

XXIII. L.E.A.D. in Biblical Perspective
Lifestyle of Evangelism and Discipleship
“Discipleship 101 – Part 2”
Matthew 28:16–20
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This is our second time in this text and we’ll be doing one more study from this text. We will be looking at two passages of Scripture in this study. I do have a couple of books I’d like to recommend for your further study on discipleship which are Robert E. Coleman’s book The Master Plan of Discipleship and Walter Henrichsen’s book Disciples are Made Not Born. I’ll be quoting some from this book in the next study. Now let’s look at our text for this study which is very familiar and unfathomable text of God’s Word. It is called the Great Commission but for many today is a great omission but we don’t want that to be true of us so let’s look at it.

Matthew 28:16–20 says [16] *Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. [17] And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. [18] And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. [19] 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, [20] teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always (literally all of the days), to the end of the age.”*

The grass withers, the flower fades, God’s Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

I have the privilege to do a 5-minute devotional called Fresh Bread and a 10-minute podcast called Today in Perspective and in the opening it says ‘looking at the issues of the day from a Christian world and life view with Gospel solutions’ therefore some of my time is looking at the events of today continually trying to look at it through the lens of Scripture and then how the Gospel would bring us to a solution. These are on our website and played on a number of radio stations around the nation so I’m constantly reading things.

It’s not hard to get to a verdict. The verdict is our culture is clearly going downhill rapidly and there are multiple issues that are before us. People want it desperately to be dealt with and how can this downward spiral be dealt with? The culture is made up of people from continents and the Gospel came to those continents and liberated our ancestors from paganism with its sexual anarchy, marital anarchy, familial anarchy, the death spiral of false religion and now we are moving back into a neopagan society. The bad thing is instead of being in that situation and being rescued from it we now as a culture are saying ‘no’ to that and going back to calling what is evil good and good evil. How great is the darkness when we do that!

So what’s the answer and how do we deal with it? My son gave the best Reeder family Christmas gift this past Christmas. My wife as our kids were growing was the videographer and we had this stack of tapes. My son got a hold of them and now we have our own YouTube channel filled with these videos that we start watching this past Christmas. One of those videos showed the park I played football, baseball and basketball on growing up. The playing fields at this park were in a valley surrounded by these hills that I also used to play on when I went to this park. I would ride bikes on those hills. I would run down those hills at break-neck speed. When it snowed, which wasn’t often, we would take sleds and garbage can lids and slide down those hills.

Have you ever gone down a hill on a bike or sled or even run down a hill? There are five things that are going to happen when you go downhill. One is that momentum is going to be gained where you will go faster and faster as you go down the hill. Secondly, you can't change direction. Thirdly, you can't stop. In fact, you go faster and faster. Fourthly, on the way down there is a nagging reality coming to your consciousness that this is not going to end well. Your only hope is Divine intervention. We say 'God, can somebody stop this? Can I get turned around?' I'm going to take that and apply it to our study today.

Our culture is in a death spiral, going downhill. We have some desperate needs – i.e. the sanctity of life, marriage, sexuality within marriage, the sanctity of gender where God made us male and female, manhood and womanhood. We are in a revolutionary movement of anarchy and it's gaining momentum. It can't reverse itself or change directions and it's not going to end well. You can read the landscape of history and know it's not going to end well unless there is Divine intervention.

God has set up a mechanism of Divine intervention. It's a message called the Gospel and it's a mission that has been given to the church. The only hope to reverse the direction, stop the momentum and not end disastrously, is for the church to stay on mission, on message and in ministry. But what we have to guard against the things we want to see changed, we can't make those our mission and our message. It's when we are on message and on mission that the church becomes salt and light. To be salt is to eradicate the putridness, destruction and consequences of sin and light to shine into the darkness. We want to see racism eradicated and oppression removed. We want to see sanity returned to legislative bodies. There are all kinds of things we want to see but those things cannot become our mission.

Whatever becomes your mission as a church will then modify the message in the next generation. If our objective becomes everyone's self-esteem then soon we'll modify the Gospel into a therapy gospel or if we think success defined by the world is crucial then the Gospel message will be modified into the blasphemy of a prosperity gospel. Praise God that He allowed an expanded number to our membership and to a profession of faith this past year yet I'm satisfied with it and I know you aren't either, but if the objective of Briarwood becomes church growth (statistical growth), it will just be a matter of time before we modify the message to get numbers and even pervert worship to that which is pleasing to God to that which entertains the saints. You have to keep on message to stay on mission.

I realize that liberalism in theology can detract from the message over a period of time but normally the way churches leave the message is by losing the mission and what is treacherous is that good consequences of being on mission become the mission then we also have a problem. When we stay on mission those blessed consequences will make for policies changing, Hollywood Blvd, Market Street, Main Street, Schoolhouse lane, Capitol Hill etc will all change. Those things change when we are on mission and on message but if the change of those things become our mission then it's a matter of time before we modify the message and we lose our effectiveness.

Our message is designed for our mission. Our mission is enhanced to stay on message and to stay on message we have to stay on mission. What is our mission? It is very simply but profound, church, for it is to go make disciples of all the nations. When you go and make disciples people's lives, people's marriages, people's families, people's neighborhoods, people's cities all change and the spheres of society get changed, but those are the consequences and not the mission. The mission is Gospel evangelism and discipleship. Do we speak to those issues? Yes, speak clearly to the stupidity of racism, oppression and that success is found in money in

your bank account and to all of that. But you speak to these things through Gospel evangelism and discipleship from the church of Jesus Christ. When we do that we start sending people into all those areas of life as salt and light.

So a year ago we took on the theme of Lifestyle of Evangelism and Discipleship (L.E.A.D.). We focused on evangelism and called it each one reach one. I said let's ask God for five E's where everyone (is) evangelizing everybody everywhere every day. It that we all know how to and are committed to sharing Christ with other people verbally. I have never yet prayed with someone to accept Christ where I was the first one they heard this from. Somebody had planted, someone had watered, someone had weeded and somebody had cultivated because we're all bringing this Good News message everywhere we go to everyone we meet in every sphere of society every day of our life. Nobody is going to heaven because they admire my life. My life can assist but people are saved by faith in Christ and faith comes by hearing the Word of Christ. That's why we have training/classes to help people in knowing how to share their faith.

Secondly, when Jesus evangelized He did so for the purpose of discipleship as He said 'Come and follow Me.' So this year our focus is on discipleship where each one be one and make one. When you start making one they are usually done in small groups so you will make more than one. This is life on life, life to life and life that brings forth lives. How do we do this? I want to come basically to the Great Commission. This is found in all four of the Gospels plus Acts 1. Jesus redundantly repeated the Great Commission. He modeled the Great Commission. Jesus gives us His Spirit so that we can accomplish this impossible mission. The most foundational of it for me is found in this Matthew 28 text.

I want to sum up what we have studied so far on the Great Commission. The command here is not go but to make disciples. In the text He tells us the four things we're supposed to do. We make disciples by going which is referring to evangelism. We don't wait for them to come to us. Most likely those you talk with have already heard this message from someone else but every once in a while you don't go 'fishing' but the fish come up and says 'hook me in'. Most of the time you are going. You have all these places to go fishing, like your classroom, your team, your neighborhood, your office, etc. where God has called you to go with the Gospel of Jesus Christ in personal evangelism.

When people respond, now you're moving into discipleship proper. The first thing you do is to lead them into the body of Christ – baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. What is the one word in your Bible that is used to describe those who have been converted to Christ? The word we use is the word Christian. That word is actually only used three times in the Bible and two times it's used negatively. The positive is used after the believers were evangelized and discipled. We use the word Christian prescriptively to declare ourselves but the origin of the word was descriptive for it was what the world called a believer because of what discipleship had done to them. They had begun to love what Jesus loved and lived the way Jesus lived, not to be saved but because of their love for the Savior. Peter uses the positive when he tells us to suffer as a Christian. The word that is used more than any other to describe a believer is the word disciple. They were added to the number of the disciples.

So how do you get to be a disciple? A disciple was discipled to go to you. That is going and then you were brought into (added) the number of the disciples as you were baptized and enfolded into the church. When you lead someone to Christ part of your active discipleship is to lead them into the body of Christ because they need more than you and your organization. They need the sacraments, preaching, fellowship, communion of the saints and another larger group of people from which they can find other disciples in their life because all the gifts aren't in us, the

discipler. They need the encouragement of the various things they will find in the body of Christ.

Once they are enfolded into the body of Christ then you start equipping them. You do this by teaching them to observe all that Christ has commanded us – primary doctrine, secondary doctrine, tertiary doctrine. II Timothy 3:16–17 says *[16] All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, [17] that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.* They are not only taught from small groups, but from the pulpit, in worship, in fellowship and in the communion of the saints. That is all coming into their life. They are being equipped.

Fourthly, is worship. The Disciples had been discipled by Jesus for three years and when they saw Him they worshipped Him. First base is going, evangelism. Second base is enfolding them, baptizing. Third base is teaching, equipping and you know you have a home run when people who fell short of the glory of God now rejoice in giving glory to God. They become worshippers to glory and praise of God in the gathered assembly of God's people.

Now I'd like to give you a brief walk through of a case study of how they did this. Here is what Jesus told them concerning the Great Commission in Luke 24:45–49, *[45] Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, [46] and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, [47] and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. [48] You are witnesses of these things. [49] And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."* Basically He didn't want them to go out until the Spirit came upon them.

Then the Bible gives us in the book of Acts the narrative of the first 33 years of the body of Christ. Luke gives us the 33 years of Christ in His Incarnate body then we see the first 33 years of His indwelt body, His church in Acts. Acts 1 through 8 is His work in Jerusalem. Acts 9 through 12 is the Great Commission at work in Judea and Samaria. Acts 13 through 28 is the Great Commission at work in the world and they say that these people are shaking the world. Why? It is because they were on mission and on message.

Do you remember all the announcements made about the birth Christ from the shepherds, wise men and angels? None of them said He would bring regime change in Rome. The announcement was that He would save His people from their sins and in four centuries watch what that does to Rome – consequence, not the mission. Watch what it did to eradicate chattel slavery. When Jesus was born it was likely that 60 percent of the population were in chattel slavery. Less than 300 years later it had been eradicated from the bottom up, top down. It is amazing what the Gospel does when God's people speak to all the issues of the day with a Christian world and life view but transformation comes with making disciples.

I want to look at Acts 2 which is the Great Commission in summary form at work in Jerusalem. The Holy Spirit has fallen upon them and empowered them in this season of Pentecost. In this text we will see the four things that Jesus wants us to do from the Great Commission – going, baptizing, teaching, and worshiping. Acts 2:37–47 says *[37] Now when they heard this (the Gospel message) they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" [38] And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. [39] For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." [40] And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this*

crooked generation.” [41] So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

[42] And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. [43] And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. [44] And all who believed were together and had all things in common. [45] And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. [46] And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, [47] praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

How did they know they needed to be saved when they asked the question ‘Brothers, what shall we do?’ It was because those in the Upper Room who were filled with the Spirit went out from there – they were going. They didn’t wait for people around Jerusalem to find them in the Upper Room. The 120 went out from that room to proclaim the Gospel. Then they go from 120 to 3,000 and that’s probably just counting the men.

Notice how they were added. They were added because the Disciples were going with the Gospel and when people respond they were baptized under the authority of Jesus in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit into the body of Christ. What does Peter do? Accordingly to Acts 2:40 he keeps teaching. He is going to teach them to observe all that Jesus commands as he starts with the basics and the people devoted themselves to the Apostles’ teaching. In other words, they equipped them. We are teaching people that their lives would change. They not only were going, baptizing but they were teaching them in the fellowship, the breaking of bread and the prayers. It was intentional. It says ‘day by day’ which is their lifestyle. Everyday people were being added into the Kingdom of God. Each who were added were being equipped, added and drawn into worship.

It says they would gather on temple mount, worshipping and then go house to house, worshipping, opening up their homes. This all multiplied as those that were being added begin to go out day by day sharing the Gospel. Here we see this addition and multiplication taking place because the church was on message and on mission so therefore it engaged in the ministries – evangelism, fellowship, worship, discipling. Jerusalem is getting so turned upside down that the government doesn’t change but the government wants to come and change them. Many will start getting arrested and even persecution against them is going to come, but they are on mission, on message and in ministry. Then it will go to Judea, Samaria and the uttermost parts of the world.

When I look at this case study there are a couple of things about discipleship that I want you to walk away with. These are lifestyle discipleship duets and they are your takeaways for this study. I have sung in a duet once in my life. When I was a youth pastor at a small Methodist church that poor old church needed some singers. They recruited my wife who can sing and then one day the choir director suggested that we do a duet and said ‘the kids would love it.’ So we did the duet and afterward we met with the choir director and I said ‘How’d we do?’ She said ‘Well, if ya’ll do this again, could you sing a little lower and softer?’ That was her way to tell me that I had just sung my last duet but these takeaways are good duets here. There are five of them from this text as a church lives out the mission and with the message in the ministry of discipleship.

The first one is there is a structure duet and that is there is large group/small group duet. Both of these groups contribute to discipleship. The large group would gather for worship on the

temple mount. The large group has the preaching of the Word, the hearing of the Word, the singing of the Word, the praying of the Word and the fellowship of sharing the Word with each other. They also had a small group dynamic because it says they house to house day by day. We know at least 3,000 people are in this church and that's probably just counting the men so this church is probably 8,000 to 13,000 in size. I'm sure there was not a house big enough to house that many people so in other words Apostles did ministry the way Jesus taught. There were 70, 12, then 3 and Paul will do the same thing. When Paul went to Ephesus he says 'I was with you house to house.' So there is also this small group discipleship that is taking place. A discipling church has both small groups and large groups in its structure.

Secondly, there are two dynamics that will be seen in a discipling church and that is discipleship is informational and relational. It's teaching and observing. We are looking for life change. There are two ways that you change and you need both of them and that is through instruction and imitation. We are born imitators. All mothers who have children will teach their children a foreign language and most weren't trained to do so. When I took foreign languages in school I had vocabulary cards but you weren't born with a set of vocabulary cards. The reason they can teach is the uniqueness of a mother's love and the second is we're born imitators.

I have done what my wife has said to do in the process and only intervened one time and that was when my last granddaughter was born. I was absolutely determined that the first words out of her mouth were going to be 'pa-paw.' So the day she was born I held her and looked at her and said 'pa-paw.' I'm convinced I watched her lips form that day. The world knows we're born imitators because that's why they keep putting celebrity pages in front of you every day. The world wants you to imitate people who live off the culture and off of you. I want you to be someone who understands the relational and informational dynamic and you can do that with two skill sets.

The third duet are skills of modelling and mentoring. When I started discipling I took people through seven books but I realized that their lives weren't really developing. Discipleship isn't just where people catalogue good theology (informational) for you want life change and that means teaching them to observe all that Christ has commanded. Therefore people not only learn by information but by relationships – life on life. That's why small groups are so important. Sometimes for a season or a reason you need one on one discipleship but I actually think a disciple is better disciplined in a small group because of the horizontal relationships with the other 7 or 8 others in the group they are being disciplined with for that's contributing as well. To be relational I need to model and then mentor.

Here are some of the mistakes I made and hopefully you can learn from my mistakes. I would do informational relationships, wrong! You need both informational and relational. Another mistake was that I would do informational but then I do the relational by saying 'now go with me.' I think it's the other way around. Take them with you, let them see it and then teach them. Luke wrote the Gospel of Luke and Acts. Luke was his first volume. Now look at what he says in Acts 1:1, *[1] In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach.*

Notice the order Luke puts this in – do and teach. We believe in Biblical inherency and Biblical inspiration and that means not only every word but the order of those words. Jesus would evangelize and teach them. He would pray and the Disciples would say 'Lord, teach us to pray.' That is why Jesus would tell them 'Remember what you have seen and heard from Me.' The book of Acts is what Jesus continues to do and teach through you. We are to model then mentor.

The fourth takeaway is the objective through the disciples and the disciplers. Every one of you need to be disciplined. Every one of you need to be discipling. You need to be discipling either in the context of the large group or the small group for not all of us are gifted as small group disciple makers but all of us need to be involved in discipling. Let me try to illustrate it this way. Should all of us worship in spirit and in truth? Yes but some are gifted in worship. Should all of us pray? Yes, but some are gifted in prayer. I'm grateful that all pray but when something comes up there are some that I go to immediately. Should all of us evangelize? Yes, but some are gifted to evangelize. My uncle Edgar could evangelize anywhere and anyone. If I had gone up to those people and said what he said I would have gotten punched in the nose but he managed to lead them to Jesus. Some are very gifted but we all need to be cultivating and sharing.

The same thing goes for discipleship. Parents, you are discipling and I don't think parenting is anything more than discipleship. You are going to your children with the Gospel. You are enfolding them into the body of Christ. You are equipping them with the Word of God. You are then teaching them a life of worship, instead of a life of self-absorption. The same thing is true not only in family but in the body of Christ.

II Timothy 2:1–2 says *[1] You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, [2] and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.* Who disciplined Timothy? Paul did but don't forget the church, where it says 'in the presence of many witnesses.' Paul didn't isolate him. Timothy was a churchman and it happened in the context of church.

It also happened in the context of family. Paul says in II Timothy 3:14–15, *[14] But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it [15] and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.* Who else disciplined Timothy? Paul says in II Timothy 1:5 *[5] I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.* Here is the full orb of discipleship – in the family, the family of God as well as the small group, life on life. We all need to participate in discipling and we all need to be disciplined in the large and small groups with models and mentors with information and relationships.

This leads to the fifth takeaway and that is results by salvation and transformation where peoples' lives are changed. I want our culture to change but I don't think the objective of Briarwood is to simply generate people who know politics, business or whatever. We need to make disciples of Christ who bring the maturity of the Gospel in their life to their vocation and then you begin to see these things change around you. Yes we need to speak to these issues but do you want to see change and the downhill stop? Divine intervention is for church to stay on mission – make disciples, to stay on message with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and that's what produce profundity from that simplicity.

We fought a war to get rid of slavery but if the church had done its job I don't think we would have had to. Let me tell you why. Where did slavery come from here? It came from England and they got rid of it without a war. How? A slaver got converted and disciplined and not only that he got called into ministry. His name was John Newton. He is the one who wrote Amazing Grace, with a keyboard style of the African musical scale. In his church there was a man in his congregation who God called into politics and John Newton disciplined him. His name was William Wilberforce. It took 40 plus years but slavery was eradicated. Child labor laws

were changed. Oppression began to cease because of a church led by a pastor filled with people, in a small group and a large group.

The last time I was in London I walked all over that city to finally find that church of John Newton's. I looked at the pulpit where Newton preached and sat where I think William Wilberforce sat and I tried to imagine the large group and the small group that kept taking place. Every time Newton was ready to leave due to his Crohn's disease and his discouragement, he was in the body of Christ being disciplined and look what happened in a nation because a church stayed on message on mission in ministry. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You so much for the time to be together in Your Word today. I'm so thankful to You God for it emotionally overwhelms me for the privilege to serve these people. God we want to excel still more, not to us O Lord, but to Thine own Name give glory and honor. God, there is no place we want to do this more than to stay on mission because when we're on mission now the church will engage in the ministry of evangelism – enfolding. The church will engage in fellowship, in worship, in discipling and being disciplined. Please O God do that in our lives and then among Your people. Allow us not to be spectators as critics in the stands but to get in the game, not be posers but participants and help us O God to give You all the glory. Today you have heard that Jesus came to save us from our sins and if you have never come to that Savior and want to pray with someone please call us at (205 776-5200 and we will confidentially and personally pray with you. If today you have an issue in your life and want someone to pray with you please call us and we'll be happy to pray with you confidentially and personally. This is your invitation for God's people are here for you. Your Savior is ready to work to bring you to Himself or to help you grow through whatever you're facing. Jesus, we pray this in Your Name, praise God, Amen.

Power Point

EVANGELISM

“Each One Reach One”

Everyone Evangelizing Everybody Everywhere Everyday

DISCIPLESHIP

Each One Be One

Life on Life–Life to Life–Life on Lives

THE GREAT COMMISSION – MAKE DISCIPLES

- going...Evangelism
- baptizing...Enfolding
- teaching...Equipping
- worshipping...Exaltation

LIFE TAKEAWAYS

BIBLICAL DISCIPLESHIP DUETS

1. STRUCTURE – *Large Group/Small Group*
2. DYNAMICS – *Informational/Relational*
3. SKILLS – *Model/Mentor*

4. OBJECTIVE – *Discipled/Disciplers*
5. RESULT – *Salvation/Transformation*