

# FOLLOWING JESUS

Dr. Tim Wiebe | Fall 2023



**6C**  
**DISCIPLESHIP**



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# FOLLOW JESUS:

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## A 6C Discipleship Resource

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# **session 1**



# The "WHY?" of Discipleship

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## I. Introduction

## II. Why Is Discipleship So Important?

A. Because Jesus commands it.

Matthew 28:18-20

see also Matthew 4:19; 5:1-2; 10:1-5 (cf. Luke 9:1-2, 10);  
Matthew 17:1-3; 26:17-20, 36-37; Acts 1:1-8

"18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."  
– Jesus Christ,  
Matthew 28:18-20

“The word ‘disciple’ occurs 269 times in the New Testament. ‘Christian’ is found three times and was first introduced to refer precisely to disciples of Jesus—in a situation where it was no longer possible to regard them as a sect of the Jews (Acts 11:26). The New Testament is a book about disciples, by disciples, and for disciples of Jesus Christ”  
- Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission*, p. 3

B. Because the [early church](#) prioritized it.

1. Acts 14:21-23:

2. Galatians 4:19:

3. Colossians 1:28-29:

4. 2 Timothy 2:2

5. See also Hebrews 5:11-14; 2 Peter 1:5-8; 1 John 3:1-3

C. To experience the [full life](#) Jesus intends.

John 10:10; Philippians 3:7-11



D. Because of the shaping nature of the world around us.

The question isn't "Are you a disciple?" but rather

"What are you a disciple of?"

Sample questions to help identify what is shaping us:

- What gets your attention (and your time)?
- Who are you afraid to disappoint?
- What do you worry about losing?
- What triggers anxiety and depression?
- What are you pursuing? (i.e., What's your picture of the good life? And who decides that?)
- What is your picture of how to spend an "ideal 3 hours"?
- Where do you turn for comfort when things aren't going well?
- What do you celebrate?

"The Christian family, Christian church, and Christian school must not assume that the next generations will accept the conclusions that seem so obvious to older generations. We must talk about the things our kids are already talking about among themselves. **We must disciple.**"

– Kevin DeYoung, "The World Is Catechizing Us Whether We Realize It or Not." Posted at TGC on August 24, 2021, emphasis added

### III. Forecasting What's Ahead in the Upcoming Sessions

#### A. A "6C Portrait of Discipleship"

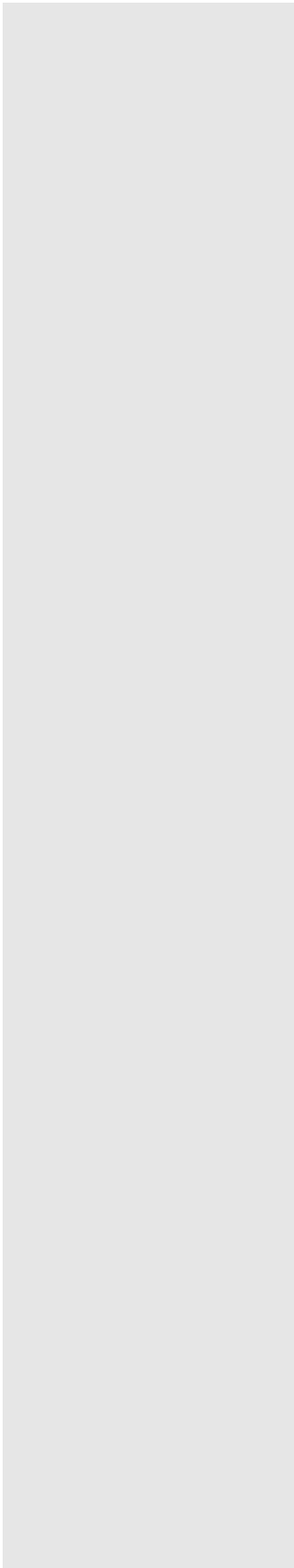
1. Commitment
2. Communion with God
3. Community with others
4. Character
5. Conduct
6. Commission

#### B. How can we grow as disciples?

#### C. Disciples Who Make Disciples: A Maturity that Multiplies

"'Becoming' is a long process that Jesus brings about in our lives over time. It's not an instantaneous gift, but the result of an extended, intimate relationship that develops over time."  
- Robby Gallaty,  
*Rediscovering Discipleship*, p. 80

#### **IV. Conclusion**







# For Further Study

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Session #1: The “WHY?” of Discipleship

Jerry Bridges, *The Discipline of Grace: God’s Role and Our Role in the Pursuit of Holiness*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1994.

Kevin DeYoung, “The World is Catechizing Us Whether We Realize It or Not.” Posted at The Gospel Coalition on August 24, 2021. Available online at <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/the-world-is-catechizing-us-whether-we-realize-it-or-not/>.

Robby Gallaty, *Rediscovering Discipleship: Making Jesus’ Final Words Our First Work*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015.

Tim Wiebe, “Establishing a Discipleship Pathway for Ministry Programming at Brookside Church, Omaha, Nebraska.” DMin project, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2022.

Tim Wiebe, “Discipleship – Luke 9:18-25.” Sermon preached at Brookside Church (Omaha, NE) on October 21, 2018.

Michael J. Wilkins, *Following the Master: A Biblical Theology of Discipleship*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992.

Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus’s Essential Teachings on Discipleship*. New York: HarperOne, 2006.

# **session 2**





# The "WHO?" of Discipleship

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A "6C Picture" of What It Means to Follow Jesus

## I. Introduction

Q: What are we "aiming for" when we talk about discipleship (or Christian formation)? What does a clear picture of discipleship look like?

- ▶ A1: Certainly, in one sense this is a question we spend a lifetime answering, from the entirety of God's Word.
- ▶ A2: At the same time, the Bible does give us "lane markers" and "road signs" to help us know we're moving in the right direction.

With the Bible as our guide, discipleship is more like a well-mapped journey rather than a blind swing at a piñata.

## II. Defining Discipleship

A.

B. At its most basic level, disciple means... *learner or apprentice.*

C. A few other helpful definitions

“In a general sense, we may define a disciple as a committed follower of a great master. . . . In the specific sense, a disciple of Jesus is one who has come to Jesus for eternal life, has claimed Jesus as Savior and God, and has embarked upon the life of following Jesus. . . . The term was used most frequently in this specific sense [in the New Testament]: at least 230 times in the Gospels (e.g., Jn 6:66-71 and 28 times in Acts (e.g., Acts 9:1, 10, 19-20).”

– Michael J. Wilkins, *Following the Master: A Biblical Theology of Discipleship*, 40

"[W]hen we speak of Christian discipleship and discipling we are speaking of what it means to grow as a Christian *in every area of life*. . . . Discipleship and discipling mean living a fully human life in this world in union with Jesus Christ and growing in conformity to his image."

– Michael J. Wilkins, *Following the Master: A Biblical Theology of Discipleship*, 41-42; italics added

"A disciple is a learner, a student, an apprentice – a *practitioner*, even if only a beginner. The New Testament literature, which must be allowed to define our terms if we are ever to get our bearings in the way of Christ, makes this clear. In that context, disciples of Jesus are people who do not just profess certain views as their own but apply their growing understanding of life in the Kingdom of the Heavens *to every aspect of their life on earth*."

– Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus's Essential Teachings on Discipleship*, xi; italics added

D. Can we get any more specific? Getting help from the Gospel of Matthew.

Matthew's teaching blocks are discipleship-oriented words from Christ to His followers, located in a Gospel that is highly focused on discipleship. The Gospel of Matthew—and even more specifically, Matthew's five discourses—therefore deserve close attention in formulating a compelling portrait of discipleship.

“Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate. Costly grace is the treasure hidden in the field; for the sake of it a man will gladly go and sell all that he has. It is the pearl of great price to buy [for] which the merchant will sell all his goods. . . . it is the call of Jesus Christ at which the disciple leaves his nets and follows him. . . . Such grace is *costly* because it calls us to follow, and it is grace because it calls us to follow *Jesus Christ*. It is costly because it costs a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life.”  
– Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, 44-45

### III. A 6C Picture of Discipleship

#### A. Commitment

1. Following Jesus changes my [allegiance](#).

*Following Jesus changes my allegiance. There is a decisive commitment to follow Him (Rom 10:9-10; Col 1:13-14) and a daily decision to live in light of this commitment (Luke 9:23; Rom 12:1). This commitment is motivated by God’s grace (Eph 2:8-10) and includes orienting our lives around Christ and a willingness to be formed by Him.*

2. Matthew 10:38-39; Luke 9:23-24; Romans 10:9-10; see also Luke 14:25-35; John 6:25-71; Romans 12:1-2

3. Further explanation / clarification / illustration

#### B. Communion with God

1. Following Jesus opens up [intimacy with God](#), through the Holy Spirit.

*We are designed for experiential relationship with God (Gen 3:8; Ps 16:11; Matt 1:23; Rev 21:3-4). This relationship is the most satisfying and enriching of all relationships (Ps 84:10; Phil 3:7-11). We can know God and be reconciled to Him (Rom 5:1). We are known by God as His adopted sons and daughters through the Holy Spirit (Gal 4:6-7) in a relationship where we are secure, known, and valued.*

2. Matthew 28:20; John 17:3; also Genesis 3:8; Matthew 7:23; Matthew 22:36-40; John 15:15; Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6-7; Philippians 3:7-11; Revelation 21:3

3. Further explanation / clarification / illustration

*"...ignorance of God – ignorance both of his ways and the practice of communion with him – lies at the root of much of the church's weakness today."*

– J. I. Packer, *Knowing God*, 12; italics added

"Spending much time with Jesus is not an option for pastors [or any who serve in a church, or even consider themselves a disciple!]; it is essential and the fountainhead of sustained and effective servant leadership. Those who serve with us will recognize that the most distinctive and persuasive quality of our lives and leadership is that we have been with Jesus [see Acts 4:13]."

– Tom Nelson, *The Flourishing Pastor*, 91

## C. Community with others

1. Following Jesus means **belonging** and transformed relationships.

*As followers of Jesus we belong to the family of God that is defined by faith, and not blood or physical descent (John 1:12; Mark 3:31-35). This community is marked by their devotion to God and their love for one another (Matt 22:36-40; John 13:34-35; Acts 2:42-47; New Testament "one anothers"). Gathering together in community is a priority that should not be compromised (Heb 10:24-25).*

2. Matthew 22:36-40; Mark 3:35; Romans 12:9-21; Hebrews 10:24-25; New Testament "one anothers"

3. Further explanation / clarification / illustration

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. – Galatians 5:22-23

## D. Character

1. Following Jesus will change me from the inside out.

*The more someone gets to know disciples of Jesus, the more they should see attractive and compelling virtue – namely, the fruit the Spirit bears in us (Gal 5:22-23). Followers of Jesus must care deeply about who they are on the inside (i.e., their “heart” [Prov 4:23]), which begins with the new heart Jesus provides through His grace (2 Cor 5:17; Jer 31:33; Ezek 36:26-27) – a new heart that transforms our direction and desires. It must be remembered that cultivating hearts in which this fruit grows requires both patience and persistence.*

2. Matthew 5-7 (especially the Beatitudes in 5:3-11); Matthew 15:8-9; Matthew 23:27-28; 1 Corinthians 13:1-7; Galatians 5:22-23; see also Romans 12:2; Ephesians 4:20-24; James 3:17-18; 1 Peter 1:5-9
3. Further explanation / clarification / illustration

## E. Conduct

1. Following Jesus transforms the way I live and what I actually do (and don't do).

*Following Jesus is personal but it is not private – God's transforming grace should take shape in our lives visibly. This conduct isn't a way to earn God's favor, but is rather evidence of His gracious work in you and of a life that is being renewed by Him. Christian conduct must be defined by such phrases as gospel-motivated, Godward-oriented, patient, persevering, and progressive (not perfectionistic).*

“...most evangelicals today no longer forbid going to movies, nor do we engage in earnest Francis Schaeffer-style critiques of the films we see – we simply go to the movies....and walk out of the movie theater amused, titillated, distracted, or thrilled, just like our fellow consumers who do not share our faith. If anything, when I am among evangelical Christians I find that they seem to be more avidly consuming the latest offerings of commercial culture... than many of my non-Christian neighbors. They are content to be just like their fellow Americans, or perhaps, driven by a lingering sense of shame at their uncool forebears, just slightly more like their fellow Americans than everyone else.”  
– Andy Crouch, *Culture Making*, 89

2. Matthew 7:15-20; Matthew 28:20; 1 Corinthians 6:18-20; Ephesians 4:1; Philippians 1:27; Colossians chs. 3-4; 1 Timothy 4:12

3. Further explanation / clarification / illustration

"We are not called to remain within cloistered walls, giving ourselves to prayer apart from social engagement with the world [and therefore neglecting 'commission'/service]. Nor are we called to perpetually and indiscriminately be consumed with being active in the world [by exclusively and lopsidedly focusing on 'commission' and missional engagement]. We are called to hold this dynamic tension before God. Why? Very simply, unless we do so, we have nothing to offer the world."

– Rich Villodas, *The Deeply Formed Life*, 171

## F. Commission

1. Following Jesus gives me purpose and sends me out on mission.

*Our commission isn't just to be disciples; our commission includes the command to make disciples (Matt 28:19-20). "Multiplication" and "living sent" must be part of our mindset. This command to make disciples includes both sharing Jesus (evangelism) and showing Jesus (visibly good deeds, or "public good") in faithful, dependent, courageous, and winsome ways (Acts 1:8; Col 4:2-6; 1 Pet 2:11-12).*

2. Matthew 4:19; 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; also Matthew 25:14-30; 1 Corinthians 12:4-31



3. Further explanation / clarification / illustration

### III. "Don't Miss" Take-Aways

- A. These six areas are more directional than destination-based.
  
- B. The combination of these six areas helps us cultivate holistic discipleship.
  
- C. This isn't just for ministry programs or other people. This starts with you.
  
- D. Every piece of this is driven by grace yet demanding of effort.
  - 1. Feeling the tension:
    - a. Our *justification* depends entirely on God's grace and His initiative. See Ephesians 2:1-10.

b. Our *sanctification* involves both grace and effort

- Grace/God's activity: Galatians 3:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Peter 1:2-4
- Effort/our activity: Galatians 5:16; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; 2 Peter 1:5-8

2. Benefiting from the tension:

3. Grace-motivated discipline:

- a. On the one hand, our role in sanctification must always be motivated by grace and is ultimately accomplished by God. Remember God doesn't owe us anything.
  - Some competing motivators:

▸ Why is grace-motivated discipline so important?

- Grace motivated discipline can't become discouraged (or proud).

- Grace motivated discipline can never be exhausted.

b. On the other hand, grace isn't opposed to effort. (It's opposed to earning.) Trust doesn't put an end to trying. Remember: Grace-motivated, grace-soaked obedience invites God's blessing and His presence.

#### **IV. Conclusion**





# For Further Study

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Session #2: The “WHO?” of Discipleship: A 6C Picture

Jennie Allen, *Find Your People: Building Deep Community in a Lonely World*. Colorado Springs: Waterbrook, 2022.

Kelly M. Kapic, *You're Only Human: How Your Limits Reflect God's Design and Why That's Good News*. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2022.

J. I. Packer, *Knowing God*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1973.

Eugene H. Peterson, *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction: Discipleship in an Instant Society*, 20th anniv. ed. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000.

Peter Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Discipleship: Moving from Shallow Christianity to Deep Transformation*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Reflective, 2021.

Paul David Tripp, *Awe: Why It Matters for Everything We Think, Say, and Do*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015.

Rich Villodas, *The Deeply Formed Life: Five Transformative Values to Root Us in the Way of Jesus*. Colorado Springs: Waterbrook, 2020.

Rankin Wilbourne, *Union with Christ: The Way to Know and Enjoy God*. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2016.

Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2002.

# **session 3**





# The "HOW?" of Discipleship (Part 1)

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Train Yourself to Be Godly

## I. Introduction

7 ...train yourself to be godly. 8 For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.  
– 1 Timothy 4:7b-8

## II. Personal Practices that Cultivate Growth in Godliness

A. Bible engagement and prayer

1. Bible engagement

“...it is always crucial to keep distinguishing between genuine spiritual formation and proficiency at the various means and methods we use to do our part in that process. Spiritual maturity is becoming more like Jesus. It is not how comfortable I am spending time alone sitting in a room looking at a candle. The substance of who we are becoming is what matters.”

- Carlson and Lueken,  
*Renovation of the Church*

## 2. Prayer

### 3. Why approaching these practices (i.e., Bible engagement and prayer) together is really healthy

## B. Community

C. Service

D. Evangelism (i.e., sharing your faith)

**III. Other practices that I can't not at least mention**

A. Confession

"Spiritual disciplines  
nurture steadfastness.  
What we repeat in  
times of ease we will  
recall in times of  
hardship."  
– Jen Wilkin

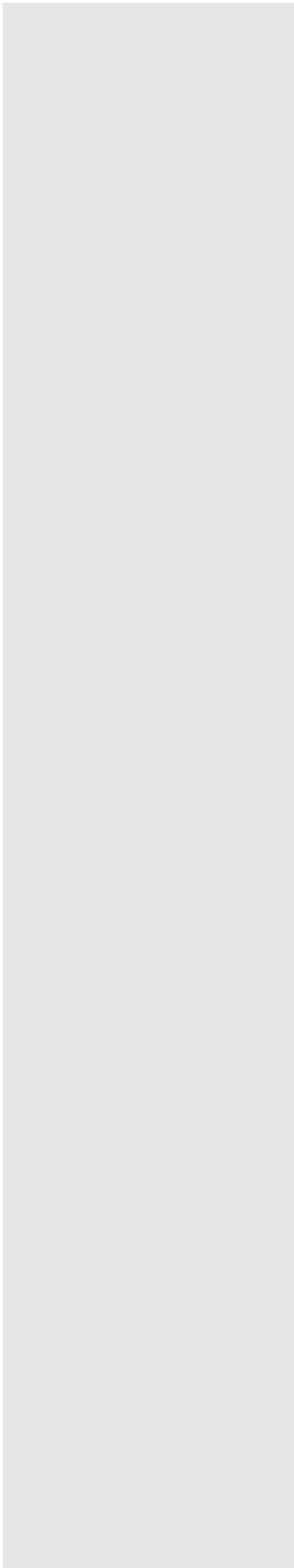


B. Giving

C. Fasting

D. Silence and Solitude

**IV. Conclusion**





# Reflection Questions (cont'd)

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Session #3: The "HOW?" of Discipleship: Train Yourself to Be Godly

- ➔ Why is it important to make sure these personal practices are connected to the 6C picture of discipleship? Why can it be dangerous to approach these practices as "ends-in-themselves"? (Hint: Read John 5:39-40 and Matthew 15:7-9.)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ➔ What is one major take-away, to-do, or question you're leaving with from this session? Who can you share this with, this coming week?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ➔ Journal a short prayer-response to God, based on what you're learning.

# For Further Study

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Session #3: The "HOW?" of Discipleship: Train Yourself to Be Godly

## **GENERAL FORMATION / SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES**

John Mark Comer, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*. Waterbrook, 2019.

Ben Stuart, *Rest and War: Rhythms of a Well-Fought Life*. Nashville: W Publishing, 2022.

Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 2nd ed. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2014.

Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives*. New York: HarperOne, 1990.

## **SPECIFIC DISCIPLINES**

D. A. Carson, *Praying with Paul: A Call to Spiritual Reformation*, 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014. [Prayer]

Dan Darling, *Spiritual Gifts: What Are They and How to Use Them*. Lifeway Press, 2022. (Bible study workbook) [Service / Spiritual Gifts]

Rebecca Manley Pippert, *Stay Salt: The World Has Changed, Our Message Must Not*. The Good Book Company, 2020. [Evangelism]

Edward T. Welch, *Side by Side: Walking with Others in Wisdom and Love*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015. [Community]

John D. Woodbridge, ed, *Renewing Your Mind in a Secular World*. Chicago, IL: Moody, 1985. [Biblical Meditation]



# **session 4**



# The "HOW?" of Discipleship (Part 1)

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Biblical Priorities, Church Priorities

## I. Introduction

## II. How Do We Make Disciples as a Local Church?

A. We're not left to guesswork in answering this question...

1. We're guided by six priorities that emerge from the early chapters of Acts:

Acts 2:42-47: 42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. 44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

- a. The priority of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4, 8; 2:1-4ff)  
– dependence and empowerment

"If there is anything in the teaching of the New Testament which is in the nature of a command, it is that you are obliged to take the Sacrament, **and you can't do it without going to Church.** I disliked very much their hymns, which I considered to be fifth-rate poems set to sixth-rate music. But as I went on I saw the great merit of it. I came up against different people of quite different outlooks and different education, and then gradually my conceit just began peeling off. I realized that the hymns (which were sixth-rate music) were, nevertheless, being sung with devotion and benefit by an old saint in elastic-side boots in the opposite pew, and then you realize that you aren't fit to clean those boots. It gets you out of your solitary conceit."  
– C.S. Lewis, *God in the Dock*, emphasis added

- b. The priority of apostolic teaching (i.e., biblical authority) (Acts 2:42)
  
- c. The priority of community (Acts 2:42, 46)
  - i. Organized under church leadership.
  
  - ii. Marked by sacrificial generosity.
  
  - iii. Manifested in both smaller and larger gatherings.
  
- d. The priority of the ordinances – baptism and the Lord's Supper (these display the gospel!) (Acts 2:38, 41, 42)
  - i. Baptism
  
  - ii. The Lord's Supper

- e. The priority of God-centeredness (Acts 2:42, 43, 47)
  
  - f. The priority of mission (Acts 1:8; 2:39, 47)
2. We can benefit from research that points to what is most impactful.

“Input goals are the things you can do today that will produce the results you want tomorrow (output goals). In other words, input goals are the levers you can pull to influence output goals. . . .”

“[N]o program, strategy, matrix, or pathway alone will cause your church members to grow. Growth is up to God and it’s ultimately his responsibility. However, we cannot let that be a cop-out for doing nothing! We still have a role . . . [T]he research revealed that doing certain actions (input goals) would actually predict a higher score in each of the discipleship attributes.”

– Daniel Im, *No Silver Bullets: 5 Small Shifts That Will Transform Your Ministry*, 50-51, 59

- a. Key input goals: (1) reading the Bible; (2) worship services; (3) small classes or groups; (4) serving God and others

b. Before we keep moving: "Input goals" and the six priorities of discipleship

	Spirit-dependence	Biblical Teaching	Community	Ordinances	God-centeredness	Mission
Worship Service	X	X	X	X	X	X
Classes and Groups	X	X	X		X	X
Serving God and Others	X		X		X	X
Reading the Bible	X	X	X	X	X	X

"We are formed in ways we don't realize by being in the same worshipping community with people who don't look like us and don't share our perspective or views. The diversity sharpens us and forms us in Jesus...We need the local church."  
 – Carlson and Lueken, *Renovation of the Church*

B. Three key pavers in a Discipleship Pathway: A proposal

1. Gathered worship

2. Small groups and classes

a. Small groups

b. Classes

c. Huddles

3. Serving opportunities

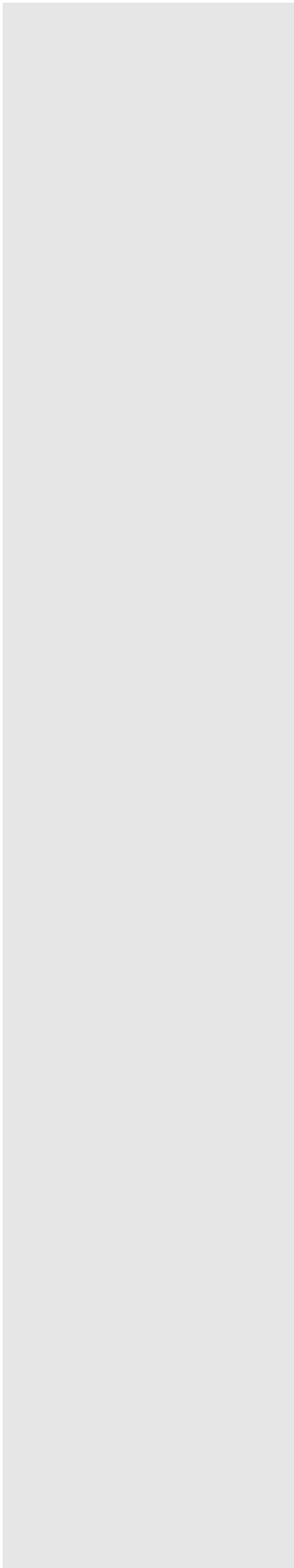


### III. One Notch Deeper

	Skeptic	Seeker	Consumer	Contributor	Owner/Mult.
	Discover	Develop		Deploy	
Gathered worship					
Small groups and classes					
Serving opportunities					
Special events					
Resources for individual growth					



#### **IV. Conclusion**



# Reflection Questions

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Session #4: The "HOW?" of Discipleship: Brookside's Discipleship Pathway

- ➔ Why is it important to root our discipleship practices ("how we do discipleship") in the Bible? (Or think of it this way if it's helpful: What will happen if we approach discipleship without consulting the Bible regarding *how* we approach discipleship?)
  
- ➔ Briefly review the six priorities of discipleship from Acts 1-2. Have one or two been especially influential in your own life of discipleship?
  
- ➔ Have any of these six priorities fallen off your "radar screen" as you think about discipleship? What can honoring this priority add to your life of following Jesus, and what will you do to approach this priority with intentionality?
  
- ➔ Why is it important to make sure the priorities of discipleship are connected to the picture of discipleship? Why can it be dangerous to approach these priorities as "ends-in-themselves"?

# Reflection Questions (cont'd)

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Session #4: The "HOW?" of Discipleship: Brookside's Discipleship Pathway

- ➔ What did you learn about how Brookside approaches discipleship, as a local church? What can you do to benefit from this intentional approach? What can you do to contribute to this discipleship pathway?
  
- ➔ How has this session helped you see the value of the local church?
  
- ➔ What is one major take-away, to-do, or question you're leaving with from this session? Who can you share this with, this coming week?
  
- ➔ Journal a short prayer-response to God, based on what you're learning.

# For Further Study

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Session #4: The "HOW?" of Discipleship: Brookside's Discipleship Pathway

J. T. English, *Deep Discipleship: How the Church Can Make Whole Disciples of Jesus*. Nashville: B&H, 2020.

Bobby Harrington and Alex Absalom, *Discipleship that Fits: The Five Kinds of Relationships God Uses to Help Us Grow*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016.

Daniel Im, *No Silver Bullets: 5 Small Shifts that Will Transform Your Ministry*. Nashville: B&H, 2017.

Colin Marshall and Tony Payne, *The Vine Project: Shaping Your Ministry Culture around Disciple-Making*. Sydney, Australia: Mathias Media, 2017.

J. I. Packer and Gary A. Parrett, *Grounded in the Gospel: Building Believers the Old-Fashioned Way*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2010.

John Stott, *The Living Church: Convictions of a Lifelong Pastor*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2007.

Tim Wiebe, "Establishing a Discipleship Pathway for Ministry Programming at Brookside Church, Omaha, Nebraska." DMin project, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2022.

James C. Wilhoit, *Spiritual Formation as If the Church Mattered: Growing in Christ through Community*, 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2022.

# **session 5**



# Disciples Who Make Disciples

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A Maturity That Multiplies

## I. Introduction

## II. Making Sure We're Clear (Stating the Obvious?)

A. The command: "make disciples."

1. To be sure, we don't neglect or overlook what Jesus' command means for ourselves (and who we're becoming).

See John 15:5; Philippians 3:10-14; 2 Peter 1:5-8

5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."  
– Jesus, in John 15:5

2. At the same time, the focus isn't only on ourselves.

"The aim of Jesus' disciples...therefore, is to make disciples of all men [and women] everywhere, without distinction."

– D. A. Carson,  
*Expositor's Bible  
Commentary*

B. The scope of the command: "of all nations"

C. The take-away(s) for us (or at least one or two of 'em):

1. The importance of the Holy Spirit.

2. The necessity of a "multiplication mindset."



### III. Driving Home the Point

A. Acts 1:8

B. Acts 8:4 (see also Acts 8:4-8; Acts 8:26-40)

C. Acts 11:19-21

D. Ephesians 4:11-12

E. 2 Timothy 2:2

F. Revelation 7:9

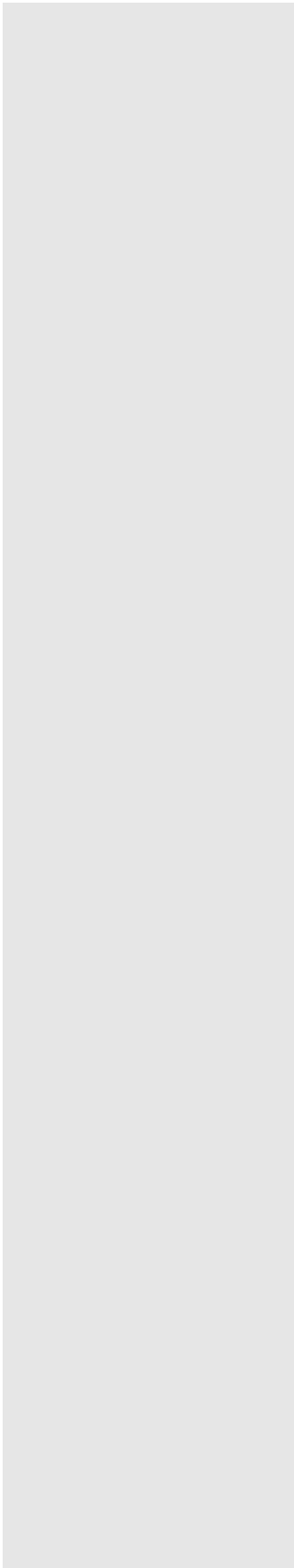
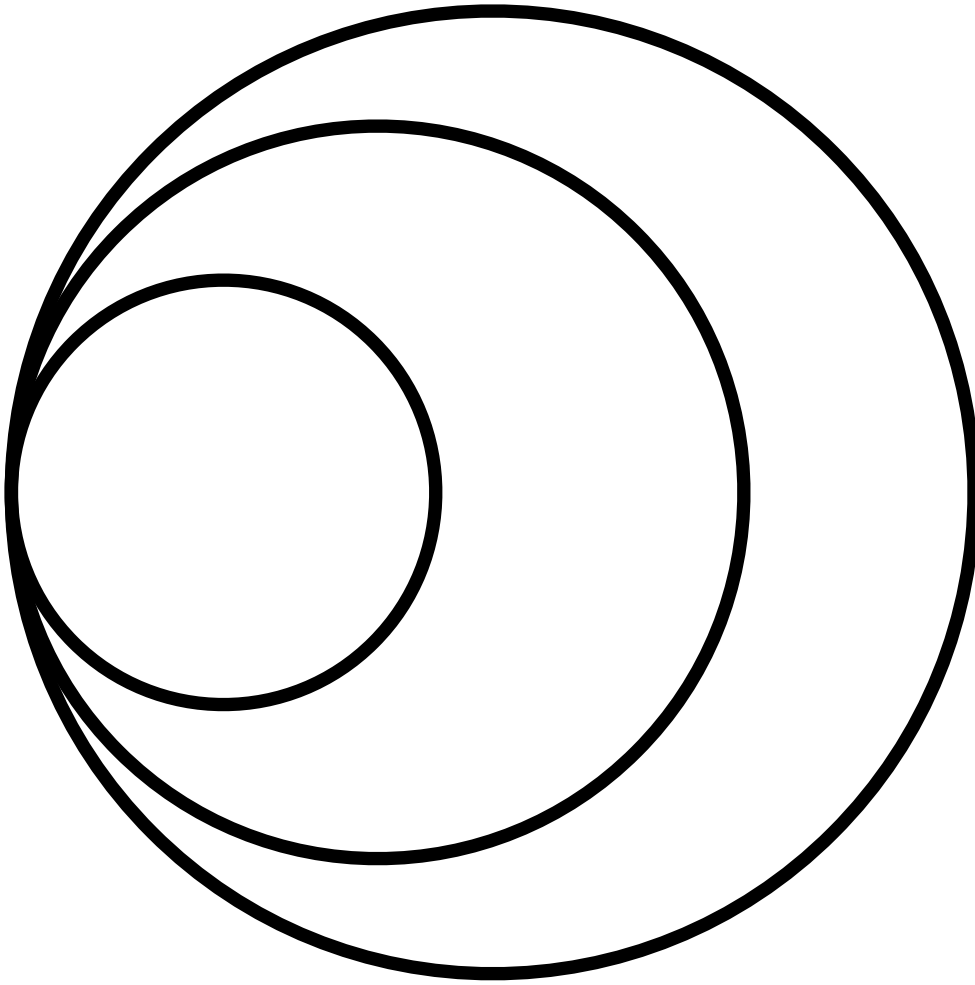
G. See also Colossians 1:7-8; Colossians 4:7-9

2 And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.  
– 2 Timothy 2:2

“Discipling...means not merely the pursuit of our own spiritual maturity but getting outside ourselves for personal connection and substantial, intentional investment of time in a few others – the kind of investment for which there must be *going* to accomplish among the nations.”  
– David Mathis, *Finish the Mission*, 17

#### IV. How Do I Live in Light of This Truth? (Application)

- A. Don't ignore your own own growth as a disciple personally. But don't stop with yourself.
  
- B. It can be practically helpful to think of your own relationships in concentric circles.
  - 1. Your “Jerusalem”:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - 2. Your “Samaria”:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - 3. Your “ends of the earth”:



C. Getting super practical:

1. The place to start: Does this person claim to follow Jesus?

“Small groups [or Community Groups] provide the opportunity for real accountability, but you’d be hard-pressed to find a man who is willing to ask for help with his porn addiction in a group with his wife and the wives of others.’ In other words, small groups cultivate *breadth* of relationship; discipleship huddles cultivate *depth* of relationship. Discipleship huddles provide a highly relational, same-gender environment well suited for transparency, encouragement, and accountability.  
– quoted in Tim Wiebe, “Establishing a Discipleship Pathway for Ministry Programming,” 83

2. A (notice the indefinite article!) formal approach for discipleship relationships:
  - a. Find a small group of 3-5 others who are willing to commit regularly for 9-12 months.
  - b. Establish a meeting rhythm that includes the following elements:
    - “What I’ve been learning from the Bible.” (Ideally coupled with journaling.)
    - Topical study. (**Optional.**)
    - 6C check-in.
    - Time in prayer.
    - What’s my action step?
    - Who can I share something with this week?
3. A million(ish) informal approaches:
  - a. The goal is to keep our eyes open, our heart sensitive, and our feet willing.
  - b. Compare/contrast Acts 8:26-27 with Acts 16:1-5 with Acts 16:6-10

4. What other “best practices” and tips have you found?

D. Start earlier than you think, before you feel “fully ready.”

## V. Conclusion

The driving question for making disciples as a follower of Jesus isn't "How can I know everything so I can answer every question or navigate any circumstance?" If that's the "pre-requisite" needed before we make disciples, no one would qualify!

Rather, we need people who are faithful, available, and teachable – and who are prayerfully asking, "Who can I help take one more step toward conformity to Christ?"

# Reflection Questions

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Session #5: Disciples Who Make Disciples – Maturity that Multiplies

- ➔ As we think about discipleship, why is it important to “start with ourselves,” while at the same time not “stopping with ourselves”? (And what might it look like to “stop with ourselves,” based on what was discussed in this session?)
  
- ➔ Reflect back on key relationships that helped you (and/or are still helping you) grow as a disciple? What are the characteristics of this relationship that were especially influential in your own formation?
  
- ➔ What stood out to you from the Bible passages that were spotlighted in this session? Was any of this teaching new to you (or at least a significant refresher)? Explain your answer.

# Reflection Questions (cont'd)

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Session #5: Disciples Who Make Disciples – Maturity that Multiplies

- ➔ What are the biggest struggles or fears you personally face (or anticipate facing) in discipling others?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ➔ Based on what you learned in this session, imagine you had to “coach yourself” through these struggles or fears. What would you say to yourself?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ➔ What is one major take-away, to-do, or question you’re leaving with from this session? Who can you share this with, this coming week?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ➔ Journal a short prayer-response to God, based on what you’re learning.

# For Further Study

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Session #5: Disciples Who Make Disciples – Maturity that Multiplies

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J. D. Greear, *Gaining by Losing: Why the Future Belongs to Churches that Send*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015.

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Bobby Harrington and Alex Absalom, *Discipleship that Fits: The Five Kinds of Relationships God Uses to Help Us Grow*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016.

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