

# MAKING DISCIPLES



By  
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## **Introduction**

**“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.**

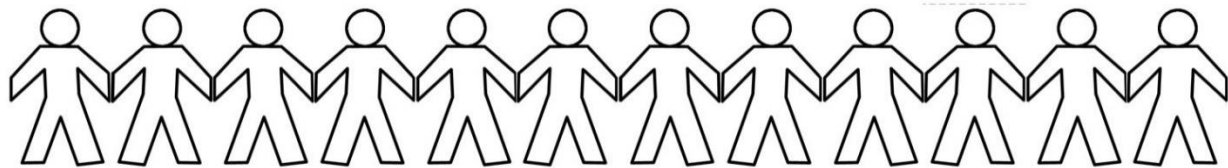
**Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,**

**baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,**

**teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.**

**And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”**

**-Jesus in Matthew 28:18-20**



## **Building Computers**

Recently my youngest son built his first desktop computer. He's homeschooled, so we designed a school project out of his desire to build a computer that would allow him to excel at his gaming passion. In order to complete his "desktop computer building" class he had to answer questions like:

- What specifications are required in order to play the games that he wants to play on his new computer?
- What will the computer look like?

- What components are required to make a computer that will play the games he wants to play?
- Where are the best places to buy those components?
- What process is required to assemble the computer?
- What kind of space will the assembling process require?
- What kind of preparation does that space require to safely assemble his computer?
- How many people are required to help him in the process?
- What expertise do those people require to properly assemble the computer?
- Where do they gain that expertise?
- If he wanted to do this as a home business, at what price does he need to sell the assembled computers in order to make a profit?

See the progression of the steps? Which one of them is the most important? All of them are equally important. Which one of them isn't required? All of them are required. Take any of them out of the process and he's going to compromise the success of the project (and his grade)!

Once he's designed the computer, figured out the components required, shopped for the best place to purchase those components, researched the process to build the computer, obtained the space, fitted it for the job, assessed the amount of help required, determined the expertise those helping need to possess, developed a plan to train those helping, coach his helpers through the process, and oversee the entire operation – THEN he can begin to actually build this amazing new computer.

As he looks to see if he's able to make money off of this venture, he has to ask the question: "Is the system scalable?" It's one thing to make *one new amazing desktop computer* a day. It's another thing to make *a hundred new amazing desktop computers* a day. It's even another thing to make *a thousand new amazing desktop computers* a day. He will need more components, different space, and more employees as his plan to make more computers increases. This will require him to return to his original questions and answer them with a different goal in mind.

When he has finished building the first computer he then has to ask questions such as:

- How well does his new computer work?
- Does it play the games as well as he expected?
- What additional components would he add if he were doing it again?
- What components seem to be unnecessary?
- Would other people buy them – or is there a market for them?
- At what price does he need to sell them to make it profitable for him?

If he wants to do a good job building his computer, as well as getting a good grade in his class – and potentially making some money off of this project – he must be very intentional in what he does, how he does it, and he must take good notes throughout the process. He can't just hope to build a great computer without putting in the research. He can't hope to fit the project within his budget without doing some comparative shopping. He can't expect to get a good grade in his class without taking good notes throughout the process and writing a good report paper. He can't just hope that the components that he purchases will "fit together," hope that the computer works when he's done with it, or expect others to want to purchase one like it regardless of cost. He can't expect that mom's going to give him an A on his class just because he excels at playing games on his new computer.

Once he's successfully assembled his first desktop computer, finds that it exceeds his expectations, learns that others would be willing to pay good money for a computer just like his, and develops a process whereby he can build and sell more computers, he can't just kick his heels up on his desk and coast for the rest of his life, right? Well, I guess that he *could* if he was satisfied with gaining limited results, attaining only one accomplishment in his lifetime, or planned on working hard only until he could achieve a life of ease – but this wouldn't be right if he had personal integrity, if he wanted to make his mom proud, or if he wanted to build upon one success so that he could achieve even more success.

## Making Disciples of Jesus Christ

This book isn't about building computers! Ha. No, it's about making disciples of Jesus Christ. Yet, there are many parallels between intentionally building computers and intentionally making disciples of Jesus Christ! The owner of the church (Jesus Christ) has tasked its members (you and I) with the job of making disciples.

Let's say that you're a pastor, an elder, or a ministry leader in the church you attend. Your job is to make disciples of Jesus Christ. If you want to be good at your disciple-making job, and please the owner of the church (Jesus Christ), you have to find the answers to questions like:

- What does a disciple of Jesus Christ look like?
- What spiritual disciplines are required for someone to develop into a fully-mature disciple of Jesus Christ?
- What personal priorities are required to develop those spiritual disciplines?
- What process is required to make disciples?
- What amount of space do we need to follow our process?
- How will that space be used?
- How many leaders are required to make disciples?
- What expertise do those leaders require to make disciples?
- Who is going to do the training?
- What financial needs are required to make disciples of Jesus Christ?

See the progression of those steps? Which one of them is the most important? All of them are equally important. Which one of them isn't required? All of them are required. Take any of them out of the process and you're going to compromise the success of the project!

Once you've determined what a disciple of Jesus Christ looks like, figured out the spiritual disciplines required to make them, ascertained the personal priorities required to develop those spiritual disciplines, developed the process, obtained the space, fitted it for the job, assessed the amount of help required, determined the expertise the leaders need to possess, developed a plan to train the leaders, coach the leaders, and manage the progress – THEN we can begin to actually make disciples of Jesus Christ.

Next you have to ask the question “Is the system scalable?” It’s one thing to make *one* disciple of Jesus Christ a year. It’s another thing to make *a hundred* disciples of Jesus Christ a year. It’s yet another thing to make *a thousand* disciples of Jesus Christ a year. You will need more resources, different space, and more employees as your plan to make more disciples increases. This will require you to return to your original questions and answer them with a different goal in mind.

After you begin to actually make disciples of Jesus Christ you have to ask questions such as:

- Is our disciple-making process working to build Christ’s Kingdom?
- Are those being disciplined inviting others to become part of the Kingdom of Christ?
- Are those new people responding to the invitation?
- Are they becoming active parts of the church?
- What financial barriers do we have to making even more disciples?

If you want to do a good job of making disciples of Jesus Christ you must be very intentional in what you do and how you do it. You can’t just show up to church without a plan and hope to make amazing disciples of Jesus Christ. You can’t just hope that the disciples you’re making are going to engage in spiritual disciplines on their own, that people will continue to show up on Sundays just because they found out that you’re in charge of the ministry, or that the owner of the factory is going to be happy regardless of the job you’re doing.

Once you’ve been successful at making one disciple; someone who lives their life in a way that Christ intended, who engages in spiritual disciplines, is part of the church, and you see that your process is scalable, or applicable to other areas of the church, you can’t just kick your heels up on your desk and coast for the rest of your life, right? Well, I guess that would be right if you were satisfied with gaining limited results, attaining only one discipleship accomplishment in your lifetime, or planned on working hard only until you could achieve a life of ease – but this wouldn’t be right if you had personal integrity, truly

intended to please the owner of the church (Jesus Christ), or you wanted to build upon one success for the Kingdom so that you could achieve even more successes for the Kingdom.

## **All Christians Are Supposed to Make Disciples**

While the above illustration is useful to get this conversation started, the points of application can be limited! It's not ***JUST*** the job of the pastor, the elder, and the ministry leader to make disciples of Jesus Christ! Making disciples of Jesus Christ is a core responsibility of each and every disciple of Jesus Christ!

In Matthew 28 we read of Christ's last words to His disciples before He returned to the Father in heaven. I think that the last words we speak at the end of our time with someone, or at the end of our life, are important words – ***very important words***. As we speak our last words we convey the most important things from our life that we wish to convey to our audience; important words that we want them to remember for the rest of their lives. As I think of the hundreds of conversations that the disciples had with Christ during their time with Him I think there must have been hundreds of things that Jesus could have said to them as He left them to carry on the work of building His Kingdom. I think that His last words to the disciples are very important words for us to focus on today as well.

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” Jesus in Matthew 28:18-20.

In a YouTube video entitled, *Don't be Deceived – Disciples Make Disciples*, Francis Chan and David Platt discuss some of the dynamics of being a disciple of Jesus Christ. One of their primary points is that a key mark of a disciple of Jesus Christ is that they are making other disciples of Jesus Christ. In other words: a sign that you have a genuine faith in Christ is that your faith in Christ has been replicated in the life of someone else because of

the time you've spent with them. This doesn't happen by itself! It must be done very intentionally!

Conversely, we could say that if someone is not actively making disciples of Jesus Christ than we should question the barriers that are keeping them from making disciples. Perhaps they are not a true disciple themselves. They might not even be a Christian. If they have not experienced the kind of a life change that compels them to share that life change with others, and invites them to experience that same kind of a transformation in their own lives, then perhaps they haven't really met Jesus at all.

This makes sense when you think of the progression we go through in our spiritual formation. Think of someone who doesn't know Christ. They're wandering through their life without Him. They're seeking hope, deeper purpose, and the peace that passes all understanding, but they haven't found it in anything they've experienced in their lives. Then, someone brings them the good news of the Gospel Message, they find Christ, their life is transformed, and they begin to grow as His disciple. This generates a desire for them to bring this Good News to others who don't know Him. These others then find Him, begin to grow as a disciple, and share that Good News with others.

This process should develop a never-ending cycle of spiritual growth leading to evangelism that leads to discipleship that leads to more spiritual growth that leads to more evangelism that leads to more discipleship that leads to more spiritual growth – etc. etc. etc.

However, much of the time there is some kind of a disconnect in this cycle. Many of those who are professing Christians are not regularly sharing their faith with the people God has placed in their lives. They are not praying for the lost around them. They are not inviting them to church. They are not intentionally discipling those who are already in the Kingdom. They might be regular church attenders, occasional Bible readers, and even pray every once in a while. They're probably not seeing a concerted path of spiritual formation taking place in their life, can't quantify a maturing of spiritual disciplines in their life, or aren't noticing a significant life change as they follow this pattern of limited discipleship.



There is obviously a disconnection somewhere between building our own discipleship and reaching back to reach the lost and build into their discipleship. Let me posit a few thoughts on this disconnect.

1. Some would argue that those who are not actively making disciples are not part of the faith. After all, you're not a Christian just because you attend church, read your Bible, or even call yourself a Christian. Nowhere in the Bible does it say that you become a Christian when you go to the altar, raise your hand in response to an invitation, or pray a prayer for salvation. Each of these *can be* part of a person's spiritual journey, but they should not be the end of the journey. Perhaps some of those who have done those things have done them *instead of* really meeting Jesus Christ.
2. Some would argue that our modern church model only allows the "super Christians" to become the disciple-makers. We give the microphone to those who have public speaking skills, those who can learn quickly, or those who are more outgoing and we are happy to let them use their skills to teach us while telling everyone else they only need to listen and follow along in their own Bibles. Perhaps we have slowed down the spiritual formation of the individual to the speed of the class as a whole.
3. Some would say that their personal involvement at church would constitute the entirety of their personal efforts to make disciples. Maybe they teach a Sunday school class, hand out bulletins, or clean up after everyone. This is the part they play. This is the role they feel comfortable with. And, after all Paul did talk about the Body of Christ having many parts, and he said that no part is more or less important than another, right? They let those who have the microphone "lead others to Christ" and they'll just do the behind the scenes part that they're "led to do."
4. Some would argue that the focus on church programs and committees have replaced the need to be personally involved in disciple-making. We have a missions program – giving to missions is how we make disciples. We have an evangelism committee – serving on the committee, planning the events where we watch a video or listen to

someone else share the Gospel Message, and inviting others to be part of the events is how we do our evangelism. Much of disciple-making is then relegated to the pastor, the elders, the church staff, and the ministry leaders. After all, that's what we're paying them for, right?

5. Some argue that there is a difference between a "Christian" and a "Disciple of Jesus Christ." They define a Christian as someone who prays to accept Christ into their life but then does little to build upon their faith. They define a disciple as someone who accepts Christ into their life and then grows in their faith to the point where they can become a pastor or a missionary, an elder, or a ministry leader. A Christian will go to heaven when they die, but they will receive little reward for their life here on earth. Following this line of thought, a disciple is one who is daily investing in Christ's Kingdom here on earth and will be greatly rewarded when they see Him face to face.

### Can We Figure It Out?

Rather than argue over potential causes for this kind of a disconnect, or debate whether or not someone is part of the Kingdom of Christ based on a prayer they once prayed, or even their church involvement, I think that our time is much better spent focusing on how we can intentionally live our lives to become mature disciples of Jesus Christ who are making more mature disciples of Jesus Christ.

That's what this book is all about. It outlines how to be a fully-devoted, mature disciple of Christ and how to make more fully-devoted, mature disciples of Jesus Christ. It includes a proven plan to meet together in intentional one-on-one discipleship relationships, as well as in small groups, to help one another become fully-devoted, mature disciples of Jesus who are actively making more fully-devoted, mature disciples of Jesus Christ.

My prayer is that the Holy Spirit uses this book to help you find at least one person who *can disciple you* through a one-on-one discipleship relationship and at least one person

who *you can disciple* through a one-on-one discipleship relationship – all of us striving for the goal of becoming fully-devoted, mature disciples of Jesus Christ together.

In the Power of His Blood,

PJ Bogoniewski