

Being Intentional

“And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’” -Matthew 28:18-20

Go Make Disciples Group Check-in: Share with your group who the person is that you will either A) work alongside to make disciples or B) partner with you to pray and encourage you as you go.

At the beginning of the book of Acts, Luke gives us the following account of Jesus’ ascension and the disciples response:

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”⁹ And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.¹⁰ And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes,¹¹ and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.” –Acts 1:8-11

Throughout these last several weeks we have seen that God has clearly commanded each of us to commit to a life of making disciples. Yet, at this point is where we are tempted to forget what Jesus has commanded us to do and simply stand around, gazing into heaven, and waiting for the Lord to return. Therefore, the focus of this session is to help us take the first steps towards making disciples, so we do not end up standing around.

The first step we need to take is to **PRAY**. In Luke 10:2 Jesus tells his disciples that the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few. But before they are to go out into the field to gather the harvest (make disciples), they are to first pray earnestly to the Lord to send out laborers into his harvest.

Pray that the Lord would continue to prepare a harvest. Pray that the Spirit would work in you to want to go make disciples. Pray that other laborers would join you in making disciples, so that the whole harvest might be gathered.

1. Why do you think we so often skip over the step of praying as we serve the Lord in ministry?

Secondly, we need to **IDENTIFY** our disciples. I firmly believe that God has placed you in your specific family, in this particular church, in your particular school or workplace or neighborhood because the harvest is plentiful there. In other words, God has already placed people in your life that are ready and willing to become disciples, we just need to discern who those people are.

In Luke 6:12-16 we see Jesus go up to the mountain to pray. All night he prayed to God. And then you know what he did the next day? He chose his twelve disciples. This step was so critical to Jesus that He prayed to God all night for wisdom and discernment as to whom he should invest in. Eleven of those twelve would not only leave behind everything and follow Jesus for the next three years, but go on to make disciples themselves.

There are many people in our lives we would love to invest in and reach with the gospel, but the harvest is not ready. Similarly there are probably many people in our lives that are not even on our radar that are ready and willing to follow Jesus. Let's be devoted to the Lord in prayer to help us discern who it is we are to disciple.

Individual Task: Real quickly, in the space below jot down some names of some people God has laid on your heart to disciple. If this is a newer concept to you, think back to the four environments in the lesson on "The Extent" (Home, Church Family, Neighborhood/School/Workplace, and World) and identify some people in those environments who need someone to pour into them before they go make disciples.

Thirdly, we want to **ASSESS** our disciples. This involves leaning into the Spirit to determine where the individual is at in regards to their maturity in Christ. Are they a nonbeliever? Are they a new believer? Are they strong in their knowledge of the Bible, but weak in evangelism? This step also involves identifying ways we can "go" into their world and encourage them to believe in the gospel and follow Jesus. What interests or hobbies do they have that I can join in with? What challenges are they facing that I can speak the gospel to?

2. Look up the following passages and see how Jesus and Paul assessed those they were investing in. (Luke 5:1-11, Acts 17:22-31)

Group Check-in: For one of the people you listed in the individual task above, share with your group where you think they are spiritually and what might be a way for you to enter their world and encourage them to become a disciple of Jesus.

Fourthly, we want to begin to **DISCIPLE** those the Lord has called us to invest in. As we have seen throughout this course this involves 1) Going to them 2) Baptizing them as we share the gospel with them and 3) Teaching them to obey all that Christ has commanded them. We of course can skip over the second step if they are already a believer, but we must not stop short of the third step if we truly desire to obey the great commission and make disciples. Discipling others will require patience and endurance, as it is never a quick and simple process.

Next we want to **CELEBRATE** God’s work. The angels celebrate when people are saved (Luke 15:10) and thus we should, too, when God uses us to lead someone to Christ. Similarly, Paul often began and ended his letters with thankfulness as to the work of Christ in other believers as they grew as disciples. Therefore, we should take time to celebrate God’s work as well.

More than likely we will reach a point when we are frustrated or discouraged by the slowness of maturity in those we disciple (see Jesus in Mt. 16:5-12, 21-23 and the author of Hebrews in 5:12-6:1). Taking time to celebrate how far they have come encourages us to keep running the race with endurance, believing God will finish the good work He has started in them.

3. As you look back on disciples you have made or are making, what are some ways you have seen God work in others that you can celebrate?

Finally, once we have finished making a disciple and have sent them out into the harvest field, we **PRAY AGAIN**. This is where we go back to step one and ask the Lord to send us back out into the field to make more disciples of Jesus. Francis Chan writes:

“We never ‘finish’ the discipleship process...God continually brings new people into our path, giving us fresh opportunities to start the discipleship process all over again.”

Go Make Disciples

Take time this week to complete the first three steps of this process:

1. **PRAY** for workers, including yourself, to be sent into the harvest field to make disciples.
2. **IDENTIFY** who it is that God is calling you to disciple by praying for discernment.
3. **ASSESS** where this person(s) are at spiritually and how you can “go” into their world.

We will begin next week by sharing what the Lord revealed to each of us for these three steps.

Praying This Week

- Thank God for preparing a harvest already for us to gather as we make disciples
- Ask God for excitement and passion to go make disciples of others.
- Ask the Spirit to help us identify and assess those he wants to disciple.