



First Things First Week 5: Discipleship

October 8, 2023

Jesus came to save the world, and to that end, He died on the cross for our sins. But on His way to the cross, He concentrated His life on making a handful of disciples who would continue His ministry after His departure. These men were taught to do the same thing, until, through the process of reproduction, the Gospel of the kingdom would reach the ends of the earth.

As Jesus prays the High Priestly Prayer in John 17, we see a glimpse into how Jesus viewed His mission from His Father:

John 17:1-4 – “Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, ‘Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You, even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life. This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do.’”

Acts 4:13 – “Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus.”

Jesus made disciples who were like Him. But why did Jesus focus on just a small group? He taught to crowds many times, but the focus of His time was spent with only a few followers.

He multiplied disciples because it was and is the most effective way to fulfill the Great Commission.

2 Timothy 2:2 – “The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”

The Apostle Paul poured into Timothy, Timothy poured into some faithful men, and then they each poured into others.

Paul also had the ministry partner and encourager, Barnabas, in his life. Barnabas supported and even held Paul accountable from time to time.

Everyone needs a Paul, a Timothy, and a Barnabas.

Matthew 28:18-20 – “And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’”

The source of power behind all true disciple-making is the “all authority” of Jesus Christ.

Mark 4:26-29 – “And He was saying, ‘The kingdom of God is like a man who casts seed upon the soil; and he goes to bed at night and gets up by day, and the seed sprouts and grows—how, he himself does not know. The soil produces crops by itself; first the blade, then the head, then the mature grain in the head. But when the crop permits, he immediately puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.’”

As with farming, we typically don’t see the organic progress in the day-to-day, but over the course of months, we see growth. In the same way, we often don’t realize that God has used us until it’s already happened.

The Power of the New Birth

1 Peter 1:3-4 – “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you”

Those in whom we invest did not cause their new birth. It was God’s power: “He has caused us to be born again.”

1 Thessalonians 2:13 – “For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.”

The Gospel Word of God not only produces the new birth but remains “at work in you who believe.”

The Power of the Spirit

Romans 8:9-11— “However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.”

The same Spirit who empowered Jesus’s earthly life has now been given to us today.

The Power of Christ’s Intercession

Hebrews 7:25— “Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.”

Jesus Christ, the God-man, ascended in His glorified human body and sat down at His Father’s right hand, and *“He always lives to make intercession for those who belong to Him.”* He is interceding for us!

The Power of Christ to Use Weak Vessels

2 Corinthians 12:9— “And He has said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.’ Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.”

Disciple-making will help you realize your weaknesses—perhaps as much as anything in life. Knowing your weaknesses can be such a good place to be, because, Christ says, *“My power is made perfect in weakness.”* Don’t talk yourself out of disciple-making or give up prematurely because you’re aware of how imperfect a discipler you are.

What are the first steps of discipleship?

1. Realize that multiplication is the only way that we are going to get the job done, and we should all be a part of it.
2. Start praying for God to help intersect you with your Paul, your Barnabas, and your Timothy.
3. Initiate. Ask someone to get coffee or lunch with you on a regular basis.
4. Have content to discuss.