

discipleship essentials

Essentials for Spiritual Leadership
Leader's Guide

EXPLORING DISCIPLESHIP

LESSON 2: BIBLICAL CALL TO MAKE DISCIPLES

INTRODUCTION

This lesson is part of a Discipleship Essentials module titled Exploring Discipleship. This series of lessons studies the spiritual formation of a follower of Jesus Christ – the process referred to as discipleship. The discipleship process occurs after someone comes to faith in Jesus Christ, beginning with a desire to live out God's plan for their life. When we undertake the task of helping a new believer to grow in their faith, we are said to disciple them. This material will benefit anyone wanting to disciple others, especially those who are practising evangelism, following up with new believers and helping them grow in their faith. Discipleship is the duty of every believer, especially those in spiritual leadership!

INTENDED AUDIENCE

The intended audience for these lessons is new Christians, those who would like a refresher on the basics of Christianity, as well as those preparing to teach these Christian practices and beliefs. Also, those with an interest in Christian thought will find value in these lessons as they pertain to daily living and choices.

The Leader's Guide is intended to help you as a leader in your preparation. These lesson outlines may be used in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials found online at www.discipleshipessentials.org.

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LESSON 2: BIBLICAL CALL TO MAKE DISCIPLES

PURPOSE

This lesson looks at what the Bible teaches us about our responsibility to disciple people, and why it should be a high priority for every Christian.

LEADER'S NOTE

Sometimes Christians get very excited about making converts to Christianity and put a lot of effort into evangelism. While this is an excellent practice, the Bible does not instruct us to make converts, but rather to make disciples! The process of discipleship is far more involved than sharing the Gospel and inviting an individual to make a decision. It requires time, community, and a display of love. Without mature Christians to teach and mentor them, many new converts to Christianity don't follow through with their faith and can struggle for many years. Help your participants see that the investment of time into others' lives is necessary, but worth it! Are any of your participants in need of personal discipleship from you? That would be a great starting point for you as you teach this lesson.

INTRODUCTION

Select two or three of the following questions to ask the group.

- ❖ What are some reasons a newly converted believer might abandon their faith? How can this be prevented?
- ❖ Should Christians place higher priority on evangelism or on discipleship? Which is easier? Which takes more time and resources?
- ❖ What examples do we have in the Bible of discipleship relationships? Why were those people disciplined? What was the result?
- ❖ How does being a part of a Christian community help us grow in our faith?

STUDY

Instruct the group on the following points.

TEACH

- ❖ **Disciples, not just Converts:** Evangelism is the act of sharing the Gospel and preaching the good news to others so that they will repent and believe in Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins. The goal of evangelism is to have someone agree with the truth of the Bible and put their faith in



Jesus. The goal of discipleship is to take that new believer and see them grow and mature until they are fruitful and able to produce new disciples.

- Discipleship is a process that lasts a lifetime. By it we grow to be more like Christ and learn to follow Him.
 - A discipleship relationship usually lasts for a limited time. The relationship where one person is discipling a new believer may last for a number of months to a few years. Other discipleship relationships may occur at different stages of life and for different purposes.
 - The command given in the Bible is not to just preach the Gospel, but to “make disciples of all nations” ([Matthew 28:18-20](#)).
- ❖ **Make Disciples of all Nations:** The command given to us in the verses above is to make disciples and to teach them. This is the Biblical call to make disciples. New converts should be taught to believe in Jesus, and to also live in obedience to Him.
- **Pass it On:** The good news of the Gospel isn't only forgiveness from sin and peace with God; it is also God's power changing our lives so we can be a part of His extraordinary plan! We must not keep this to ourselves but pass it on to others, and train them to disciple others also!
 - The Apostle Paul, who discipled Timothy, wrote to him, “...what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” ([2 Timothy 2:2](#)). This should be the goal for each of us.
 - Paul wrote that those who learned from him should follow him, or imitate him, as he followed Christ ([1 Corinthians 11:1](#)).
 - Jesus taught His disciples by example, and told them to be an example to others ([John 13:15](#)).
 - **The Goal of the Church:** The Christian life cannot be lived alone! The goal of the church is to present everyone mature in Christ – that is, to see that everyone knows God, puts their faith in Him and walks in obedience to Him.

ASK PARTICIPANTS:

Read the following verses together to see what a Church or community of believers exists for. What is its role in the discipleship process?

- [Colossians 1:28](#)
- [Proverbs 27:17](#)
- [John 15:8](#)
- [1 Thessalonians 2:8](#)

TEACH

- **Older teaching Younger:** In many areas of life it is natural for older people to teach the younger. In discipleship, it might be that a younger person who is more mature in their faith teaches an older person who is a new believer. However, every Christian should be involved in discipling, training, and being an example to those who are newer in their faith.



- o [Titus 2:1-8](#)
- o [Psalm 145:4](#)
- o [Acts 8:27-31](#)
- o [1 Peter 5:1-5](#)
- o [Ephesians 4:11-16](#)

❖ **Biblical Examples of Discipleship:**

- **Discipling our Children:** While the other relationships we are talking about in this lesson are usually adults discipling one another, we do have a biblical responsibility to disciple our children (our own children, the children in our family, and those of our church and community). This discipleship of children involves several actions:
 - o Training them to love and obey God ([Proverbs 22:6](#), [Ephesians 6:4](#)).
 - o Teach them the laws and grace of God, and talk to them about God as part of life ([Deuteronomy 11:18-21](#)).
 - o Encourage them in their faith to be an example to others ([1 Timothy 4:12](#)).
 - o Every Christian parent is responsible to disciple their own children. This is accomplished by being a godly example to them, by living a consistent life of faith, and by setting aside particular times for teaching and training.
- **Discipleship Relationships:** There are many examples of formal discipleship relationships in the Bible, also called mentor relationships. A few examples are listed below:
 - o Jethro mentored Moses, and Moses mentored Joshua.
 - o Eli taught Samuel, and Samuel taught both Saul and King David.
 - o Nathan taught King David, and David mentored his army commanders who united Israel and also King Solomon who was said to have great wisdom.
 - o Elijah disciplined Elisha as a prophet, and Elisha taught King Jehoash.
 - o Mordecai cared for and disciplined Esther in the ways of following God. Esther had influence over King Artaxerxes who liberated the people of God.
 - o Paul was a mentor to Timothy and disciplined him. As they served together Timothy learned much, and then taught others in their faith.
- **Discipling Small Groups:** Sometimes as a spiritual leader, you may have opportunity to mentor a group of people. This small group setting can consist of Christians at different stages of faith; connecting with each other will help everyone mature in their Christian walk.
 - o Jesus disciplined His Apostles, – sometimes one on one, but usually in groups. This way they learned together from Jesus example as they followed Him in His work. Jesus sought out particular people to teach and train so that they could continue the work.



- ❖ **Biblical Call:** In the Bible, everyone who received God's truth passed it on to others and set out to teach them God's ways. This should be a call to each one of us. We must examine our lives and make discipleship a new priority.
 - o We can disciple children and family members. Those we are close to must learn from our example.
 - o We can disciple newly converted Christians as we engage in evangelism.
 - o We can seek out those who are less mature in their faith and offer to meet with them regularly and disciple them.
 - o We can bring along younger believers as we engage in our Christian service.
 - o We must also be careful to live our lives in a manner worthy of the Gospel, as younger believers will look to us to see how to live.
 - o It is a privilege to join with God in changing lives.

DISCUSSION

- ❖ What do you wish someone would teach you about living life as a Christian?
- ❖ What do the Biblical examples we've looked at in this lesson show you about God's plan for training disciples? Does God intend for us to learn and grow in our faith apart from other Christians?
- ❖ What role does the Church play in discipleship? How does your church encourage or equip you for discipleship? How can you be a part of these efforts?
- ❖ Why is it vital to work on our own relationship with God as we disciple others? What could happen if we don't?

PRAYER

Close with a time of prayer. Thank God for His plan to bring us to maturity in our faith through relationships with other believers. Thank God for people who have come into each of your participants' lives to disciple and mentor them. Pray that each participant would find others to teach and disciple. Thank God for His Gospel and the truth of His Word that can be shared with the whole world through disciples training disciples.