

Disciples Who Make Disciples

I. Introduction

- A. Be fruitful and multiply = first command in the Bible
 - 1. Fill the earth with image-bearers
 - 2. Have lots of babies
 - 3. Right from the start, this is God's desire and design for the world
 - a) To see his glory spread
 - b) To see his image carried
 - c) To see his creation functioning as he created it
- B. Of course we didn't multiply glory, we multiplied sin
 - 1. But God's heartbeat remained the same
 - 2. After the flood, the first command he gave - again - was: be fruitful and multiply
 - 3. Fill the earth with worshippers, image-bearers
- C. This continues to be God's heartbeat, and we see echoes of it in the Psalms and the Prophets
 - 1. The nations WILL be glad and rejoice
 - 2. God's glory WILL fill the earth like the water fills the sea
 - 3. People from all nations WILL come and worship YHWH at his Holy City
- D. So then Jesus comes, the Son of God, lives a perfect life, and is crucified for the price of sin, his blood to break the curse upon the world
 - 1. Crucified so that I may be forgiven
 - 2. Raised from the dead so that I might live forever
 - 3. Ascended into heaven to prepare a place for me and to send the Helper, the Holy Spirit
 - 4. And he's coming again
 - 5. His final words before he departed: Be fruitful and multiply
 - a) Phrased differently, of course: Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey all that I've commanded you. And behold, I am with you always to the very end of the age!
 - 6. Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth with worshippers
 - a) Those who worship in Spirit and in Truth
 - b) Those who carry my glory to all the earth
 - c) Those who let the light of Christ shine in every corner of the earth
- E. We exist to glorify God... by making disciples... who make disciples...
 - 1. We exist for his glory
 - 2. We spread his glory when we are disciples and when we make new disciples
 - 3. Today we want to talk about being disciple-making disciples... or disciples who multiply

II. Multiplication vs. Addition

- A. Last week we talked about discipleship and how Jesus essentially lived in community with these early disciples
 - 1. They were with him
 - 2. They became like him
 - 3. They learned to do the things that he did
- B. When he ascended, they would have mimicked what they observed
 - 1. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, they saw great works of God
- C. But I want you to imagine for a moment, that none of that happened
 - 1. If you were Jesus, I would be willing to bet that your gameplan for reaching all nations, for filling the world with your glory, wouldn't have been what Jesus did (picking a small group of men and sending them to do what he did)
- D. No, I think for most of us, that is - in our natural fleshly state - we would have done something more like this:
 - 1. Amass a big following
 - 2. Tell everyone the truth
 - 3. Amass a bigger following
 - 4. Keep telling everyone we know
 - 5. Me, doing all the work.
 - 6. After all, why would Jesus send the disciples to do the sharing when he could have just hung around and done it himself?
- E. When you survey the way that most churches in the world “do ministry” or “make disciples,” it is by and large addition based models, not multiplicative. What's the difference?
- F. Addition-Based Approaches
 - 1. Definition and Focus:
 - a) Linear Growth: Addition-based approaches focus on adding individuals to the church one by one.
 - b) Centralized Effort: Church leaders (pastors, staff) are primarily responsible for evangelism and discipleship.
 - c) Program-Centric: Emphasis on church services, events, and programs to attract and retain members.
 - 2. Characteristics:
 - a) Clergy-Led Ministry: Professional ministers carry out most of the evangelism and teaching.
 - b) Extractational Evangelism: New believers are often brought out of their existing social contexts into the church environment.
 - c) Resource Intensive: Requires significant resources like facilities, finances, and staff to maintain programs.
 - d) Limited Scalability: Growth is constrained by the church's capacity to add more programs and accommodate more people.
 - 3. Growth Pattern:
 - a) Steady but Slow: Adds individuals incrementally; for example, 100 new members per year results in 1,000 members after 10 years.

- b) Cannot Keep Pace with Population Growth: Struggles to reach vast numbers of unreached people due to its slow nature.
 - 4. Potential Challenges:
 - a) Leader Burnout: Heavy reliance on church leaders can lead to exhaustion.
 - b) Passive Congregation: Members may become spectators rather than active participants in ministry.
 - c) Cultural Barriers: May inadvertently create distance by expecting people to adapt to church culture.
- G. Multiplicative-Based Approaches
 - 1. Definition and Focus:
 - a) Exponential Growth: Multiplicative approaches aim for disciples making disciples, leading to rapid, exponential increase.
 - b) Decentralized Effort: Every believer is equipped and empowered to evangelize and disciple others.
 - c) Relationship-Centric: Emphasis on personal relationships and mentorship over programs.
 - 2. Characteristics:
 - a) Believer-Led Ministry: All Christians see themselves as ministers and disciple-makers.
 - b) Incarnational Evangelism: Believers remain within their social and cultural contexts to influence others.
 - c) Resource Efficient: Utilizes existing relationships and personal resources; less dependent on church facilities.
 - d) Highly Scalable: Growth is theoretically limitless as each disciple-maker reproduces.
 - 3. Growth Pattern:
 - a) Rapid and Exponential: If each disciple makes two disciples annually, numbers grow dramatically; potentially reaching billions in 20 years.
 - b) Keeps Pace with Population Growth: Capable of reaching vast numbers, including unreached people groups.
 - 4. Potential Challenges:
 - a) Quality Control: Risk of inconsistent teaching without proper oversight.
 - b) Training Needs: Requires effective systems to equip believers in disciple-making.
 - c) Coordination Complexity: Managing a widespread, decentralized movement can be challenging.
- H. Summarized:
 - 1. Addition adds individuals one at a time through centralized church efforts.
 - 2. Multiplication equips every believer to reproduce disciples, leading to exponential growth.

3. Addition approaches say, "Let's plant one 10,000 person mega-church every year."
4. Multiplication says, "Let's equip two people to, and hold them accountable in, making disciples this year, and have them do the same."
5. Exponential Potential
 - a) If one believer discipled two people in a year, and those two each discipled two more the next year, the numbers grow exponentially.
 - b) Year 1: 10,000 people vs. 1 becomes 3
 - c) Year 2: 20,000 person mega-church vs. 3 becomes 9
 - d) Year 10: 100,000 vs. almost 60,000
 - e) Year 15: 150,000 mega-church vs. Potentially over 14 million
 - f) Year 20: 200,000 mega vs. Could be 3.5 billion+

I. Part of the problem, in my assessment is...

1. That's just theory to us. We've never seen it firsthand (b/c grassroots are never as visual as big, theatrical displays)
2. We love big, glamorous, celebrity pastor garbage
3. As a culture we have an obsession with "the best"
 - a) Who is your favorite preacher?
 - b) Who is your favorite author?
 - c) Who is your favorite worship leader/band?
 - d) So and so celebrity gets saved, "Oh boy, they are going to turn the world upside down." "Nope, they're a sinner just like you and me"
4. We love being groupies, but if you're a groupie of anyone but Jesus you are walking towards idolatry

III. More importantly, multiplication, and not addition, is what we see modeled and instructed in the Scriptures... be fruitful and multiply

A. Jesus modeled multiplication:

1. **Training the Twelve:** Invested deeply in a small group who would carry His message forward (Mark 3:14).
2. **Sending the Seventy-Two:** Empowered others to preach and heal (Luke 10:1)

B. The Apostle Paul embraced this model: *2 Timothy 2:1-2, [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.*

1. Paul, Acts 19 → "All of Asia" heard the Word // No place left for me to work
2. How? We see Paul's recipe for multiplication in these verses, in his final letter before his death
 - a) POWER of God
 - b) Healthy PEOPLE
 - c) Multiplicative PROCESS

C. Healthy PEOPLE (Start here)

1. Not all multiplication is healthy. Cancer is multiplication. So are cults.

2. Paul wants to see healthy multiplication, and that begins with healthy disciples → disciples who are faithful are trustworthy.
3. The health of a multiplying movement hinges on the quality of its people.
4. Think about those words: Faithful and Entrust
 - a) I won't entrust my daughter to a man who isn't faithful
 - b) I won't entrust Revolve to leaders who aren't faithful
 - c) Paul says not to entrust the gospel to unfaithful disciples
5. We often talk about looking for FAT people: Faithful, available, and teachable → Seek out those who are not only faithful in their walk with Christ but also eager to learn and grow. These individuals become reliable carriers of the gospel message.
6. While skills are important, character is paramount. Integrity, humility, the pursuit of holiness, and a servant's heart are essential traits for those who will disciple others.
7. When we find people like this, we must pour into others through mentorship, modeling Christ-like behavior, and providing guidance and encouragement.
- 8. Be a healthy disciple; help others get healthy**

D. Multiplicative PROCESS

1. The strategy Paul lays out is inherently multiplicative: he teaches Timothy (in the presence of others), who teach faithful men, who then teach others—four generations of discipleship in one verse!
2. My friend says, "simple things grow, simple things multiply. Complex things do not"
 - a) COVID covered the earth in a matter of months b/c viruses are simply and the multiply
3. The gospel message and discipleship practices should be easily understood and passed on without losing their essence.
 - a) This is why we love the ABCs and the DBS → not b/c it's the only way but b/c it's simple enough to train and equip others
 - (1) Teaching people to hear
 - (2) Teaching people to obey
 - (3) Teaching people to share
4. Multiplication hinges on encouraging and equip ALL believers to immediately begin sharing their faith and discipling others in the Word (not in a church culture)
5. We need to foster a culture of multiplication from the outset.
6. The goal isn't just to make converts but to develop disciple-makers who will continue the chain of multiplication.

E. The POWER of God

1. Paul begins by urging Timothy to "be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 2:1).
2. Jesus said to wait for the Holy Spirit who would empower his people

3. Our efforts in disciple-making are futile without God's empowering power and grace. It's His power draws people, unveils their eyes, guides us, etc
4. Just as Paul relied on God's grace for his ministry (1 Corinthians 15:10), we too must draw from this inexhaustible source. It's not about our abilities but about His power working through us.
5. Like a sailboat...

IV. Casting the Vision for Our Church

A. Multiplication Summarized:

1. Empowerment: Equipping believers to disciple others.
2. Reproduction: Each disciple-maker trains more disciple-makers.
3. Indigenous Leadership: You reaching YOUR community
4. Simple and Reproducible Methods: Ensuring practices can be easily passed on.
5. Illustration: The fruit of an apple tree isn't the apple, but the seeds inside the apple that can produce more trees. Imagine our church embodying this multiplication model:

B. Imagine what God could do...

1. **Every Member a Disciple-Maker:** Each person saw themselves as both a follower and a leader. (duckling discipleship)
2. **Discipleship Groups:** Home gatherings functioned as microcosms of the local church, capable of reproducing themselves, modeling health
3. **Leadership Development:** A continuous pipeline of emerging leaders equipped to disciple others, not just by me but in your DGs, homes, etc
4. **Global Impact:** Our local efforts contributing to a worldwide movement of disciple-making.
5. **The gospel to YOUR Spheres of Influence**
 - a) **Family and Friends:** Starting with those closest to us.
 - b) **Workplace and Community:** Seeing everyday environments as mission fields.
 - c) **Social Networks:** Leveraging relationships for Gospel opportunities.

C. Practical next steps:

1. **Seek God in the Word and prayer:** This is how God aligns our heart with his own
2. **Get Equipped:** Revolve has ample resources and opportunities for training, but remember that the best training is RELATIONAL
 - a) In your DGs... in community... in a training huddle
 - b) Not online, not in a podcast, with people
 - c) If you want to be trained, tell your DG leader, tell us
3. **Open your eyes:** Who is right in front of you who wants to grow in their faith? You don't know everything, but you know something
 - a) Maybe you've only read the Gospel of Matthew - you can read that with someone else who hasn't
 - b) Look for FAT people: faithful, available, and teachable individuals.

4. Anticipate the impact...

Challenge:

- **Will you embrace the call to be a disciple who makes disciples?**
- **Will you step out of your comfort zone to invest in others?**
- **Will you commit to God's vision of multiplication for His glory?**