



31 DAYS WITH GOD

THE AUTHENTIC CHURCH

Devotionals About the True Church

Compiled by the CHPC and FBVR Sessions

www.31dayswithgod.com

Acts 4:12-13 And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

¹³ Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus.

Acts 17:6 “These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also

Luke 9:23 And he said to all, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”

Joshua 24:15-16 And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

¹⁶ Then the people answered, “Far be it from us that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods,…”

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How to Use this Devotional

This devotional is provided in the hope that it will be an encouragement and blessing to the congregations of CHPC and FPVR during this important time when leadership is considering a merger of the two existing congregations at the current FPVR location into a new church for the glory of God. There is no intention nor vision for sharing these devotions with other churches. Nor is there any intention to convince anyone which way the decision should go, one way or the other. This month with God is simply for our common edification and spiritual preparation in anticipation of God's leading.

Each devotional is designed to take ten to fifteen minutes to read, consider its true meaning, and prayerfully apply its truth in a personal way. None of the pages are provided 'for someone else', but should be considered with the question in mind, "What wondrous thought from Scripture does God have for me today?" And secondly, "How can I apply it to my life?"

Some of the pages have been compiled or written by various members of the Session of either church, some simply copied from other reliable sources such as, Tabletalk Magazine, The Navigators, Ligonier Ministries, My Utmost for His Highest, Going Places with God, John Piper, John MacArthur, Samuel Rutherford, Randy Pope, Harry Reeder, Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Kevin DeYoung, Spurgeon, and others. We have attempted to give proper credit to those sources but may not have been as thorough as 'professionals' would have, so we apologize for any misses in that direction. There is no intent to sell or otherwise distribute this material, but only to build up and strengthen these two small bodies of followers of Christ at this important time.

Here is the suggested daily approach to this "31 Days with God" for our congregations:

1. Obtain a copy of these devotions in the format you prefer: printed, digital, online, or downloaded so that it is readily available to you for daily consumption.
2. Designate a time and place each day to read the day's devotional and commit to that time. Think of it as a very important appointment set to meet with God, prayerfully listen to him speak from his Word, and respond with careful application and/or action. If you miss a day or

WHAT IS CHURCH?

The world, culture, the media, and the masses do not understand the church. "...because they have a totally wrong conception of what she is." Martin Lloyd-Jones But, they have a main source of information --and that is from the church itself. The church is not a place to visit on special religious occasions or to go exercise a weekly obligation. Church is not a building, not even a place. Church is not centered around a man, a tradition, a building, a history, nor sentimental emotionalism. That is religion, and Christianity has nothing to do with that.

The local church is a gathering of people-- souls who have been changed by God, mastered by God, and therefore have God at the focus their life. They did not seek religion and did not seek God at all. Christianity happened to them by God's initiative; it was not their choice. Church is a gathering of those who were spiritually dead and have been made spiritually alive by Christ and his gospel. ONLY these authentic Christians can reflect the true nature of the church to the world.

two, don't be discouraged. Simply go to the date for 'today' and re-start.

3. Write down one wondrous thought God gave you: perhaps one sin to avoid, or a promise from God, an example to follow, a command to obey, some knowledge to receive, a truth to apply, or a person to encourage or serve. If you print the pages, you could write on the back of each day.
4. Look for opportunities to encourage others in our congregations to meet with God daily. And,
5. Come prepared each Sunday of July to hear the Teaching Elder take you deeper into the scriptures you have read in the previous week. To encourage focus on the preached Word, no devotional is provided for Sundays. Rather, a page for Sermon Notes has been included.

CONTENTS: WEEKLY THEMES

Week One: What is a Disciple?

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FORWARD

Relocation/Merger is a big decision for any congregation.

As they often say in weddings, it is not to be entered into lightly or unadvisedly, but soberly and discreetly. Relocation/merger of a church should be taken only when it is clearly the best strategy, and clearly at the leading of the Holy Spirit. Of all the important studies undertaken by leadership: logistics, legalities, demographics, culture of the churches, compatibility of the churches, commonalities of vision, mutual needs and benefits, and others; none compares to the one central question: Is God calling us (both) to expand his kingdom work in Villa Rica and the surrounding area by merging the churches? Needs, desires, comforts, and dreams are not the call; the call comes from God, and when it does it becomes a simple matter of obedience. To merge or not must be an obedient response to God by his people.

Davis Byrd, of the LifeWay Corporation's Church Architecture Department says churches need to relocate/merge for one of two reasons:

1. Out of a need for additional land area that is unavailable in the present location, or
2. They have a poor location to do the ministry they feel called to do.

It is not the purpose of this devotional to urge either congregation to adopt the idea of a merger. That may not be the best course for either congregation – there is no such thing as a –one size fits all answer on this question. By considering relocation of CHPC and merger with FPVR, both congregations are at minimum saying that there are issues that need to be addressed. Considering relocation/merger for the second reason above, the discussion is particularly difficult for the congregations, for this speaks of possible dysfunction in execution of God's call for the church, and it may mean that either or both are at the point of a life and death crisis.

One of the most difficult things for you or some of your fellow church members will be to sort through the emotions relocation/merger talk stirs up. Some may feel that the church is considering a course that is disloyal to your forebearers or feeling grief that the church will never be the same after a merger (an unavoidable fact). These feelings will not just go away if we ignore them. They are powerful and sometimes agonizing. We need to be especially sensitive to those who may be struggling with this consideration, and work to lovingly “consider others interests ahead of our own”. We need to acknowledge them, but we should not allow them to prevent us from studying the facts about the situation, searching for insights from Scripture that may apply to it, and ultimately discover God’s will and God’s call to God’s work.

Discussions about relocation/merger are about more than the street address. They are about the kind of church we are going to be. It is an unavoidable fact that the new, combined congregation will be a different church than either of the previous two. If it is to occur, it will be a new work. The relocation/merger decision is about each church’s growth strategy. What will be the new church niche in the Kingdom of God? It will be new and different. What are the strengths of each congregation and where can those strengths be best put to work to advance the Kingdom of God?

The relocation/merger question involves and challenges some of our deepest held doctrinal beliefs — in particular, the doctrine of the church. What do we believe about the nature and mission of the church? The definitive answer to the relocation/merger question may also reveal our level of spiritual commitment. The key question for each of us is: would you be *willing* to support relocation/merger if you knew God wanted it? These are spiritual issues that need to be *thought through* and *prayed through*.

You would not be reading this, nor considering this if you did not love your church. Each of us loves the idea of a flourishing, growing, biblical, impactful, Spirit-filled, Christ-uplifting, God-glorifying church. However, be warned: these devotionals will speak firmly at times to you and your fellow church members concerning ministry and mission. The strong wording is intended to overcome the defenses we put up to protect our feelings, sentimental preferences, traditions, and histories concerning the churches we love so much in favor of simple devotion to Christ and responding in faith to God’s call to God’s work.

May God bless you as you enter his presence daily and study his Word as we spend 31 days together with Him.

Ephesians 3:14-21 ¹⁴ For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, ¹⁶ that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

²⁰ Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

*Scripture quotations are from the ESV, unless noted otherwise. Three dots “...” usually means that the text was edited or condensed to save space. When credit is offered for compiling a writing, the name only is attempted to be noted. If you would like more information about an author, Google their name to learn more. The term ‘relocate’ is sometimes found alone. The intention is to add “/merge” for clarity, but if that was omitted, please understand that the intent is that the term ‘relocate’ and “merge” are interchangeable throughout these devotionals.

WEEK ONE, INTRODUCTION



Theme: What is a disciple?

DEFINITIONS:

Disciple - like discipline, comes from the Latin word *discipulus*, meaning “pupil” or “learner”.

Disciple of Christ -- One who pursues learning about Christ, follows Christ's teachings.

Maker of a Disciple of Christ – Every Christian who encourages/instructs/entrusts to others to learn more about and pursue Christ. Notice, this applies to one who by the grace of God encourages/instructs both Christians and non-Christians to learn and pursue Christ, and fully trusts God with the outcomes. It is God who does the work --calls, saves, and matures by his Spirit. Jesus lovingly includes us in his work through the command of the Great Commission in Matthew 28. In fact, he chose to rely on our obedience as he extended this amazing privilege by his grace. Jesus did not ‘qualify’ his command according to our giftedness, age, or station in life. It is for all who are followers of Christ.

DISCUSSION:

The Great Commission: *Matthew 28:18-20 And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*

This weeks' devotionals focus on discipleship with a Biblical lens. We are called to make Disciples of all nations –all people groups regardless of tribe, race, or nationality. The first application that many Christians make is to understand the Great Commission in only an evangelistic mode: to see unbelievers coming to Christ. That is one aspect of making a disciple of Christ but not the only one. We are also to work with new and old Christians to encourage one another to become better, more mature followers of Christ.

While you are reading through these daily devotionals, think and pray about how intentional you are when it comes to making disciples, whether your focus is to evangelistically help nonbelievers know more about Christ, or to teach Christians young and/or old about how to follow hard after Christ. Both can be practiced where you are now, whether by talking to your unbelieving neighbor about Christ, teaching/participating in a Bible study, or encouraging a believer from another church. All of these are ways to engage in Christ’s kingdom work disciple of Christ and to make disciples of Christ.

May this week’s devotional readings encourage and sharpen you as Christ’s Disciple, and draw you into deeper love for him and his bride, the church. Dig in!

Week One: What is a Disciple?

DAY 1, SERMON NOTES: SERMON TITLE: OUR COMMON MISSION

Scripture:

Matthew 28:16-20 ¹⁶ Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷ And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Acts 1:1-8 ¹ In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, ² until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. ³ He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

⁴ And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me; ⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." ⁶ So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷ He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Exposition:

Application:

DAY 2, DISCIPLES INDEED

Scriptural Text

Matthew 16:24-26²⁴ Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”²⁵ For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.²⁶ For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?

Exposition

“Throughout the world, there are many people who claim to be Christians. In fact, if we were to ask people in our communities if they are Christians. Many of them would respond quickly with an emphatic yes. However, if we were to ask those same people if they are disciples of Jesus Christ, many of them would likely not be as quick to answer, and those who are honest would have to admit that they are in truth not disciples of Jesus Christ.

This dichotomy is problematic. Although many people don’t want to hear it, and while many pastors fail to preach it, there is no distinction between a Christian and a disciple of Jesus Christ. Christians are disciples.” Dr. Burk Parsons, editor of *Tabletalk Magazine*.

The problem arises when the distinct characteristics of a disciple become the expectation. Distinctives such as:

Obedience to the Word, Takes up his cross daily, Lifestyle of Worship, Confession of Sin Openly, Produces Other Disciples, Disciple Their Own Children, Memorize Scripture, Sacrificially Loves Other Christians, Pursues Personal Holiness, Pursues Sound Doctrine, Counts the Cost of being a Disciple, Teams Up for Ministry, Strengthens the Weaker Brother, Committed to Prayer, Seeks Redemptive Relationships with the Lost, and Loves the Bride of Christ (the church) ...to name a few.

This is when some Christians would like to ‘opt out’ and say that they are ‘just Christians’, not really disciples. But the truth is the two terms are interchangeable. A Disciple of Christ is a Christian and a Christian is a Disciple of Christ. One cannot be a Christian if one is not a Disciple. The disciple is one who practices the disciplines of the one he follows....in our case, Jesus. A disciple is a learner who is committed to learning all he or she can from another. “The word *disciple*, like *discipline*, comes from the Latin word *discipulus*, meaning “pupil” or “learner”. Consequently, to learn is to discipline oneself.” Anthony J. Carter

The Disciple is one who trusts Christ. That trust is a saving faith that compels following and obeying Christ as his disciple, giving up his life of desires and comforts in favor of being with Christ in his work. “I am afraid that much of what we might call evangelical Christianity has lost this important truth. Many have been deceived into thinking that because they prayed a prayer, or signed a card, or walked an aisle (or were born into a covenant family) that they are guaranteed eternity in heaven. But Jesus demands something more. Jesus demands that we trust him with our very lives, that we follow hard after him, that we live life out as his disciples indeed.” Rev. Grant R. Castleberry

Application

Pray. Settle the issue of your salvation. Are you trusting your life to Christ now as well as for eternity?

DAY 3, AUTHENTIC CHURCHES ARE FULL OF AUTHENTIC DISCIPLES

Scriptural Text

Mark 3:13-14 *And he went up on the mountain and called to him those whom he desired, and they came to him. ¹⁴ And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) **so that they might be with him and he might send them out...***

Acts 17:6 "These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also,..."

Exposition

Many people around the world go to church religiously without accepting Christ or without knowing how to follow Him in every area of life. Few church leaders bother to build a culture of biblical, life-on-life discipleship within their churches, but those who do attempt it may be met with an array of objections, fears, and resistance from church members and other leaders in the church. Discipleship has become a buzz word with multiple understandings making it difficult to communicate clearly about what it is, and what it is not. The result is often reversion to 'religious' entertainment, activities, schedules, and programs that fill the calendar of the church in an attempt to appeal to the religious cultural preferences of members, but without the expectation that Christians should have a mindset of disciple-making.

The mere words: discipleship, evangelism, outreach, and spiritual growth literally scare some Christians because they are outside the norm of the culture of the church in America today. All this makes the challenge of reaching the lost in the community even more difficult. For all its faults, the lost culture around churches in America today senses that there is a real disconnect from Reality afoot at the typical local church; therefore, they label the church as "irrelevant".

Theologically speaking, any person who has been called by Christ is a follower or disciple. Much like sanctification, discipleship is a process of growth. So, the true disciple is a person who answers Christ's call to "*be with him*" in preparation "*that he (or she) might be sent out*". One of the definitive characteristics of Christianity, and therefore of Christians, is that Jesus calls us into relationship with himself...in fact, with the triune God. The one thing required of any relationship is time together. The disciple understands that his or her relationship with Christ is not a form of 'religiosity' through simple Church attendance. Once or twice a week is not enough for the authentic disciple. The authentic disciple longs for daily time spent with God through his Word.

The outward focus of a disciple is an intentional sharing out of that private walk with God, as opposed to just giving information. It's a philosophical shift," says Hershey. "When truth is shared out of the life, people relate to it. It makes sense, and it becomes organic as opposed to getting lectured with information." This life-to-life sharing is exactly why Jesus spent time (3 years) with his first disciples. If book-to-life were his mode of discipling, surely Jesus would have spent those three years writing books. Instead, he spent his days life-to-life with his disciples. The New Testament is a record of the events of those days, how they continued to share life-to-life, and how it turned the world upside down.

Application

Pray about your daily routines. Choose a time and place for daily time in the Word, Prayer, and Worship. Determine to be an authentic disciple of Jesus.

DAY 4, ABIDE IN CHRIST

Scriptural Text

John 15:4-9 *Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.* ⁵ *I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.* ⁶ *If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.* ⁷ *If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.* ⁸ *By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.* ⁹ *As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love.*

Exposition

"In the matter of determination: The Spirit of Jesus is put into me by way of the atonement by the Cross of Christ. I then have to build my thinking patiently to bring it into perfect harmony with my Lord. God will not make me think like Jesus— I have to do it myself. I have to bring *"every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ"* ([2 Corinthians 10:5](#)). *"Abide in Me"*— in intellectual matters, in money matters, in every one of the matters that make human life what it is. Our lives are not made up of only one neatly confined area.

Am I preventing God from doing things in my circumstances by saying that it will only serve to hinder my fellowship with Him? How irrelevant and disrespectful that is! It does not matter what my circumstances are. I can be as much assured of abiding in Jesus in any one of them as I am in any prayer meeting. It is unnecessary to change and arrange my circumstances myself. Our Lord's inner abiding was pure and unblemished. He was at home with God wherever His body was. He never chose His own circumstances, but was meek, submitting to His Father's plans and directions for Him. Just think of how amazingly relaxed our Lord's life was! But we tend to keep God at a fever pitch in our lives. We have none of the serenity of the life which is *"hidden with Christ in God"* ([Colossians 3:3](#)).

Think of the things that take you out of the position of abiding in Christ. You say, "Yes, Lord, just a minute— I still have this to do. Yes, I will abide as soon as this is finished, or as soon as this week is over. It will be all right, Lord. I will abide then." Get *moving*— begin to abide *now*. In the initial stages it will be a continual effort to abide, but as you continue, it will become so much a part of your life that you will abide in Him without any conscious effort. Make the determination to abide in Jesus wherever you are now or wherever you may be placed in the future."

Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest*

Application

Get moving! Pray about areas of your life that you may be walling-off from the life of Christ in you. Quickly repent and trust that there is no area that is not best when fully invaded by Christ. Ask God to fully invade your heart and to create a longing for daily, consistent time with him through his Word until you are unconsciously abiding in Christ.

DAY 5, MIRACULOUSLY PROLIFIC

Scriptural Text

John 15:16-17 ¹⁶ *You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.* ¹⁷ *These things I command you, so that you will love one another.*

Exposition

The disciple lives out of the core of his spiritual existence in Christ: the call of God and the grace of God bringing spiritual life where there was death by the Atonement. The disciple is overwhelmed by grace in his or her knowledge that it was utterly undeserved personally. Being so honored by God and yet so underserving creates profound humility and surprisingly, unshakeable confidence in the salvation that the disciple possesses.

In our consideration of the amazing, un-understandable grace of God toward us, disciples often turn inwardly to the question, “Why would God do this for me?” But God has not hidden his answer to this profound question. He clearly states one of the reasons that we are possessors of such a great salvation: that we should bear fruit, fruit that lasts. We have a purpose, clearly stated.

Let’s consider fruit for a moment in nature. Genesis tells us that each tree bore fruit ‘after its own kind’. In other words, apple trees produce apples, not pears or walnuts. In every niche of nature, fruit bearing involves reproduction and proliferation to the maximum extent conditions will allow. This gets at the essence of abiding, fruit bearing, and our Lord’s command to “Go and make disciples...”.

As nature teaches us; it takes a disciple to produce a disciple. Likewise, we have a term for any plant or animal that cannot produce its fruit: barren. Jesus is telling us here that by his or her very nature, the disciple produces fruit after his or her own kind, and that that fruit will last. This is God’s method of spiritual reproduction. It is not ‘adding’, but multiplication. Imagine the proliferation if every true disciple of Christ produced two disciples in their lifetime, or per decade, or per year!

The Great Commission, “*Go, and make disciples...*” is a command as if to say “Go and make more of yourselves. I have shared my life with you. You have learned my ways and experienced how to live them out. I like what I see, so now go and make more of yourselves...” And, how were they to do it? “...teaching them everything I have commanded you...” A paraphrase might be, “do it just like I did it with you, life-to-life, show them everything, just as I invested all my life and ministry in you.” This command of Christ harkens back to Genesis and Adam and Eve when God said, “This is good!” “*Be fruitful and multiply!*” He liked what he saw then; he likes the disciple he sees now in you; so be fruitful and multiply! You will establish a spiritual lineage that will last until his return and into eternity.

We immediately put up a mental barrier to this command by imagining it to be some incredible spiritual mountain to be overcome, but it is actually a command to simply be who Christ has made us and to reproduce that in others. We can only effectively guide people as far as we have traveled.

Application

Determine not to be barren as a disciple. Since we will produce after our own kind, prayerfully consider what kind of disciples of Christ you are already producing. The apple tree does not strain to produce apples; it is natural. Abide in Christ until your spiritual multiplication is unconsciously, naturally prolific.

DAY 6, SPIRITUAL MULTIPLICATION

Scriptural Text

Matthew 28:18-20 And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Exposition

“Jesus came...” Jesus took the initiative. When Jesus directs us, he has proven his faithfulness in being there to fulfill his purposes.

‘and said to them’... Jesus spoke to them in plain language. He had spent three years discipling the 11. He had these 11 as his only plan to bring his story of salvation to humankind. There was no ‘Plan B’. Jesus knew he was about to ascend back to his home with the Father. This would be the moment of his ‘famous last words’. Of all the important things that Jesus could have said in these decisive moments such as: love one another, help the poor, hold fast to the truth, love your wives, be faithful in worship, or repeating the beatitudes; and instead of delivering an hours long review of all he had taught them, Jesus had one simple imperative to deliver; to “go and make disciples.”

“All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me.” ... “Since all authority on earth is lodged in Christ’s hands, he can also clothe any and all of his servants with a sacred might by which their hands will be sufficient for them in their high calling. ... having a divine power that will make them useful.... Only he who has all authority can work his bidding by a word and dispense with all force but that of love.” Spurgeon

“Go therefore, and make...” Whether seen as a direct command: “Go” or interpreted “As you are going...”, Jesus is expecting intentionality on the part of his disciples. And, Jesus said ‘to make’ indicating the action, the effort, the task or work to be done. It is not a passive life, but a committed life radically focused on this activity, the activity of ‘making’.

“...disciples of all nations...” These 11men knew they were Jesus’ disciples. They knew he had made them by life-to-life exchange for the last three years. There was no doubt in their mind of what a disciple of Christ is, precisely, and that is precisely what they were to reproduce by the continuing grace of God. Having already established his absolute authority over the earth is his basis for “of all nations”. His universal authority was not to be misunderstood as over only a single people group, the Jews, though he tells them to go to the Jews first. Jesus clearly wants disciples reproducing in every people group on every continent and far reaching island. Jesus does not discriminate as man is so prone to do.

“...baptizing....teaching to observe all...” We are to welcome into the family of God, and to do what Christ did: share life-to-life to make disciples. Notice it is not book-to-life; it is not even pulpit-to-life, but “all I commanded you”...that life-to-life reproduction that only his Spirit can effect.

“...I am with you always...” We are not Jesus’ partner in discipling. He is our Director and Enabler by his Spirit, if we will but obey.

Application

Pray and ask God to show you who he would like you to engage in spiritual multiplication.

DAY 7, DISCIPLES MAKE DISCIPLES LIFE-TO-LIFE

Scriptural Text

2 Timothy 2:2 ² and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.

Titus 2:1-5 But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine. ² Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness. ³ Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, ⁴ and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, ⁵ to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.

Exposition

Here Paul outlines for Timothy the visionary aspect of a Disciple. A disciple sees future generations of disciples resulting from his faithful, life-to-life communication of the sound doctrinal truths of Scripture to other followers of Christ. A genuine disciple makes not only disciples, but makers-of-disciple-makers.

“...entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.” A disciple-maker is to seek such men. In our churches we would be wise to free all such men to engage in life-to-life discipling relationships. Each faithful man needs to be discipled and to disciple others. The entrusting is that each of us would ‘teach others also’. Paul is not making a general statement, but a personal one. As it concerns each of us, we must determine to be trustworthy receivers and faithful deliverers of the Word.

“Titus 2 describes vibrant covenant life where the pastor teaches sound doctrine and one generation discipled the next generation; and sometimes discipleship is gender-specific: “Older women . . .”

Women teach what is good by reinforcing the good doctrine ...train by showing how sound doctrine informs and transforms our attitudes and actions. Paul practiced this informational/relational discipleship dynamic. “We were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. ... we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves,” he writes to the Thessalonians (1 Thess. 2:7–8). (This is life-to-life exchange.)

Women spiritually mother women by sharing the gospel and our lives ... This is so important in the life of the church that when God sent His Son into the world, He provided an older woman to disciple the young woman chosen to mother the Messiah. Elizabeth and Mary embody Titus 2 discipleship.

...After the angel’s announcement to Mary, she “went with haste” to Elizabeth’s home. The young woman went; the older woman welcomed. “Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit” (Luke 1:41). God empowers us to be and to make disciples...Elizabeth teaches Mary that blessedness comes from obedience to God’s Word.” Susan Hunt

Application

Pray and ask God to give you a vision for a few men or women who are faithful, and likely to teach others. Write their names down and begin consistent prayer for them asking God to give you opportunity to invest your life in their life for the glory of God. Prayer is the key. No Christian can develop a ministry to others that exceeds the depth of his or her personal prayer life, so pray for disciples and be willing to be a disciple-maker! “...that the Word of God may not be reviled.”