

THE RIGHT REASONS FOR DISCIPLESHIP

#6A

The previous few lessons have been concerned with helping us grow more connected to Jesus. In His 33 years on earth, Jesus not only taught crowds but also invested deeply into 12 men who are commonly referred to as His disciples.

- **What are disciples? Were they only people who walked with Jesus?**
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One definition of a disciple is a follower or learner. In referring to Jesus, a disciple is one who desires to know Him, follow Him and be like Him. As a church, we hope to help people be disciples of Jesus who in turn, help others become disciples of Jesus as well.

In this lesson, we'll discuss a few reasons why this is an important value for The Bridge.

1. Because it's Biblical.

Read Matthew 28:18-20

What does Jesus command His followers to do in the first part of verse 19?

Interestingly, we aren't commanded to go build bigger church buildings, go have great meals together, or even go invite more people to come to church. This command to go and make disciples is known as the Great Commission, and it is for every Christ follower.

2. Because Jesus did it.

Study the Gospels and you will see that while Christ ministered for three years to masses of people, He primarily spent his time with twelve men into whom He poured His whole life. He took them everywhere with Him, taught them, trained them, and invested His life into them. They caught the life of Christ by spending time with Him.

Jesus ushered in a spiritual kingdom that has lasted more than two thousand years because he invested his life in twelve men. If we are going to give our lives to others, Jesus' strategy is probably the best strategy.

What was Jesus' strategy?

- **The Growth Model**

Grace + Truth + Time = Change or Growth

A relationship of grace is marked by a discipler who listens and seeks to understand the person. They communicate. They believe in the person. They encourage. They walk through life with the person – not only in victory, but also in failure and sin.

A relationship of truth is marked by infusing the word of God into our life – understanding it, learning how to apply it, being held accountable to live it out.

Discipleship relationships must be marked by Grace + Truth. Not one or the other. Discipleship is working out the truthful word of God in the context of a gracious relationship. Without someone relationally involved in their lives loving them, extending grace to them, working through the hard stuff – believers may miss out on the abundant life Christ promises us.

3. Because the Benefits are Far-Reaching

The third reason we disciple is because of the far-reaching benefits of discipleship to the local church and the body of believers around the world.

Discipleship develops authentic relationships which can only emerge when we're diving into one another's lives. There is a depth within small groups and one-on-one relationships that cannot happen at a church service on Sunday morning. Depth is what discipleship is all about.

- **When we talk about discipleship, what is it we hope to produce? What does a mature biblical disciple look like?**
- **Biblical disciples walk by faith.**

They are developing their relationships with God by digging into the Scriptures and developing a prayer life. They start having consistent quiet times. Biblical disciples deal with issues of holiness in their lives. They're dealing with sin, and developing a sensitivity to turn from sin when they see it in their lives. They are learning how to worship, and how to endure trials. They're developing a walk with the Lord.

- **Biblical disciples communicate their faith.**

Biblical disciples are developing a heart for what is on God's heart, and one of the things on God's heart is people who don't know Him. Biblical disciples have a heart for the lost, a growing compassion for the fact that people who don't know Jesus, need to know Jesus. Biblical disciples want to know how to relate to non-Christians and how to share their personal story in a way that non-Christians can understand. They want to initiate spiritual conversations in a loving, tactful way, and learn how to answer the tough questions posed during those encounters.

- **Biblical disciples multiply their faith.**

They can take the things that God has taught them and pass them on to someone else. For instance, if they lead someone to Christ, do they know what to do besides invite them to church? Biblical disciples can learn how to study the Word of God in depth, how to dig in, observe, and apply the Scriptures, so they themselves can ground a new believer in the faith by walking through Scripture with them. They can also learn how to follow-up with a new believer, lead a Bible study, and act as an accountability partner.

Questions for Reflection:

1. Which of the benefits for discipleship are most motivating to you?

2. Which areas of a mature disciple do you see growth in your life in recent months?

3. Which of these areas do you sense God still trying to shape you in?
