with Jesus where He was just kind of one on one. Almost all of His encounters take place in a group setting. Well, it's not really surprising that in recent studies, in recent years, they found that group learning is one of the most effective ways for people to be taught. Now, why is that? Well, the main thing is that in a group study, a group learning environment, the thing that was communicated or taught, is then rediscussed, rehashed, reviewed, processed from different angles to the point where now not only did people hear it the first time, but they heard it in a sense multiple times and now understand it from different perspectives. So that group learning dynamic is really powerful. In fact, it's considered one of the most effective ways to teach people, in a group. Paul actually refers to this a little bit when he talks to Timothy in second Timothy 2:2. He says this, "And what you've heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." So let me follow that a minute. Paul

says to Timothy what you heard from me among many witnesses, so right there we understand Paul was teaching Timothy, but he wasn't just teaching Timothy. We just sort of expect well, Paul mentored Timothy, I mean, Timothy was his guy. I mean, this was. And Paul says, listen, what you heard from me in the presence of a bunch of other guys. So right there, Paul's teaching Timothy in a group. He says, I want you to be able to take those things and commit them to, he calls them faithful men, plural, who will be able to teach others also. Who will be able to teach others also. Notice Paul is saying, I want you to disciple in these things the way I disciplined you. I'm going to have you turn around and disciple some other people who will be able to then disciple some other people.

See, Paul already understood the process of multiplication. And when we're talking about discipleship groups, we're talking about the best way to disciple people. Now, discipling people is not about the gift of teaching. Again, there's these things that we've heard in church and in scripture and centers. You go, "Well, I don't have that grace. I'm not gifted for that. You know, I'm not really the front of the room kind of a person." That's okay. A discipleship group is not meant to be something where you are the venerated teacher, you're the rabbi, and your wisdom is all that is poured forth, and they just have to sit and listen at your feet. No, in fact, discipling is often about asking questions, listening to how people are processing and

helping them find from the scriptures what the answers to those questions are. In fact, a good discipleship leader doesn't let the group depend on them. You should be able to leave the group and someone else can step up and lead because it's about facilitating discipleship more than it's about trying to be the teacher. Now, for some of us who are graced to teach, it's like, "But I like to teach" and that's fine. There's definitely a place for the teaching. Grace But I want everybody to understand this is one of those things that God called everybody to do, which means everybody can do it. He doesn't call us to do things that are impossible. He asks us to follow Him. Right? We talked about it so that we could be made into fishers of men. We want to help people find the answers, but we want to help them find the answers here.

In fact, let me tell you a little story about something in the disciple making movements, which are called DMM around the world. One of the big ways that is used to disciple people is called a Discovery Bible Study. In fact, we use them too and I'll talk about that a little bit more in a minute. But a discovery Bible study simply gives you a list of passages to turn to. And then we read the passage. We recite the passage like, what did you hear? Did you understand it? And then we discuss the passage with a few questions. One of those questions is, what did you hear that you need to obey? In other words, this is God speaking, what do I do? It's immediate obedience. Immediate, what do I do? And sometimes people go, well, you have to have

Bible studies on specific topics and you need to be able to go through these, you know, certain books and things like that. But just let me share this story with you. This is a story of a gentleman who was in a village. Who, they were reading, and they were just at the beginning stages of this Discovery Bible study. They're just in Genesis reading the foundations of the world. And I said, So what did you receive today? What did you get that you need to obey? And this gentleman says this. He said, Well, this says that my wife and I are both in the image of God. So I must stop beating her. What? No. I mean, really think about it. He just read in Genesis where it said male and female. He created them in the image and likeness of God. He created them. And this man who's in a culture and in a scenario where it's completely acceptable to abuse his wife, because he's opening scripture and receiving from God, he was able to catch something that nobody else in the room caught. Not only that, but we're not talking about some guy who's just got this sensitive heart and like, oh, I need to be nicer to my wife. No, he's saying, like, I'm beating my wife and I've got to stop. Well, don't you have to wait till you get to another passage to get that lesson? It is the power of God to salvation.

This is God breathed. We are so high and mighty in our education and in our learning and in our degrees and in our biblical literacy and languages. And God's saying, just open up My word. In that discipleship group that man had a revelation that day of

something that would change his life and his family's life forever. And how did it happen? Because someone came along and said, you know what, you should be doing better. No, it came because if we read scripture, we need to know how it applies to us and we need to change our lives based on what it says. Every time, every time we open the Word, we apply it to ourselves. And with that kind of expectation, when he opens the Word, he went, I see it. I have to change. It is the power of God to salvation. Discovery Bible studies are just that basic. In other words, I don't need a professional pastor in the room to break down the Greek and Hebrew so that we could learn. I've heard it said before, Scripture is so simple you need someone else to confuse it for you. Unfortunately, there's a lot of people confusing it for us. But when you just read it and expect to receive from it, all Scripture, it says, is given by inspiration of God and is profitable. All Scripture. He goes on to say that the Man of God might be thoroughly equipped for every good work complete. Well, yeah, but you can't be just. You also need... No, no, no. Scripture tells us this is all you need. Now, I'm not saying it's the only thing you'll ever be asked to do. God may call you to get 17 different degrees and teaching in beautiful colleges around the world. That's a wonderful thing. But what you need is found here. And what you find here is to obey God. And if He tells you to do something else, you do it. But it always comes back to His word. Just going to the word.

You know, there's a there's a video that I highly recommend everybody watches, I think it's about 30 minutes. It's found on YouTube. It's called Sheep Among Wolves Volume two, and it's about the church in Iran. I'm going to try and make sure we've got that in the description of this video so you can link to it, but you can search it yourself, Sheep Among Wolves Volume two. And it's simply showing how people are being changed as they reach others, and just using the Word of God. Sometimes we make it so complicated. We make it so complicated and Jesus is saying, Would you just gather a group and begin to open the word? Study together? That man, that example I gave of that man reading Genesis, you know what he also just did? He just opened up a door for accountability. He just told everybody, I need to obey this. And by sharing that with the group he now has people who are saying, how is it going this week doing what God told you to do last week? That's what part of this discipleship group is about. Not only am I saying, Yes, I need to do this, but I have people who are looking at me saying, Did you do it? Oh, we don't like that. You're going to get my business, that's just uncomfortable, and I don't really... But isn't that what we want? How many of us have had years over, years over years? I just wish I could breakthrough. I wish I was going deeper with God. I know I'm supposed to be praying more. Yada, yada, yada, yada, yada. And we never get around to it. And what do we need? We need some brothers and sisters in the Lord who act like our personal trainers at the gym. Now, come

on, one more rep. You've got it in you. Let's do it. That's uncomfortable. It is uncomfortable. But the results you want, the results you really want, that's when they happen. It's simple as that.

You remember, there's a number of time management specialists, leadership gurus who say something like this. And I believe it was Stephen Covey that said this, but I could be quoting that wrong. He said, Begin with the end in mind. Another person said, Start how you want to finish. If we're going to take people into discipleship through these discipleship groups that are going to multiply into discipleship groups, we've got to start with, what needs to be in the DNA, in the seed? Right? The seed whose seed is in itself. What needs to be absolute in there? And I want to give you three things that I believe need to be in every discipleship group. Again, if you follow the outline of the Jesus Disciple material, this is all in there. But I want you to understand not just how to follow materials, but understand what we're talking about here. And the first one is expect obedience from the start. As we talked about before, obedience is the foundation. If we don't immediately ask people how they could change their lives, how they would respond to these words, then we are literally starting the process that we've seen throughout many Western churches, which is just I come and sit in a theater approach to church and I watch somebody else teach and I go, That was good. And I walk away. But when we sit in a house, church or in a

discipleship group, we're facing each other and we're saying, How will I be changed by this? Which means next week we're going to ask, how did you do with that? Just like I was talking about before, instead of having lessons on prayer and books on prayer and seminars on prayer, but not praying, when we read a scripture about prayer and we say, I've got to make more time in my schedule for prayer, that next week when we come together and they say, How did you do this week obeying what God told you to do? I'm right there saying I tried, but I didn't. Okay. Someone saying, well, what do you think would be helpful? Right. We're supporting one another. And it's not just me, it's all of us. We're supporting each other to be the men and women of God that we're called to be. What a beautiful thing. You know, if you're starting a discipleship group with people who don't really know Jesus, sometimes just starting and saying something like, If this is God, what would that mean for your life? Which allows you to then transition down the road and eventually get to the point where you can say, Since this is God, what does this mean for your life? As you become a house church, as your discipleship group grows. So the first thing is expect obedience. That has to be the foundation.

Second is that multiplication has to be a part of everything we're doing. In other words, we're saying, Who could you share that with this week? When you learned that lesson from Scripture. Who could you share that lesson with this week that would help them as



well? How can you take this and bring it to somebody else? This is multiplication, obedience and multiplication. I had some people in our house church who, man, they were just on fire to help people. They started realizing they needed to disciple others, family members who didn't really know God. They had a religious experience, maybe went to some kind of church in the past, but they didn't really know Jesus. So what did they do? They decided to start a house church. Really, they were needing to start a discipleship group, that's what they were really starting. But they called it a house church initially because that's what they knew. And they started this up and they're getting it going and they're helping people walk through the journey of learning from Jesus. And then what comes along is another family member who had been far from God, who opens up their heart and says, Yeah, I'm interested, I need to know more, I need to do something. And they said, Okay, well, we've got this thing on this day of the week, and they said, I can't make that days. They said okay, we're starting another one. Here is a family with multiple children in school. They both work full time. They're both very busy people. And yet because of the sake of the gospel and people receiving from Jesus, they're starting additional groups out of their own home on top of the house church that they attend. Why? Because people need to know. They need to be disabled. So they're starting groups so that people can learn together. And the goal of that group, that group, that discipleship group, if they're

people who are what we would call pre believers, you know, some people say unbelievers, I would say pre believers. Right? People who are interested, they're open. And you're walking that journey with like a discovery Bible study. Eventually you'll be able to take them into some of the Be Steps and the Seven Commands of Jesus, which are more for the the person who's a first time believer, initially understanding salvation. And then once they go through those steps, they're now ready to walk into becoming a house church and becoming as believers, stirring one another up to love and good works, and following the commands of Jesus together and encouraging one another. It's the process and that's what you want to do is take them through expecting obedience, making sure multiplication is a part of everything we talk about. How are you going to do this today and how can you share this, who can you share this with?

And then finally, the third thing is you got to train them to seek God and look to His Word. Man, we have a lot of answers because a lot of us have been in church for many years. We've read the Bible for many years, and it's just so easy to give people answers. But sometimes what people really need to know is that they can find the answers. So when people ask me questions like, well, hey, Tammy, what about this? What do you think about that? And if it's really a journey they're on, I might say, you know what? I would recommend that you read the first few chapters in John this week, why don't you

read those and see if any of that sticks out to you? And let's talk next week about what that is meaning to you and the journey you're on. I might say someone is dealing with issues with their words and how they get frustrated and how they speak to their family members, I might say, you know what, why don't you take some time in James this week and then come back to me and tell me what you got from the Lord. What am I doing? Well, I can tell them, I can point it out to them to say, this is how God changed me. I had a problem with my tongue and I needed to deal with it, so I was in James and let me show you this verse and this verse. But you know what happens when Jesus shows them? It's something that they received directly from the King. And man, does that make a difference. Not only that, but next time, when you're not available, they know they know where to go to. They know the answers are here, because it is the power of God. So how do you start a discipleship group? How are you going to get one started? Well, I'm going to tell you the same thing we talked about last week. It's always our last time. Start with prayer. Start with prayer. Ask the Lord to soften hearts. Ask the Lord for direction on who to reach out to. Who to begin to have conversations with. Even strategies on how to reach people. Sometimes there's just an open door, a place where you can be a support to someone that He wants you to step in. And it's actually an open door to bring the gospel. Now, I'm not talking about being manipulative and being nice to people just so that you can share the gospel with

them. Hopefully that would not even cross your mind, that you would just be kind and loving and supportive just to show the love of Jesus. But knowing that as we do those things, God is going to open doors. So pray.

Second, consider your what I would call your natural network. The people you know. That's your coworkers, your classmates, your friends and your family, the people that you already have interaction with. Consider for a minute those people, as you've maybe already done and written down the list that you know and you're praying over those people. Consider if there's anybody that you feel like, man, Lord, is there anyone here who's ready? Is there anyone Lord that You'd ask me to reach out to? Maybe to start a discovery Bible study with. Maybe they're ready to hear your story. And that's the third thing is just to ask. Simply seeing if someone is open to a spiritual discussion, sometimes it's asking something like, you know, can I pray with you about anything? Or maybe it's a specific area you see they're struggling with, saying, Hey, could I pray with you about that? Can I help you? Asking a question, provoking a conversation. Often that's the only door you need to then be able to share your story about how God has rescued you, how God has changed you, and hopefully be able to just right there share the gospel with them. And then you can begin the process of a discipleship group like through the Be Steps or the Seven Commands of Jesus. But if they're not ready for that yet, they're just there open. They're willing to listen, but

they're not ready to make a commitment, start a Siscovey Bible Study. All these resources are on our app and on the website. But then finally make a time, make a commitment, and just remember some of these things don't have to happen just weekly. Now, I say that because for most of us, our schedules are busy, we're full. But if someone's hungry you don't got to wait another week before you come together with them again. I don't know why I just said that was such terrible grammar. But you don't have to wait another week to to get together with them again. You can do it every three days. You can do it in the afternoon, one day in the evening, the next. Listen, if people are hungry, we want to grab hold of that because God is working on them right now. The spirit of God is wooing them. Please, please, please hear this from me right now. You cannot convince somebody into heaven. That is not your calling. That is not your grace. That is not your direction from heaven. That you have to wrench someone's arm so that they receive Jesus. Listen, the only way people are drawn into the kingdom is by the Spirit of God, which is why everything must start with prayer. But once you pray and you ask the Lord for wisdom, follow that through and know that the Lord will make the way the Lord will set that up, but if people are ready, they're hungry, they're responding. Sometimes your meeting on a Thursday night and you say, Hey, do you want to meet Saturday? Do you have time Saturday? You can meet two days later and continue to go through Scripture. Do you have a few friends we could gather together?

And that's the thing when you invite, don't just invite one person. We started this talking about groups and that's the point. Ask them, do you have some friends or family you could invite on Saturday, we could begin to go through the scriptures with a few of your friends, few of your family, see who's available, who the Lord might bring. I know some people. They've gone a week or two and one person comes and two weeks later they invite two more people. Suddenly they've got a pretty big discipleship group. With the goal of that discipleship group, now we believe that they will all be saved and all be able to start a house church and be a community for one another. This is what we're going after here, guys. We're going after people being changed, people's lives genuinely being committed to Jesus, people even stirring one another up. And yes, sometimes you can have naysayers in a group, and yes, sometimes people are going to say, Well, I don't know about that, but we want to help people go through the process so that they can learn and receive and be changed and not only be disciples, but be disciple makers. That those people in that group can begin to actually start other groups because they see the power of coming to the Word of God and receiving it for themselves.

Can I pray for you? Lord, I pray that every person under the sound of my voice right now would receive from You the commission to go and make disciples, that we would share with people how to obey Jesus, how to receive from

His Word, how to be changed by Your goodness, by Your power, Lord God. And that we would not be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ because it is the power of God to salvation. I thank You, Lord, for just a renewed vigor in our hearts to take people to the Word, to know their God, to be set free, to be empowered, and to be strengthened by You, Lord God. Change us, oh, Lord. Change us that we might be the disciple makers and church planters that You've called us to be, in Jesus' name, amen. Amen.