

Undisciplined Disciples Part 2

a sermon in the series

The Apprentice: An Analysis of What it Means to be a Disciple

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Hebrews 5:12-14

For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

To recap last week, the writer to the Hebrews stated the sad condition of the church as a church full of spiritual babies. Like this church, many churches today are more reminiscent to a nursery rather than gymnasium where the people go to gain more strength and agility. We are closer akin to a room full of babies and not those who are able and strong. Something has happened and I want to suggest that the very concept of what it means to be a church has changed. Church leaders design churches today to appeal to people's felt needs rather than do what Jesus commanded, which is to "make disciples." When the emphasis in the church is on what people think they need, then the people will be coddled, and when you coddle long enough you make people easy, soft, and self-centered.

In the message last week we said there were four reasons why a church ends up in this predicament, having many converted people but undisciplined. That's why I've titled this message *Undisciplined Disciples*. Over the years I have often said that the first problem of the modern church is that the majority of its members are unconverted. The second problem is of the minority who are saved, the majority of them are immature. From a close examination of the text we stated that there are four reasons that contribute to this problem.

I. Losing Sight of the Goal of Discipleship.

When we as a church lose sight of what the real goal of the church is, we breed immaturity. When we make anything else the major aim of our church other than fulfilling this great command called the Great Commission, we will be detoured into a pathway leading eventually to spiritual babyhood. We will reverse our spiritual progress.

As I sited last week, author Dallas Willard called the Great Commission in most churches the Great Omission. Most churches are not fulfilling the Great Commission because it's not the ma-

job priority of that assembly. When we lose sight that this is the command of God, that we are His visible manifestation on this earth and we are to continue what He started, we are destined to be a weak and impotent church.

Do you not realize that union with Christ is a real thing in the sight of God? He takes this seriously. God the Father cannot distinguish between Jesus the Son and Jesus the church, because He is the church. He is the Head, we are the Body and we have been united. Bodies without heads and heads without bodies are not effectual in any regard. Jesus is the church and since we are in Him, that means we are the physical manifestation of Christ in this world.

When He ascended back to His Father His mission was not complete, that's why He left us here. We are His hands, His feet, His eyes, and His ears. We are to carry on His mission, which is to seek and save the lost, and make disciples. No other aim, purpose, or reason for existence is ours.

2. The Spiritually Mature Instruct But Do Not Train.

The church culture, as it is right now, has so emphasized Christian education that we have equated being saved with knowing a few facts about Jesus and agreeing with Him. Discipleship in our culture is not following Jesus by sacrificing your life, giving it away, in order to follow Him to be like Him. Discipleship in modern culture is getting some workbooks from the Christian bookstore and fill in the blanks with a small group for 13 weeks. That's what modern churches call discipleship because we are so focused on instruction and teaching, but not training. Discipleship requires instruction, Jesus taught His disciples repeatedly but that wasn't and isn't the whole of discipleship.

3. Pastoral Care Takes Place of Discipleship.

Something has happened over the course of 2,000 years that has made the job of discipleship relegated to a few in the church, mainly pastors. People come to church today believing they are the recipients of the ministry because only those who have been called to ministry are the ones qualified to do it and only them. *They've got the training, education, certification, and ordination; I don't have any of that so therefore I am not called to do that work.* That is not true. Until you see that's not true and that you also have a responsibility to make disciples you will be stunted in the possibility of spiritual maturity. You are missing a key principle to your own spiritual growth and advancement. The Bible tells us, "Let each of you look out not only for his own interests but also for the interests of others." In other words, Paul is saying you ought to shepherd one another. When you put yourself secondary and others, your brothers and sisters, primary and look out for their care as much as you look out for your own, then you are shepherding and that is the responsibility of discipleship we each have to one another.

4. The Concept of Church Changes From A Self-Sharpening Community to A Self-Seeking Consumerism.

Perhaps it is easier to remember this last reason to say, *the concept of church changes from community to consumerism.*

We are to be a community of believers not a group of individuals that gather on a Sunday or Wednesday. We are to be a true cohesive unit called community, but instead of coming together for the purpose of self-sharpening—helping and encouraging one another—we’ve turned the concept of church into a Christian mall or, if you prefer, a buffet table. We mark up the church as a place for you to come and sit, where we have to get you as comfortable as possible because if you’re not comfortable you won’t pay attention. If the seats are too hard you’ll be thinking about that, if it’s too warm you’ll be thinking about that. And then, because we are such a visually stimulated culture we have to have the right lights and the right mood and the right multi-audio/visual presentation to keep your attention. The whole concept of church is that we perform in order to entertain and satisfy what you need. As my friend Paul Washer says, it’s “Six Flags over Jesus.” That’s what the church has become.

Today the church is seen as a place where the individual is a customer. If you are to reach the church shopper you must cater to the person and draw them in like advertising. In advertising you draw your target market by letting them know your product is what they need and they can’t be happy or content without it. In the modern church culture we do the same thing. God intended this body, you and me, to be a community of individuals who come together to lose their self-rights in order to minister to one another and thereby sharpen their spiritual maturity. “Iron sharpens iron,” says the proverb.

The question we want to take up this morning is namely one. How do we change that? The answer to this question will help us to become more New Testament as a church.

How Do We Disciple Undisciplined Disciples?

Some of you are saved but have never been disciplined. You may be growing in knowledge about the Bible but have never had someone further along in their walk with the Lord invest in you and model Christ’s life in front of you. You may be growing in information about the Bible but no one has taught you by their life how to take that knowledge put it into practice. How do we change that so you can experience that kind of discipleship?

How Do We Transition to a Community of Disciplers?

How do we become a body that has influence in this community to make disciples? How can we change this church and make it into a church full of disciple makers? That’s the question.

There were four things that contributed to the problem of prolonged spiritual babyhood in the Hebrew church; therefore, I’m going to respond with four things to aid in spiritual maturity.

A. A Church Must Change Its Priorities to Make the Great Commission a Priority.

Jesus said that we were to make disciples, teaching them to observe—meaning obey—all that He had commanded them. The church's responsibility, your responsibility, my responsibility, is to teach others not just what Jesus said we were to do but how to do it. For your information, Jesus issued 212 commands. Some are very similar so they can be categorized or lumped together. But you can take those 212 commands and condense them into four. And Jesus said you could take those four and condense them into one. What was that? To "love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength." The greatest priority is the command to love Him with our whole being. But what does that look like? It is to so value Jesus, to treasure Him that you want to build your life on Him. It means worship. To love God means you can't find anything more valuable than God who is worthy to build your life upon and around. So to love God with your whole being simply means to worship God. If you will not build your life upon Christ and around Him then you're going to do it on something else. You are designed to worship. So you will find something to devote your life to and build your life upon and when you do you are worshipping. To love God means I have tasted and seen that He is good and that He is worth building my life upon and sacrificing my life to follow in order to be like Him. When you worship something you want to be like what you worship. To worship Jesus is to obey Him, and to have Him as your greatest pleasure and most prized treasure.

You watch children old enough to play sports. Whether it is baseball, basketball, or another sport, they will find somebody in the sports world whom they want to emulate. If it's a baseball player, they will adopt his batter's stance and try to swing the bat like he does, maybe they'll tug at their cap just like he does. Why? Because they idolize him, and we idolize those we want to be like.

So what does it mean to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength? It means you have found Jesus to be the supreme Person, the One whom you want to be most like.

If you do that you will be free to do the next three commands: love your neighbor as yourself, love your enemies, and make disciples. These must be main priorities of a church. It is also to be the priorities of every Christian. Therefore, an inventory of a church's purpose and priorities must happen.

If you love God the way I just defined you will love your neighbor and you will love your enemy. But the question is how do you do all that? By the fourth command our Lord gave us—making disciples. That means if you are a Christian, a follower of Christ, a disciple, then your major goal is to please Jesus by wanting to be like Him, so you make disciples because that's what Jesus did.

There are people in this room who love the Lord, but you don't have a clue about how to make a disciple. You want to know and that's what this series of messages is about. It's time you learn how to do that. And that has to become the priority of the church. We have to do some serious soul searching, Oak Grove. We need to take an inventory of our purpose and our priorities and re-evaluate them. We need to make sure that everything we do, everything we're about, is doing what Jesus said—loving Him with our whole being, loving our neighbor, loving our enemies, and making disciples.

One of the biggest changes must be its emphasis of the Sunday morning “worship service.” I’ve thought a lot about this and the first place I think we need to spend time talking and thinking about together, the biggest place for change is our emphasis of the Sunday morning “worship service.”

We need some change in this area. Some of you, I’m sure, are surprised that I would say the Sunday morning worship service. Some might suggest we do some changing of Sunday night because it’s not as well attended as Sunday morning. No, it’s the Sunday morning that needs the greatest change. And where the greatest change needs to occur is in how we think about this time together. It’s not so much what we do here that needs to change it’s our thinking about what we do here that does.

Most of your thoughts regarding church involve this couple of hours on Sunday morning. If you think about Oak Grove you think about this time right here. You see everybody seated exactly where they are now because that’s where you sit all the time. You might see in your mind’s eye this sanctuary or the fellowship on Wednesday night, but the point is you see the gathering times.

This happens because our view of church is something you go to. No doubt someone this morning said, “Hurry up, we’ve got to go to church!” We think this way because our concept of church is it is a place. Not necessarily the building, you know better than that, but you still see the church as the congregation of assembled members. That must change in our thinking. If that doesn’t change we won’t be able to do any of the things God has called us to do. We’re never going to grow spiritually, numerically, or any other way. We have got to put this to rest right here and right now because that kind of thinking is not biblical.

In the Bible they didn’t meet in the same place every week. They didn’t have buildings and yet the church functioned at a far higher caliber than we do today and we have all of these luxuries and privileges. When you begin to specify that the church is a place you have just cut the umbilical cord of the church from the Lord Jesus and deprived it of its power. The church is not relegated to a place but it is us, the body of Christ full of Jesus’ power on His agenda. That’s the church. Jesus removed locality when He said to the woman at the well, “Neither here nor in Jerusalem shall you worship.” The church is not a place where we do certain things.

Therefore we need to talk about not just who we are but what we do. If you were to read church growth books you would read a great deal of talk about improving church, which invariably means how to conduct the worship service because that’s how we think of church. Church is where we get together in one place and do these specific things and if we can improve upon them and have more excellence in how we do those things, then the church will grow. That’s how we view church today. That must stop if we are going to be New Testament because what we’re doing here is very little of what the church is supposed to do. If this is the measure of Oak Grove Baptist Church, then we are sadly falling behind and disobeying God.

As I said last week, if you get most of your understanding and hearing from God from me then you're on milk. Believe it or not my teaching is mostly milk. Some of you would argue and say, "No, it's deep. It's really deep." Somebody told me this past week they learned more about God in their few short years here than they had in their whole life. I've heard that many, many times. They say it's because I go deeper in the Word than anyone else they've ever heard. I appreciate that, but I tell you, it's still milk. You want to know why it's milk? I'm the one that feeds on the Word of God and I mull over it, I chew it, I ingest it, and then I condense it into about a 45 minute time span to give you the essence of all I've studied that week. So I'm the one taking the solid foods in and giving you the milk, no matter how deep you may think it is.

I may give you factual, biblical hard evidence, and truth, but it will have no impact until God quickens it to you. We pray He does that every time but for it to be meat it takes you getting alone with this Word by yourself. It takes you wrestling over it, praying over it, not understanding it but staying with it, seeking the Holy Spirit's insights so that the Word of God is not coming to you by a second party but by God Himself. That's meat.

My milk is always going to take you onto deeper meat but I can't give you meat. Not by myself. If all I can give you is milk and sometimes a little bit more solid food, maybe some pureed vegetables, if you please, baby food, that means I'm not doing much discipleship in this two hours. Let's be frank. Am I really making many disciples in this two hours every Sunday? No. We need to come out and face the reality that we're not making many disciples right now because doing what we do these two hours every Sunday morning and Sunday night and Wednesday night is not the making of disciples, it's a part of it, but it's a small part. We need to change our mind about these hours together. This is not the main work of the church.

So what do we need?

We need to be an interdependent community of disciplers. In other words, we need to quit thinking about our individual selves and become consumed with the edification and growth of one another. Together we can do much more than we can alone. Unfortunately, because of the American culture, we are basically lovers of independence not *interdependence*. But that's an American cultural thing. If you go to other places in the world you will find that other cultures are different in this regard. In other places there is more of an emphasis placed on community rather than individualism. In some cultures the oldest person in the house is the leader and most respected and everybody follows and submits to him. We need to learn to become a more interdependent group of disciplers and that means we need to be less cultural and more relational.

You're going to have to come out of your reclusive ways and be around, rub shoulders, with other people. The New Testament was not a place where they met for a couple of hours on one day. The early church would have wondered if one was saved if they thought of the church as a place to go a couple hours a week. If they would have heard, "You know, I go to church for two hours on Sunday, I'm really dedicated because some people only go for one hour, if they go at all!" they would have thought you were probably not a Christian. All you want to give Jesus is two hours

a week? We are a covenant of individual body parts that come together. Don't you understand that you can't get all of Jesus by yourself? God didn't design you to get all of Him by yourself. The Christian life isn't designed that way. He submersed you into His body as a joint member with other members. If He meant this to be lone ranger Christianity we wouldn't even need to meet. He could have saved you and then sent you out on your own but He didn't.

We need to be more relational. We need to come out of the cocoons of our own private lives and start investing our lives in one another. We need to begin establishing brotherhoods and sisterhoods, and that involves more than texting. That means being in each other's lives. But we really don't want to do that and that's why we remain spiritually immature.

We need more training along with instruction. We don't need to stop the instruction we add more training.

"For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. ¹⁴ But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." (Hebrews 5:13-14)

The word *unskilled* means "without experience" and the people to whom he was referring were taught and knew the Bible lessons but they had no experience of taking truth and making it real in everyday life. There was no practical application of the Word of God so that life was truly based upon hearing God through His Word by His Spirit.

The word *use* in verse 14 is a Greek word that means a "habit established by practice." A spiritually mature person is someone who has developed a habit of taking what they hear and practicing it; they practice and practice and practice, until it has become a way of life. Those who do this are sharp in their spiritual senses, they know God and good and evil.

"But solid food belongs to those who are (spiritually) mature, to those who on account of long usage have their powers of perception exercised to the point where they are able to discriminate between both that which is good in character and that which is evil." (Hebrews 5:13 Wuest Commentary)

They are incorporating and practicing what they hear in their daily lives. We need to change every priority so that it feeds ultimately to this one priority, making disciples. Thereby we will love God with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

B. The Undisciplined Must Divest Their Lives of the Non-Essential In Order to Become Like Jesus.

God has really taught me in the last few weeks this principle of divesting. What does it mean to divest something? It means the opposite of investing, which is when you put something of value into an instrument of multiplication that you believe with time will increase your initial investment. To divest is to remove something. You unload yourself of it. It is the emptying your life of

things that are non-essential to investing. That has to take place before you'll ever make an investment. Here's why. How many hours in a day do you have? Twenty-four. How many days in a week do you have? Seven. Would you say your life is very crammed and that you can't find time to do what you would like to do? That happens to me all the time. I go to bed and think, "Lord, I didn't do half of what I wanted to do today."

Now that you have heard you need to follow Jesus in order to be like Him how are you going to do that? Is God going to give you extra hours or more time during the week? Not at all. That means we are going to have to divest, unload some things that are not helping us to make disciples and fulfill the Great Commission. The same is true in your individual lives. Here is where the decision about being a disciple is tested. *What do I give up, especially when I don't want to give it up?*

Luke nine is a fabulous portion of Scripture about discipleship because in a few verses, Luke shows us three men, one of whom Jesus actually called just as He called James and John to be a disciple of His. The other men two volunteered. It is here you see that the undisciplined disciple must divest their lives of non-essentials in order to become more like Jesus.

Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, that someone said to Him, "Lord, I will follow You wherever You go." ⁵⁸ And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." ⁵⁹ Then He said to another, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." ⁶⁰ Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God." ⁶¹ And another also said, "Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house." ⁶² But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God. (Luke 9:57-62)

Jesus contradicted the modern concept that being a disciple hinges on a one-time decision to accept Jesus. He said it was not a momentary decision and yet so many people define being a Christian exactly that way, don't they. Are you a Christian?

"Oh yes."

How do you know?

"Because when I was 8 I made the decision to accept Christ."

Today's Christianity is reduced to a momentary decision. Luke shows us three men who made the momentary decision, they all three said, "Yes, I want to follow You, Jesus." But they didn't make good on their momentary decision. Jesus said to be a disciple, to be a Christian, was not just a birthing experience but also it is to live after that birth following Him. Each of these men had made the decision to follow Him. However, Jesus said more was required to be His disciple than a momentary decision. But it seems all three men had something to hinder them that they were not willing to divest themselves.

For the first man it was personal comfort. "Lord, I'll follow you wherever you go." And yet, Jesus did not say, "Here are the cards, sign up!" He knew as He looked into that man's heart what his hindrance would be and what he would need to divest in order to follow Him. It was personal comfort.

Jesus had left Galilee for the last time and He was on His way to Jerusalem to die. It would take Him several months to get there and He says to the man, "Listen, there's no Best Westerns, no Holiday Inns, no Hyatt Places, there's not even a Motel 6 for Me. The birds of the air and the foxes have a place but I don't have that. I live a very simple life and it's not full of comfort." And that man balked. He wanted to follow Jesus wherever Jesus went as long as it didn't cost him personal comfort.

Beloved, you're living in a culture that has literally attacked your mind trying to convince you that you are entitled to personal comfort. You can be a follower of Jesus, perfectly happy and in need of nothing and not have comfort. Jesus didn't have comfort and yet He was the most satisfied Person on this planet. You are sacrificing life more abundant for personal comfort. When Jesus said, "I have come that you may have life and have it more abundantly," He didn't mean that you could have all of the latest things and make your life pleasurable and comfortable. He meant, "If you're going to follow Me you're going to have to live like I lived, a very simple life. I divested My life of anything that would hinder the work My Father sent Me here to do."

The second man was not willing to divest himself of personal wealth. He said to the Lord, "I'll follow you but first let me bury my father." The problem was his father wasn't sick. He wasn't even close to dying. He was referring to the custom of the day when the eldest son would help to take care of the elderly and then when the father died he would be made executor of the will of which he got two thirds for inheritance. He was saying, "Lord, I don't want to lose my inheritance. If I leave my father now he will take that as a personal insult and he will disown me, my brothers will get everything and I will get nothing. Besides, if You will wait, when my father dies I'll have enough money to subsidize my ministry You won't have to worry about me."

The last fellow seems to be a little strange, doesn't it? All he wanted to do was go home and tell everybody goodbye. I mean, when Elijah called Elisha to follow him he allowed Elisha to do just that. Why is Jesus such a hard nose? Jesus knew what was in this man's heart. He knew the man didn't want to go kiss his wife and children goodbye; he wanted to go back and have a feast, a celebration, a party where he would tell everybody where he was going and what he was going to do. Why would Jesus say, "If you put your hand to the plow and look back you're not worthy of the kingdom?" Because you can't plow a straight line by looking backwards. Besides, he knew somebody would talk the man out of following Him. This man was not willing to divest himself of personal relationships.

Jesus has called you into a life unlike this world and you cannot live like this world and be a disciple. I'm not saying we should live in mud huts and eat dog food and hand out tracts. What I'm saying is that you've got to build your life on Jesus and He's got to be so valuable to you that you never consider it a loss to divest your life of things, but consider it a gain.

C. The Undisciplined Must Submit Themselves to Others Who Would Invest in Them.

I think this is the most difficult. Once again, because we live in a culture that celebrates independence, to submit to somebody else seems strange to us. It seems abnormal, not right, to bring ourselves under the authority of someone else voluntarily. "I have rights! To submit to someone else, why, that sounds cult-like."

The type of submission I am talking about is not cultish it is New Testament. Am I suggesting that you need to submit and do whatever someone tells you to do, and that they are to do all the thinking for you? No. God won't even do that for you.

What God wants you to begin to think like He thinks and be mature enough to make godly decisions without Him having to tell you what you to do at every turn. That is why to bring yourself under the submission and authority of someone else to do whatever they tell you to do at all times is cultish and is not discipleship.

Discipleship is what Paul said in 11 Corinthians 11:1, "Follow me, as I follow Christ." In other words, if you are to be a true disciple, which means to be disciplined so you can eventually disciple someone else, you need somebody who is more spiritually mature to invest themselves in you. You are to come under their leadership and follow them as long as they are following Christ, doing what they say to do as long as it's in the Bible. If it's in this Book it's God saying it and not that person. This is where churches must demand from the disciple.

The culture works against this telling you are your own person and are to make your own decision. It preaches that is not right to bring yourself under somebody else's authority. But the Lord Jesus Christ and the Scriptures clearly say that there is no other way to discipleship.

"Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.'" (Matthew 16:24)

Discipleship requires self-denial to bring yourself under the leadership of another.

D. The Mature Must Divest Their Lives of the Non-essential In Order to Invest in the Undisciplined.

You, who are considered more advanced in the life of Christ as a disciple, also need to divest your life. You need to throw some things overboard so you can bring somebody else into your life and you can invest in them. It's going to cost you some comfort, it will cost some wealth, it will cost less time in some relationships, and it will be glorifying to God as you fulfill His commandments.

I'm going to say something that many of you will not agree with. There is a part of the Christian culture, not the American culture, the Christian culture that has infected our churches and is

hurting and damaging them. Let me just go on the record and say that while I believe in the family unit it is not more important than the family of Christ.

I love my family, I love my wife, my children, my mother in law, I love my family and they are very, very important to me. If you criticize my wife you'll find out how important. I don't mean that as a threat, I'm just telling you that I won't tolerate that. I love my family. But there is going to come a day where I die, or she dies, or we both die at the same time, and we're not going to be married. She'll cease to be my wife but she will continue to be my sister eternally. Together we'll be the Bride of our Lord Jesus Christ. I'm not saying you should forsake your family. No, not at all. I'm not in favor of preachers who forsake and neglect their children like some have done and their children grow up hating the Gospel and the church and Christianity. That's unbiblical and we'll talk about it in a future message. But please listen, there is an idea that is going around in churches today that the family unit is more important than God's family. No it isn't. It's not.

Is the church family more important than the nuclear family? I won't say that. You'll just have to work that out on your own. But I wouldn't say the church family is less important. This is the family Jesus died for, the Body of Christ. And if that means I can't be with my wife every evening like I would like to be but I am with other folks investing my life in them, then so be it. That's a small price. In fact, it's not a price, it's an investment and if you make wise investments you always get more back than you put in.

If this church is to transition to what it needs to be, those who are mature are going to have to start investing their lives into other people here and outside of here.

These four things are essential to the life of this church and it is what God has called us to do. Why these four things? I think it's really simple. It's because we are the physical manifestation of Jesus Christ to this world. One hand cannot do much on its own. It's connected to the wrist and the wrist to the forearm and the forearm to the upper arm and to the body, and without that connection my hand can't do anything. It requires other body parts to do its thing. You by yourself cannot make disciples. It was never intended to be that way. God intends Christianity to be a community effort and project.

Let me illustrate. On Wednesday nights I've been teaching from Matthew 5:13 and following where Jesus said, "You are the salt of the earth." For illustration purposes, I took one grain of salt and said that it could not season your potatoes. If you put that one tiny grain of salt on your potato you will not know it's there—you won't taste it. So what do you do when you want to season your potatoes? You take a saltshaker that has many grains and shake it out so you have enough grains and by the sum total of all those tiny grains of salt your potatoes are seasoned. If we are to make disciples we must work together. Just one of us is not enough but when we come together an amazing thing happens—Christ shows up. He's not just in one of us He's in all of us.

The perfect example of this would be Geoff. He was converted a couple months ago. Can Geoff make disciples? *Well, he needs to be disciplined himself, how can he make disciples?* True, but to disciple

another does not require you to be a master of Bible knowledge, it requires you following Jesus and know a little more than the person you are trying to disciple. You've just got to know a little bit more than they know.

Geoff has already started discipling a co-worker but he doesn't have enough education in the Scriptures yet to fully teach the co-worker. Two men are investing their lives in Geoff to solve that issue. So how will this work?

Let's say Geoff has the gift of service. The gift of service is the ability and desire to help people. It is the passion to roll up your sleeves and labor to assist others. Now let me ask you a question. What would make a person feel more loved: someone giving them Bible information, doctrine, and teaching, or by someone rolling up their sleeves and helping them when they need help? Which will make that person feel more loved? The answer is helping them. There is nothing like serving someone to communicate love, it's even more powerful than teaching.

Over the last few days, Karen and I had the opportunity to share the Gospel with two men. It was a very brief time but we shared the Gospel and I know they saw Christ. I know it was genuine, but I don't know how much they felt loved by that. But if I had an opportunity to roll up my sleeves and really get in there and sacrifice myself to help them in a time of need, I guarantee they would have felt more loved by that than me sharing the Gospel with them. Does that mean I don't share the Gospel? No, instruction is a part of it. But what I'm trying to say is this, some of you don't know enough to share the Gospel, at least you don't think you do, but you can get in there and minister and love on people by helping them. If you keep loving them like that, sooner or later they'll say, "If everybody at Oak Grove Baptist Church is like Geoff, I need that!" Then you get a couple brothers or sisters who know more than you introduce them to the person who you are investing your life. You get others involved who have the knowledge you do not yet have. That's what happened this week.

Geoff was to meet with Whitt for lunch for some discipleship and he brings his co-worker because Whitt knows more than Geoff. It just so happens that Whitt's life, before he was saved, was more similar to this other man's than Geoff's. So now we have two people ministering to him. That's much more effective than just one. That's why discipleship is a community effort.

God didn't give me all the gifts. I need you! I need the gift in you, which is a manifestation of Jesus' Spirit in you. I need that because He doesn't show me things the exact same way as you. If we put those gifts together we can change this area and this world.

Can we save it? No. But we can make an impact. You and I are His hands. Jesus will not touch this hurting world without our hands, our feet, and our voice. Thereby, we become His physical extension in this world so that they can hear Jesus speak into their lives. They can see how Jesus loves them by your sacrifice. By the peace your life demonstrates they can see how much they need Christ who is in us. In this way, Christ is touching our sick world. That's what God intended for us and we can't do that by ourselves it takes an interdependent community.

We've got to change our mind about this couple of hours. If you come here because you believe this is required for us to do church, that's a false view of church. Church is not what happens on Sundays. Church is what happens when we leave here. That's when the church goes into action. This is not church; it's only part of what the church does. Amen.