

Discipleship Requires Conversation

I. Discipleship is teaching someone how to be like you or someone you're trying to be like.

- We all have disciples.

II. Everyone disciples.

- Whether intentionally or unintentionally everyone teaches those around them how to be like them.
- Disciplers are simply influencers. And we're all influencers. God created us to influence and be influenced. He created us for community.

III. Discipling is as easy as living.

- You can't help but train people to live like you (or the person you're trying to live like), and it becomes easier and easier the more time you spend together.
- Your students, family members, friends, church members — they're all learning to be like you every moment they spend with you.

IV. What makes a good discipler?

- I Timothy 3:1-13; II Timothy 2:24-25; Genesis 1:3
- A good discipler will not disciple for self, but for Christ.
- A good discipler will be a good communicator. The best learning occurs when teachers teach *well*, and the best teaching requires good communication.
- All throughout the Bible we see that change happens when people talk. That change can be for good as when Peter preached on the day of Pentecost, or it can be harmful as when Satan manipulated Eve.
- But talking about God and talking about God *well* is not enough.
 - We may tell people that God is really important to us, and we may communicate with expertise what the Bible says, but when the people who know me realize that I don't actually live and talk those truths in the nitty-gritty of my weekend play, work, parenting, studying, or whatever . . . they're going to rightly deduce that being a disciple of God is for the churchy times. But that could not be further from the Truth. Someone who claims to be a follower of Christ, but who only follows Him during religious events and churchy experiences is not a follower of Christ. And everyone they're discipling is learning very well how to be a non-disciple of Jesus.
 - Instead, what if you and I had a relationship where we spent copious amounts of time together. Maybe we work together. Maybe we have shared passions. But instead of only interacting with you within that structure, we also get together outside of those prescribed times? What if you saw me live and parent and work and play and entertain and do chores, and you discovered that God is not merely an *element* of my life, but He is the driving motivation, focus, and passion of my life? What if you saw that my belief in God and submission to His Word touches everything in my life? What if nearly every conversation we ever had tied back to some Truth about God — an encouragement edification, or rebuke? What if you learned from watching me and talking with me how God's Word could be practically and relevantly lived out in every moment of every day — both in the High Days of feasts and festivities and in the Low Moments of everyday Thursday afternoons?

- Discipleship requires conversation. And the more conversation there is, the better chance your disciplee will become more like you. And if being like you means submitting their lives to Jesus, then you will be discipling your friends and students and church members and children and coworkers for Christ.
- Yes, we should all be able to teach — or at least just talk about the glory of God!
- But if we're going to relegate churchy discipleship time to once a week sessions for 30 minutes, we're actually undermining our whole purpose.
- Should we toss out small groups? No, I'm saying they should be the natural outflow of *already formed* relationships that are *already* interacting and growing and talking and mirroring and modeling and — most importantly — doing so as a true disciple of Jesus Christ.
- If you find it hard to talk about God, you can know that you *are* discipling, you're just not discipling anyone to be a disciple of God. You're discipling them to be a person who says they love God but then never acts and talks like they really love God.
- And if you are one of those people who can unpack the Scriptures in small group, but who doesn't live out those truths in your life . . . the Bible has a warning for you too.
 - James 3
 - In one of the most famous passages about the power of communication, James says that we should not strive to be in a position of a teacher if we're not prepared to do it well. Teachers who teach poorly will incur judgement.
 - In the same way, we are disciplers whether we like it or not. That position holds a lot of responsibility. If we set ourselves up in small group as someone who really knows God, but our lives betray the fact that we don't really consider Him in our moment by moment decisions, there will be judgement for that.
 - Perhaps this is why the American church doesn't do life together very well. We have our church friends and our regular-life friends. Maybe that's because we're consciously or subconsciously uncomfortable with the idea that the people who hear us talk about God at church may come into our homes and realize we're very different people.
- Teaching others to be followers of Christ requires conversation. Life-on-life conversation that glorifies and uplifts the Lord is the best way to disciple.

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