

discipleship essentials

Essentials for Spiritual Leadership Study 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!

The Study Guide is intended for an individual to look deeper into a specific lesson on their own. The lessons can be used in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials, such as the video and audio productions found on www.discipleshipessentials.org.

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EXPLORING DISCIPLESHIP

LESSON 2: BIBLICAL CALL TO MAKE DISCIPLES

WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

Discipleship isn't something that people have made up over years of Christian history – it is a very biblical. This lesson looks at what the Bible teaches us about our responsibility to disciple others, and why it should be a high priority for every Christian.

JUST SO YOU KNOW...

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 actually instruct us to make converts! Does that surprise you? What the Bible is clear on is that we should be making disciples: committed followers of Jesus. 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.

GETTING STARTED

1. How does being a part of a Christian community help us grow in our faith?

2. What are some reasons a newly converted believer might abandon their faith? How can this be prevented?



STUDY

❖ **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.
- What is the specific command given to us in the Bible? Read Matthew 28:12-20:

❖ **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!

- Read the following verses and write down what you learn:

2 Timothy 2:2	
1 Corinthians 11:1	
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.



- How would a group of people be better at helping a person mature in Christ than that person attempting to live for Christ all alone?

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- What does the Bible say that a Church community exists for? What is the role of other Christians in the discipleship process? Read the following verses and write down what you learn.

Colossians 1:28	
Proverbs 27:17	
John 15:8	
1 Thessalonians 2:8	

❖ **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.

- What does the Bible tell us about our responsibility to teach those with younger faith?

Titus 2:1-8	
1 Peter 5:1-5	
Ephesians 4:11-16	



❖ **BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF DISCIPLESHIP:** There are many examples of discipleship throughout God’s Word. These fall into several categories:

- **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:
 - Training them to love and obey God (Proverbs 22:6, Ephesians 6:4).
 - Teach them the laws and grace of God, and talk to them about God as part of life (Deuteronomy 11:18-21).
 - Encourage them in their faith to be an example to others (1 Timothy 4:12).
 - 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.

How can you be involved in discipling of children, or encourage those who are?

- **Discipleship Relationships:** There are many examples of formal discipleship relationships in the Bible, also called mentor relationships. A few examples are listed below:
 - Jethro mentored Moses, and Moses mentored Joshua.
 - Eli taught Samuel, and Samuel taught both Saul and King David.
 - Nathan taught King David, and David mentored his army commanders who united Israel and also King Solomon who was said to have great wisdom.
 - Elijah disciplined Elisha as a prophet, and Elisha taught King Jehoash.
 - Mordecai cared for and disciplined Esther in the ways of following God. Esther had influence over King Artaxerxes who liberated the people of God.
 - Paul was a mentor to Timothy and disciplined him. As they served together Timothy learned much, and then taught others in their faith.

Have you ever thought of these Biblical examples as discipleship relationships before? Choose one of the above examples and think about the lesson you can learn from that relationship.



- **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.
- 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.

How could you contribute to or benefit from a discipleship small group?

❖ **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 is why the message has reached you! This should be a call to each one of us. We must examine our lives and make discipleship a new priority.

- We can disciple children and family members. Those we are close to must learn from our example.
- We can disciple newly converted Christians as we engage in evangelism.
- We can seek out those who are less mature in their faith and offer to meet with them regularly and disciple them.
- We can bring along younger believers as we engage in our Christian service.
- 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.
- It is a privilege to join with God in changing lives.

Keeping the above points in mind, how can you make discipleship a new priority for you?



IN SUMMARY

- ❖ Evangelism is important, but discipleship takes that new faith and develops it so that new disciples can be made. Our goal should not be conversion but discipleship
- ❖ The command given to us in the Bible is not to make converts, but to make disciples.
- ❖ 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.
- ❖ This is often accomplished by older (or more mature in faith) teaching the younger.
- ❖ Discipleship in the Bible takes several forms – discipleship of children, discipleship relationships and small group discipleship.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What do you wish someone would teach you about living life as a Christian?

2. 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?

3. Why is it vital to work on our own relationship with God as we disciple others? What could happen if we don't?