

III. Discipleship is the Heart of the Measure

Discipleship is the measure of our success in this dispensation. By discipleship you can measure the two goals of conformity to Christ and glory to God in three areas: in the church, in the world, and in the individual believer. So let's talk about how

A. *It is the Measure of _____ in Churches.*

1. How do you measure success? Attendance, offerings, conversions, baptisms?
2. If we correctly understand Matthew 28:18-20, the ONLY true measure of success is reproduction and multiplication – that's done through discipleship.
3. It is fulfilling the Mission. You know what would turn this country upside down? Your city upside down? Prepare for revival? For our churches to return the Bible back to their people. To have an army of believers unleashed in ministry. Because revival is not prayer meetings, healings or even conversions. Revival is a common man or woman taking a common Bible and fulfilling God's mission in the lives of other people.

Understanding that discipleship is the measure of success in the church leads us to seeing that...

B. *It is the Measure of Success in _____ of the Lost.*

1. We have devised many ways to evangelize and measure the results by securing professions of faith.
2. Reading all the newsletters of evangelistic and missions organizations and adding them up means we have evangelized the world several times over! Jack Hyles won Chicago to Christ two or three times.
3. Only discipleship gives us a real measure to see if the profession has been really possession

C. *It is the Measure of Success in the Individual Believer's _____.*

1. Our job is to have spiritual children. To reproduce.
2. But giving birth implies the responsibility of discipleship
3. Success as a believer is to be measured by discipleship, and specifically 2 Timothy 2:2 as a yardstick
4. Success implies our need for a specific philosophy and plan of approach toward the task of discipleship.

What does a fruitful discipleship ministry look like?

Next: Examining the biblical pattern for discipleship ministry.

The Biblical Pattern of Discipleship

I. **The importance of the ministry of *biblical discipleship* and its relationship to other ministry goals.**

To carry out the mandate of Matthew 28:18-20, there are at least five essential objectives we must accomplish to fulfill the Great Commission.

These are the five reasons for the existence of our church:

A. There are five _____ in Christian ministry.

1. Evangelism.

This is the Go ye of the Great Commission. You cannot disciple a lost man, so first you must go and win him. The emphasis is on our responsibility to go and exert ourselves to evangelize the lost people of the world.

It's easier to teach the Bible than preach the gospel. We have to win them first!

Recognize:

- People are born sinners and destined to perish, Rom.3:23; 5:12
- People must be delivered from darkness and forgiven, Col.1:12-14
- Jesus Christ came to save sinners, Luke 19:10; 1 Tim.1:15
- Christians are to give the gospel to the lost, Rom.10:13-15; 2 Cor.4:3-6

Objective: Lead people to Christ and baptize them.

But cannot leave them to grow in their own.

God has given them purpose and has a plan for them. (Eph. 2:10)

2. Establishment of _____.

This is the significance of the instruction "baptizing them," because new converts are brought into the local assembly.

- Baptism is one of the requirements of discipleship.
- The Christian life was never intended to be lived in isolation, just as no member of Israel was ever intended to live outside of the camp.
- True discipleship cannot effectively take place outside of the local church.

Understand:

- The first church was established in Jerusalem, Acts 2:41-47
- The gospel went out, people saved and churches were formed, **Acts 15:41; 16:5**
- A local assembly of believers called a body, 1 Cor.12:13-27
- Eph. **4:11-16**- God's plan for this age is the local church.

Priority of a family: edify, equip, and work together

Church has the ability to prepare people to minister in work

Church body can reproduce other church bodies

3. Preparing disciples.

- A *disciple* is a student, learner, follower.
- The objective of discipleship is to equip believers to live Christ's life on this earth.
- "Teaching all nations, baptizing them" – this is the process by which we transfer our life by passion on our relationship with God to others.
- Jesus called out twelve disciples early in his ministry, Matt.10:1-4
- Converts in Antioch were disciples called "Christians", **Acts 11:25-26**
- Jesus prepared his disciples to teach future disciples, Matt.28:19-20
- II Tim. 2:2 - The multiplication factor.
- Our mission is to make learners of all nations by teaching or discipling them.

We are saved to serve the living God

Jesus started with twelve common country boys and gave them the most significant mission on earth. Jesus gave them the resources to accomplish His plan.

4. _____ our lives to be like Jesus Christ.

- After salvation the child of God must grow in Jesus Christ, Rom.8:29
- Grow to be perfect (complete, mature, full age), Luke 6:40; Col.4:12
- Grow to walk in and be led by the Holy Spirit, Gal.5:16-18, 25
- Finish the work that God began in me at salvation, Phil.1:6; Col.4:17
- The goal of discipleship - **Col. 1:27-28**.

This is the end result of discipleship, teaching to observe all things whatsoever the Lord has commanded us.

"My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you."
(Galatians 4:19)

God predestined you to grow in Christ after salvation.

Mankind desires to reach perfection and utopia environments by means of science exploration, medicine, cloning.

Man seeks retirement, shorter work week, and more benefit.

Only Jesus can perfect you and give you true peace!

5. Bringing _____ to God

This is implied in verse 20 with the phrase, unto the end of the world

- Our purpose is to bring glory to God; **Isa.43:7, 21; 1 Cor.1:31**
- In whatsoever we do, do all to the glory of God, **1 Cor.10:31**

- To praise and give thanks to God, Psa.100:4; Col.3:17
- Eccl. 12:13- Our reason for existence - I Cor. 6:19-20

God created you for Himself for His pleasure

When time and sin end, God's kingdom will be comprised of people who practiced their free will to trust God and His Word.

The connection between the commission and the goal of glorifying God is clear from Rom 16:25-27

"Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting do, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen."
(Romans 16:25-27)

B. The importance of discipleship in relation to the other four goals.

All five of these goals of Christianity are vitally important, and none can be ignored, but discipleship holds the key position.

1. Discipleship forms the _____ between the first two (_____) goals and the last two (_____) goals. Goals which cannot be measured.
 - People who make a profession of faith, who are baptized or join a church can be numbered, **Acts 2:41; 4:4**
 - Local church bodies can be counted, **Acts 9:31**
 - Difficult to know how many people are growing in Christ and how many Christians are actually serving and walking with God. Most churches are focused on immediate results, not on long-term growth.
 - Goals 4 & 5, there is no external unit of measure for the last two goals, therefore most churches ignore them.

Pre-occupation with numbers, nickels and noses will diminish importance of discipleship.

Quantity will not produce quality. Quality will result in quantity.

2. Discipleship provides people with all the _____ necessary to carry out their ministry and bring glory to God.
 - Jesus was not satisfied with just having the disciples believe in him.
 - Jesus had a plan to teach and prepare them to minister and glorify God.
 - People must grow spiritually just as they grow physically to maturity

Jesus devoted most of His ministry to His disciples.

First(s) years of persons life are important to future.

- Personal attention and investment

Jesus only lost one disciple

Other eleven served to make disciples and prepare them to carry on.

II. **These Five Goals Can Be Illustrated By The Example Of Raising _____.**

1. Evangelism - Bearing fruit through the new birth - a baby is born.
2. Establishment of churches - That baby is brought home and placed within the family unit.

Evangelism and church attendance are vital, but true Christianity does not stop there. Just as family life does not end with simply bringing home the baby.

3. Making disciples - teaching and training new converts - The child is taught the basic principles of life.
4. Conforming our life to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ - The child grows up to be "just like dad."
5. Bringing God the glory - Prov. 17:6 - "Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers." Prov. 10:1, 15:20, 23:24-25, 29:3

III. **The _____ to the ministry of discipleship and how to _____ against them and _____ them.**

A. _____ **between the discipler and disciple.**

- The improper division between *clergy* (spiritual leaders) and *laity* (congregation)
- This began after the death of the Apostles and the following generation.
The 3rd & 4th generations became apathetic allowing some false doctrine to enter the church.
- **Doctrine of the Nicolaitans was setting a priest over the laity, Rev.2:6, 15**
They lifted themselves as the final authority. God hates this mindset and practice!
- This philosophy forces the common Christian to receive a formal religious education (outside the local church) before becoming a spiritual leader.
- Key: God gave his Holy Spirit to empower every believer and gave us the Bible to be understood by every Christian in the Church.
Roman Catholic Church has this division firmly in place by 3rd century
- *Some priests, clergy, bishops, thought themselves higher*
Dark Age - bible kept from common believer
Corinthian church allowed this philosophy to cause diversions
When church leadership is elevated and praised
- *They become more vulnerable for attack and big fall*
- *They can become untouchable in a glass house*
- *The congregation begins putting personal spirituality in the leaders shoulder.*

B. **Intellectual studies and debates.**

- **Many people honor human thought and wisdom above the simple faith needed to understand God and His Word, 1 Cor.1:19-31**
- Some Christians are unwilling to be disciplined because they value being self taught and forming their own conclusions.

- People who doubt the Word of God and attack its teachings are skeptics (we'll always have those!)
- We don't have to defend the Word of God but just live it out. The Bible defends itself
- Key: find faithful people who desire to learn the Word and feed them
2 Tim.2:2
DISCIPLESHIP DOES NOT AND CANNOT WORK W/ UNFAITHFUL PEOPLE
People don't understand the bible or refuse to believe bible
Prov 23:9 - Don't speak to a fool, Luke 23:8-9, Jesus set example.
Col 2:8-10 - Beware of those that attempt to spoil you with philosophy, traditions, and science.
1 Cor 2:2-5 - Preach Jesus Christ – keep it simple
1 Pet 2:11-15 - Blameless life will put to silence the ignorance of foolish men
Don't give skeptics a reason to reject Jesus Christ.
2 Cor 3:1-3 - Let your ministry speak for you - **God will defend his written word.**

C. The _____ movement.

- Definition: the attempt to reincarnate the Apostles ministry (Book of Acts - a transitional book!)
- They emphasize the physical miracles rather than teaching spiritual principles that guided those experiences
- Jesus Christ gave his Jewish Apostles the power of signs and miracles to continue to reach the Jews who specifically required signs, Matt.12:38; 1 Cor.1:22

Jews require a sign. 1Cor. 1:22 / Tongues are for a sign. 1Cor. 14:22
Joshua 5

Joshua has led Israel across Jordan River and into Promised Land.

Israel has seen miracles in the wilderness for 40 years. vs. 10-12

They have stepped out by faith by believing and obeying.

God finally ceases to spoon feed them manna and quail meat.

There comes a time when Christians must begin feeding themselves. But many Christians continue to depend upon signs and external miracles for God to prove himself. Yes God works miracles in your life but governed by absolute truth. We must learn to trust in whom God is and what He says; and cannot focus on what we want from God. There is an end to being disciple but no end to depending upon God for discernment and direction.

- The Charismatic Movement is often driven by emotions and experiences; less upon the absolute, complete and perfect word of God
- Key: rightly divide the Word and judge everything in light of the Word.
2 Tim.2:15; 2 Pet.1:19-21

Human emotions and experiences do not supersede fact

Unknown tongues, healing services slain in the spirit

Leadership misapplies scripture, causing confusion - 1 Cor 14:22

1. That Holy Spirit comes and goes, determined by person's faith.

2. That Christians sometimes need a second filling of Holy Spirit

3. That if miracles are not present then person lacks faith

4. That Christian can lose their salvation.

Reality and reason must supersede emotions or feelings

D. Legalism

- Definition: a system which establishes “rules” or “tradition” to measure spirituality. External laws or requirements
- The Pharisee’s put laws and tradition over the Word of God, Mark 7:1-9
Church leadership is NOT to be set above the Word of God.
- The book of Galatians is written to destroy the Law and tradition in the church. Gal.2:18-21
- The church leadership is to lead and equip the body to reach the lost world, not to isolate from the world
- Jesus Christ has liberated the Christian to serve God, Gal.2:4; 5:1
- Key: operate by higher laws:
 - by the law of the Spirit of life, Rom.8:1-4
 - the law of love, Gal.5:13-14
 - the law of liberty, Jam.1:25

Many churches hold on to the Old Testament law. Moral laws are valid.

There is a difference between Old Testament and liberty

Lordship of Jesus Christ is the key.

Jesus Christ fulfilled the Old Testament law - Rom 8:3-4

Jesus Christ redeemed us from the curse of law - Gal 3:13

The external do’s and don’ts are unnecessary

E. Ceremony

- Definition: establishing a priesthood to direct people in formal worship
- Manifested in our lives when we hold leaders responsible for our spiritual growth and our personal victory
- Discipleship stops when your application of God’s Word and your growth is someone else’s responsibility
- Pastors and leaders are responsible to teach, guide, protect and be an example to the congregation, Acts 20:28-31
- Key: realize that every Christian is to grow in faith and minister Jesus Christ to others, 1 John 4:17; 2 Cor.5:17-21

Catholic Church finds its identity in the symbols, rituals

Jesus Christ is the only mediator- 1 Tim 2:5

The external symbols connected with the priest and cathedral

We as believers are part of a royal priesthood - 1 Pet 2:9-10

KEY: We bring people to Jesus. We don’t stand in the way.