

Creating Reproducing Disciples

Bill Scheidler

I. Introduction to Discipleship

A. What does a true disciple of Christ look like?

And Jesus came 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 of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen. Matthew 28:18-20

1. A disciple is not what is sometimes promoted as such.

A disciple is not...

- a. A person who once prayed the sinner's prayer or made a decision for Christ.
- b. Someone who claims to have been a Christian for a long time.
- c. Someone who attends church services and programs.
- d. Any good and moral person.
- e. Someone who knows the Bible very well.
- f. Someone in "full-time" ministry.
- g. A person with a very supernatural ministry.

All of these things may be good but they do not necessarily equate to discipleship.

2. A disciple is learner, a student and an apprentice.

- a. The word for disciple means "one who sits under teaching."

Many revolutionary leaders have had disciples and have changed their spheres of influence in a negative way.

An extremist leader of a violent revolutionary group in North America said they were cutting down their numbers by 2/3 until they had an utterly dedicated group of trained disciples who could bring about a revolution.

- b. Discipleship involves learning. It is associated with a Latin word [*disciplina*] which means "to learn."
- c. True discipleship is more than learning in that it always leads to a changed lifestyle that corresponds to the teaching that has been received (Jam. 1:22).

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

And remember, it is a message to obey, not just to listen to. If you don't obey, you are only fooling yourself. –NLT

3. A disciple is someone who continues to grow beyond their conversion experience.

Every disciple is a Christian but not every Christian is a disciple. A disciple is not just a convert who may be primarily concerned about going to heaven when they die. A disciple is someone who wants to order his or her life in such a way as to help establish God's heavenly kingdom on earth.

The early church channeled its energy towards making disciples. Discipleship was a process that applied to everyone in the believing community. Paul made the process of discipleship a main focus of his labor.

Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.

Colossians 1:28-29

My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you. Galatians 4:19

4. A disciple is someone who has a desire to be like their master (Jesus).

The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master. Luke 6:40, KJV

5. A disciple is someone who is passionate about achieving their destiny.

Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you.

Philippians 3:12-15

6. A disciple is someone who is willing to enter into close relationship with other people.

Disciples are made through personal relationships with others and by letting others into their lives. We cannot separate the call to discipleship from the call to community.

7. A disciple is someone who is open to accountability and even correction.

- a. Jesus often corrected or rebuked His disciples for their own growth and development (Mt. 8:26; Mark 8:33; Luke 9:55).
- b. A wise person is someone who can receive correction from others (Pro. 9:8; 10:17; 12:1; Ps. 141:5).

People who accept correction are on the pathway to life, but those who ignore it will lead others astray. Proverbs 10:17

Whoever loves instruction loves knowledge, but he who hates correction is stupid. Proverbs 12:1

8. A disciple is someone who makes other disciples.

B. What is the cost of discipleship?

For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it--lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, "This man began to build and was not able to finish." Luke 14:28-30

1. Being a true disciple involves having a personal cross experience (Luke 14:27).

And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.

2. Being a true disciple involves a denial of self (Mark 8:34-38).

When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

3. Being a true disciple involves losing your soul-life (Mark 8:35).

For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it.

4. Being a true disciple involves a surrender of all of life's possessions (Luke 18:22-23). There can be no first but Jesus.

So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, “You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” But when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich.

5. Being a true disciple involves a total love for God (Luke 14:26).

If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.

How deep is your love for the Lord? Is it really your highest relationship (Mt. 10:37)?

6. Being a true disciple involves a continual pressing on toward the mark (Luke 9:62).

But Jesus said to him, “No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

As costly as this all seems, nothing is ever really a sacrifice, because what God asks us to give up for Him is not worthy to be compared to what He gives us back in return (Luke 18:28-30; Rom. 8:18; II Cor. 4:16-18).

Then Peter said, “See, we have left all and followed You.” So He said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who shall not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come eternal life.” Luke 18:28-30

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. Romans 8:18

Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. II Corinthians 4:16-18

C. What does making disciples look like?

Making disciples is helping a person know, follow and become like Christ through an open, loving relationship.

1. Disciple-making is characterized by the following:

- Prayer
- Care

- Teaching
- Encouragement
- Accountability
- Correction

2. Disciple-making focuses on cultivating the following:

- Character
- Understanding
- Ministry

3. Disciple-making utilizes practical method of example and modeling.

*The older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things--that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed. Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded, in all things showing yourself to be **a pattern** of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you. Titus 2:3-8*

Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you. Philippians 3:17

Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me-- put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you. Philippians 4:9

Many people focus on just one aspect of discipleship and think they are discipling someone, but true or broad-based discipleship is characterized by all of the above.

The \$64,000 question...

“Are we producing disciples or are we settling for converts?”

II. How do we create reproducing disciples?

- Become a disciple yourself.
- Examine the front door of your church.
- Develop a follow-up procedure for new contacts (visitors, altar respondents, etc).
- Develop a process through which converts must go.
- Continue the discipleship process through small groups.
- Preach for changed lives rather than the impartation of information.

III. Resources for creating true reproducing disciples

A. Victorious Christianity Course

B. Discipleship Course