



Strengthening Your Grip on Key Areas of Your Christian Life

Discipleship A

Introduction:

1. We're in our 5th week of our series: **Strengthening Your Grip on KEY AREAS in your Christian Life**

> if we're not growing in our walk with the Lord, then we're really NOT going to be ready to meet the challenges that lie ahead of us

2. Our emphasis is: 'people, people, people' – reaching out, building bridges, getting out of our comfort zones, and 'Gearing Up' to minister then

❖ We're not talking about 'pleasing people' – but seeking to glorify God by showing love to one another, demonstrating we are the disciples of Christ, and reaching out to others!

> meeting people where they are (that's a lot of what our subject today is about) and helping them take the NEXT step of growth

3. We want to keep the following question in front of all of us!

Q: What is the NEXT step of growth for you . . .for us?

[serving, leadership, evangelism, hospitality to others, prayer life, study of the Word, etc.]

4. So far, we studied 4 important areas in which we need to strengthen our grip:

⇒ *Strengthen Our Grip on Relationships // Missions // Aging // Purity*

5. Our study today is 2nd only to the study on purity: **Strengthening Your Grip . . . on Discipleship!**

Input: What example(s) can you give on someone discipling you in your Christian walk?

•

- Open your Bible to Luke 9:18-26 – explain the context of following the feeding of the 5,000 – one of the miracles demonstrating His deity – that He was God!

- notice in v. 18, Jesus asks the question: "Who do people say that I am?" –

- Jesus also asks the question, "Who do YOU say that I am?" – that's much more personal

> which leads to * **Two different perspectives of this study on Discipleship:**

1: Being a Disciple

2: Being a Discipler – actively engaged in the process of discipling others –

- helping them to grow and change

- this involves meeting them where they are, and leading them to where they need to be!

- let's begin with thinking about the definition:

I. What is Discipleship?

Discipleship = the process of helping others conform to the image of Christ in the way they think and act

A. The ultimate goal: God is glorified

Glory = right opinion

- ❖ **1 Corinthians 10:31** Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

-that's what Matthew 5:16 is all about:

- ❖ **Matthew 5:16** "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Q: *Why do we have Mission trips, get involved in Habitat for Humanity, Mentor young people in Big Brothers/Big Sister, etc*

A: So people see our good works and say, "Wow, they are really something" – NO

A: So people see our good works and say, "Wow, their God is a loving, gracious God!"

B. The model: Christlikeness

- if God is going to be glorified, it will be because we are like His Son:

- ❖ **Matthew 3:17** and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."

Point: We please God by being like Jesus Christ

* **True disciples are growing in thinking and acting like Jesus Christ**

* **True disciplers are helping others grow in the way they think and act like Jesus Christ!**

- THAT is true discipleship!

> Thinking and acting like Christ in all areas of our life!

- Q: **In what area are you NOT like Christ, and therefore need to change and grow?**

- to change, is a two-fold process:

C. The process: Two-fold

#1: Salvation – justification (legally declared righteous on the account books of heaven)

- when God see us, He no longer sees our sin or us as sinners – but He sees the blood of Jesus Christ which cleanses us from all sin

Example: Israel in Egypt – 10th plague (death) – explain 'when I see the blood, I will pass over you' (Exodus 12:13)

Point: Salvation is the 1st step of being a disciple & the 1st step of the discipleship process!

- that's why we are so fired up about our evangelism opportunities

- but a person trusting Christ as his/her Savior, is the FIRST step of the process – the discipleship is JUST BEGINNING!

- Input: Why is it that we aren't more passionate about winning people to Jesus Christ?**

[various answers]

✓ **We grown cold in our love for God/people**

✓ **We've allowed other things to distract us from the MAIN THING!**

- ✓ **We live in fear of what people will think**
- ✓ **We don't think a/b the joys of Heaven or the torments of Hell enough to motivate us**
- ✓ **The crucifixion has been routine and the resurrection just another event!**

- the next step is on-going till Jesus comes (that's why I have job security – no church will ever be perfect, we all need to grow)

#2: Growth – Progressive Sanctification

- this is the doctrine of spiritual growth – how a person changes and grows

Q: *What does that process look like?*

1) **Understand the goal of life is to please God by being like Jesus Christ**

2) **Learn to deal with the idols of the heart**

idols = anything we make more important than pleasing God (James 1:13-17)

3) **Practice the 'put off' and 'put on' process of Eph. 4:22-24**

Example: Using Eph. 4:22-24, use the following chart to explain

⇒ **Identifying sinful habits of thinking and action that God wants you to change**

⇒ **Replacing those habits with biblical ways of thinking and action**

Put Off	Put On
<p>Sinful habits of: <u>Worry</u> Worry = assuming responsibilities God never intended me to have <u>Thinking:</u> God can't help me Trials are like <i>walls</i> between me and God</p> <p><u>Action:</u> Make wrong choices – turn to alcohol, drugs,</p>	<p>Biblical habits of: <u>Faith</u> Faith = believing God can do His part and I need to do mine (obey) <u>Thinking:</u> Phi; 4:8 (quote) = God is all powerful, gracious Trials are like <i>bridges</i> (reality to Christlikeness)</p> <p><u>Action:</u> Prayer, read & obey the Word, trust God</p>

"The Holy Spirit of God takes the Holy Word of God and conforms us to the image of the Holy Son of God!" – Pastor Bill Goode, former pastor of FBC (1974—1996)

- explain Gal. 5:16-22 – the various aspects of the fruit of the Spirit – what does it mean to 'walk in the Spirit'? What is the result? (v. 22-23), What's the alternative? (walking in the flesh)

IMPORTANT: God will do His part, but you have to do your's – you have to "discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness" (1 Tim. 4:7)

- let's think about another aspect of discipleship:

II. Origin of Discipleship: Where Did Discipleship Begin?

A. Technically, it began in Genesis 1, 2, 3

- when God created man in His image and likeness – man had the ability to bring glory to God
- God only gave him one restriction to establish Himself as the Creator, the Moral Law Giver – thus the standard of righteousness – "don't eat of the tree ..."

- > this demonstrates that man needed God's counsel (discipleship) even BEFORE the fall
- > while man was sinless, he was not God, therefore his actions had potential to bring glory to God or to NOT bring glory to God (depending on if he obeyed the one command)
- but 'the disciple' chose to sin and ate of the tree
- then another level of 'discipleship' needed to be added: God had to counsel Adam again regarding:
 - ⇒ Consequences of his sin (death, cursed ground, pain in child birth (for the wife!), etc.)
 - ⇒ The prophecy of the 'seed of the woman' that would bruise the head of the serpent
- there are dozens of examples of God '*disciplining*' His people, individuals

Input: What were the various responses of God's people, individuals toward the discipleship process?

[various answers – some good/some bad – here are some examples of good responses:

- **Joseph in Egypt** - responded well to temptation (sexual, and tempted to be proud with his brothers – he responded in grace! But what would YOU have done given the same situation?)
- **Daniel** in the lions den
- **3 Hebrew guys** – stood in fire, trusting God – 'be it known unto you oh king, we will not bow down and worship the graven image which you have set up!" [Daniel 3:18]
> now THAT'S DISCIPLESHIP – they stood their ground on the TRUTH!!!

B. Modeled in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ

- Luke 9 gives an example of discipleship in the public ministry of the life of Christ
- Let's go back to * **The beginning of His ministry** and think a/b when Jesus actually called these men to follow Him

Note: Jesus used the phrase 'follow Me' 19 times in the Gospels

* **Exemplified throughout His ministry** – as He continued to model a godly life and response to the various situations we would face

> He even warned us about those issues:

- ❖ **John 15:20 "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also."**

* **Delegated at the end of His earthly ministry:**

- ❖ **Matthew 28:16-17 [context, right before Jesus ascended back to heaven] 18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."**

- stop and think about that for a minute – Jesus has entrusted US with the responsibility to 'make disciples of all nations'

> He has allowed us/ ordained us/ commissioned us for this task

- AND, He did not send us out ill-equipped

Input: What do we as believers have that enables us to get the discipleship job done?

[assign these verses to be read and then answer the question]

⇒ Holy Spirit – John 14:16

- ⇒ Word of God – 2 Tim. 3:16-17
- ⇒ Body of Christ – Heb. 10:25
- ⇒ All the grace (2 Cor. 12:9) and wisdom (James 1:5) we need and/or ask for!
- ⇒ HOW DOES THIS WORK? COME BACK NEXT WEEK!

III. Technique: How Does Discipleship Work?

- we're going to study 5 steps—I tried to make a 12 step program, but Pastor Viars said no - ☺
- note the progression from the beginning to the end

A. Announcement

- 4 of the 5 steps we're going to talk about are contained right here in this verse:

❖ **Mark 3:13 And He went up on the mountain and summoned those whom He Himself wanted, and they came to Him. 14 And He appointed twelve, so that they would be with Him and that He *could* send them out to preach,**

- Discipleship starts with a personal relationship with Jesus Christ
- before you can be involved in discipleship, you have to first BE a disciple (a follower of Christ)

[explain the joy of presenting the Gospel message]

Input: Examples of times you've had the opportunity to share the Gospel with someone

Illustration: Recent guests to the Community Picnic!

- this is what Jesus was talking about in John:

❖ **John 10:27 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me."**

Input: Why should the Gospel motivate us to be a discipler?

- the next level is:

B. Appointment

- Jesus basically '*called*' them to this mission – He chose them for the task

Input: What was so interesting that Jesus was choose these 12 guys?

[various answers – but look at them – they weren't the 'cream of the crop']

"What is more revealing about these men is that at first they do not impress us as being key men... They were common laboring men, probably having no professional training...One might wonder how Jesus could ever use them. They were impulsive, temperamental, easily offended and had all the prejudices of their environment. In short, these men selected by the Lord to be His assistants represented an average cross section of the lost of society in their day. Not the kind of group one would expect to win the world for Christ." – Swindol, p. 112, quoting [The Master Plan of Evangelism](#)

- I like the title of John MacArthur's book, Twelve Ordinary Men [one of the best books I've ever read] – that pretty much sums it up
- these guys were NOT the 'big dudes' of their day – most knowledgeable, gifted/skilled
- they were just 'ordinary men'

Input: How does that give you hope in the "being a disciple" category?

- God meets you where you are, but you do have to grow

- ❖ **Acts 4:13** Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and *began* to recognize them as having been with Jesus.

Q: What was it that changed them from *deniers* to ‘DISCIPLES’ willing to die for Christ?

Answer: THE RESURRECTION!

- after the appointment came . . .

C. Involvement [Note the comment below]

TEACHERS, THIS IS A VERY IMPORTANT POINT ABOUT OUR “PEOPLE, PEOPLE, PEOPLE, EMPHASIS”, AND THE NEED TO BE SERVING ALONGSIDE OTHERS

- the short version is this: if you’re going to disciple anybody, you have to spend time with that person(s)
- that’s why a person who isolates themselves from others will NEVER disciple anybody!
- * **He spent time ‘WITH THEM’** – they went where He went, saw what He saw, did what He did
- this is why faithfulness in attendance is so important for the worship service, ABF, small groups – you’re with the body and individuals

Q: If you didn’t show up for 2 months, would anybody miss you?

> not because they didn’t see your face, but because of you influence on their life and they missed being around you!!

Point: if the answer is no, then my guess is you’re not involved in the lives of others very much – and that needs to change if you’re going to be like Jesus!

D. Assignment

- this is the specific mission they were given: * **The Mission: Matthew 28:19-20**
- the mission is simple: Literally “having gone, make disciples of all nations”
- we have a mission, and we need to keep the main thing the main thing and be as creative as the Word allows us, and as aggressive as love will guide us!]

E. Accountability

- ❖ **2 Corinthians 5:10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

- It’s reasonable to expect that Jesus, our King and Judge will evaluate our efforts in the end

Input: Why don’t we like to think about the accountability of our discipleship efforts?

- Let’s ask another question:

IV. Commitment: What Does Discipleship Mean?

A. Personal Relationships

“Disciples have no higher priority in their lives than Christ—not even their love for their own family members.” P. 115

Q: Can you say that, first and foremost, Jesus Christ is number one in your life? Would the following verses really characterize your life, your thinking, and your choices?

- Are the following verses applicable to YOUR life?:

- ❖ **Matthew 6:33** "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.
- ❖ **Colossians 1:18** He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.

B. Personal Goals and Desires

- ❖ **Luke 14:27** "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.

"The crowd that surrounded Jesus understood exactly what he meant. They were familiar with the scene He referred to . They had often seen criminals carrying their crosses to the place of their execution. In those days carrying one's own cross meant the same as a person in our day walking to the gas chamber or the electric chair. It meant death—sure, absolute death." – Swindol, p. 116

- **The issue is commitment – a high level of consecration on the part of those who wish to become disciples.**

- Here are a few verses to consider:

- ❖ **Luke 9:23** And He was saying to *them* all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.
- ❖ **Romans 12:1** Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.
- ❖ **Philippians 2:3** Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; 4 do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.
- ❖ **Luke 22:41** And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and *began* to pray, 42 saying, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done."
- ❖ **John 6:38** "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.
- ❖ **John 8:29** "And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him."

"A genuine disciple . . . comes to that place where no major decision is made without a serious consideration of the question, "What would the Lord want me to do?" as opposed to, "How will this benefit me?" – Swindol, p. 117

- ❖ **John 6:66** As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore.

*** 3 Questions to ask:**

1. **As you think through the major decisions you have recently made (past 6-8 months), are you growing in making decisions that please the Lord and bring glory to God?**
2. **Are you growing in taking your personal goals and desires and comparing them to God's Word as you seek to do His will?**
3. **Do you seek** out godly counsel and/or advice before making important decisions?

C. Personal Possessions

❖ **Luke 14:33 "So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.**

Point: It's not about what you possess (those things are temporal and pass away with time) – our lives should be about what is ETERNAL!

V. Evaluation: Why Is Discipleship So Costly?

- Because God is holy, and sin really messed things up
- the price that had to be paid by the Son of God was so great – it cost God the Father His 'only begotten Son'
- If He paid that price to redeem you, shouldn't we be willing to sacrifice whatever to serve Him?

Key Passage: Hebrews 12:1-14 – Read & explain as you go – compare the cross to what you are being asked to do – and we don't face persecution, but some in the body do!

All you need to do is get alone with the Master, pour out your fears and your failures, then tell Him you are ready to take the first step away from a world that centers on you and into a new life that focuses on Him." – Swindol, p. 125

Conclusion:

Two important questions: Are you a disciple? Are you a discipler?

Strengthening Your Grip on KEY AREAS in your Christian Life #5 – Part A
Discipleship — Luke 9:18-26

Introduction:

Q: What is the NEXT step of growth for you . . . for us as a church?

Input: What example(s) can you give on someone discipling you in your Christian walk?

I. What is Discipleship?

Discipleship = the process of helping others conform to the image of Christ in the way they think and act

A. The ultimate goal: God is _____

Glory = _____

B. The model: _____

* True _____ are growing in _____ and _____ like Jesus Christ

* True _____ are helping others grow in the way they _____ and _____ like Jesus Christ!

Q: In what area are you NOT like Christ, and therefore need to change and grow?

C. The process: Two-fold

#1: _____ – justification (legally declared righteous on the account books of heaven)

Example: Israel in Egypt (Exodus 12:13)

* Salvation is the 1st step of being a disciple & the 1st step of the discipleship process!

Input: Why is it that we aren't more passionate about winning people to Jesus Christ?

#2: _____ – **Progressive Sanctification**

1) Understand the goal of life is to please God by being like Jesus Christ

2) Learn to deal with the idols of the heart

idols = _____ we make more important than pleasing God (James 1:13-17)

3) Practice the 'put off' and 'put on' process of Eph. 4:22-24

⇒ Identifying sinful habits of thinking and action that God wants you to change

⇒ Replacing those habits with biblical ways of thinking and action

Put Off	Put On
Sinful habits of: _____ Worry = assuming responsibilities God never intended me to have <u>Thinking:</u> <u>Action:</u>	Biblical habits of: _____ Faith = believing God can do His part and I need to do mine (obey) <u>Thinking:</u> <u>Action:</u>

“The Holy Spirit of God takes the Holy Word of God and conforms us to the image of the Holy Son of God!” – Pastor Bill Goode, former pastor of FBC (1974—1996)

II. Origin of Discipleship: Where Did Discipleship Begin?

A. Technically, it began in _____

Input: What were the various responses of God’s people, individuals toward the discipleship process?

B. Modeled in the _____ and _____ of Jesus Christ

* The _____ of His ministry

* Exemplified _____ His ministry

* Delegated at the _____ of His earthly ministry:

Input: What do we as believers have that enables us to get the discipleship job done?

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To be Continued!

