Where Are We Headed
Becoming a Follower of Jesus - Session 13
19 December 2012

Introduction:
As people who are committed to disciple-making, we want to become Followers of Jesus. We want to read the gospels to find out what Jesus did. We want to listen to Jesus regularly as He guides and directs us. We want to make Christ-like Disciples who will in turn become Disciple-Makers. For us, it is not enough just to teach and train on a Wednesday night, although this is a great beginning. We plan to spend “a fall” and “a spring” in preparation to launching our disciple-making process as a church.

In the fall of 2013, our training will continue to grow and change on Wednesday nights. We want to be a church that helps others become followers of Christ who help others become followers of Christ. Our ultimate goal is to follow Jesus’ example of developing disciples. We want to read what He did, study how He did it, and emulate His example. Our ultimate goal is the same as His…following His disciples who actually reached out to and developed other disciples. We are very excited about the vision of Jesus He is revealing to us…of together building a process to develop Disciple-Makers. We don’t have to be in a hurry in this process because Jesus isn’t. It will take time. But if we commit to keep following Jesus, He will guide us all to become effective Disciple-Makers. Buckle up! Our churches are in for a fantastic ride with Jesus at the Head!

Key Memory Verse & Memory Verse Summary:

How many of these do you know? Test yourself.

1 Timothy 4:7-8  John 3:16  Galatians 2:20  Colossians 2:15
Psalm 119:11  1 John 1:9  Joshua 1:8  Zechariah 4:6
John 16:13  1 Corinthians 10:13 Matthew 4:19  Mark 10:43-45

Genesis 12:1-3 The LORD had said to Abram…2 “I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing…3 all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”

Congratulations on reading through the gospels of Mark & Luke these past 13 weeks! You are almost all the way there.

Exercise 1: A Memorization “Quiz”

This Coming Week’s Reading: Luke 22-24
Objective: The objective of this lesson is to show Followers of Jesus organizational examples from the Bible and explore how God’s plan for reaching the multitudes with His Disciple-Making vision requires both the right “heart” and the right kind of vision and thinking.

Key Definitions / Concepts:

1. Let’s begin by taking a look at how God guided His people in the Old Testament to organize themselves. Throughout the Old Testament, we find the number 12 is a key biblical and organizational number that God uses.

   a. God’s plan for spiritually blessing the world came through Abraham & Isaac (Genesis 12:1-3)
   b. Ishmael was to be the father of 12 rulers and the leader of a great nation (Genesis 17:20; 25:16)
   c. Isaac had Jacob, who was the founder of “Israel.” He had 12 sons, who became the 12 tribes of Israel. (Genesis 35:22; 49:28; Acts 7:8)
   d. At Mt. Sinai God’s covenant was confirmed & Moses set up 12 stone pillars (Exodus 24:4).
   e. The breastpiece for making decisions by the high priest had 12 stones (Exodus 28:15-21)
   f. There were 12 loaves of holy bread set before God regularly by the priests (Leviticus 24:5-9)
   g. The organizational government of God’s people was based on 12 leaders (Numbers 1:44)
   h. Moses selected 12 spies to spy out the Promised Land (Numbers 13:1-16)
   i. When God’s people crossed the Jordan, they set up 12 memorial stones. (Joshua 4:1-9)
   j. Solomon had Israel and its governors organized into 12 districts. (1 Kings 4:7)
   k. Solomon’s gold/ivory throne made of 12 lions, represented God’s government (2 Chronicles 9:19)
   l. Elijah used 12 stones when he renewed and rebuild the altar of God. (1 Kings 18:31)
   m. There are 12 months in one year. (Daniel 4:29)
   n. A day is made up in two 12 hour periods. (John 11:9)

2. We find that Jesus also uses the number 12 as a key biblical and organizational number.

   a. After Jesus prayed all night, He chose 12 disciples. (Luke 6:12-16)
   b. It was the 12 disciples of Jesus that began the multiplication Jesus taught to where today we have over 2 billion people who follow Jesus the Nazarene. Paul said Jesus’ resurrection was part of the promise “the 12 tribes of Israel were hoping to see fulfilled.” (Acts 26:5-8)
   c. The early church recognized the spiritual importance of the scattered 12 tribes. (James 1:1)
d. The city of God (new Jerusalem) has 12 gates and 12 angels at those gates. (Revelation 21:12)

e. On the gates are written the names of the 12 tribes of Israel. (Revelation 21:12)

f. The wall of the city has 12 foundations…on them are the names of the 12 apostles. (Revelation 21:14)

g. Down the middle great street flows the river of the water of life. On each side of the river stands the tree of life, with 12 crops of fruit, 1 for each month, healing the nations. (Revelation 22:1-2)

3. There is spiritual significance to the number of disciples Jesus chose (12). As we study how Jesus did ministry, we find that He taught the crowds but He realized His primary work was disciple-making. That seems to be more important to Jesus and a higher priority than just teaching the crowds. Application for us: While our Sunday worship/teaching time is important, it is not the most important part of the church. Building disciple-makers is the mission Jesus gave us and that requires discipleship training and using smaller groups. Based on our reading of scripture and our study of optimum group life, we should consider developing and using groups of 10-12.

4. A biblical lesson from Jethro (Exodus 18:1-27): Moses was exhausting himself by trying to do everything himself. We learn here the principle of leadership development and delegation. Pastors have to learn to say no to some things so they can say yes to more important things. Like spending more time with fewer people (and choosing the people Jesus leads you to spend time with). There are lots of busy activities in the typical church that takes the pastor’s time. This issue must be revisited to make room for the most important activities surrounding the mission Jesus gave us. Our activities should include a focus on evangelism and making disciple-makers.

5. Jesus was and is the MASTER DISCIPLEMAKER of all time. He is our Model, our example and our guide in Disciple-Making. Jesus modeled this type of intentional training for His own 12 disciples and for us as He lived and worked with His 12 original men. When Jesus told the Disciples to go and make disciples in Matthew 28, Jesus didn’t give them 20 chapters of instruction on how to do this. He had laid down the pattern for them for the past 3 years as He had carefully, patiently, deliberately, intentionally poured His heart and life into them. They knew what He wanted them to do – because He had just modeled it for them for 3 years! We must not be about information delivery, but rather investing our hearts and lives in others.

6. There seems to be a simple 4-step process of disciple-making we can see in the ministry of Jesus. People have shared these truths using a variety of words, but here is the essence:
Win: The process of leading people to Jesus to experience salvation personally. Paul describes it clearly: “Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God’s law but am under Christ’s law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some.” (1 Corinthians 9:19-22)

Some of the activities and ministries that churches engage in during this part of the disciple-making process are outreach events (Trunk-R-Treat, VBS, Baptism services, etc.), Greeters, Ushers, Altar Workers, Basic Bible Studies, How to Share Your Faith, the list goes on. In the “winning” phase of disciple-making is also where existing Christians are taught to pray, fast, develop compassion and seek the lost.

Gather: The process of leading the new Christian to discover God’s plan for living a Spirit-filled, sanctified life. Some of the activities and ministries that churches engage in during this part of the disciple-making process are offering Pre-Encounter orientation, Encounter week-ends and Post-Encounter fellowship and growth opportunities. This is where people become established by giving their lives fully to God and move forward spiritually in a commitment to grow.

Disciple: The process of training a Christian to follow Jesus toward becoming “a fisher of men.” (Matthew 4:19). Jesus hand-selected those He discipled and trained them specifically as they followed Him. Some of the activities and ministries that churches engage in during this part of the disciple-making process are 6-9 months of discipleship training. Learning to pray, to study the Bible, to understand the ministry of the Holy Spirit are just a few of the topics covered.

Send: The process of “going” every Christian naturally and simply does as they reach out and share Jesus with others. Some of the activities and ministries that churches engage in during this part of the disciple-making process include Life Group facilitator’s training, the value of spiritual accountability, how to disciple others, etc.

7. The growth and multiplication of the church is not difficult to see take place. It happens naturally as the church is filled with healthy Christians who simply “follow Jesus.” He will “make us fishers of men,” it is NOT up to us! He will guide us. He will open people’s hearts to respond to the gospel (Acts 16:14).

8. Beyond the ministry of Jesus, John Wesley was one of the greatest disciple-makers in the history of Christianity. He understood the way Jesus made disciples and he followed Jesus’ model in 18th England. He revolutionized
England, saving it from the blood-filled social revolution that France experienced. He did it by spending a lifetime building and perfecting a “disciple-making process.”

9. Wesley realized that no disciple-making movement would ever reach the masses of England and beyond unless he built a process that was reproducible. So he constantly refined his practices so that not just the clergy, but ordinary lay-leaders [just like the disciples Jesus called] could follow Jesus and become “fishers of men.” (Matthew 4:19). Out of his work came the development of “lay preachers.” He inspired their hearts, wrote their sermons, and sent them out! God raised up an army of over 650 lay preachers to revolutionize 18th century England!

10. The two most well known preachers who led the spiritual renewal movement in 18th century England were George Whitfield and John Wesley. When Whitfield died, there was no discipled group, no church and no process that followed him to perpetuate his life’s work. But in the few years after John Wesley died in 1781, more people were saved, sanctified, discipled, trained and sent out into mission than John Wesley ever trained and sent during his entire lifetime! How? The key to John Wesley’s success is that he understood the importance of building solid, disciple-making processes within a movement. That’s what the Wesleyan Master’s Plan is all about.


12. To help people grow through these 4 basic steps in Wesley’s “order of salvation,” John Wesley developed a system of “interlocking groups.” As he read the New Testament, he knew that disciple-making would never happen through preaching alone. Jesus developed groups of people He worked with. So Wesley did the same thing. He developed the following 3 groups:

   a. The “society” (larger group where people encountered God)
   b. The “class” (an open group, much like our intentional Life Groups today)
   c. The “band” (a closed group, for leadership development and accountability)

13. The Society was like a small congregation. Members of the society were tied to involvement in the Class that met weekly. The class was 12-15 people, and had a focus on spiritual relationships, helping new Christians grow, what people should avoid, what to pursue, identifying spiritually helpful practices, etc. Becoming a Class Leader – was the first rung of leadership development in the early Methodist church. This is identical to our use of the Wesleyan Master’s Plan approach today. The first step in leadership development is facilitating a Life Group or Ministry Group.
14. The Band that Wesley developed were closed discipling groups in Methodism. They involved high commitment and high accountability. Their purpose is identical to the Master’s Plan closed groups that are being developed & used around the world today in a number of fast-growing churches.

15. Wesley had such a focus on making Christ-like disciples that he taught his lay preachers he sent out: “Preach in as many places as you can. Start as many classes as you can. Do not preach without starting new classes!”

16. Over 30,000 churches worldwide, including 3000+ churches in North America now use a form or adaptation of Wesley’s plan of disciple-making. This kind of disciple-making is now being used in over 125 different denominations. It is being used because it is biblical, because it is so effective and because it works.

17. This is the model of disciple-making being used by the largest, fastest growing Nazarene church in the world, in Cali, Columbia. It has grown from 200 to average over 12,000 in 8 years. The steps in the disciple-making process they use include:

   a. A powerful Encounter week-end
   b. Several months of weekly classes and training focused on becoming a Christ-like disciple
   c. Life Groups – that are open and evangelistic
   d. One-on-one discipling
   e. Lead Groups – slowly and carefully developing disciple-makers, just like Jesus did
   f. Each leader is challenged to develop their own group of 12, just like Jesus did

18. The Michigan District has recently made a commitment that this training will be embraced as the key disciple-making, leadership development strategy the district uses. Our future as a group of churches as well as individuals, will be vibrant and healthy as we focus on building healthy, spiritually vibrant Christians committed to following Jesus.

Exercise 2: Giving feedback

Exercise 3: Prayer Around Tables