

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." - Matthew 28: 18-20

## Being a Disciple Who Makes Disciples



What does it mean to be a "disciple" of Jesus? The word literally means "learner". To be a disciple is to learn how to live life in a whole new way. It is learning to let go of our old self-centered nature and lay hold of a Spirit-directed lifestyle, connecting to God and others. *It is learning to be carried by God*, receiving the love, joy, and power generously provided. And it is learning to be a living invitation to a broken world that healing and hope are truly within their reach. Being a disciple means unlearning a lot of attitude stuff and risking to discover the surprising presence of God in our everyday routines, in all the people we meet and in all the circumstances we face.

Being a disciple means to connect with a larger community of disciples, giving and receiving encouragement, guidance, and love. Within this supportive community, we are able to explore new ways of living, as Jesus says, the "abundant life". And we become the arms of God's embrace for others.

The adventure continues as we extend an invitation to this Life to those around us. This invitation is communicated by the quality of our own life with Jesus and how well they see His Spirit working through us to serve and to love and to bring healing. Everything we think or do is like casting seeds out into a field. Such potential for new growth! But our seeds may be good or bad, healthy or unhealthy. That's our choice. The quality of the ground (a.k.a. other's hearts) on which they fall will vary too – that's *not* our choice.

There is a *timing* aspect to this invitation too. People are all in different places and need different kinds of invitations to grow. That is why I like to suggest people follow the ABC's of leading a person to Christ and the life that He offers:

**Ask questions.** We never ask enough questions. Assumptions are made about people (and God) that just simply don't pan out. Jesus asked lots of questions like "What do you want me to do for you?" or "What are you seeking?" We might do well to ask God "What are you up to in this person's life and how can I help?" It also may be helpful to ask someone (non-judgmentally) "Can you help me to understand why you believe this or that, or why you do this or that?" Learn to follow the gentle guidance of the Holy Spirit.

**Bring a gift.** Jesus was constantly surprising people with something good for them: a free lunch or healed eyesight or liberation from an ego-driven life. His generosity was unequalled. He encourages us to "freely give" of ourselves to others. It may be a smile, a prayer, our time & attention, a physical gift of money or an object, or simply the gift of being vulnerable enough to share our struggles and how God figures into that equation. Love cost God dearly. It will have a cost for you too. But the rewards are out of this world!

**Cultivate change.** Life in God is about being transformed. We enter into a new way of seeing... seeing others, seeing pain & joy, seeing our own worth and potential, seeing the majesty of God. We learn to let go of old ways of doing things and adopt new habits that reflect the life of Jesus. But like cultivating a garden, it is a process that takes time and effort. Practicing humility positions us for healthy change, allowing our lives to be more "grounded" (closer to the "humus"). This is the greatest "proof" which will inspire others to desire a Jesus-centered life too! We can help others to cultivate change too with encouragement guided by the Spirit. We can help others take the next step in their walk with Jesus, being a faithful friend.

**Your greatest call is to live intimately connected to God.** This is do-able but requires commitment and practice within the supportive community of other God-followers. Have courage! Take the leap!



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