

DISCIPLE MAKING

at The River

the journey to a closer walk with Christ

- 3. Signposts of Disciple Making
- 5. Philosophy
- 6. Motivation
- 8. Disciple Making Legacy
- 10. A Jesus Model
- 11. Big Rocks
- 13. Dos and Don'ts
- 16. Disciple Making Steps
- 19. The Purple Book
- 20. Directions
- 21. Road Map

signposts of disciple making*

1. Engage the Bible

Transformation can be recognized when our mind is sharpened by the Bible, our perspective is shaped by the Bible, and our actions are directed by the Bible.

"All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work," (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

2. Obey God and Deny Self

Discipleship is the process of obedience to one who is in authority over you. Transformation can be seen when we progressively set aside earthly delights for kingdom priorities.

"If anyone wants to come with Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me," (Luke 9:23).

3. Serve God and Others

Transformation is evident when personal needs and even dreams are set aside for the needs we see in others.

"Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you did for Me," (Matt. 25:40).

4. Share Christ

Even with the need to live out the effects of the gospel, maturing believers know that speaking about the message is a necessity. Transformation is evident when we talk about the source of it.

"Always be ready to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you," (1 Pet. 3:15).

5. Exercise your Faith

Transformation is seen in believers when risk-aversion is set aside and our lives are characterized by faithful obedience to God's will.

"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." (Gal. 2:20).

6. Seek God

Transformation is seen when our desire is to know God more deeply and experience His work more fully.

"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you," (Matt. 6:33).

7. Build Relationships

Our faith is personal but it is not intended to be private. Our horizontal relationships should develop just as our vertical relationship with God does. Transformation is occurring when relational maturity is evident in our lives.

"And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to the prayers," (Acts 2:42).

8. Be Unashamed

Transformation is evident when a believer is unashamed in presenting their own life as being aligned with Christ.

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is God's power for salvation to everyone who believes, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek," (Rom. 1:16).

["Aim at heaven and you will get earth thrown in.
Aim at earth and you get neither."
C.S. Lewis]

OR consider the old Zig Ziglar quote, "if you aim at nothing then you will hit it every time." At the very heart of Christianity is the work of making disciples for Christ. It should never sit on the fringe of our life or the church. Through working on these signposts, we are able to better recognize when we are effectively moving toward that goal.

* *What Are the Eight Signposts of Discipleship?* by Lynn Pryor (Lifeway)

philosophy

True discipleship is hard. It's not complicated, but the time, investment, commitment, and accountability required is not a call for the weak. It's also not exclusively a call for the theologian. Disciple-making is the call of every believer. It was Jesus Christ's last earthly instruction. "You will be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8) was a declaration-confirmation of the call to make disciples (The Great Commission – Matthew 28). The disciples took that very seriously. And so should we. Jesus is our everything.

When we capture that reality and the Holy Spirit anoints the message of hope, we plant seeds in others that promise to spring up in a powerful life-giving display of God's glory. THAT is our purpose and therefore, our mission. Making disciples is like planting a forest for God to enjoy. Not because He needs it, but because He loves it! And then we get to watch spiritual growth happen in others all around us.

Among the ruins of ancient Rome sits a small dungeon still intact. In its prime, it was little more than a dark, circular, underground hole with plastered walls and a single small opening on top where they lowered prisoners into confinement. It was a lonely place – a desperate place. Today you can take a tour, and go down into the belly of the cell. Against the wall is a stone pillar with an inscription indicating that the Apostles Paul and Peter were held there. It was probably there that Paul wrote these words in Philippians 3:

"8 ...I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith."

Read those words again. Think about each line. Paul's singular purpose was simply to know (gain) Jesus. His singular passion, his heart's cry, his driving force was to know Jesus deeply and personally. He wanted to grasp the righteousness of God – to worship. He wanted to know the resurrection power of Jesus Christ, experientially working through his life. Even in his suffering, Paul wanted to be shaped into the likeness of Jesus. Jesus was the center of Paul's life.

Paul declared that everything else he had pursued was waste. He had been on the fast track to fame and power. He had been a rising star in the religious field, surpassing all the rest. He had all that the world said was important – wealth, prestige, success, respect – but when he met Jesus, nothing else mattered. Nothing could compare to knowing and following Jesus.



motivation

Pursuing anything other than Jesus with your one single life is simply a waste of time. One hundred years from now nothing else will have lasted and nothing else will matter. As the famous evangelist Billy Graham once said, "The ultimate experience in life is knowing Jesus."

This is the great promise of Jesus: if you make it your singular purpose to know and follow Him, He will show Himself to you. In John 15:4-5, Jesus said, "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing." To abide means to make yourself at home. To abide in Jesus means to draw close to Him, to seek to know Him more deeply. Only when we abide in Jesus can we really be used by Him to do great things.

What's your singular purpose? What drives you and defines you? That one thing is what you worship, and what you worship sits at the center of your heart. How can you know? Follow the trail of your time, your money and your desires, and they will reveal what really has your heart.

Knowing Jesus deeply and personally is the singular purpose of discipleship. But what motivates us to lead others to experience Jesus that way OR experience it ourselves? Lord willing, our motivation is to be who Jesus calls us to be AND help others find that joy as well.

We want to be at home with and equip others to be at home with Jesus. To abide in Him, and watch that flow into every area of life. This is what true discipleship is all about.

Here are some markers for testing our motivation.

Do you...

pray continuously?

That doesn't mean, you are voicing prayers all day everyday. It simply means, you have an attitude of prayer – it's on your mind. It is your go to, not a secondary thought. If not, this is for you. If so, this is for you. Is that motivating enough?

choose wisely?

Are the choices you make every day seasoned by prayer and from a contrite heart? Do those you want to disciple desire to know Jesus deeply and personally or are they just good people? Be deliberate about your time and your investment. Are you motivated to advance the Kingdom of God?

meditate deeply?

Do you dive into the depths of God's Word and search for truth? God's Word is so wonderfully rich with both knowledge and application, it is impossible to navigate a life at the feet of Jesus without regular and meaningful meditation on the scriptures.

thank regularly?

Are you motivated by your gratitude? Be sure to give thanks often. That means both thanking God for the powerful privilege and to grow and thanking those who invested in us. And while you're at it, be sure to thank those you disciple for the honor of investing in them.

consider carefully?

Putting others first starts here. Think about this. The grocery cart in the "empty" parking spot, the person who doesn't notice the line you and others have been standing in for 10 minutes, the person at dinner who has a huge mound of mashed potatoes and you have to scrape the edges to get a spoonful. People in general just don't consider others. It doesn't mean they are jerks – they just don't think about the needs of others. Discipleship starts with seeing and addressing the great need in all of us to grow deeper in our relationship with Jesus. Are you motivated to put others before yourself?

think intentionally?

Are you motivated to focus on the things of God? The walk with Christ is not accidental or presumptive. It requires work. And investing in others requires a sacrifice of time, energy, and devotion that leads us to a place where our minds and hearts are trained on the things of God.

encourage humbly?

Are you motivated to #speaklife? That's what true discipleship is all about. Let the Word of God be your guide. Encouragement is lifting a person's soul where it needs it most, and humility is setting aside your own desires and embracing those of God. So, humble encouragement is making the time to speak life into someone's soul.

send quickly?

Are you motivated to keep the movement going? Don't wait. When you have finished the 21 weeks with a leader, be prepared to launch the group you will lead.

- Be praying and considering whom you will ask weeks 8-14 (Reach)
- Invite them (by week 18) to start a new group with you
- Launch your new group two weeks after you have finished book 3 (Invest)

disciple making legacy

“So how do you make disciples?”

When asked the question about how disciples are made, most thoughts are pretty vague and varied. Most say that getting people into small groups makes “disciples.” But when pressed to give specifics of how they know discipling was taking place or what the end product looked like, the room gets pretty quiet. In most cases, church leaders have running long-standing programs with little thought to whether these programs are actually contributing to the formation of passionate, reproducing disciples. If more people are in these programs year over year, it is a success. If attendance is waning, it is time for an overhaul or a new program. The question of whether or not the program is actually producing disciples is seldom asked. So, how do you make disciples in a local church?

As we follow our Lord, we quickly learn that part of imitation is replication. Having a personal relationship with Jesus is magnificent, but it is incomplete if it ends with us. Part of being His follower is to intentionally help others learn from Him and become more like Him. To be His follower is to help others follow Him.

Being a disciple that makes disciples happens in two particular ways.

First, we’re called to evangelize. Evangelism is telling people who don’t follow Jesus what it means to follow him. We do this by proclaiming and portraying the gospel in our neighborhood and among the nations (Matt. 28:19-20). We must never forget that God has placed us in the families, workplaces, and circles of friends that we are in so that we can proclaim the gospel of grace to those who are destined to hell apart from Christ. We must help people learn how to begin to follow Jesus.

The second way we make disciples is helping other believers grow in Christ-likeness. Jesus has designed His church to be a body (1 Cor. 12), a kingdom of citizens and a family who actively build each other up into the fullness of Christ (Eph. 2:19; 4:13, 29). We are called to instruct each other about Christ (Rom. 15:14) and to imitate others who are following Christ (1 Cor. 4:16, 11:1; 2 Thess. 3:7, 9). As disciples, we intentionally pour into other disciples so they can pour into others (2 Tim. 2:1-2).

At large, many of the finely-tuned disciple-making ministries are found in the para-church world. Great organizations like The Navigators, Campus Crusade, Youth with a Mission, Student Mobilization, Christian Businessmen’s Committee, and others have a laser focus on making disciples and producing disciple makers. They have boards and leaders committed to making disciples. They have staff that spend every waking breath leading people to Christ and helping them grow in their faith. They see rapid rates of multiplication and they deploy

people into other campuses, cities, and countries to make disciples for Christ. But when we look at the average church, we don't see a lot of that. We see churches gathering for worship and running programs with little thought or intentionality toward disciple-making. But the Church has the greatest potential for leading others to love and follow Christ. The Church is the greatest vehicle for discipleship.

Jesus loves the church. Jesus started the church. Jesus gave the Great Commission to the church. The early church was a disciple-making machine. Yet so many churches today have abandoned Jesus' heart for disciple making. In some cases, like Esau, they have sold the very birthright Jesus gave us of building disciples for the promise of church growth and immediate success. We are now discovering that those methodologies (growth and success) lack eternal substance and are ineffective to reach the next generation. Some have been misled into thinking that large numbers equate to successful ministry. Some have failed to accept the role of the farmer who cultivates, plants, and waters, patiently praying until the fruit comes.

Discipleship does not just happen. We need to be intentional about cultivating deep, honest relationships in which we do spiritual good to other Christians. While we can have discipleship relationships anywhere, the most natural place for them to develop is in the community of the local church. In the church, Christians are commanded to meet together regularly, spur each other on in Christ-likeness, and protect each other against sin (Heb. 3:12-13; 10:24-25).

The discipleship relationships that spring out of this type of committed community should be both structured and spontaneous. When we study the life of Jesus, we see that He formally taught His disciples (Mt. 5-7; Mk. 10:1) while also allowing them to observe His obedience to God as they lived life together (Jn 4:27; Lk. 22:39-56).

As we follow Christ and help others follow Him, we're constantly made aware that we need grace. We fail. We sin. We struggle. But thankfully, God's grace abounds to His children. This is good news as we seek to follow Jesus together and daily be transformed into His glorious image (2 Cor. 3:18). May we faithfully follow Christ and help others to do the same until we see His face.

Our heart's desire is to see leaders in our church claim their God-given legacies of disciple making. God designed the church to be the perfect place for making disciples. As the church makes disciples, it becomes the hope of the world. For that to happen, we have to go back to the example of Jesus and replicate Jesus' disciple-making model.



a Jesus model

In the 1980s, it was the “attractional model” that focused on seeker-sensitive worship experiences designed to attract the unchurched. Willow Creek and Saddleback were the trail blazers of that movement. And they reached loads of people. In the early 90s, the Pentecostal minister, Carl George popularized the “meta church model,” emphasizing not large gatherings, but intimate, small home groups he called “cells.”

By the late 90s to the early 2000s, a new trend was developing called “missional communities.” This model originated with St. Thomas’ Crookes Church in Sheffield, England, and proposed that churches should not concentrate on large attractive worship services or small home groups, but should instead meet the needs of the community. Early adapters promoted “random acts of kindness” and “social justice” as a means to evangelize and grow the church.

In early 2000, popular bloggers Frank Viola and Neil Cole promoted the “organic church model,” defining church as a rapidly reproducing gathering of three to 20 in America. By 2012 there were over 5000 churches using this model. The fastest growing churches in America are using a multi-site strategy. Today, a whole new language circulates on church blogs and conferences using terms like “relational,” “tribal,” “fundamental,” “reformed,” “egalitarian,” “complementarian,” “cessationist,” “charismatic,” and the list goes on.

Church conferences are all about promoting the latest models and tribes. Mega church pastors take the stage like rock stars and talk about how many thousands of people attend their services and how many followers they have on Twitter. All the while, the pastor in the seat, slugging it out in a struggling church, has few options. He can leave discouraged (“I’ll never be as successful or as cool as he is. I guess I’m a failure.”) or leave envious (“I want what he’s got. I want to be like him and enjoy the fruit he eats. I’ll mimic him so maybe I can be successful, too.”) Either option is a sad expression of the calling on his life.

In the meantime, the church at large is shrinking. Now don’t get us wrong. Church models or tribal distinctives aren’t bad. In fact, each of the models we’ve mentioned have been used by God to advance the church and to reach people. Additionally, throughout history the church has always adapted and morphed into various shapes and models—sometimes for the better, sometimes for the worse. The church has always been tribal, dividing and connecting along the lines of theology and practice.

Our concern is that somewhere in all the current dialogue about models, tribes, and trends, the model of Jesus can be easily lost.

big rocks

We've all seen the illustration: Given a large glass jar and several rocks of various sizes, including large rocks, pebbles and sand. A person tries to pour in sand first, then pebbles and then can't fit the big rocks. You know the deal...the big rocks go in first.

If you try to randomly push everything into your schedule, most likely, something important is going to be left out. Your family isn't going to get your best. Your work will suffer. Your list of tasks won't get done. And certainly, time to make disciples will disappear. But if you intentionally place the big rocks of your life in first, making room intentionally in your schedule for what matters the most, and then fitting the rest around those things, you will be able to accomplish all the things God wants you to accomplish. If you ask people who successfully make disciples year after year, you discover that each one of them made disciple making a big rock in their lives. Making disciples isn't something they do with their extra time. It's priority and given a primary spot in their weekly schedule. If we are going to make disciples who make disciples, we must make it a priority in our life. That's what Jesus did. throughout His ministry, He prioritized investing in a few. Around halfway into His public ministry, Jesus spent four times as much time with a few as He did with the crowd. While the masses constantly demanded His time, He *intentionally, purposefully* and *strategically* invested His life in a few who would reproduce. You may think, "How can I do that? I'm already so busy!" Let me give you a few suggestions:

Take an inventory of your schedule.

We must eliminate the things that are not as important so we can concentrate on what's most important. Eliminate and concentrate. Take a look at your schedule. How much time is going into things that are not important and don't particularly matter for eternity? What things could be eliminated from your life? How could you concentrate your time and be more productive?

Repurpose the time you already have.

Many will say, "I'm just too busy!" What if you took just one mealtime a week - one meal out of 21 - and gave it to the Lord for the purpose of sharing a meal and making disciples? As you begin to look at the time you already use, you will be surprised to find there are many ways to repurpose your time for making disciples.

Make an appointment.

Usually, we make appointments for the things that really matter. If you are sick, you will make an appointment with a doctor. If you need legal help, you will make an appointment with a lawyer. What matters most gets put on your calendar as an appointment. So why not make an appointment with your "group" to make disciples. It is just as important as any other

appointment you have on the books. Carve out time to make disciples by making appointments and keeping them.

Be flexible and creative.

Many times, the people you are discipling have changing and flexible schedules. So don't be afraid to be fluid, flexible and creative. Technology allows us to communicate in creative and innovative ways. Don't let the inability of a "regular" meeting keep you from investing in someone's life. Be intentional without being rigid.

Ultimately, making disciples is a matter of the heart. Jesus said, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also," (Matt. 6:21). He was saying our time, our talent and our treasure will always follow what has our heart. We always find time, money and energy for the things we love the most. Or simply put, we always find time for what matters most to us. So make following Jesus and investing in others the heartbeat of your life, and when you do, you will find the time necessary to accomplish it.



"We always find time for what matters the most to us."

dos and don'ts for leaders

Don't start casting vision (aka "talk it up") about disciple making immediately.

Do start making disciples immediately.

Probably the biggest mistake leaders make in disciple making is they reveal their vision and passion for making disciples too quickly and then turn it into a church program that usually has a short shelf life. There will be a time for vision casting and preaching on disciple making, but not at the very beginning. Instead, keep vision casting one on one. Look for ones who understand the priority to disciple and start investing in their lives. Help them reproduce and reproduce others who will reproduce. Work under the radar. That is what Jesus did. For the first year and half, Jesus didn't preach to massive crowds, casting His vision of disciple making. Initially John the Baptist drew the crowds, Jesus was content to work in the shadows.

He worked under the radar of John's public ministry, quietly investing in five men. When the time came for him to go public, he already had men ready to begin reproducing. Jesus said the Kingdom of God is like a bit of leaven that silently and invisibly works through the whole dough (Matt. 13.33). So don't begin from the pulpit, begin at the coffee shop. Start quietly investing in others.

"Why is this important?" First, it allows us to field-test your methods to discover what works best for us. We don't want to take something church wide that won't work in a real-life context. Second, it allows us to build a tribe of supporters. Once we go public with the vision of disciple making, we will have people who can attest to the power of it and how their lives have been changed. Third, once we begin to publicly speak about disciple making, people will **want** to be discipled. If we start quietly making disciples first, when the demand is there, you will have people ready to meet that demand and disciple the people in our church.

Don't expect anyone else to do it.

Do lead the charge yourself.

The quickest way to kill a disciple making movement in your church is to leave it to others while you fail to get involved. Remember, disciple making is 90% modeling what the Christian life looks like to others. We must set the pace ourselves. We must give ourselves to investing in the believers in our church. Make disciples. Live authentically before them. Give them an example to follow. Walk with God on your own as a church leader, and share what God is speaking to you.

Build relationships with people who don't know Christ and regularly share the gospel with them. Gather a few people you are investing in on a regular basis. When the people in our church start seeing us do these things, they will follow! Let's not turn this into a program that will eventually die. Don't give this responsibility over to someone else. Set the pace with us and model for others what it means to know Christ and invest in others. If we will lead by example, they will follow anywhere.

Don't do a mass sign up.

DO select the people you know.

"If you want to be discipled, sign up on this clipboard...under your chair, if you remember, and if you REALLY want to, and if it's convenient..." Making the appeal to everyone has some problems. First, that is not how Jesus did it. When it came to training men, Jesus always took the initiative (Matt. 4:18-19). Mark 3:13 reports that Jesus "called to Him those whom He desired." Jesus picked the guys He wanted to spend time with. Jesus always looked for the men who were spiritually curious. The first men Jesus discipled were men who came after Jesus with spiritual questions (John 1:39).

The best person to disciple is not the man who thinks he already knows everything. It's the man who is hungry, eager, and ready to learn. Read that again. We'll wait. That is the kind of person you want to disciple. Second, if you get 10 or 30 people wanting to be discipled, there is no way you can personally do it yourself. Unless you have prepared a group first, that plan is going to fail fast. Third, you want to be sure that the people you initially invest in have the capability of reproducing. Not everyone is ready for this phase. You wouldn't want to invest a large amount of your time in a person who will never take what you have shown them and invest in others. Better to do what Jesus did, select the ones that are ready and that will be most productive.

Don't underestimate the power of a few people who walk with God.

DO prioritize reaching and training adults.

The story is often told about Dawson Trotman, the founder of The Navigators, as he was recruiting counselors for one of Billy Graham's Crusades in a large city. He called supporting churches asking them for help. He asked one secretary who answered the phone if they had many men or women in their church who knew their Bibles well and could lead someone to Christ. She replied, "Would you repeat the qualifications again, please?" So Dawson did. After

a long pause, the secretary replied, “You know we did have a man like that in our church once, but he moved away.” Unfortunately, I’m sure that church is not the exception. We want a growing list of people who know their Bibles and can lead someone to Christ. A list of people who are trained, proven, solid, and ready at a moment’s call. There is a crying need for Christians like this.

Think about it. If a man is walking with God, chances are good he will lead his wife and children to walk with God. Reach the man, reach the family. The man will provide spiritual leadership in his home, at his office, and in the church. For generations, God has used godly women to give leadership to the church. If it weren’t for godly women, like those who invested in young Timothy’s life (2 Timothy 1:5) the church would not be as strong as it is today. However, over time men have taken a back seat in spiritual leadership both in the home and at the church. A 2002 Gallup poll revealed, “A mountain of Gallup survey data attests to the idea that women are more religious than men, hold their beliefs more firmly, practice their faith more consistently, and work more vigorously for the congregation.”

Today, the typical church in America draws a crowd that is 61% female and 39% male. On any given Sunday in America, there are 13 million more women than men in church. Those numbers may not totally reflect us at The River. We have a nearly 50% ratio of men and women. Largely because we are more family-centered than most towns. But when we as leaders begin to invest in other leaders, they will step into the legacy roles of they may have forgotten or abandoned – both men AND women. Both equally essential to disciple-making and to leading their homes closer to Jesus.

Don’t underestimate the power of godly legacy.

When God gets ahold of a person’s heart, there is a generational, LEGACY impact. That’s why the last prophecy in the Old Testament is a promise that before the Lord comes, He will “turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers” (Malachi 4.6).

disciple making steps*

Discipleship is the continued process of loving Jesus. It starts with the knowledge that Jesus loves you and continues with the experience of obeying Jesus because you love Him.

1. Learning Stage

Personal discipleship – “Do you love me more than these?” (John 21:15)

Jesus asked a very personal question to Peter. He asked Peter if he loved Jesus more than “these.” To what “these” is Jesus referring? Jesus could have referred to the love of the other disciples. He could also be referring to the fish Peter just caught. He could also be referring to the boat and the business. I believe that Jesus was pointing to the fish that he was cooking and asking if Peter loved Jesus more than the fish. The reason is that Jesus was comparing the love of Jesus to following Peter’s own way of life. When it comes to following Jesus, we have to grow in loving Him more than what we have loved before.

The learning stage is all about personal discipleship. During this first stage of renewing your personal discipleship with Jesus, a Christian goes back to the basics of loving Jesus more than anything else. After Peter affirms that he loves Jesus, Jesus steps up the call of discipleship. This leads to the second stage of personal discipleship

2. Lending Stage

Making disciples – “Feed my lambs.” (John 21:15)

Here, Jesus says to feed lambs. Lambs are young sheep. They are not fully grown sheep. They are child sheep. Jesus instructs Peter to make disciples. This is related to the commission Jesus gave the entire group in Matthew.

“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,” (Matthew 28:19)

We are told here that we are to make disciples, which is the main action in this text. This is the same as “feed my lambs” in John. You go from learning for yourself to helping someone else grow. You lend out what you have learned.

But it does not end there.

Each time, Jesus asks Peter if Peter loves Jesus. The question about the love of Jesus is central to how discipleship works. Discipleship is not just about learning. It is about loving. So, one

can learn to love Jesus. One can learn to love younger people in the faith. That's relatively easy. They don't know as much as you. You don't know as much as Jesus. You pass on what you learn from Jesus to the lamb.

It is at this point, we need to see that discipleship takes a level of deeper faith and love than we originally thought. It is here where most Christians get stuck. They want someone else to teach them. But they rarely want to take the responsibility that discipleship requires.

3. Leading Stage

Disciple-making Disciples – "Tend my sheep" (John 21:16)

Here, we go from learning to lending, to actually leading. The young lambs you have taught now need a leader, not just a teacher. They need someone who will help them go from consuming to contributing. Jesus wanted Peter to lead the church to grow larger. At this stage, you are helping the church to go from just learning things in their Bible studies to participating in the mission of the church. It is here that some people will balk. You know it because you will hear people say they "are not being fed."

"And 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)

Peter later defined shepherding as supervisor position. He also said that the position should be approached with the right attitude. A shepherd should oversee with joy.

"Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly" (1 Peter 5:2)

There should be people who are not just learning, but are lending out to others. Then comes the point of discipleship where you learn a hard lesson.

4. Letting Go Stage

Disciple makers making disciple makers – "Feed my sheep." (John 21:17)

What is the difference between feeding lambs and feeding sheep? A big difference. You have to LET GO. You go from leading people to letting them lead themselves. Feeding sheep is much different than feeding lambs. Let me explain with a cattle illustration.

If you have a calf in which the mother doesn't take, you have to bottle feed it. So you spend lots of time feeding it milk by hand. There is no mother to take the calf and so you help it grow. Eventually, you have to let the calf be "weaned." This means that the calf learns to grow on its own. A dependent Christian has to become a growing Christian who can eventually

become an independent Christian. That can only happen when a mature Christian who has been discipling another Christian lets go so that the immature Christian can grow. A lamb has to stand on its own to grow and become a sheep. A lamb becomes a sheep when it leaves its mother and lives life on its own. The same is true for us when we follow Christ.

5. Living Stage

Following Jesus everywhere - "Follow me." (John 21:18-19)

Ultimately, loving Jesus means that you follow Him wherever He tells you to go. It means rising above the Learning stage, the Lending stage, the Leading stage, the Letting Go stage, to finally the Living stage. You live the life that Jesus calls for you. My personal discipleship will take me to further levels of obedience. Jesus said in Mark about the way that discipleship works:

"And calling the crowd to Him with His disciples, He said to them, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." (Mark 8:34)

Discipleship is a growth process where we continue to give up more of ourselves and take on more of what Jesus wants of us. Jesus shared a prophecy with Peter, said that Peter would be crucified and that Peter needed to follow Him. That is the final stage of personal discipleship. You go from learning to living. As your love for Jesus increases, so does your life for Jesus. You give up more of yourself and you accept more of what Jesus expects. All the while, you are passing down lessons to others.

In Peter's case, he moves from being responsible for 10 other disciples to leading a church that eventually grows to thousands. He went from there to start other churches. The call to discipleship deepened. Discipleship is a long process of obedience, from personal growth to the continued growth of the kingdom of God.



* *The 5 Stages of Personal Discipleship – 19 July 2017 by Jim Erwin (Patheos)*

the purple book

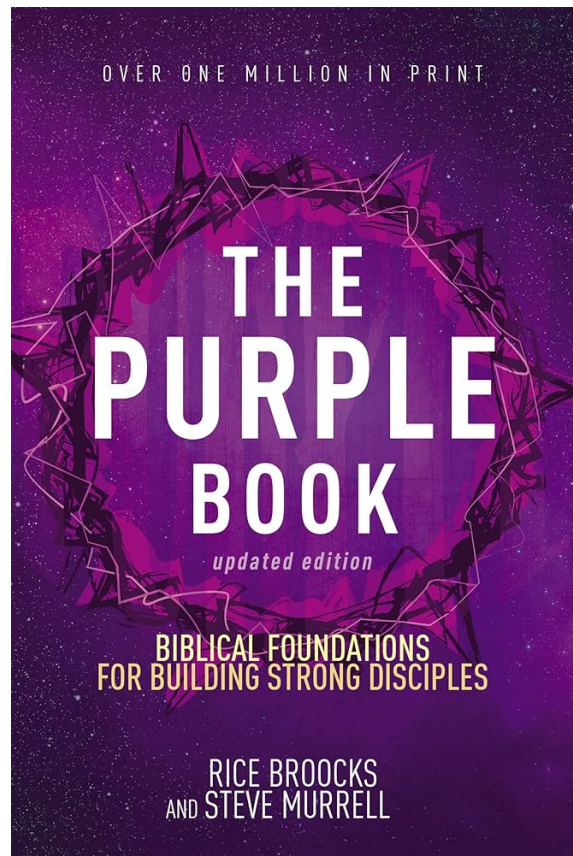
**"Give us the tools, and we
will finish the job."**

Winston Churchill

To do the work right, we need the right tools. *The Purple Book*, is an interactive disciple making journey made up of twelve distinct and transformative chapters – weeks for our purpose of meeting together and walking through applying the essential beliefs of Christianity.

The Purple Book will help you grasp the foundational truths that God wants you to hear on topics such as sin, salvation, spiritual gifts, prayer, worship, generosity, and evangelism. Along the way you will understand what the Bible means when it says Scripture is "God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16).

The faith you hold has the power to change lives and transform nations. Gain a solid foundation the enemy can't dismantle, and a heart shaped by knowledge of God's Word.



The Purple Book helps us understand foundational truths that God wants us to hear on topics such as sin, salvation, spiritual gifts, prayer, worship, generosity, and evangelism.

- Learn how the Bible is "God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16).
- Discover that the faith you hold has true power to change lives and transform nations.
- Gain a solid foundation the enemy cannot dismantle—and a heart shaped by knowledge of God's Word.

directions

1. Identify those around you who have not walked through the disciple making steps.

2. Build a small group of disciples. 2 is wonderful. 4 is OK. 3 is ideal.

3. Begin praying for individual group members – for urgency and follow-through

4. Secure copies of The Purple Book (enough for you and your group).

The books are \$5 each – Let people in your group buy them. It's a small and huge investment in their walk, and people take things more seriously when they are invested. See Pastor Brent to get them: brent@theriverpanhandle.com | 214-783-1742

5. Determine a time and place to meet.

6. Call initially to walk through the plan and explain the process.

- Give books to the group at least 1 week ahead of time.
- Make a commitment to Jesus and each other to:
 - See it through
 - Memorize scriptures
 - Answer questions thoughtfully and thoroughly
 - Practice daily devotions in the material
 - Meet together consistently with the group

7. The Meetings

- Pray together.
- Scripture memory (pick a verse from the chapter each week).
- Share thoughts about each day's journal/questions.
- Establish accountability for the daily journaling / sharing.
- Assign accountability / prayer partners for the week.

8. Keep legacy moving forward! Your group is ready to begin steps 1-8 with a new group of their own (see "send quickly" page 7)

- Multiply disciple makers by helping your group start the process with their own group.
- Be available to help/encourage them.
- Share this document with them. Download at: theriverpanhandle.com/disciple
- Repeat. Repeat. Repeat.



Identify those to be disciplined

Invite them to take the journey with you

Determine time and place to meet

Get PURPLE Books

Begin praying for group members

Meet initially to walk through the plan

Meet regularly and encourage them to stay the course

Help your group prepare to lead a group

Keep legacy moving forward by multiplying disciple makers