WHAT WE DO

What on earth is the church of Jesus Christ supposed to be doing until Jesus comes back? There are, perhaps, 1001 different things that church could be doing, but what is the one thing we should be doing that governs everything else we do?

I. THE GREAT COMMISSION

We believe that the mission of the Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ. If we did 1001 other things, but failed at this one thing we would fail to do the main thing the Church has been commissioned to do by the risen Christ himself.

Matthew 28:18-20 And Jesus came and said to them, ‘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.’

DARRELL BOCK (Acts, 66) – “This commission describes the church’s key assignment of what to do until the Lord returns. The priority for the church until Jesus returns, a mission of which the community must never lose sight, is to witness to Jesus to the end of the earth. The church exists, in major part, to extend the apostolic witness to Jesus everywhere.”

We see this commission being carried out as the mission of the church throughout the book of Acts and the rest of the New Testament. The Bible ends with disciples throughout the ages and from every nation gathered before the glorified Christ in heaven.

Revelation 5:9 And they sang a new song, saying, ‘Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation…’

OUR MISSION STATEMENT: Our mission together is to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

This begs two questions…

A. How?

More specifically, how does the church make disciples of Jesus Christ? Jesus himself provides the basic categories for how to do this in the Great Commission (Matt.28).
1. **Go!** – v.19 ‘Go therefore and make disciples…’

The church is to make disciples out of those who aren’t already disciples through the proclamation of the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit. We are to bear witness to Christ in word and deed, calling people to repentance and faith, in the hopes of winning them to Christ.

**Luke 24:45-49** Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.’

**Acts 1:8** ‘But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.’

2. **Grow!** – v.20 ‘teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.’

Disciple making doesn’t stop at conversion. Making disciples also involves growing those disciples into ever-maturing disciples who increasingly reflect the likeness of Christ in their lives by teaching them to observe all that Christ has commanded us.

**Ephesians 4:17, 21-24** Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do… assuming that you have heard about [Christ] and were taught in [Christ], as the truth is in Jesus, to put off the old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

KEVIN DEYOUNG & GREG GILBERT (What Is The Mission of the Church, 62) – “The mission of the church is to go into the world and make disciples by declaring the gospel of Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and gathering those disciples into churches, that they might worship the Lord and obey his commands now and in eternity to the glory of God the Father. We believe this is the mission Jesus gave the disciples prior to his ascension, the mission we see in the New Testament, and the mission of the church today… to win people to Christ and build them up in Christ. Making disciples – that’s our task.”
B. What?

More specifically, if the church’s mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ, then what, exactly, is a disciple?

Here’s how we’ve tried to say it: A Christian disciple is someone who find’s their IDENTITY in Christ and as a result he or she WORSHIPS God, lives in loving COMMUNITY with other disciples, and is on MISSION to reach the lost.

1. Identity – This is the piece from which all the others spring.

Paul alone uses the expression “in Christ” (or some form of it – “in the Lord”, “in him”) over 160 times in the New Testament. It is so fundamental to the Christian faith that it appears all over the pages of the New Testament as a way to encapsulate who we now are as disciples by virtue of our relationship to Jesus Christ.

2Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

What we find our identity in guides and governs our sense of who we are, and therefore, guides and governs how and why and what we live for.

PAUL TRIPP (Dangerous Calling, 22) – “Human beings are always assigning to themselves some kind of identity. There are only two places to look. Either you will be getting your identity vertically, from who you are in Christ, or you will be shopping for it horizontally in the situations, experiences, and relationships of your daily life. This is true of everyone… The false identity that many of us have assigned to ourselves then structures how we see and respond to others [God, the world, ourselves, our lives].”
Disciples are those whose identity in Christ is guiding and governing their sense of who they are, and therefore, guiding and governing how and why and what they are living for. Thus being a disciple...

- Is not first and foremost about what I do, but who I am in Jesus.
- Can't be compartmentalized to part of my life, but rather is an entire lifestyle where all of my thinking, doing, speaking, and living comes under the influence of who I am in Christ.
- Begins with the conviction that who you are in Jesus ultimately defines who you are, and is, therefore, transforming how and why and what you live for.

Defining what a disciple is may start with who we are (our identity in Christ), but it is also includes what we do. Flowing out of our identity in Christ, all that the Bible calls us to do as disciples can be summed up in the great commandment...

_Mark 12:28-31_ And one of the scribes came up and... asked him, ‘Which commandment is the most important of all?’ Jesus answered, ‘The most important is this, ‘Hear O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all you heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.’

From this comes the rest of our definition of what a disciple is: A disciple WORSHIPS God (thus loving God), lives in COMMUNITY with other disciples (thus loving our neighbors in the church), and is on MISSION to the lost (thus loving our neighbors in the world).

2. Worship

Those who find their identity in Christ are going to be those whose lives are characterized by the worship of God.

_John 4:23_ But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.

_1Corinthians 10:31_ So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.
Every human being was created to worship God. The problem with sin is that it hijacks our worship and aims it at everything but God (Romans 1:18-32). The beauty of the gospel is that in Christ our worship gets re-aimed, re-oriented, and re-directed back to its original, intended object: God!

1Peter 3:18 For Christ also suffered, once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God…

John 17:3 And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

MIKE WILKERSON (Redemption, 29) – “To be human is to worship… Worship is not just singing songs in church; it’s how we live our lives every moment of every day – every thought, word, deed, feeling, and desire. You worship what you live for, whatever is most worthy of your attention and devotion. It’s what drives you at the core, and it flows from the essence of who you are. You can’t turn off worship. It’s your basic human wiring. To not worship is to not live. It’s like a garden hose stuck on full blast. You can aim it at the grass, the car, the shrubs, but you cannot stop its flow. Or you might imagine yourself as a sort of human billboard, always advertising what you find to be important, valuable, worthy. What you pay attention to, how you spend your time, the way you work, how you relate to others in your life – all these things broadcast your heart’s worship, making visible and advertising what is important to you. God created you to broadcast him.”

If our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ, then our mission is to make worshippers of God – that is, people who are being transformed by the conviction of who they are in Christ in such a way that they live lives that are God-ward in orientation, broadcasting Him as supremely valuable and supremely worthy.

3. Community

Those who find their identity in Christ are going to be those whose lives are characterized by living in loving community with other disciples of Jesus Christ.

In Ephesians 2:11-22, Paul describes the effects of the gospel and how it brings us together as God’s people. He describes us as now being joined together as fellow “members of the household of God”. Being joined together in Christ expands the notions and boundaries of my household to include my brothers and sisters in Christ. The New Testaments paints the picture of this new household like a family, living and sharing life together as an active, ongoing, regular part of one another’s lives.
**Ephesians 2:15b-22** That he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

**Acts 2:44-47** All who believed were together… day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

**Hebrews 10:24-25** And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

BRAD HOUSE (Community, 33) – “We are saved to be a community, not a church of individuals… It is through Christ that we have been reconciled to God and to one another. It is in Christ that we are united together like a family who shares the bloodline of Jesus. Jesus gives us the ability to experience life as God intended, in real community with him and with one another. In a world searching for belonging, the cross is a beacon of hope. We belong to one another because we have been united to Christ... Community is for us a declaration of the overwhelming love of God, a tangible proclamation of the reconciling work of the cross.”

Our shared identity in Christ joins us together in community with one another in a way that transcends and supersedes all other differences we may otherwise have. There is a common bond in Christ that is to carry greater weight all by itself than all of the differences combined.

## 4. Mission

Those who find their identity in Christ are going to be those whose lives are characterized by being on mission to reach the lost. Every disciple has been called by God as a missionary and has been sovereignly placed by God in the mission fields of our ordinary lives and places of work, school, and neighborhoods to reach the lost with the gospel.
\textit{2Corinthians 5:18-20} All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

\textit{John 20:21} As the Father sent me, so I am sending you.

CAESAR KALINOWSKI (The Gospel Primer, 179) - "I want to suggest that the secret to increasingly living our lives on mission is to move from seeing a gospel-centered mission as something 'additional' that needs to be tacked on to life, to seeing all the normal stuff and rhythms of life as full of opportunity for the gospel. We need only to fill them with greater gospel intentionality. We must move from an 'additional' mindset to an 'intentional' mindset in the normal rhythms of life that God has given us."

A Christian disciple is someone who finds their IDENTITY in Christ and as a result he or she WORSHIPS God, lives in loving COMMUNITY with other disciples, and is on MISSION to reach the lost. We believe this is the picture the New Testament paints of a mature disciple. These are the kind of disciples we desire to make at CrossWay.

II. COMMUNITY GROUPS

Our mission together is to make disciples of Jesus Christ. This involves going with the gospel and winning people to Christ, and it involves growing those who trust in Christ into ever-maturing followers of Christ. The goal is to make mature disciples who find their identity in Christ and, as a result, worship God, live in loving community with other disciples, and are on mission to the lost.

There are two primary ways we seek to do this at Crossway. The first is our Sunday Corporate gathering where we worship God together, receive teaching from His word and, in a limited way, fellowship with one another.

The other primary way we seek to do this at CrossWay is through our Community Groups. Therefore, a key component in disciple making at CrossWay is through participation in a CG.

A. What is Community Group?

What happens when you get a bunch of soccer players together? What happens when you get a bunch of musicians together? What happens when you get a bunch of disciples together?
1. **Identity… together!**

We gather together in Community Groups to deepen our understanding of who we are in Christ and how the gospel literally impacts every single part of our living and breathing. It’s as our understanding and appreciation of the gospel deepens that our worship of God intensifies, our community life grows more vibrant, and our mission to the lost more compelling.

JERRY BRIDGES (The Discipline of Grace, 46) – “The gospel is not only the most important message in all of history; it is the only essential message in all of history. Yet we allow thousands of professing Christians to live their entire lives without clearly understanding it and experiencing the joy of living by it.”

2. **Worship… together!**

Through Bible study, book studies, prayer, praise, thanksgiving, confession, testimonies and an endless variety of other ways we want to gather together and make disciples by making worshippers of God. We want to help and encourage one another to increasingly live God-ward lives – lives that will go out into the world broadcasting God as supremely valuable and supremely worthy.

*Psalm 34:3* Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together!

3. **Community… together!**

Through times of fellowship and hospitality we want to live life together, share life together, and open our lives to one another - encouraging one another, caring for one another, praying for one another, challenging one another, meeting together and spurring one another on in love and good works (Heb.10:24); helping each other to grow more and more into the likeness of Jesus Christ.

John Piper - “Sanctification is a community project.”

3. **Mission… together!**

Through acts of service and compassion, outreach, evangelism, hospitality, and an endless variety of other ways we want to reach the neighborhoods and communities in which we live. Community Groups aren’t just a place for us to grow as disciples, but we desire them to be the means through which we also go and make new disciples – together!
**1Peter 2:9** But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness and into his marvelous light.

**Romans 15:5-6** May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ

THE GOSPEL RESOURCE NETWORK (Missional Community Field Guide, 4) – “The church is not a place, but a people – a community that is continually being reformed and renewed by the transforming power of the gospel. This new family becomes the conduit and vehicle for God’s mission in the world.”

THE GOSPEL RESOURCE NETWORK (Missional Community Field Guide, 8) – “The best way to make disciples is in community and on mission. The deepest community comes when we are on mission together as Jesus’ disciples. The most effective mission takes place when people both hear the gospel proclaimed by faithful disciples and see it lived out in a vibrant community.”

**B. How do I join a Community Group?**

1. **Join The City**

Go to [www.crosswaync.onthecity.org](http://www.crosswaync.onthecity.org) and join. You can search for and find information regarding each of the Community Groups here. A member of the Host Team can always help you if you need it.

2. **Visit**

Feel free to visit as many of the CG’s as you’d like. We don’t dictate which CG you should join. However, we would suggest joining one that is in or close to the neighborhood in which you live.

**III. SUMMARY**

In obedience to the great commission, our mission as a church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ. It’s the main thing we believe God has called us to do until Jesus returns. Therefore, individually and corporately, we want to faithfully proclaim the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit. However, disciple making doesn’t stop at conversion. Disciples are to be ever growing as disciples – increasingly transformed by the conviction of who we are in Christ in such a way that we increasingly worship God with our lives, increasingly live in loving community with other disciples, and are increasingly on mission to the lost. In
this way, we’re endeavoring to be disciples who are fulfilling the great commandment to love God and love neighbor.

But we don't do this alone. We can't do it alone. We need each other. Community Groups are a key component in the disciple making process here at CrossWay. CG's are the place where not only am I seeking to be made more and more into a disciple of Jesus Christ, but also the place where I am seeking to help make others more and more into a disciple of Jesus Christ. All to the glory of God.