

# Making Disciples

**Matt 28:19-20**

*Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

A lot of people think that the Great Commission was about getting people to pray the sinner's prayer. If you are one of those people then you need to rethink your philosophy and amend it in light of Jesus' words.

There are 3 key ingredients to what He has called all of us to do.

## **1. Go and make disciples.**

The Bible doesn't say, wait for them to come to church and hear a good sermon, or wait for someone else to guide them through the steps. It says **GO** and make **disciples**, not **converts**. A lot of people look at Billy Graham and think of him as doing more of the Great Commission than anyone else over the last 50 years. The truth is that Billy *personally*, has made very few disciples. Where Billy has been exceptional is at using and training the local churches to follow up and make disciples. It is not enough to get people to come to church or to pray the sinner's prayer. It is up to each person individually to get new converts hooked up to the body of Christ and to help them understand what it means to have Jesus as Lord of their lives.

## **2. Baptizing them.**

It is important for every believer to be baptized. Baptism is an outward expression of an inward commitment. It acknowledges that the old man is dead and that the person is a new creature in Christ. It acknowledges that their sins have been washed away, erased, gone forever in the eyes of God. It is also a ritualized way to welcome a new convert into the family of Christ. We witness their baptism and we rejoice with them in their choices. Finally, it is an act of obedience to Jesus who commanded it.

## **3. Teaching them.**

New converts are often unsure of what they have just signed up for. They need to be taught and guided. That job is yours, the person who led them to Christ, their neighbor, friend, and relative. It is **not the primary job of the pastor or the elders**. Yes, we will teach them and equip them, but Discipling them is your primary task. It is your job to get them started reading the Bible. It is your job to warn them against starting in Genesis, but to get them to start in the Gospel of John and to tell them why. It is your job to teach them the basics of the faith. If you need help, that is where the Elders can help you. You can use our brochures as a starting point, especially our Statement of Faith. It is your job to get them involved in a small group and get them to know more people.

## ***Making Disciples***

- All of us want to see people come to the Lord.
- Most of us freeze up and shy away when the time comes to actually do it.
- Many of us don't do it because we don't know how.
- Others don't do it because they are afraid of failure.
- Still others are afraid of being seen as a religious nut.

**Remember that Jesus says to GO.** It is far better to go and make mistakes than to sit on the sidelines. God can use your mistakes, but He can't use your inaction. I use to get so mad at fanatics who beat people over the head with the Bible, or who got into people's faces to point out the sin in their lives. Granted, those aren't the best methods, and some people do get turned off at the time. Over time, however, I have been thankful for those people because they have opened doors for me. People see who I am and how I conduct myself and then they ask questions because they see a difference between those who came before me and myself. It opened up doors for me to share the Good News with them. Don't worry about blowing it. Go and God will honor it.

**Don't worry about what people might think about you.** No matter what you do, there is always going to be some people who will be responsive to you and your message, others will appreciate you and reject your message, and yet others will reject both you and your message. This is a fact of life. Jesus knew this and that is why He told His disciples to shake off the dust when people didn't receive them. **Forget about it!** Move on. Don't let it affect you. It is their loss. Instead focus on the fact that you are doing what God called you to do. Men and women may reject you, but God chose you. Which is more important: the approval of man or the approval of God? If they rejected His prophets and His Son, you need to realize that they will reject you also. Don't dwell on it. Also realize that though it may seem as if they have totally rejected what you have to say, you may have prepared them for the next person to come along.

**John 4:37-38**

*Thus the saying 'One sows and another reaps' is true. 38 I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor."*

**Don't worry about the results leave those to God.** Our job is to move people along the Engels scale. It is the Holy Spirit working through us and in a person's life that makes the difference. Our responsibility is to preach the Good News and to make disciples. John Wesley is quoted as saying that the average conversion takes 2 ½ years, and that in a time when most people grew up in church!

**Overcome Fear.**

**2 Tim 1:7-8**

*For God did not give us a spirit of timidity (Fear), but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.*

*8 So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord,*

Fear is not from the Lord. It is tool the enemy uses to immobilize us and take us out the game. Most of us are afraid of the unknown. Our worst day on any job is our first day. We don't know what to expect. But after a few days we start to feel at ease because we are getting familiar with our surroundings. It is the same thing with sharing. The more you do it, the easier it gets and the more you want to do it. Get in the game! Just do it!

**Overcoming the salesman mentality.** Many people share their faith with others but never get to the point of asking people to make a decision for Christ. In sales this is called the close, moving in for the kill. Christianity is not a hard sell. Remember that you are not trying to sell people anything. You are sharing with them the Good News. Remember how you felt when you asked Jesus into your heart? That is what you are offering others, a chance to feel that good for the first time in their lives. You don't have to convince them to buy into Christianity. You are inviting them to become part of the family.

**The Post-Modern World.** We are living in a different world than we grew up in. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century most people grew up with at least a rudimentary knowledge of God. Most at least attended Sunday School and when you mentioned the Bible it meant something to them. Not anymore. Most people only have second-hand knowledge about Christianity. The Bible is just another book filled with myths to them. The Church is irrelevant to them. In the past, we appealed to mind first and then to the heart. We tried to convince people of the truth of the Bible. In the Post-Modern world we need to do

just the opposite. Appeal to the heart first, and then to the mind. They may believe in God, but what they believe is a hodge-podge of many religions and philosophies. When you talk to them you can't say, "The Bible says..." because that doesn't mean anything to them.

### ***Things you should know about pre-Christians***

1. Most have rejected Church but they haven't rejected God. Many even pray. Some even consider themselves Christians.
2. They are morally adrift, but secretly want an anchor.
3. They resist rules but respond to reasons.
4. They have judged Christianity and don't understand it, but are also ignorant about what they claim to believe in. The information they have about Christianity comes from the headlines in the news, which are mostly negative.
5. They have legitimate questions about Christianity but they don't get answers from Christians, just judgment.
6. They don't want to know if Christianity is true. They just want to know if it works and will it work for them. Ex. **India's Untouchables**.
7. They don't want knowledge about something they want to experience it!
8. They don't want to be somebody's project, but they would like to be somebody's friend.
9. They are distrustful of Religious leaders, but are receptive to authentic Biblical leadership. They want to see if your walk lines up with your talk. They want to see if God makes a positive difference in your life or if it just a crutch.
10. They want their children to get quality moral training even if they feel they themselves are not spiritually sensitive.

### **The best way to share your faith is to do exactly that.**

- **Start out by sharing your story.** Tell them how your life was before you met Christ and what a difference it made when you asked Jesus to come into your heart.
- **Tie your story into God's story.** Tell them about how God cared about you and had a plan for your life. Tell them about how the Bible tells the story of God drawing us into a relationship with Him.
- **Invite them to be a part of the story.** Let them know that God loves them and has a plan for their life. Sharing the Love of God will draw them. Remember that you are sharing a message of hope.
- **Practically Speaking.** Prepare a 5-minute testimony and a 3-minute testimony. Write it out. Tell them to someone and have them time them. Most of us tend to ramble and rabbit-trail. Remember that we are living in an MTV generation. People don't have patience for anything more than a 5-minute sound bite. If you go any longer in your presentation you will lose them. If they ask questions, then you can add to what you've said.
- **Remember to share what God has done for you and then quote one verse that had an impact on you.** People are into testimonials. That is what has spurred on the infomercial craze of the last few years. Don't preach at them, or give them theology. Share your story with them. Then give them one verse. Don't say, "The Bible says...", but instead say something like this, "Something that God said in His book really touched me" and then share your verse.

#### **Isa 55:11**

*So is my word that goes out from my mouth:*

*It will not return to me empty,*

*but will accomplish what I desire*

*and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.*

There is **power in God's Word**. Read it, digest it, know it, use it.