

Why do you want to make disciples?

- As followers of Jesus Christ, we should be focused on making disciples. But if we don't do it with the right motives, we are wasting our time.
- God cares more about the condition and motives of our heart than He does about our outward appearance and religious activities.
- If God cared only about religious activities, then the Pharisees would have been heroes of the faith.
- The Pharisees were continuously engaged in ministry, vigorously pursuing an outward demonstration of "godliness", yet they neglected "justice and the love of God". (Luke 11:37-54)

Matthew 15:8-9 // "This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; 9 in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."

Matthew 23:27-28 // "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness. 28 So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

- The Pharisees devoted their whole lives to religious activity, yet Jesus came along and declared that it was all in vain !

1 Samuel 16:7 // But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart."

- This is a very important theme that runs throughout all Scripture.

1. Take a moment to examine your heart. In all honesty, why do you want to make disciples? Do you struggle with wanting your actions to be noticed by others

Teaching Is Dangerous

Q: Ask yourself again: Why do you want to make disciples?

- **The obedient:** The only reason you are still working through this material is because Jesus commands you to make disciples, and you don't want to be disobedient.
- **The reluctant:** You're not sure if you have much to offer, but you know you should let God use you however He desires.
 - For those of you who are just being obedient or reluctant, remember that God wants you to minister out of joy, not mere obligation.

- God wants us to enjoy the privilege and pleasure of ministering to others. He wants us to be cheerful when we give (2 Cor. 9:7), and He wants us to lead others willingly and eagerly.

1 Peter 5:2 // shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly;

- **The leader:** You've always seen yourself as a leader. You have a message that the church needs to hear, and you're ready to teach anyone who will listen. You don't need motivation; you just want to be better equipped.

- For those who are eager to lead, remember that God wants us to be cautious as we guide God's people into godly living.
- The Bible takes the role of a teacher very seriously, and so should we.

James 3:1 // Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.

Blessing or Cursing

- James gave us a terrifying warning about the power of the tongue.
- James 3:1-12 says the tongue is untamable, capable of diverting the direction of our lives, "producing deadly poison", "a world of unrighteousness", "setting on fire the entire course of life" and being "set on fire by hell"!
- Examine your heart, if you find even a trace of desire for the glory and prestige that comes through teaching and leading other people, take some time to let James' warnings sink in.
- Think about what your tongue is capable of, you could make a huge impact for the kingdom of God or you could lead people horribly astray.

Matthew 12:34 // You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

2. Read James 3:1–12 and meditate on James's warning. How do these powerful words affect you? How might you need to adjust your approach to making disciples?

Love Comes First

- Paul said that gaining knowledge and power, even sacrificing our own bodies, is completely worthless apart from love:

1 Corinthians 13:1-3 // If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

- A loveless ministry is serious: “I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal ... I am nothing ... I gain nothing.”

Q: Are you the type of person who would teach someone without loving them?

- Most of us have to work hard to keep love at the forefront.

- Every act of ministry and leadership must be fueled by love.

Q: What do you think and feel when you are in front a group of people?

Q: Are you overly aware of the ones who are wealthy, attractive, or have something they can offer you?

- A sure sign of a loveless heart is seeing people as a means to your own ends—they listen to you, give you affirmation when you want it, stay out of your way when you don't, etc.

- Loveless teaching is bound to be sterile, unfruitful, annoying and irrelevant.

- We should look for ways to love and opportunities to give ?

- Fulfilling Jesus' command to make disciples is about more than having the right theology or well-developed teaching points.

- It's not about what you know—or what you think you know—it's all about the love of God working in and through you.

1 Corinthians 8:2-3 // If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know. 3 But if anyone loves God, he is known by God.

- If you're not willing to make loving God and loving people your highest priority, then stop. The lack of love is the unmistakable mark of death.

1 John 3:14 // We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death.

- Discipleship isn't gathering pupils for teaching.

- The focus of discipleship should be on loving people and teaching them how to live as an obedient followers of Jesus.

- Ultimately, it's all about being faithful to God's call to love the people around you.

- It's about bringing them to the Savior and asking Him to set them free from the power of sin and death and transform them into loving followers of Jesus Christ.

- It's about glorifying God by obediently making disciples who will teach others to love and obey God.

Q: How much do you care about the people around you?

Q: Do you love them and long to see them glorify God in every aspect of their lives?

PRAYER: Honestly look inward at your heart and ask God to purify your motives, fill you with His Spirit and bring forth His fruit in your life for the good of others, your joy and His glory. (Galatians 5:22)

3. Up to this point, would you say that your desire to make disciples has been motivated by love? Why or why not?

Take some time to consider your existing relationships—family, friends, coworkers, neighbors, etc. The way you think about and interact with the people that God has placed

in your life can tell you a lot about your heart. Think about your relationships and ask yourself how well you love those around you. By assessing your current relationships, you should be able to identify areas you need to work on.

4. *Describe your love for the people God has placed in your life. What evidence can you point to that shows that you love the people around you?*

5. *In addition to praying fervently, what practical steps can you take to increase your love for people?*

Teaching by Example

- One of the worst things you can do is teach truths that you are not applying. We call this hypocrisy.
- Hypocrisy is one of the most common criticism of Christians in America.
- Jesus gave some harsh warnings toward the religious leaders who were hypocrites.

Matthew 23:3-5 // so do and observe whatever they [the scribes and Pharisees] tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice. 4 They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger. 5 They do all their deeds to be seen by others. For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long,

- Hypocrisy has damaged many, so let's run far from it. James also gave a strong warning against this type of thinking

James 1:22-23 // But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer,

- Religion without practical action is worthless. (James 1:26-27)
- Faith without works is dead. (James 2:14-26)
- A self-deceived teacher who practices worthless religion is probably not the best candidate for disciple making.
- Godly disciple makers teach by example. Faith in action.

Hebrews 13:7 // Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.

- Hebrews calls us to imitate the faith of our leaders.
- If you are going to make disciples, you need to be putting your faith into practice so that the people around you can imitate your faith.
- Being a disciple maker demands your entire life.
- Being a disciple maker means following Jesus in every aspect of your life, pursuing Him with a wholehearted devotion.
- If you're not ready to lay down your life for Christ's sake, then you're not ready to make disciples.

- Making disciples is all about seeing people transformed by the power of God's Word. If you want to see that happen in others, you need to be experiencing such transformation yourself.

6. Would you say that your life is being transformed by the truth of God's Word? Why or why not?

7. What changes do you need to make in order to live the truths that you will be teaching other people?

8. The things you've been thinking through in this session are not easy to address—there are no "quick fixes" here. End your time with this session by praying that God will give you the proper motivation to make disciples, increase your love for Him and the people around you, and empower you to live out the truths that He has called you to teach to others.