

## Discipleship Course: Class Two

October 6, 2024

### INTRODUCTION

#### Memory Verse Work

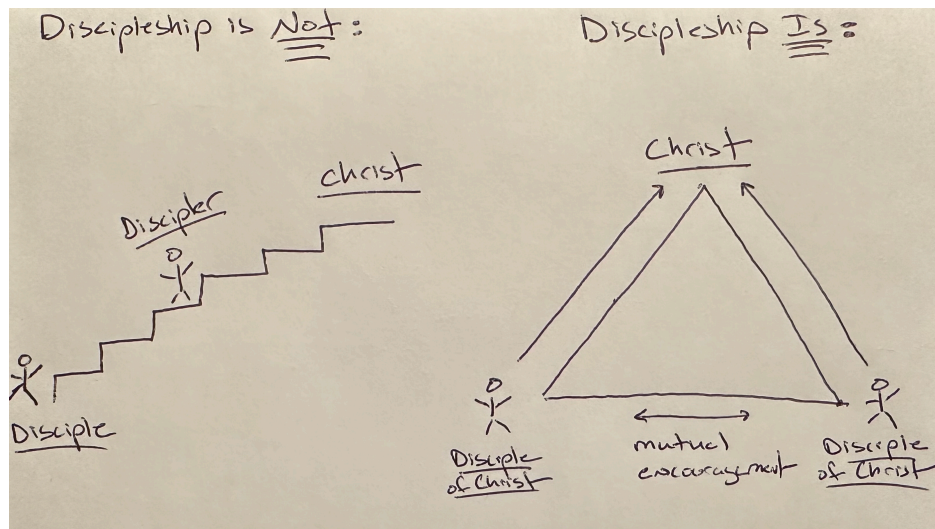
- In pairs take 8 minutes to work on memorizing Matthew 28:18-20.
- Any one ready to cite it for the class?

#### Review

Last week we looked at how the word, “disciple,” μαθητής/*mathetes*, was used throughout the New Testament.

- Who can tell me what the word means? Answer: a learner
- What was one important, truth that stood out about how the word, disciple, is used? Answer: When used of Christians, in the church, the orientation of disciple is always towards Christ. People are either “disciples of Christ” or simply “the disciples.” Not disciples of Paul, or Peter, or James, or John.
- Why is this important to see? Answer: Because we are learners or students of Christ before anyone and we have direct access to Christ as his pupils and are connected directly to Him.

Illustration: Discipleship Is Not, Discussion Is...



Then we looked at Matthew 28:18-20. In this call to discipleship we see we have three jobs. What are they?

1. “Go and make disciples” - We evangelize them/Call to Follow Christ
2. “Baptizing them...” - We baptize them/Identify them as Christ’s disciples and part of the church
3. “Teach them to obey...” - We encourage them to continue to follow Christ, obey Christ, trust Christ, abide in Christ, etc.

This is how you make disciples of Christ. Its the discipleship process. The rest of the class is going to be focusing on that last task, which is what we typically think about when we are involved in discipleship relationships.

## **UNDERSTANDING DISCIPLESHIP cont.**

### **A Practical Definition of Discipleship**

To disciple is to *personally help one another grow in Christ.*

Three parts to this definition that are biblical and helpful:

1. It is Christ oriented

We are to “personally help one another grow in Christ.”

As we have discussed, we are disciples of Christ first and foremost, not disciples of one another. That does not mean that we do not teach one another or learn from one another. Certainly we do as Matthew 28:19 states. But, all of this is oriented to Christ who is...

- The great teacher
- The wonderful counselor
- The head of the church
- The first born from the dead
- Our sympathetic high priest
- Who is, as it says in Ephesians 1:23 and Colossians 3:11, all in all.

Our lives are about Him. We are His disciples. Everything now about our lives is about knowing Him and walking in Him:

John 15:5

I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. (ESV)

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (ESV)

Colossians 2:6–7

[6] Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, [7] rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. (ESV)

So discipleship is about helping one another in our “in Christ-ness.” Its always about Him and not only realizing all that we have in Him, but continuing to press our lives more into Christ.

If we are not focused on Christ or pressing into Christ, it is not Christian discipleship. It is something else, which is not only ineffective, but misguided and potentially dangerous.

2. It is focused on growth

We are to “personally help one another grow in Christ.”

To be a disciple of Christ is to be someone who is growing. We are never stagnant, but maturing and evidencing this maturing like branches that produce fruit. So growth in Christ is the goal.

Consider the following passages that speak of our growth:

Ephesians 4:15

Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, (ESV)

2 Thessalonians 1:3

We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing. (ESV)

2 Peter 3:18

[18] But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. (ESV)

Because we are wanting to help one another grow, we are not to be “time wasting” disciples/disciplers. There is intentionality to the time we spend together. There is focus. We are “goal oriented” and the goal is growth in Christ.

And while relationships are key to discipleship (as we will see in the next point), relationships are not the ultimate goal. Growth in Christ is the ultimate goal. If you make relationships the ultimate goal, there is a lot you will not do, that the Bible is calling you to do, because you won't want to put the relationship in jeopardy. These are the things that are not easy, like: rebuke, admonishment, correction, exhortation, or even teaching.

The ultimate goal is Christ-likeness and growth in Christ. There is a lot we won't do if we make relationships the ultimate goal. But, this does not mean that loving relationships are not extremely important. They are!!! This gets us to the last part of the definition:

3. It is accomplished through loving relationships

We are to “personally help one another grow in Christ.”

Loving relationships, where we come alongside one another and help one another is essential in discipleship. Without this, there is no platform for us to help one another grow in Christ.

John 13:35

By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”  
(ESV)

Ephesians 4:15

Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, (ESV)

1 Thessalonians 2:7–8

[7] But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. [8] So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us. (ESV)

1 Thessalonians 2:10–12

[10] You are witnesses, and God also, how holy and righteous and blameless was our conduct toward you believers. [11] For you know how, like a father with his children, [12] we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory. (ESV)

There is the big difference between “noisy gong” ministry, where you might try to minister to one another, but all that is being heard and seen is obnoxious banging and clanging because there is no love. Nothing gets through but one's ugly offensiveness, because no one really believes you care for them.

Versus what we see in Christ who knew his disciples, loved his disciples, and served his disciples. He washed their feet. There was no doubt from the disciples that he knew them, loved them and put their needs above His own.

The ultimate display of this was his dying on the cross for our sins.

Mark 10:44–45

For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (ESV)

This kind of servant hearted, relational love and care is the platform or vehicle by which we effectively come alongside one another and help one another grow in Christ.

Personal Discipleship Evaluation:

- Take a moment, on your own, to evaluate where you are strong and where you might be weak in the key elements of discipleship as explained in our definition.
- After each of the following evaluation statements place a number between 1 and 5 next to it. 1 means you are very weak at it and 5 means you are very strong.
- In the areas that are lower numbers write down why that number is low and how you intend to change

My discipleship of others is Christ oriented (focused on Christ):

My discipleship of others is intentional, aiming at growth:

My discipleship of other involves loving relationships:

### **The Goal of Discipleship**

A Table Study of Colossians 1:28-29

Colossians 1:28–29

[28] Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. [29] For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me. (ESV)

1. What is Paul’s goal in his ministry to others?
2. What does it mean to presenting everyone “mature in Christ” or as other translations state, “complete in Christ”? How would you describe this maturity or completeness?
3. Do we ever reach the goal? When? And what does this mean for our discipleship ministry to one another until then?
4. In verse 28, what does Paul do to reach the goal?

5. Read Matthew 28:20 and Ephesians 4:15 and discuss the importance of our teaching ministry to one another. How does God use our teaching ministry to one another in discipleship relationships uniquely (maybe when you compare it to a preacher that preaches to many people at one time)? And what would have happened if we stopped doing this ministry to one another?
6. How does Paul describe his labor in ministry in vs.29? And how should this description influence our discipling ministry to others?

Paul has a laser sharp focus and that is to “present everyone mature/complete in Christ.” Another way to say this is that as we minister to one another, there is a fullness in Christ that we want them to experience. It's a fullness of knowing Christ and then a fullness of them reflecting Christ to the world around them. Discipleship is about growing people in Christ and into Christ-likeness.

Illustration: Fullness in Christ



We continually proclaim Christ, admonish, teach, and encourage. Not only does this fill others up so they are complete in Christ, the overflow shows the world their reflection of Christ. This is what we mean by being “complete in Christ.” One is both filled with the fullness of Christ and reflecting Christ to the world around.

PREP FOR NEXT WEEK: prayerfully review your notes and continue memorizing Matthew 28:18-20.