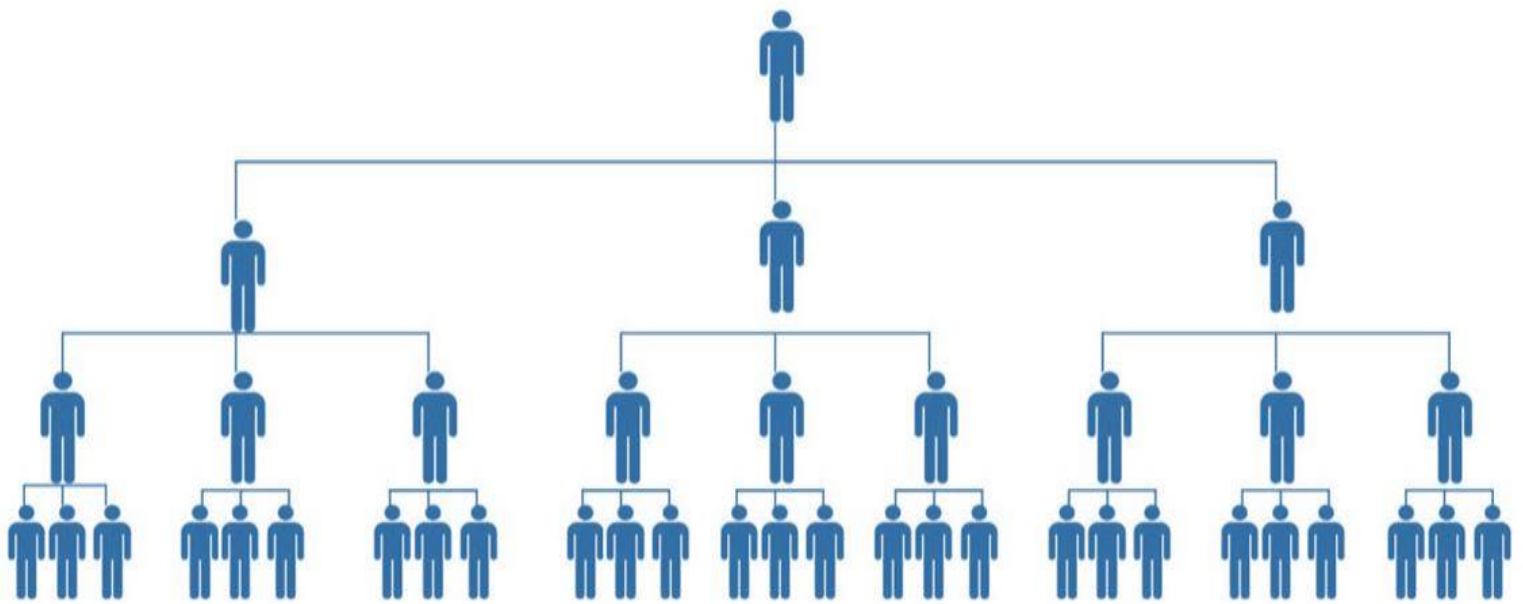


Go Make Disciples

Lesson 7: Step 4 Continued Teaching



Discovering God's Word
Bible Study Series

Go Make Disciples

Lesson 7: Step 4 Continued Teaching

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Discovering God's Word Bible Study Series

Study Number: DGW241

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About the author: My name is Eric Krieg. I am a disciple of Jesus, a Bible student, a truth seeker, and an evangelist. My interest is in using the Bible as my only guide in my faith. My desire is to help others understand the message of the Bible and pursue true, New Testament Christianity.

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My plea: It is my hope and prayer that you are searching for the truth that is contained in God's word, the Bible. My desire is to help you understand and obey these truths God has revealed in the pages of His word. It is to that end that I write this material. Please observe all of the Scripture references and evaluate whether the conclusions I have drawn are in harmony with God's word. If they are, I ask that you make honest application of those truths to your life and obey God's instructions.

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Go Make Disciples

Lesson 7:

Step 4 Continued

Teaching

When people consider the “Great Commission” (as recorded in Matthew 28:18-20 and Mark 16:15-16), they tend to think about the three steps we have been considering over the previous three lessons. The first step is “Go.” The second step is “Preach.” The third step is “Baptize.”

Since baptism is the point at which the Scriptures demonstrate someone becomes a disciple of Christ, the focus of the disciple-maker often shifts at this point to someone else who is not yet a disciple. However, this is a great error. For, Jesus’ “Great Commission” that was focused on making disciples for Him did *not* stop at baptism. Instead, there was a fourth step involved.

Listen to Matthew 28:18-20 again. “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ Amen.”

Continued teaching is this fourth step. Jesus knew that people still had a lot of learning and growing left to do whenever they became disciples of His. Therefore, the disciple-maker’s work is never done with an individual. True disciple-makers will not just be focused on helping people become disciples of Christ. Instead, they will also be focused on helping those who have become disciples really live as disciples should!

You can see this in Jesus’ parable of the soils (as I referenced in the previous lesson, from Luke 8:5-8, 11-15). While most people in the world will never believe and obey the gospel so as to become disciples of Christ, consider that there are three types of soil (hearts) in this parable that do become disciples – albeit with different results. So, the disciple-maker’s work will be to help those who have become disciples become fruitful in Christ’s service.

Jesus speaks of the rocky soil as those who “when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away” (verse 13). Next, Jesus speaks of the thorny soil as those who “when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity” (verse 14). Finally, Jesus speaks of the good soil as those who “having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience” (verse 15).

As you consider these three groups of people who all receive the gospel’s initial teachings to become disciples of Christ, you can surely see that they are *not* all equally pleasing to God. Although it is up to the individual to decide what kind of soil he/she chooses to be, those who are disciple-makers should do their best to help every disciple be the good ground that produces fruit for Jesus Christ. But, this will not happen just by baptizing someone and then leaving that person in order to go help someone else become a disciple! Instead, the seed must be both planted and watered, continually being cultivated, in order for it to produce fruit (1 Corinthians 3:5-7).

As you consider this fourth, ongoing step involved in making disciples for Jesus, perhaps you do not know how to help those who are disciples become fruitful. Perhaps the seriousness of this work makes you nervous and you have some questions about how to do the work. Questions like: Where do I begin? How do I get started? How do I actually accomplish this work? How do I get someone to let me work with him/her in this way? Therefore, I hope this lesson provides you some guidance as you consider the fourth step in the disciple-making process.

Viewing Baptism As The Beginning, Not The End

In order to get started accomplishing this work, you need to experience a shift in your mindset. You must go from thinking baptism is the *end* of the disciple-making process, to seeing it as just the beginning. But, this is not just true for the one who has recently become a disciple. Instead, it is also true about you – and about everyone who is a disciple. So, there is no lack of prospects in this phase of the disciple-making work either. Therefore, you should accept help from other disciples of Christ (who want to help you be a better disciple) as well as look for opportunities to help others. As you do this, consider a few things baptism is just the beginning of.

The beginning of a new life

Whenever someone becomes a disciple of Jesus Christ, it really is an opportunity to rejoice! In fact, Jesus taught that “there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents” (Luke 15:10)! This is because an individual who was dead and lost in sin has just been given new life. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”

So, this individual has experienced a new birth. This individual has a new relationship with God. This individual has a new Master. This individual has new priorities. This individual is working to develop a new character. This individual is working to develop new habits. This individual is working to learn new religious practices. This individual is trying to produce new fruit. And, this individual has new hope.

Now, while this new life is a great cause of rejoicing, disciple-makers also must recognize that “new” things are not always easy. And, without the proper guidance, the old can creep back in – either quickly or slowly. For, Satan does not give up and admit defeat whenever someone is baptized. Instead, he just has to work that much harder at them.

The beginning of new opportunities

Whenever someone becomes a disciple of Christ, there are wonderful new opportunities. For, the Bible is full of examples of how God used ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary things for Him. Think about Moses, Gideon, David, Esther, Peter, Paul, and Timothy.

Jesus wants to use every disciple to produce spiritual fruit in His service that will work to glorify God. Matthew’s account of the parable of the soils says, “But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty” (Matthew 13:23). So, every disciple of Christ is capable of producing fruit in Christ’s service (though every disciple will produce a different amount of fruit than the others – because each one has different abilities and opportunities).

Just imagine the possibilities if every disciple of Jesus Christ worked to produce all the fruit he/she can produce. Imagine the people who could be taught the gospel! Imagine the disciples who could be strengthened! Imagine the erring who could be corrected! Imagine the good works that could be done in the Lord’s name! But, it is very easy for disciples of Christ to get caught up in the hustle and bustle of life so as to either fall away from Christ, fail to produce any mature fruit, or fail to produce the kind of fruit they are capable of producing. So, every disciple of Christ can use the help, encouragement, and strength provided by other disciples to do better in Christ’s service!

The beginning of new challenges

Whenever someone becomes a disciple of Christ, there are new challenges. A disciple’s life is not always easy. In fact, there are times it is downright difficult. Jesus even said that “narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it” (Matthew 7:14).

First, those who are Christians will continue to experience the same kind of challenges that all people face while living on this earth. They will get sick. They will get hurt. Their loved ones will get sick and die. There will be accidents. There will be

surgeries. There will be pain. And, there will be suffering associated with living in a fallen world. So, disciples will need support and encouragement through these times.

Second, there will be new challenges that are directly associated with a disciple living for the Lord. There will be new temptations that must be resisted. There will be changes that must be made to the disciple's character. There will be old habits that must be broken and new habits that must be created. There will be old relationships that will work to pull the disciple back into the old ways. There will be some old relationships that will be broken. There will be persecution. So, disciples will need support and encouragement through these times.

The beginning of a growing process

Whenever someone becomes a disciple of Christ, there is a growing process that has only just begun. For example, whenever a baby is born, it is immature and dependent on others. Parents must carefully and diligently nurture the child and train the child so that it can become more and more independent. And, this growth and development continues for as long as an individual lives.

It is the same way spiritually. Whenever an individual is baptized, the Scriptures call this being "born again" (see John 3:3-6). And, 1 Peter 2:2 records an instruction to Christians, saying, "as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby." Hebrews 5:12-14 teaches that there is a time whenever disciples should have matured beyond the "milk" of the word (the "first principles" of God's teachings) and are able to handle "solid food" (the more difficult teachings of God's word). But, not every Christian has grown and matured in the proper way.

So, those who are disciple-makers should be concerned about helping other disciples grow and mature. For, whenever someone is first baptized, he/she may have no idea how to live as a disciple. He/she may only know the basic truths of God's word. He/she may not know all the things God expects from him/her. He/she may not know how to make certain changes. He/she may not know some changes that need to be made. He/she may need

guidance, leadership, and encouragement to reach the next level in his/her spiritual maturity.

Every disciple can use help along the way!

You see, baptism is clearly just the beginning of the disciple-making process – not the end! Every disciple of Christ (including yourself) can use help in becoming the disciple Jesus wants him/her to become. Every disciple can use teaching. Every disciple can use encouragement. Every disciple can use some loving correction.

Listen to Ephesians 4:11-16 to see how God wants all His disciples to be working together to help the whole body of believers be built up and strengthened in the faith. "And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head – Christ – from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love."

Take a few moments to consider the disciples who are around you. You are not solely responsible for the spiritual growth and development of each one. Instead, each individual is ultimately responsible for himself/herself. And, your other brothers and sisters are also responsible for helping them. But, you certainly do have a role to fulfill in helping them. You will simply need to consider how you can help each disciple around you to the best of your ability.

Disciples Helping Disciples Be Disciples

Fortunately, God has not left disciples of Christ alone in trying to live for Him. Instead, disciples have been given the responsibility to help one another live like disciples should. So, there are many “one another” responsibilities given in the Scriptures. And, I contend that it will be by fulfilling these “one another” responsibilities that disciples will accomplish the work of helping disciples be disciples. Consider some of the responsibilities disciples of Christ have been given toward “one another” (though this is not an exhaustive list).

Live as members of one another

Disciple-makers have to have a second major shift in their thinking. Not only do disciple-makers have to shift their minds to recognize that baptism is just the beginning, but they also have to shift their minds to recognize how interconnected God wants them to be with their brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ. For, the Scriptures picture such a close relationship between those who are Christians that it says they are members of one another.

Listen to Romans 12:4-5: “For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.” And, Ephesians 4:25 says, “Therefore, putting away lying, ‘Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,’ for we are members of one another.”

The relationship you ought to have with your brothers and sisters should be so close that you are members of each other. Your life is interwoven with their lives. So, you rejoice when they rejoice and weep when they weep (Romans 12:15). You care deeply about their struggles. You have a personal interest in their spiritual development. You aren’t strangers to one another. Instead, you really know them and want to help them any way possible.

Now, this point really prepares us to consider the “one another” responsibilities we have toward

other disciples. But, consider who these responsibilities apply to. The fact is that every disciple has every one of these responsibilities toward every other disciple he/she has the opportunity to fulfill them toward. So, like with everything the disciple-maker does, you must be watching for doors of opportunity to be opened in these areas.

Love one another

God has commanded those who are Christians to love others. In fact, the Christian is expected to even love his/her enemies (see Matthew 5:43-48). So, it should come as no great surprise that Christians have the responsibility to love their brothers and sisters in Christ.

1 Peter 2:17 commands Christians to “Love the brotherhood.” 1 Peter 4:8 says, “And above all things have fervent love for one another, for ‘love will cover a multitude of sins.’” The kind of love God requires of those who are Christians is a self-giving and sacrificial kind of love that always seeks to do whatever is in the other person’s best interest. It is not just a love that is expressed in “word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth” (1 John 3:18)!

So, disciple-makers should be focused on their brothers and sisters. Your daily life should not just consider yourself and your physical family. Instead, you should consider what you might be able to do to help the members of your spiritual family (i.e. your brothers and sisters in Christ) live as disciples of Christ. And, even though doing something to help your brother or sister may cost you time, energy, money, etc. that you could use on something else, sacrificing these things to help your brethren is what loving your brothers and sisters in Christ really looks like! After all, is it really love if you are not sacrificing anything of yourself in order to help them live for Christ? Therefore, you need to develop a daily focus on helping your brothers and sisters in Christ in any way possible, utilizing the opportunities of the day.

Receive one another

As you can already see, God wants His disciples to be part of a larger community of

disciples. He recognizes that it is even more difficult for His disciples to live faithfully for Him if they are all alone in this world full of temptations, trials, and persecutions. Unfortunately, some disciples actually make this harder on other disciples by failing to receive one another.

Romans 15:7 commands, “Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.” Although some disciples allow past personal or family squabbles, economic or social barriers, personal opinions and traditions, and such things prevent them from receiving one another, God’s expectation is actually quite simple. He says that disciples are to receive one another, just as Christ has received us all.

So, disciples of Christ are not permitted to put barriers between themselves and *any* of their brothers or sisters who are living according to the will of Christ. As a result, no disciple who is trying to serve God should ever be shunned by his/her brethren. Instead, every disciple should be trying to help, encourage, and strengthen every other disciple. There must be no artificial barriers placed between any disciples of Christ. For, these barriers will only work to help Satan accomplish his goal of leading disciples of Christ away from Christ. And, these barriers will not just be social barriers. But, they will also prevent disciples from accomplishing their other “one another” responsibilities that will help their brothers and sisters serve the Lord.

Encourage one another

Fulfilling your “one another” responsibilities goes beyond what should be common-sense conduct between disciples (such as loving and receiving one another). Instead, there are also spiritual responsibilities involved. For instance, the disciple-maker will be looking for any possible opportunity to encourage other disciples to follow Christ.

Listen to Hebrews 3:12-13. “Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called ‘Today,’ lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.” And, Hebrews 10:24-25 says, “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works,

not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”

So, both inside the assemblies of the local church and outside the assemblies, you should be looking for opportunities to encourage brothers and sisters in Christ. Notice carefully that disciple-makers should be interested in offering some kind of encouragement to other disciples every day! For, the disciple-maker recognizes that Satan is working to tear their brothers and sisters down every day. Every day presents its own set of challenges and struggles. Every day presents another opportunity to become complacent in Christ’s service. Every day has its own temptations. Every day has good works that could be done. Every day presents an opportunity to grow and mature in Christ. Therefore, disciple-makers should find some way to encourage a fellow disciple every day (since disciples should be so connected with each other that they interact with other disciples every day)! And, the way to encourage others to serve God is through the teachings of His word, which is able to build people up in the faith (Acts 20:32).

Bear one another’s burdens

As we saw earlier in this study, disciples of Christ face many burdens as they live. These burdens include the typical burdens all people face as they live in a fallen world that is subject to pain, suffering, and death. And, disciples of Christ face added burdens that are directly associated with living for Christ.

Listen to Galatians 6:2. “Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” No disciple should be left alone in holding up the burdens of life. Although every disciple has his/her own burdens, the community of disciples should be so interconnected that you could picture disciples with inter-locked arms, trying to hold up the burdens of the others!

Disciple-makers need to recognize that every disciple of Christ is burdened in some way. Although not all burdens are equal in the weight and pressure they put on someone, no burden should be taken lightly. For, Satan wants to use these burdens to press so hard on disciples of Christ that they either seek an

easier way to live, become distracted in their service, or feel as if they are all alone in trying to withstand the pressures. So, you should let your brethren know that you are there to listen and help in any way you can – and actively watch for opportunities to do something that will help lift the loads others are carrying.

Teach one another

Although there is more involved in disciples helping other disciples be disciples than just teaching, certainly teaching is involved. For instance, Jesus commissioned His apostles to go, preach, baptize, and then continue “teaching them to observe all things I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:20). All disciples should view themselves as being part of a life-long continuing education program in which all disciples are working to help all other disciples. Again, there should be an interconnectedness about this work wherein each Christian learns from the others.

Colossians 3:16 explains how disciples can accomplish this work through spiritual songs. “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” And, listen again to 2 Timothy 2:2 (as we have considered earlier in this series). “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”

Perhaps Titus 2:1-8 is the best picture of this point. “But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience; the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things – that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed. Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded, in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be

condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.”

Every disciple-maker should be looking for opportunities to teach God’s word to other disciples, remind each other of spiritual truths, and warn each other of the need to follow God’s word. Particularly, those who are more mature in the faith ought to be looking for opportunities to take less mature disciples “under their wing” and bring them along in the faith – just like Paul was like a father to Timothy in the faith. For, if disciple-makers fail to teach other disciples, how will they ever grow and mature in the faith so as to produce spiritual fruit and help others be disciples? Disciples should determine to be like iron that sharpens iron, teaching and warning one another so as to become more knowledgeable, mature, and capable in the faith of the gospel (see Proverbs 27:17).

Correct one another

All disciples of Christ must recognize that they can (and will) still sin against God. And, whenever other disciples are aware of the sin their brothers and sisters have committed, God has given them responsibility to correct the erring. For, there is no difference (in terms of eternal destination) between those who have never become Christians and those who have turned back to sin after becoming Christians. Therefore, the disciple-maker is always looking for an opportunity to say or do something that can help turn someone who is lost in sin to Jesus Christ.

Consider Galatians 6:1. “Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.” James 5:19-20 says, “Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.” And, 1 Thessalonians 5:14 says, “Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all.”

Disciple-makers have a definite work to do in this area when they see their brothers and sisters who

fall back into sin. But, they also need to be careful and use wisdom in each situation. For, disciple-makers must make sure they get the whole story before accusing someone of living in sin and do not rush to judgments, even giving the benefit of the doubt where doubt exists (see John 7:24 and 1 Corinthians 13:4-7). And, some situations will require a softer approach than others (see Jude 1:22-23). Everything must be done with love and in the best interest of the soul that is lost. The disciple-maker must also try to correct a fallen brother or sister as he/she would want to be corrected if in the same situation (according to Jesus' "Golden Rule" in Matthew 7:12).

Forgive one another

In all the work of making disciples, forgiveness may not be the first thing on your mind. However, it certainly should not be forgotten. For, failing to forgive those who come or return to the Lord on His terms can be a great discouragement for those disciples of Christ.

Ephesians 4:32 commands, "And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you." And, Jesus said, "Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him" (Luke 17:3-4).

Every disciple-maker should put himself/herself in the position of the one who comes to God for forgiveness. That individual realizes he/she has sinned. He/she wishes he/she would have acted differently and never committed the sin. But, it is too late to change what has been done. So, he/she is now in need of forgiveness from God and anyone else he/she has sinned against. Satan wants that individual to feel as if he/she is always shackled to the past life of sin he/she has lived and has no hope of changing. Certainly, disciples of Christ should be actively working to help their brethren overcome that obstacle – not adding to it!

Serve one another

Disciples should have such care for their brothers and sisters in Christ that they will look for every opportunity available to serve each other. The kind of service that is provided for others could be physical in nature – or it could be spiritual. Regardless, it should be clear that your service is done out of love for the other and for Christ and not in search of any kind of reward for yourself. For, it has often been said that folks don't care how much you know until they know how much you care!

Consider Galatians 5:13. "For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another." Galatians 6:10 says, "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith."

The power of serving others is not just in helping someone with something. Instead, it really shows people you care about them and are thinking about their needs. People need to feel as if they really do matter to others. They need to feel that whether or not they serve the Lord matters to others. They need to know they are not alone. So, by serving people, you show them that they are so important to you that you sacrifice your own time, money, resources, energy, etc. in order to help them live for Christ!

Be hospitable to one another

I have intentionally saved this point for last. For, I want you to consider how you (as a disciple-maker looking to help your brothers and sisters in Christ live as disciples) will actually accomplish your work. Do you suppose that just attending the assemblies of the local church will be sufficient? Or, do you suppose that just saying "Hello" to someone and making small talk with him/her will accomplish the work? I believe the Scriptures teach the need to go further than this.

Consider 1 Peter 4:9. "Be hospitable to one another without grumbling." And, consider the picture that is given in Acts 2:46-47. "So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and

having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”

Disciple-makers need to recognize the value of spending actual time with their brethren – even outside of the assemblies of the local church. They need to have their brothers and sisters into their homes and share physical meals together (and, no, nothing has to be “fancy”). For, disciples will not be very knowledgeable about each other’s needs, struggles, and opportunities unless they really do know one another. In fact, truly knowing your brothers and sisters in Christ will help you accomplish every one of the important works we have been discussing. And, the best way to really get to know your brethren and be in the position to help them live for the Lord is to spend time in each other’s homes (both inviting others to your home and accepting invitations to other homes)! When this is done with a focus that is not on the food, shared earthly hobbies and interests, etc.; but with a shared focus on helping each other serve God and having spiritual conversations, these opportunities for hospitality are truly wonderful blessings for everyone involved!

Conclusion

Disciple-makers have to recognize that living for Jesus Christ is a life-long process. Life on this earth is full of ups and downs, twists and turns. Thankfully, God has not made any disciple go through these things alone. So, disciple-makers should be focused on helping those who have become disciples navigate through life in a way that will result in growing and fruitful service for the Lord. Therefore, you should search for opportunities around you to help those who are disciples of Christ live closer to Him today than they did yesterday!

Study Questions

How does Jesus’ parable of the soils (Luke 8:5-8, 11-15) demonstrate different results from those who believe and obey the gospel initially?

1. Viewing Baptism As The Beginning, Not The End

How is baptism the beginning of a new life?

How is baptism the beginning of new opportunities?

How is baptism the beginning of new challenges?

How is baptism the beginning of a growing process?

How can every disciple use help?

2. Disciples Helping Disciples Be Disciples

Why is it important for disciples to live as members of one another?

Why is it important for disciples to correct one another?

Why is it important for disciples to love one another?

Why is it important for disciples to forgive one another?

Why is it important for disciples to receive one another?

Why is it important for disciples to serve one another?

Why is it important for disciples to encourage one another?

Why is it important for disciples to be hospitable to one another?

Why is it important for disciples to bear one another's burdens?

Why is it important for disciples to teach one another?