

Discipleship Course: Class Three

October 13, 2024

INTRODUCTION

Memory Verse Work

- In pairs, take 5-6 minutes to continue to memorize your first memory verse: Matt 28:18-20. Go back and forth quizzing one another to help commit it to memory.

Table Review Sharing and Prayer

- Last week we gave a working definition of discipleship. Discipleship is “personally helping one another grow in Christ.”
- At the end of that lesson, you took a personal discipleship evaluation, where I had you rate yourself in three areas:
 - 1) My discipleship of others is Christ oriented (focused on Christ):
 - 2) My discipleship of others is intentional, aimed at growth:
 - 3) My discipleship of other involves loving relationships:
- Review how you evaluated yourself, maybe where you are strong and where you are weak. Discuss these things with your table.
- After each person shares, have the person to the right pray for the person who just shared. And then the person who prayed will share.

Quick Review of Colossians 1:28-29

- What was Paul’s goal or aim from Colossians 1:28-29?
 - Answer: present every one mature/complete in Christ. This means that we would help others with a fullness in Christ: fullness in knowing Christ and fullness in reflecting Christ (looking like Christ).
- How do we do this? How do we present people complete in Christ?
 - Answer: the verse states we proclaim Christ, teaching and admonishing.
- This gets to the core of what discipleship is about. Right? So how do we do this effectively in the context of discipleship relationships?
- This brings us to our next section. We move from Understanding Discipleship to...

PRACTICING DISCIPLESHIP

Below are several keys to practicing discipleship.

I. The Gospel

We talk a lot about this at Indian Trail Church. We talk about Gospel centrality in life and ministry. We talk about how important the Gospel is and how we should never leave it behind as Christians.

The Gospel is not given to us just for our initial salvation, our justification in Christ. The Gospel is also for our sanctification, our growth in Christ and in holiness.

Table Study/Discussion

- Read the following verses and after each reference discuss how these verses are encouraging us to keep the Gospel central. And discuss why we should keep the Gospel central (i.e. what it accomplishes in our lives).

1 Corinthians 15:1–4

[1] Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, [2] and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. [3] For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, [4] that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, (ESV)

- Paul reminds believers of the Gospel, encourages them to hold fast to it, and says it is of “first importance.”
- The Gospel is not only what was originally received, but it is by the Gospel that we are “being saved,” which is a reference to sanctification or ongoing salvation. And it is in the Gospel that we “stand,” meaning that we stay strong amidst temptations and trials because of it.

Romans 12:1–2

[1] I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. [2] Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. (ESV)

- It is “by the mercies of God” that we are able to serve God in worship and obedience to Him. The mercies of God are a reference to the Gospel and the enabling work of the Gospel. This is why Paul wanted to preach the Gospel to believers in Rome (1:15).
- The only way we can truly worship God in devoted service to him is because the Gospel makes us right and gives us the ability to do so. And it is by the Gospel that we can resist the world and be transformed in our thinking so we can discern and do what pleases God.

Titus 2:11–14

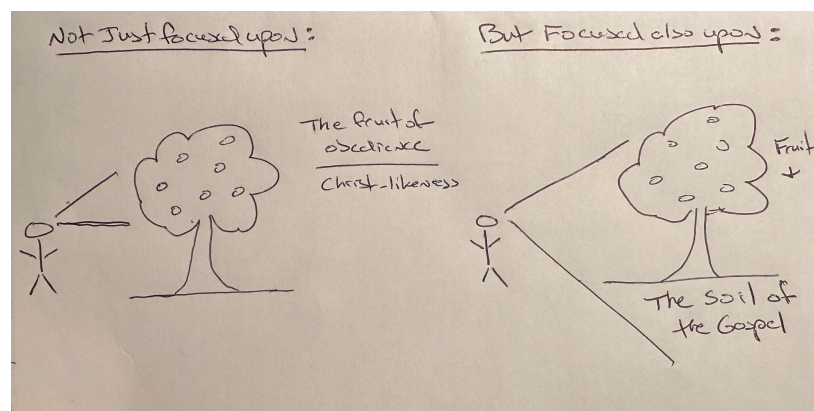
[11] For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, [12] training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, [13] waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, [14] who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works. (ESV)

- The “grace of God” that has appeared is a reference to the Gospel which has brought salvation to all people.
- This very same Gospel grace trains us to “renounce ungodliness and worldly passions” and to positively “live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age.”
- And the Gospel gives us an ongoing hope of Christ’s return.
- This hope then feeds our ability, as God’s people, to be “zealous for good works.”

A Discipleship Warning

- It would be so easy to mistakenly think our discipling ministry to one another was merely about encouraging and enforcing others to keep God’s commands. Now don’t get me wrong. We want believers who are following Christ’s commands. “Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you,” is what Jesus told us to do in the great commission (Matt 28:20a). Jesus also said, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments” (John 14:15). The commands of God are essential as we learn to conform our lives more and more to Christ-likeness.
- But, we must not forget to help one another grow in the full understanding of what enables them or empowers them to keep God’s commands for their lives, which is the Gospel or Jesus Christ.
- So, discipleship, is done well when we pay attention to both, helping one another grow both in understanding the grace of Christ in the Gospel and in obedience to Christ.

Illustration of what Discipling relationships are focused upon:



- As the apostles disciplined the early church, in their letters they typically first recall and teach the Gospel. We are called to remember Christ and all that He has done for us in his life, death, resurrection, and ascension. And we are to see who we are in Christ, our identity, our newness of life in Him. All because of his grace and mercy.
- Then what follows is to “walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called” (Eph 4:1). And what follows this general charge are specific commands for our lives.
- Every command for the Christian life is always rooted first in what God has done for us by His grace in the Gospel of Jesus Christ
- So, again, Both are very important. Both must be part of our discipling relationship with others.
- So, to disciple effectively, our focus should not just be on obedience to commands, but also on what Christ has done in the Gospel of Jesus Christ that motives such obedience to Christ.

How does the Gospel affect us? In the Gospel:

1. We are reminded that apart from Christ, in our old life, we were hopeless sinners in desperate need of God’s mercy, and this is where we would be today if God had not rescued us
2. We are assured of God’s love and on going forgiveness and acceptance which strengthens our faith to keep us steadfast in Christ
3. We are focused now on our new identity in Christ (i.e. we are saints, children of God, etc.) which inspires us to live for Christ and not ourselves
4. We are shown the power and wisdom we have from God to help us fight temptations and live in obedience and worship of Him

Practical Thoughts:

1. In discipleship relationships continue to bring clarity to the Gospel, knowing that often our lives drift to false thinking/ideas.

2 Corinthians 10:5

We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, (ESV)

2. Whenever talking about obedience or struggles towards obedience, try to always tie the commands of God to the Gospel of God. (i.e. we forgive because we have been forgiven in Christ Jesus; we love because He first loved us, etc.)
3. Often talk about who we are in Christ (i.e. saints, justified, reconciled, adopted, regenerate, slaves of righteousness, etc.)

Good books on the Gospel and the relationship between the Gospel and living our lives in obedience to God:

- A Gospel Primer, by Milton Vincent
- The Cross Centered Life, by C.J. Mahaney
- What Is the Gospel, by Greg Gilbert
- The Gospel for Real Life, by Jerry Bridges