

# Holistic Disciple Making Intensive

## Session 4 Summary: What Compels a Person to Be a Disciple and Make Disciples?

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### What's So Compelling About Jesus?

To be a disciple means to be a follower of Jesus. So, then we must ask ourselves, *What's so compelling about Jesus that we should follow him?* If we know that we want to truly be disciples of Jesus, following after him in his mission, shaping our lives after the way he lived, and actually doing the things he taught are things we simply have to do—because we want to.

Jesus has a way of bringing about in us both fascination and fear, like a divine paradox. And as much as Jesus affirms us, he disturbs our lives; he assures and complicates our every decision as we grow more deeply into him and into his likeness. He is the confounding Christ.

### Jesus, the Confounding Christ

We can see the human response to Jesus' confounding nature clearly in Luke 5, when Jesus called his first disciples. The story goes like this: The about-to-be-disciples had been fishing all night, with no luck. Jesus was standing near the lake as people crowded closer and closer around him to hear the things he had to say. Jesus noticed some fishermen off to the side washing their nets, bummed and discouraged from their lack of a catch. The next thing we know Jesus continues his preaching from a floating pulpit, and when he finishes, he has the boldness to tell the fishermen to put their boats and nets back into the water—even though they had spent the whole night fishing, without catching even one fish.

And they did. Because something about Jesus, something inside him, drew them in and moved them to listen. Something about Jesus inspired them to act upon his request. Before the fishermen knew it, the nets were so filled with fish that the boat began sinking. It is then that Peter fell to his knees and begged Jesus to leave him, because he knew he'd never be able to leave Jesus. And so Jesus told the fishermen not to be afraid. He told them that from then on they would fish for men—and they left everything and followed Jesus.

Peter, for one, was magnetically drawn to Jesus. It is Peter's experience that a lot of us can relate to. Peter became so overwhelmed by the power of Jesus, the authority in his nature, the wonder of his miracles, that he fell to his knees. Peter knew that Jesus could change his life. Perhaps Peter knew that his life would never be the same. Seeing Jesus, he was reminded of his sinfulness and made sure to remind Jesus as well. Because Peter didn't want to disappoint Jesus—a man who worked miracles into ordinary events, a God-man who was asking Peter to leave everything, follow him, and fish instead for individuals who would become disciples of the confounding Christ.

Oswald Chambers captures Peter's experience like this:

If we have never had the experience of taking our common religious shoes off of our commonplace religious feet and getting rid of all the undue familiarity with which we approach God, it's questionable whether we have ever stood in his presence, that those who are flippant and familiar have ever been introduced to Jesus Christ.

The disciples left everything to follow Jesus. And for us, to follow Jesus is our greatest adventure. We are being recruited by the Lord of glory to be engaged in an eternal mission, and we have the calling to recruit others to join Jesus and ourselves in that eternal mission. When you follow Jesus, you will have to face your fears. Every step into obedience is to face the fear in yourself.

## Disciple Making Is Different

So, *what compels us to follow Jesus?*<sup>2</sup> We are compelled because our life awaits fulfillment in him when we let go, face our fears, and follow him on this eternal enterprise of being his disciples and making disciples. Which brings us to: *What compels us to make disciples?*<sup>2</sup> What we are shown in Scripture about the compelling nature of disciple making is that disciples are made in relationships. Disciples are called by name to come and follow Jesus—and to take part in having a deep and authentic relationship with him. Disciple making needs to follow Jesus' disciple making model. Jesus spent time discerning the people to call unto himself. In the same way, we can spend time in prayer, seeking out who in our lives God may be calling us to disciple. It is God who works and moves in people, we merely move and work to fulfill his will and mission.

Disciple making is so different than church programs. Jesus is about relationships. Churches are too often about programs, especially in today's society. Programs, while not necessarily bad or destructive, are all about information and the relaying of facts. Facts don't change lives. Jesus changes lives. Relationships involve transformation, and transformation is about intimacy. An intimate and lasting relationship with Jesus is a powerful thing, it's the very thing we are trying to help other individuals find and develop in their own lives.

Programs rely on an expert, while relationships mean sharing in the gospel together. Jesus did not rely on his preaching to make disciples. No educational system would be a success if the teacher

merely met with the pupils for one hour per week and had no deeper relationship with them than that. It is the relationship and knowing people more deeply—their hurts, challenges, struggles, and joys—that enables and empowers life-changing disciple making.

Programs are about synchronization. Relationships are about customization and personalization, where individuals go through the journey of faith together, through its challenges and through its struggles. To be compelled to make disciples you need a relational experience of disciple making. You need to have been nurtured in a disciple making context. Secondly, you need to be compelled to make disciples through a replicable experience.

In order to do this, first pray for discernment as you invite others along in disciple making. Share your life with others around the truth of God. Grow towards maturity in Christ—together. And growing in maturity includes making disciples of others. Soon enough, you will be equipped to go out and live the mission.

## How Did We Get Here?

So, there are two holes in our heart: one to know God and the other to respond to God's call. How we will fill those holes is by going. *Go. Go and make disciples.*

It was Jesus himself who made disciples who went out and made disciples. Our aim is to follow the mandate that Jesus so clearly and lovingly gave us. We have to be a disciple before we can make disciples, and the two are intimately connected. One without the other simply doesn't make sense.

The ideal is that everybody who comes to faith in Jesus would be discipled. Ideally, disciple making would happen first primarily in the home. Unfortunately, God's ideal happens less than we'd hope for. Disciple making is often delegated to happening only in churches. In the American church, we are lacking the sort of pastoral leadership needed for people to grow in their faith and disciple others and reproduce that process. *Which leaves us where?* That leaves us in the position that we're in now: people who aren't sure what it means to be a disciple, much less how to go about living a life of making disciples.

Danny Hinton talks about how we see godly, passionate twenty-somethings who are sold out for Christ, and we think, *Wow. I want that. We need more of that in our church.* Yet we still don't take the time to realize that those people are built and developed into that place—they were discipled. A lot of people long to experience the joy of having that kind of leader who is passionate but are unwilling to do the work of getting to that place in their own life.

Joanne Kraft talks about how there is power in the invitation. Church culture can grow from one person inviting another person into their life, sharing their life with that person to develop a spiritual relationship of discipling.

## Preach the Discipleship Gospel

Greg talks about the way we have been communicating the gospel. We have not been preaching a discipleship gospel but one that says you can be a Christian and have your sins forgiven and then just go on with your life. We need to make a radical direction change in our life in order to engage in truly receiving the Good News. We have not been preaching a discipleship gospel. But we need to. Remember that the gospel we proclaim is the kind of disciple we will make. We want to make disciples *of Christ*.

Danny reflects on the difference between referring to someone as a Christian or as a disciple. We tend to categorize Christianity as a destination. If we thought of it more as a trajectory, we'd find a call for constant movement and growth—and even more so we would continue the work even after a person comes to Christ. We would pursue them further, encouraging them to in turn pursue Christ and his likeness.

Think about what a disciple is below the surface, it's an *identity* built around becoming something. Now think about what a Christian is beneath the surface; it's a state of being—one that can too easily become stagnant and unchanged, one that can lack others-centeredness and life-changing vitality.

The difference between a disciple and a Christian will come out when a potential disciple is in relationship with you. Anybody who is truly a disciple, will grow to the point where they also make disciples. If we want to become like Jesus, we have to engage in disciple making. We can see in Scripture that Jesus devoted between 65 and 90 percent of his time to making disciples, not just being a disciple. A disciple is somebody who is following Jesus, being changed by Jesus, and is committed to the mission of Jesus.

## Obedience Is God's Love Language

We need to gain a mindset of transformation, one of intentional, conscious change. Invest in others and move toward them. Engage with people and engage in their life. People are going to execute disciple making in a lot of ways, unique to their own diverse gifts and callings, but the paradigm is going to be the same. People will be passionate for Christ and that passion will bleed out into making disciples. Disciple making includes reaching out to people who don't know Jesus and helping those who do know Jesus get to know him better and grow more.

Joanne shares how she sometimes realizes that those who are in the church aren't discipling. And they don't realize it or don't even realize that they should be discipling. Obedience is God's love language. Are we being obedient to his Word? How can we say that we want to trust and follow Jesus but not live out his mission and calling?

Joanne continues by sharing three reasons why people can place living like Jesus and following in his footsteps to the side:

1) *Analysis paralysis*—This happens when people don't think they know enough and become afraid, believing that they don't have what it takes to carry out the hard work of Jesus' calling, but we need to remember that God empowers us.

2) *Busyness*—People often say and think they are too busy, but we all have twenty-four hours in the day; so, we need to consider what is taking up our time and what is manifesting itself as our priority.

3) *Complacency*—We can get distracted or confused thinking that the disciple making life is for other people. If we are going to be obedient and love God well, we have no choice because discipleship is a part of that package.

How do we help churches so that each church has a simple, effective, reproducible model?

## The Importance of *Culture*

Danny discusses how the healthiest models are where churches and ministries have a *culture*. Our churches today are not anti-disciple making, per se. It appears that instead, churches today are most interested in appearing as if they are engaged in the Great Commission while not actually engaging in or fulfilling it. The very structure of the church, knowing people personally makes a big difference in creating a culture of disciple making.

Joanne offers the point that whether you are in ministry or not, you are a part of this, you are part of God's family, and Bobby jumps in, saying that Jesus did not rely on preaching to make disciples. Most churches lack a culture of disciple making due to a lack of intentionality or a misalignment of what Jesus called for and what his church needs. Before we can begin changing our church, we can all start by being a disciple who makes disciples, because unless you have a reproducible, well-communicated model, it cannot and will not shape the culture of the church.

Danny offers up a few thoughts to keep in mind throughout the process of creating culture and implementing a reproducible process, saying that disciple making is something that starts in the spiritual realm. We get into all the nuts and bolts of it, but it's God who does the work. What must remain at the root and heart of what we're doing—and at the heart of our reproducible model—is loving and beholding Christ. Getting caught up in reproducing a certain book inevitably causes us to lose focus from loving and beholding Christ. We need to have a relationship agreement for disciple making, and a part of that is the plan for reproduction and multiplication.

## The Vision of Jesus Is This: *Be* a Disciple and *Make* Disciples

The panelists close this discussion by offering a final piece of wisdom and advice.

Joanne - "Sound doctrine is vital, especially for this age. I just want to encourage those people out there who think it's a one and done discipleship thing, it's not; it's a lifelong culture."

Danny - “We make disciples and we pursue and we persevere in making disciples because we love Christ, and for most of us, I would venture to say it’s because we have felt it. We’ve experienced it; it’s been tangible. It is challenging but it is the joy of our life. Disciples need to learn it, see it, and then feel it. Once that happens they will be compelled to make disciples for a lifetime.”

Greg - “Vision, intention, and means are necessary for transformation. The vision that we have for Jesus, how compelling is it? The one that we fall in love with is the one who will draw us along. We need to ask ourselves: *What is that vision of Jesus?* You have to have a means and way to stay connected to that vision.”

Today, we hope that you will recommit yourselves to being disciples of Jesus and to making disciples with Jesus.

## Session Questions

1. *True or false:* If we know that we want to truly be disciples of Jesus, we just have to follow what we think he wants us to do in our own life.
2. *True or false:* Jesus explained himself before asking his about-to-be disciples anything.
3. *True or false:* Following Jesus truly is our greatest adventure as we engage in an eternal mission.
4. *True or false:* True and deep relationship with people and with God is what empowers disciple making.
5. *True or false:* Disciple making *starts* with setting our hearts and minds toward reproducible action.
6. *True or false:* Most churches have in fact been preaching the discipleship gospel.
7. *True or false:* The healthiest churches and church models place great emphasis on culture.

8. *True or false:* The three reasons we most often place living like Jesus aside are: thinking we aren't good enough, tiredness, being caught up in our own lives.

9. *Short answer:* Explain the difference between programs and relationships.

10. *Short answer:* What position are we in now, as disciple makers, that we have to overcome to fulfill Jesus' mission? And how did we get here?

### Quick Links:

1. [Discipleship.org](http://Discipleship.org)
2. [Global Discipleship Initiative](#)
3. [Discipleship for Women](#)
4. [Downline Ministries](#)