

**MCHA: Disciples make more Disciples FBC Canton Sunday am July 20, 2025**  
**Introduction: We are attempting to MCHA. We have discussed 6 core habits that will leverage change in your Faithwalk. Romans 1:16-17**

Do not negotiate with yourself. Do the hard things first.

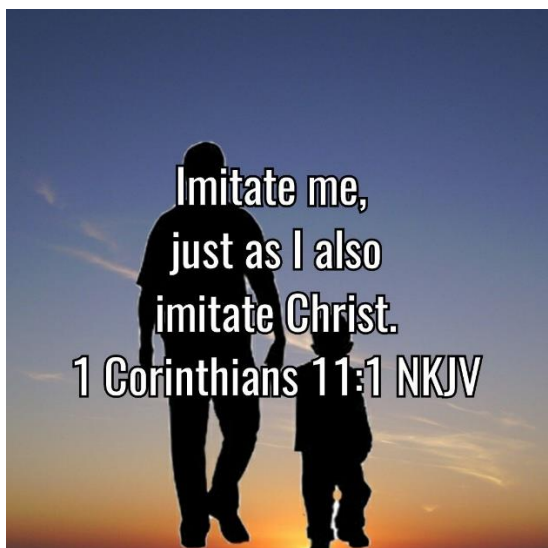
Do not deny the richness of these nutrient sources that will change the health of your walk with God.

1. Time in the Word; He is ahead of you every day.
2. Time in prayer, hearing His voice in solitude.
3. Time in worship, private awe will lead to public awe.
4. When your Christianity is dull and lifeless pour service into it, and watch it flourish.
5. Enduring hope is the strongest evidence of healthy Christianity.
6. Knowing your purpose for existence will prolong your days and fulfill your deepest longings.

God's purpose on your life is at the crossroad of the greatest version of yourself and the world's greatest need: salvation.

Disciples who are engaged in these core habits will reproduce others who are doing the same...disciples who are healthy grow.

**Today we are going to see that disciples imitate Jesus by making more disciples. 1 Corinthians 11:1**



If you are going to imitate Christ you will have to pick up your cross and follow him! Many never do because the cross is too big to carry...too demanding, too much surrender involved.

## **We are to pick up our cross, not a twig.**

Paul is ending his physical leadership of the Church in Ephesus. He is headed to his execution and his words are heavy and they are full of wisdom for us to follow.

*He knows this transition is about to come and he wants them to focus on:*

**Transitions in leadership are inevitable, and necessary for the next generation to take leadership.**

Why? Because.....

**You are not the end of the chain, just the next link, don't be the missing link**

How? Respond to this call!!!

All healthy things grow...and growing things become healthy

### **I. Calling to all Elders; all people grow, not all become mature. V. 17-38**

Calling all elders because you have not always been an elder, and someone invested in you. Elders were those mature in their spiritual experience.

#### **a. Manners matter:**

##### **i. Living God's dream=Faithwalk. Philippians 3:17-21**

<sup>17</sup> Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. <sup>18</sup> For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ: <sup>19</sup> whose end is destruction, whose god is *their* belly, and *whose* glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things. <sup>20</sup> For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup> who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

#### **1. Be knowable. V. 19**

##### **a. Service can only be done well with humility and compassion. V. 19**

i. God does the building, you are just the gopher. v. 32

##### **b. How you go through a trial is more important than the trial. V. 19**

i. Tribulations awaited Paul...so do they you. V. 23

#### **2. Be submissive to the Spirit. V. 22-23**

a. Especially because we don't know the future. V. 23

#### **3. Be accountable. V. 24-25**

a. Eternal race more important the physical life. v. 24

- i. Inheritance is different than entrance. V. 32, I Corinthians 3:11-15
    - b. Give ministry away freely because it was given freely. V. 28**
    - c. We will not last forever, so tie their allegiance to the one who will. V. 25**
      - i. Commend them to God, not you. v. 32
    - d. Coveting temporary gold is not a precious metal. V. 33**
- ii. Words build up, not keyboard warriors. V. 20-21, I Thessalonians 5:11** Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.
  - 1. Proclaim the truth, not sugar: just because it is legal does not mean it is helpful. V. 20**
    - a. Publicly.
    - b. From house to house.
    - c. Words of God's grace carry gospel weight, not your words.
  - 2. Testify to the awesome: without prejudice, all need repentance; available to all but not automatic to any. I John 2:2**
    - a. Repentance because God is Holy. V. 21
    - b. Faith in Lord Jesus because he made the way to become justified. V. 21
    - c. The only way to be innocent from the blood of all men is to proclaim there is power only in the blood of Jesus. V. 26
  - 3. Declare the whole counsel of God's will, not just favorite rants. V. 27**
- iii. Service, not serve us. V. 28-38**
  - 1. Oversee those that don't belong to you. v. 28**
  - 2. Kill the wolves because the sheep are precious. V. 29**
    - a. You can never lose if you love people who are undeserving. V. 37
    - b. See the motives behind the words, because some seek their own followers. V. 29
  - 3. Warn with compassion, not frustration. V. 30**
  - 4. Leaders know giving is greater than receiving. V. 35**
    - a. Work hard so you can give big.
  - 5. Kneel to pray because your heart is yielded, not because you want folks to notice you. v. 36-37**

**Conclusion: Make disciples of Jesus, not codependents for us.**

1. You cannot make a disciple without doing evangelism.
2. You follow Jesus so that others will follow Jesus; I surrender all.
  - a. All priorities.
  - b. All future decisions.
  - c. All resources.
    - i. Time.
    - ii. Funds.
    - iii. Heart.
    - iv. All your life.
3. You disciple those God has placed around you with intentionality.
4. You don't use one method, you use all methods.
  - a. Public proclamation
  - b. Private conversations.
5. Consistency over time produces results, not just once in a while.

### C. Paul's address to the Ephesian elders.

1. ([Acts 20:13-17](#)) Paul comes to Miletus and sends for the elders of the church in Ephesus to meet him there.

Then we went ahead to the ship and sailed to Assos, there intending to take Paul on board; for so he had given orders, intending himself to go on foot. And when he met us at Assos, we took him on board and came to Mitylene. We sailed from there, and the next day came opposite Chios. The following day we arrived at Samos and stayed at Trogyllium. The next day we came to Miletus. For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he would not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the Day of Pentecost. From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church.

- a. **Intending himself to go on foot:** Paul apparently preferred to walk from Troas to Assos instead of sail with the rest of his group; but he sailed with them from Assos to Miletus (**we took him on board**).

i. Paul “stayed till the last possible moment, probably to be assured of Eutychus’s complete restoration to consciousness and health, and then took a shortcut by land to join the ship at Assos.” (Bruce).

b. **Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus**: Paul’s intention wasn’t to slight the church in Ephesus, but he knew that it would be impossible for him to have a **short** visit there, and he wanted to hurry so as to be **at Jerusalem, if possible, on the Day of Pentecost**.

c. **From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church**: Though Paul knew he couldn’t make a **brief** visit to Ephesus, he still wanted to pour his heart into the leaders of the church at Ephesus. So, **from Miletus**, he **called for the elders of the church** to come for a special meeting.

2. (**Acts 20:18-21**) Paul begins his farewell to the elders of Ephesus by recounting his work among them.

**And when they had come to him, he said to them: “You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you, serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews; how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”**

a. **And when they had come to him, he said to them**: Most of the time in Acts, we see Paul the evangelist; but here in **Acts 20**, we get a unique picture of Paul the pastor — what was important to him as a leader and shepherd of God’s people.

i. “It is the only Pauline speech delivered to Christians which Luke has recorded, and it is not surprising to discover how rich it is in parallels to the Pauline letters (especially, in fact, to the later ones).” (Bruce)

b. **You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you**: Paul first calls attention to himself as an example. Not an example **instead** of Jesus, but an example as he followed Jesus. Paul didn’t act like a religious celebrity and expect people to serve and honor him; he just wanted to be **serving the Lord with all humility**.

i. In a similar pattern, we can each be good examples of how to live the Christian life. There is no reason for us to not be so. Even the young, new Christian can be a good example of how a new Christian should follow Jesus.

c. **I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you**: Paul could solemnly say before these elders of the Ephesian church that he **kept back nothing that was helpful**. He didn't only teach the topics that pleased him. He **proclaimed it** all.

i. **Testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks**: If Paul didn't limit his message, he didn't limit his audience either. He wanted to preach all the word of God to all people.

d. **From house to house**: This implies that the Ephesian church, lacking any central building, was organized logically in house-churches. Probably, each elder had charge over a particular house-church. These were much more like house-church pastors than what we think of today as a board of elders who presided over one large congregation.

### 3. ([Acts 20:22-24](#)) Paul speaks of his future.

**“And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.”**

a. **I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there**: Paul didn't know what was ahead of him; he even had reason to believe it was bad. But that didn't trouble him. He could give it all over to God even when he didn't know what would happen. There should always be more Christians who will say, **“none of these things move me.”**

i. **Uncertainty** did not move Paul. Even though he was **“not knowing the things that will happen to me there,”** he would not be moved from his cause. Paul could sing this Psalm from his heart: *I have set the Lord always before me; because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved.* ([Psalm 16:8](#))

b. **Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me**: Paul recognized the dangerous road ahead of him; apparently he had received many words of prophecy telling him of this danger already. Yet he was not set off the track by danger, but was willing to lay down his life for **the gospel of the grace of God**.

i. **Nor do I count my life dear to myself**: Paul thought of himself as an **accountant**, weighing carefully the credits and the expenses; and in the end, he does not count his own life dear to him, compared to his God and how he can serve him.

ii. **So that I may finish my race with joy**: Paul thought of himself as a **runner** who had a race to finish, and nothing would keep Paul from finishing the race with joy. Additionally, Paul speaks of **my race** — he had his race to run, we have our own — but God calls us to finish it with joy.

iii. This shows that even at this point, Paul had his death in mind. It would be many years until he actually died, but he considered that what he did with his life now was worth dying for. In the words of Spurgeon, he preached a gospel worth dying for. It is a worthy challenge to any preacher: Is the gospel you preach worth dying for?

- The gospel of moral reform? Not worth dying for.
- The gospel of save yourself through good works? Not worth dying for.
- The gospel of social action and improvement? Not worth dying for.
- The gospel of religious traditions? Not worth dying for.
- The gospel of merely having spiritual conversations? Not worth dying for.
- The gospel of mystical mumbo-jumbo? Not worth dying for.
- The gospel seeking the church of true hipness? Not worth dying for.
- The gospel of self-esteem? Not worth dying for.
- The gospel of ecological salvation? Not worth dying for.
- The gospel of political correctness? Not worth dying for.
- The gospel of emergent church feel-goodism? Not worth dying for.

iv. “Yet there used to be a gospel in the world which consisted of facts which Christians never questioned. There was once in the church a gospel which believers hugged to their hearts as if it were their soul’s life. There used to be a gospel in the world, which provoked enthusiasm and commanded sacrifice. Tens of thousands have met together to hear this gospel at peril of their lives. Men, to the teeth of tyrants, have proclaimed it, and have suffered the loss of all things, and gone to prison and to death for it, singing psalms all the while. Is there not such a gospel remaining?” (Spurgeon)

4. ([Acts 20:25](#)) Paul announces that he probably won’t see the Ephesian elders again.

**“And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more.”**

a. **You all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God**: Paul did a lot in Ephesus. In that city God used him to work some amazing miracles.

- [Acts 19:11](#) says that in Ephesus, the hands of Paul did unusual miracles.

- [Acts 19:12](#) says that in Ephesus, handkerchiefs or aprons from Paul's body were brought to sick people and they were healed and delivered from demonic spirits.
- [Acts 19:15](#) says that in Ephesus, demonic spirits said they knew Paul and his ministry.

i. With all that, Paul didn't say to the Ephesian elders here, "You all, among whom I did some awesome miracles." Or, "You all, among whom even the demons said they knew me." Instead Paul was always focused on the life-transforming power of the word of God, and he said "**You all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God.**"

ii. It's as if Paul said, "This is what I do. Sure, I do a lot of other things, but at the core I'm a preacher, and I preach the kingdom of God."

b. **You all... will see my face no more**: Paul here showed great sadness, great compassion, and great courage. He told them something he hadn't told them before: that this would probably be the last time they saw him, and he saw them. This would be like a bombshell to these church leaders.

i. Don't forget the great bond Paul had with these Ephesian leaders. He was in Ephesus for two years, and the ministry was so effective that [Acts 19:10](#) says, *all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.*

ii. That amount of time and that kind of effective ministry builds bonds of fellowship and friendship that last.

iii. It was hard for them to believe it. Maybe at first they thought he was joking. But they quickly understood that he wasn't and they understood why he asked them to walk 36 miles to meet with him.

c. **Will see my face no more**: In all of this, Paul's great love and concern for the leaders and the congregation in Ephesus was simply a reflection of Jesus' great love and concern for them. Paul followed Jesus in every way he could; since Jesus loved these believers so much, so did Paul.

i. It's fascinating to think of how much this segment of Paul's life mirrored the life of Jesus.

- Like Jesus, Paul traveled to Jerusalem with a group of his disciples.
- Like Jesus, Paul was opposed by hostile Jews who plotted against his life.
- Like Jesus, Paul made or received three successive predictions of his coming sufferings in Jerusalem, including being handed over to the Gentiles.
- Like Jesus, Paul declared his readiness to lay down his life.
- Like Jesus, he was determined to complete his ministry and not be deflected from it.



- Like Jesus, he expressed his abandonment to the will of God.

ii. Would we expect any different? Is the servant greater than his Master? We too should expect to know *the fellowship of His sufferings* ([Philippians 3:10](#)).

5. ([Acts 20:26-27](#)) Paul's solemn declaration of his innocence before God.

**"Therefore I testify to you this day that I *am* innocent of the blood of all *men*. For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God."**

a. **Therefore:** There is much wrapped up in this simple word. It has the sense of, Because I probably won't see you again... because I love you so much...because I have invested so much of my heart and life among you all... you therefore need to know that.

b. **I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men:** As if he were giving witness in a court of law, Paul declared that his heart was clear. He could leave these Christians to God's care with a good conscience, knowing that he had **not shunned to declare to** [them] **the whole counsel of God**.

i. We should have a greater appreciation of the value of a *clear conscience*. God helping us, we can have one — at least as clear as possible from this point forward.

c. **The whole counsel of God:** Paul could leave them with a clear conscience because he knew that he taught them **the whole counsel of God**.

i. [Acts 19:9-10](#) tells us that Paul taught the Ephesians and those in the region for more than two years, using a rented room from *the school of Tyrannus*. There are some indications that Paul taught for several hours a day, and some six days a week. This means hundreds of hours of teaching time (probably well more than 1,500 hours).

ii. He had plenty of time to take them verse-by-verse through the books of the Hebrew Scriptures. They may have also studied the life of Jesus from some of the accounts of His life being written in that same period.

iii. Today, there should be more and more who will present **the whole counsel of God**. Paul later warned that in the last days, people would not endure sound doctrine, but would look for teachers who would tell them what they want to hear — teachers who would scratch their itching ears ([2 Timothy 4:3](#)).

iv. Many preachers today simply use a Bible text as a launching pad, and then go on to say what they want — what the people want to hear. Others throw in Bible quotations to illustrate their points, or to illustrate their stories. Yet the real calling of a preacher is to simply let the Bible speak for itself and let it declare its own power.

v. Taking Paul's testimony at full strength, we must say that those preachers who deliberately fail to **declare... the whole counsel of God** *are guilty* **of the blood of all men**. The

preacher who preaches what his audience wants to hear, and not **the whole counsel of God**, hurts both his audience and himself!

6. **(Acts 20:28)** Encouraging them to take heed to themselves and to God's people.

**“Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”**

- a. **Therefore**: This is Paul's second **therefore** in this section. The first *therefore* looked at his own life (*I testify to you that I am innocent of the blood of all men*). This second **therefore** instructs the leaders of the Ephesian Christians.
- b. **Take heed to yourselves**: “Pay attention to your own life. You have a high standard to fulfill. The standard isn't perfection, but it is nevertheless high. You won't fulfill that high standard without paying attention to it, if you don't **take heed to yourselves**.”

i. These words from Paul were all the more dramatic knowing the tension and the atmosphere of this meeting. These words mattered.

ii. The godly leader knows that effective leadership flows from a life, not just knowledge.

- c. **Take heed... to all the flock**: “Pay attention to the people of God. Love them, look over them, care for them. Do it because **the Holy Spirit has made you overseers**.”
- d. **To shepherd the church of God**: **Flock** has the idea of *sheep*; **shepherd the church of God** continues that thought. He is telling them to be pastors, **to shepherd the church of God** — to serve their house-church congregations as faithful pastors.

i. The first idea behind being a shepherd is *feeding* God's people. “They are to *be shepherds* of God's church, *poimanino* meaning in general to *tend* a flock and in particular *to lead a flock to pasture and so to feed it*. This is the first duty of shepherds.” (Stott)

ii. Shepherds don't only *feed*; they also *lead*. Under the guidance of the Chief Shepherd and in the community of God's people, they lead the people of God to where God wants them to be.

- e. **Which He purchased with His own blood**: This is one important reason *why* they had to take heed to themselves and to the flock of God. They had to do it because *the church doesn't belong to them*, it belongs to Jesus who **purchased** it **with His own blood**.

i. Any responsible person is going to take greater care of something that belongs to someone else. Leaders need to remember that the church belongs to Jesus. Taken together, it's really a wonderful balance:

- The sheep need to remember that God has appointed shepherds to feed and lead them.

- The shepherds need to remember that the flock belongs to God, and not to them.

ii. Considering the greatness of the price, this calls leaders among God's people to be dedicated and godly: **His own blood**.

7. ([Acts 20:29](#)) Take heed to the flock because of danger from the outside.

**“For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.”**

a. **For I know this**: Paul presses the urgency here, warning these leaders that **savage wolves will come in among** them all. He knew that a pastor, a leader among God's people has to do more than only **feed** and **lead** — he also has to **protect**.

i. Paul doesn't say how he knew; only that he did **know**.

b. **Not sparing the flock**: These wolves would be vicious. They wouldn't hold back against the people of God, but take as many of them as they could.

8. ([Acts 20:30](#)) Take heed to the flock because of danger from the inside.

**“Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.”**

a. **Also from among yourselves men will rise up**: It is often easier for pastors to deal with the wolves that come from the outside — obviously false teachings and goofy winds of doctrine. But it is often very difficult to deal with those who rise up **from among yourselves**.

i. Imagine how *these men listening to Paul* would have received this. It would be hard to believe, and like the disciples with Jesus, many of them would say, “Not me, Lord!”

b. **Speaking perverse things**: This is their **method** — they would **twist** what was good.

c. **To draw away the disciples after themselves**: This is their **motivation** — they wanted a following. Ego can make people do things that they **never** thought they would do.

9. ([Acts 20:31](#)) Further encouragement to watch.

**“Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.”**

a. **Therefore watch**: This was Paul's third **therefore** in such a short section.

- He gave one **therefore** about himself (his clear conscience, [Acts 20:26](#)).
- He gave a second **therefore** about what they should do (take heed, [Acts 20:28](#)).
- This third **therefore** is given after the urgency of taking heed has been explained.

b. **Remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears**: Paul asked them to have the same careful concern for the people of God that he himself had.

- It was a long-term care (**for three years**).
- It was a constant care (**did not cease**).
- It was a watchful care (**to warn**).
- It was a universal care (**everyone**).
- It was a heart-felt care (**with tears**).

**10. (Acts 20:32-35) Paul's conclusion: Remember a heart of sacrifice.**

**“So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me. I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”**

a. **I commend you to God and to the word of His grace**: Though Paul gave his all for the Christians in Ephesus for some three years, at the bottom line, he could only **commend** [them] **to God and to the word of His grace**. Paul knew there was trouble ahead for him, and some trouble ahead for the Ephesian Christians. Yet **God** and **the word of His grace** would see them through.

i. Programs can't do it; the spirit of the age can't do it; slick marketing can't do it; entertainment can't do it; only **God** and the **word of His grace** can **build you up and give you an inheritance** in heaven.

b. **I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel**: Paul concludes by trying to communicate his heart, his *motive* in ministry. He wasn't in it for himself, but for God's glory and for the building up of God's people. **Laboring like this** means that Paul was a hard worker for God's glory.

c. **It is more blessed to give than to receive**: His parting words, taken from a quote of Jesus' unrecorded in the gospels, are perfect for all who would minister to God's people. Leaders must be more concerned about what they can give their flock than concerned about what their flock can give them.

i. Without a heart of *sacrifice* there can be no real effective, eternal ministry — and it should be a *glad sacrifice*, knowing the blessedness of it all.

ii. **“It is more blessed to give than to receive”** is the best beatitude of all. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus told us how to be blessed; here, He tells us how to be **more** blessed!

iii. It should not stumble us to consider that Jesus taught many things unrecorded in the gospels; John said as much in [John 21:25](#). But we can trust that God has preserved all that is necessary of the teaching of Jesus.

#### 11. ([Acts 20:36-38](#)) Paul's tearful good-bye to the Ephesian elders.

**And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. Then they all wept freely, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spoke, that they would see his face no more. And they accompanied him to the ship.**

a. **He knelt down and prayed with them all. Then they all wept freely**: This reminds us that Paul was not a cold dispenser of doctrine, but a warm, pastoral man who loved his people greatly and won great love from them.

b. **That they would see his face no more**: They part with prayer, tears, and a sending-off party, believing they would only meet again in eternity.

i. Given the strength of Paul's warning to these leaders, it is fair to wonder how the Christian community in Ephesus fared after this. Some 30 to 40 years later, Jesus sent a letter to this church in Ephesus, found in [Revelation 2](#). He complimented them on many things:

- Their hard work for the kingdom of God.
- Their endurance through difficult times.
- Their dealing with those who are evil, and with false apostles.
- Not giving up when they were weary.

ii. Yet despite it all, Jesus gave them a severe warning: they had left their first love ([Revelation 2:4](#)). Unless things changed in a hurry, Jesus wouldn't even be present among them anymore.

iii. It may well be that in their zeal to fight against false doctrine — which they seemed to do well — they left their love for Jesus and their love for one another behind. It's a great illustration of the principle that the devil doesn't care which side of the boat we fall out of, just as long as we're in the water and not in the boat.

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Updated: August 2022

## **Bill Acton :: Acts 20 - Heading Home**

References for Act 20:17 — [1](#) [2](#) [3](#)

### **Sermon Outline for [Acts 20](#)**

#### **Heading Home**

- I. The Witness in Macedonia and Greece — [Act 20:1-24](#)
  - A. Revisiting the churches
  - B. The traveling seminary
  - C. The experience of Eutychus — [Act 20:7-12](#)
    - i. Christians were meeting on the first day of the week
    - ii. Paul preached till midnight
    - iii. Eutychus fell and died
    - iv. He was miraculously restored
    - v. The communion service lasted till daybreak
- II. The Witness at Miletus — [Act 20:17-38](#)
  - A. The elders from Ephesus join Paul
  - B. Paul reviews his ministry — [Act 20:18-21](#)
    - i. Consistent - "I lived among you"
    - ii. Humble - "Serving the Lord with all humility"
    - iii. Earnest — "With tears"
    - iv. Dangerous — "With trials and plots"
    - v. Fearless - "I shrank not"
    - vi. Tireless - "Publicly and from house to house"
    - vii. Redemptive - "Repentance and faith"
  - C. Paul states his commitment to serve — [Act 20:22-24](#)
    - i. The trouble awaiting him
    - ii. His attitudes and convictions

- a. The danger does not affect him
- b. He does not count his life as precious to himself – [Phl 3:7-10](#)

i. He wants nothing for himself

ii. He lives only for God's glory

- c. His goal is to accomplish God's purpose – [Jhn 4:31](#)

. He had received his ministry from the Lord Jesus – [Act 9:15](#)

i. He was to testify to the Gospel of the Grace of God

### III. A Gospel Worth Dying For

A. It was the Gospel of the grace of God

i. The Gospel news

- a. God will pardon transgression
- b. God will take away sin
- c. God will justify the ungodly
- d. God will cover the sinner with righteousness
- e. God will accept the sinner into His favor
- f. God does it out of pure grace – [Rom 9:16](#)

. No goodness can bring us in

i. No badness can shut us out

ii. How God removes sin

- a. God gave His Son
- b. The Son gave His life
- c. The blood is a just payment

iii. The message to us

- a. Do not look within
- b. Do not search for personal merit
- c. Do not look for strength or ability
- d. The command of God is to believe

. God calls for faith

i. God supplies the faith

B. It was Paul's life cause to testify to the Gospel of the Grace of God

i. A graceless Gospel is not worth dying for

ii. The Gospel of Grace is the greatest need of the world

- a. It glorifies God
- b. It saves the sinner

### IV. Application

A. What are you living "for"?

- i. A purpose
- ii. A cause
- iii. Fulfillment
- iv. Sense of contribution

B. What does a Christian do with self?



- i. Living for self is destructive
  - ii. We must have a greater purpose
- C. Paul valued the Gospel as greater than his own life

**Chuck Smith :: Verse by Verse Study on Acts 20-21 (C2000)**

Click [here](#) to view listing below for [Act 20:17](#)

[Click here for the correlating audio message](#)

Last week we left Paul in Ephesus, in the midst of a near riot in town, as Demetrius the silversmith got together his companions in trade and pointed out how the preaching of Paul was about to put them out of business. Because these men made little likenesses of their goddess Diana, and Paul was going around telling everyone they weren't true gods. And so these silversmiths stirred up the city and they were gathered together in the arena crying, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." Half the people didn't know what was going on. But it was quite an uproar, until finally the town clerk stood up and appeased the crowd telling Demetrius that there are courts of law, if he has any real case against Paul and all to bring it before the courts and let it be settled in a lawful matter. The Roman government was in danger; they were in danger of being called by the Roman government to answer for that uproar of which they really had no good answer. So he had then dismissed that crowd of people that had gathered in that town square.

So chapter 20.

And after the uproar ceased, Paul called unto him the disciples, and embraced them, and departed to Macedonia ([Act 20:1](#)).

Macedonia, of course, was the northern area of Greece. Greece was divided after the death of Alexander the Great into four divisions. You have Greece, Macedonia, and then the Syria and Egypt. So then Paul, rather than causing any further, he'd been in Ephesus for three years, and his heart now is sort of stirring to go back to Jerusalem. But when he goes back to Jerusalem, he desires to take to the church in Jerusalem an offering from the Gentile churches. For the church in Jerusalem had become very poor. And so Paul was seeking to show the brotherhood of Christianity, and really the support of the... really he was trying to show the oneness of the body of Christ, where there is neither Jew nor Greek, one member suffers, they all suffer. So in Paul's Corinthian epistle he told them when they gathered together on the first day of the week that each man was to bring an offering as he purposed in his own heart. They should give willingly and not by pressure, for God loved a cheerful giver. So Paul wanted now to go through Macedonia and Greece and collect these offerings that he had asked them to take up for the poor saints in Jerusalem. In order as Paul returned to Jerusalem he could take the offerings for the poor brethren there from the Gentiles.

So he embraced those from Ephesus, and he sailed across again to Macedonia, where, of course, was the church of Philippi and Thessalonica and Berea.



And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece. And he stayed there about three months. And when [he found out that] the Jews were lying wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia ([Act 20:2-3](#)).

Now at that time it was the feast of the Passover and Paul was probably wanting to get back to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover. But thousands of Jews would come for the feast of the Passover from all over. And there would be many chartered type ships coming from Greece, from Athens, from... to go to Jerusalem, they would be filled with Jews coming for the feast. And Paul, no doubt, got wind of a plot to throw him overboard from one of these ships filled with Jewish pilgrims that were coming back for their holy days. And so rather than getting on a ship and being thrown overboard in the middle of the night, Paul took the wise course and rather than coming by ship back to Syria to go to Jerusalem, he went up then again through Macedonia and he went by land on up again to Macedonia. And evidently, the churches there realized that there were real threats being made upon Paul's life, and so there were several brethren from the different churches that accompanied Paul, in order, no doubt, to afford him a certain amount of protection.

So there accompanied him to Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe ([Act 20:4](#)),

Now that's a different Gaius than the one of Corinth.

and Timotheus of Derbe [and that is the Timothy that we know]; and of Asia, there was Tychicus and Trophimus [whom Paul mentions in some of his epistles as his companions]. And these going before waited for them at Troas ([Act 20:4-5](#)).

So these fellows went ahead across to Asia and waited there at Troas for Paul.

And so we ([Act 20:6](#))

The plural personal pronoun again showing that Luke is a companion of Paul once more.

We sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread ([Act 20:6](#)),

And so that was the feast of the Passover was now over because that was the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

and we came to them in Troas in five days; where we abode with them for seven days ([Act 20:6](#)).

Now the trip from Troas to Macedonia when Paul received his vision; saw the man of Macedonia saying come over and help us, and immediately they got a ship and sailed from Troas to Macedonia, that took them only two days. And so here a trip that had only taken Paul two days in the past, took them five days this time, evidently sailing against the wind and probably under adverse circumstances. And it could be some very rough seas and all. And so they came to Troas where they stayed for seven days.

Now upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the next day; and he continued his speech until midnight ([Act 20:7](#)).

Now I've been accused of being longwinded, but you haven't had to put up with anything like that.

It is interesting for me to note that it records that they had gathered together on the first day of the week to break bread. So often you will hear the Seventh Day Adventist or others such as Herbert W. Armstrong who believe in Sabbath day worship. You will hear them declare that worshipping on Sunday did not begin until Constantine and he was the one who introduced Sunday worship to the church. Not so. There seems to be indications that the Gentile church worshipped on Sunday, almost from the beginning. Here we find the Gentile church gathering together on Sunday, the first day of the week, to break bread. One of the early church fathers, Tertullian, said that in as much as Jesus rose on the first day of the week, they felt that was the only day really in which the church should break bread. I don't go along with Tertullian, but it seems that as early as the time of Tertullian, which was before Constantine, that the first day of the week was already a common practice in the gathering of the church.

Now it could be that there was a dispute over which day of the week you should worship the Lord in the early church because in two of Paul's epistles he makes mention of the fact that it really doesn't matter which day you worship the Lord. As he was writing to the Romans he said, "One man esteems one day, another man esteems another day. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." In other words, it really doesn't matter. Some people esteem one day above another, some esteem another day above another, you know. Whatever, you know, pleases you.

When the church in Jerusalem sent to the Gentile believers concerning their relationship to the law, they mentioned nothing about the observance of the Sabbath day. In Exodus when God gave the Sabbath day law, God said it was a special covenant between Him and Israel. Even as was the right of circumcision a special covenant between God and Israel, but not something that was required of the Gentiles. When Paul was writing to the Colossian church, he said, "Don't let any man judge you in respect to the eating of meat or of Sabbath days, or new moons or holy days, which were all just a shadow of things to come." The real substance is Jesus. Therefore, Paul is saying that the Sabbath day was just a shadow. The Sabbath day was what? It was a day of rest where the people were to rest from their labor. As a shadow of the things to come, the substance being Christ, what is he saying? He is saying what Paul, or what the author of Hebrews said in chapter 4, that Jesus is our rest. So the Sabbath day was only a shadow of Jesus who was coming, who has become the rest for His people. And our rest is in Jesus Christ, and in His finished work. So Paul said one man esteems one day above another, another man esteems every day alike. Well that's me; I esteem every day the Lord's day. And every day to me is, I live unto the Lord no matter if it be a Saturday, a Sunday, Friday or whatever. I live every day unto the Lord, and so I esteem every day alike. Now my wife doesn't appreciate that. Because it goes for birthdays and anniversaries too. She says I do that on hers, but I really want special perks on mine. But uh, that's not so. We went to her favorite place to eat on my birthday.

So they gathered on the first day of the week to break bread. That is to have communion. And communion, it seems, was a very common practice in the early church. That reminder of the broken body of Jesus Christ and of His blood which was shed for our sins. And it was a very common practice in the early church. They did it, it

would seem, once a week at least. They did not only though in church, but from house to house. It was a beautiful thing. Christians gathered together, "Let's break bread together, you know." It was just a beautiful thing. Now they also had on a weekly basis what they called the "love feasts" in which they also took communion at the end. The love feast is what we would call today a potluck dinner. Where the church would gather together one day a week for these love feasts and everybody would bring something to add to the common table and they would all eat together and then would conclude it with the communion. This love feast was especially significant for the slaves because it was probably the only good meal they had all week long. But in the church there was neither bond nor free, you know, they were all one in Christ. And so, they had weekly these love feasts and that beautiful fellowship.

Now there is a real value, I think, in eating together. There's just a closeness of communion. I love potlucks. And I love the eating together. You notice how when we go on tour to Israel together, how much closer we seem to get to one another. And I think it's because we eat together all the time. And there is something that just creates a closeness, a bond, eating together.

And so the early church here gathered in Troas, on the first day of the week Paul preached until midnight.

And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together. And there sat in the window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep ([Act 20:8-9](#)):

Now it could be that he had carbon monoxide poisoning. If he was sitting there in the window and there were all of these lights there which, of course, were candles burning; and you know the carbon monoxide going from the burnt candles and probably going out the window and sitting there in the window with all that smoke curling out, it could be that he just got deprived of the oxygen level. And he fell into a sleep,

sunk down with sleep, and he fell down from the third loft ([Act 20:9](#)),

Probably, now the windows there, of course, weren't glass windows, they were just openings, open windows; sitting there in the window he fell out the window into the patio below, three stories.

and he was taken up dead. And so Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him ([Act 20:9-10](#)).

So, again, a real miracle as God restored life to Eutychus.

It's interesting Paul fell on him embracing him. There's an interesting story in the Old Testament of the prophet Elisha and the Shunammite woman whose son died. And Elisha actually did a pulmonary resuscitation kind of a thing. He breathed into him and all, and doing it three times, the young boy revived. Now that doesn't take away from the fact that there was a definite miracle of God. And God brought life, because you can, you know, if you take a person who's been dead as long as that kid had been dead, there's no way any resuscitation is gonna bring him back. But the fact that he did that is interesting to me, in as much as we have discovered today, you know,

this resuscitation and cardiac arrest and things of that nature. I'm not suggesting that that's what Elisha did to the young man, because this young man had been dead for hours. And God brought him back to life.

Here was Paul falling on him, embracing him, much as Elisha did to the Shunammite woman's son.

So when he was therefore come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, he continued to talk until the break of day ([Act 20:11](#)),

So a slight distraction, and yet, Paul went on talking to them 'til daybreak.

And they brought the young man alive, and they were not a little comforted ([Act 20:12](#)).

Now I am certain that the Lord has allowed at times the miracles of bringing back a person to life. We know that this happened in the ministry of Jesus. We know that it happened with the ministry of Peter when he went and brought back to life through prayer Dorcas. But I am also certain that the miracle of restoring life was never for the person but for the people around who were grieving because they were gone. Here it says, "And they were much comforted." It didn't say that Eutychus was. But the people that were there were comforted by the fact that he was brought back to life. And that miracle that God works in bringing a person back to life is really never for that person's benefit. But for the benefit of those that would be sorrowing. And I say that because if ever the Lord should see fit to take me and I am there reveling in His presence, and suddenly I feel my spirit returning to my body, and when my eyes flicker, and when I open them up and I see you with hands laid upon me praying, "Oh God, restore life to him," the first thing I'm gonna do is bust you in the mouth. We may pray that the Lord restore a person's life for our benefit, but it surely doesn't benefit them. "For to be absent from this body is to be present with the Lord." And so for the sake of the people, God performed this miracle on Eutychus.

"And they were not a little comforted." I mean, they were really comforted. Actually in the Orient, at death they start shrieking. And the women have a particularly shrill shriek at the time of death. And so when Eutychus fell out the window and they rushed down there and saw that he was dead, these Oriental women probably started their shrieking. And that's why Paul went down and said, "Oh hush, hush, hush, he's alright, his life is still in him," and as God restored life to Eutychus.

And so we went before to ship, and we sailed to Assos, and there we intended to take in Paul: because he had decided to go by foot ([Act 20:13](#)).

Now from Troas to Assos is twenty miles by land and thirty miles by sea. You have to go around the cape there. And Paul wanted to walk. You know, I think that walking is one of the greatest ways to meditate. I think it's a tremendous way to sort of collect your thoughts. When you have a decision to make, it's amazing how that in walking you can sort of sift things out. And I think Paul just had a lot of things to sift out in his mind. And so he said, "You guys just go ahead and go in the boat and I'll meet you over at Assos, I'll just walk." And so he walked that twenty miles as they went around by ship and met him then at Assos.

And he met us at Assos ([Act 20:14](#)),

Luke evidently went in the ship,

we took him in, and we came to Mitylene. And we sailed from there, and came the next day over against Chios; and in the next day we arrived at Samos, and we tarried at Trogyllium; and the next day we came to Miletus ([Act 20:14-15](#)).

Which is about thirty miles from Ephesus. And from there they sent messengers up to Ephesus to tell the elders at the church of Ephesus to come down and meet Paul at Miletus because he was in a hurry. He didn't want to go all the way up to Ephesus and back because he desired to get to Jerusalem in time to participate in the feast of Pentecost.

So from Miletus they sent to Ephesus, called the elders of the church. And when they were come to him, he said unto them, You know, that from the first day that I came to Asia, what manner of life I have lived among you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, with many tears, and trials, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews ([Act 20:17-19](#)):

Paul said, "You know that how from the very first day when I came into Asia, the way I lived among you. For I have been serving the Lord with all humility of mind." Paul always saw himself as the servant of the Lord. And I think that that is an important mental attitude for everyone who is in the ministry to maintain. I am a servant of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, everything that I do, I must do to the glory of God. I should not be doing anything for the glory of man. For whatever I do, word or deed, do all to the glory of God. Not seeking to be a man pleaser, but seeking to please the Lord, knowing that of the Lord I am going to receive my rewards. And so Paul said, "You know that my attitude the whole while I've been with you is one of a servant of the Lord, serving Him in all humility of mind."

The man who has received a true vision of the Lord is a man who has humility of mind. That man who is proud has not had a true encounter with God. No man can have a true encounter with God and still maintain a prideful position. In seeing God, in really seeing God, I see myself. And I realize how nothing I am. Isaiah said, "In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord high and lifted up, sitting on the throne. And His glory filled the temple. Then said I, woe is me" ([Isaiah 6:1,5](#)). Hey, that's always what a man says when he really sees God, "Woe is me!" Peter, when he saw the Lord, said, "Depart from me, Lord! I'm an unclean man" ([Luke 5:8](#)). Daniel, as he talked about his vision and all, he said "Then my beauty was turned into corruption" ([Daniel 10:8](#)). Seeing God is an important thing. Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" ([Matthew 5:3](#)). But that poverty of spirit always comes to the man who has had a true encounter with a living eternal God. You cannot stand in the consciousness of the true and the living God and still maintain that prideful state. And so, "I've been serving you," Paul said, "with all humility of mind, and with many tears. And in real trials, tribulations, because the Jews were always lying in wait to ambush me."

Paul said,

And how I've kept back nothing that was profitable unto you ([Act 20:20](#)),

Paul gave himself for the people because he was serving the Lord. You see, as a minister of Jesus Christ, He requires that I be the servant of the body. Jesus said that if any of you would be chief, then let him become the servant of all. He's talking about the ministry, talking to His disciples. So my serving the Lord involves my serving you. And Paul talks about his service to the men and the people there in Ephesus.

How I held back nothing that could [benefit you or be of] profit to you, but I have showed you, and taught you publicly, and from house to house ([Act 20:20](#)),

So both in the public gatherings there in the... where was it we studied it... that place in Ephesus where Paul was teaching... come on, someone help me... Tyrannus, yes, very good. You get an A. The school of Tyrannus publicly, but then also from house to house. Now notice Paul said, "I was showing you and teaching you." Sometimes the best lessons are object lessons. If our lives don't show it, the teaching becomes meaningless. As a minister, I have to not just proclaim, I must live by it. Showing you, demonstrating by my life, the lifestyle that I lived among you, as well as teaching you. And so that faithful minister.

Testifying both to the Jews, also to the Greeks, repentance towards God, faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ ([Act 20:21](#)).

So Paul was teaching their repentance, the necessity of repentance toward God and faith towards Jesus.

And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that are going to befall me there: except that the Holy Spirit is witnessing in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions are waiting for me ([Act 20:22-23](#)).

"I really don't know what's going to happen to me when I get to Jerusalem. All I know is that I am to be bound and I am to be imprisoned. The spirit is warning me this everywhere I go."

But none of these things disturb me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy ([Act 20:24](#)),

"My chief desire is to finish my course with joy. It doesn't bother me that I have to be imprisoned. It doesn't move me that I'm going to be bound. My chief desire is to just to finish my course." So Paul's great drive to finish that course that God had set before him. He finally wrote to Timothy and he said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished the course." That was his last epistle just before being beheaded by Nero. "I fought a good fight, I finished the course. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, our righteousness judge, shall give. Not only to me, but to all those who do love His appearing" ([II Timothy 4:7-8](#)). It's just a shame that Paul didn't know the power of positive thinking, and positive confession. He could have escaped an awful lot of things. But, poor fellow, he was beheaded suffering for Jesus' sake. Because he didn't know that it was God's will that no one should suffer. That it's a lack of faith or commitment that anybody would suffer. Poor Paul. I trust you know that my tongue is in my cheek.

I love this. I love commitment. Give me some men who are stouthearted men who will fight for the right they adore. Start me with ten who are stouthearted men and I'll soon give you ten thousand more. I love Paul; he was a stouthearted man. I mean, he was committed to a cause, a cause of Jesus Christ. And hey, nothing was going to detour him or deter him from finishing that course with joy.

So, "Well, it's probably the last time I'll see you, but it doesn't bother me. I know I'm going to be thrown in jail. Beyond that I don't know. But I'm not worried by this. For I do not count my life dear unto myself. What I really desire is just to finish my course with joy,"

and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus ([Act 20:24](#)),

What is the ministry, Paul, you have received of the Lord Jesus?

to testify of the gospel of the grace of God ([Act 20:24](#)).

Testimony of the gospel of the grace of God. What is the gospel of the grace of God? God loves you, no matter how badly you failed. No matter how deeply you have sunk into sin, God loves you. But God hates sin because He loves you. And God knows what a destructive force sin is. And because God loves you so much, He doesn't like to see you being destroyed. And so He hates that which is destroying you. God loves the sinner. God hates the sin. Because He loves the sinner. And He sees what sin is doing. The blighting, damning influences of sin on a person's life. And so God hates the sin, because He loves the sinner. And so God has made provision to free a person from that power of sin, by sending Jesus Christ, His son, who took our sins and died in our place. That by our believing in Him we can be forgiven from whatever sins we may have ever committed. And through faith in Him can receive power over that bondage to corruption. And one day, as we are translated by the spirit into His presence, we will be freed from even the presence of sin. So that is the gospel of the grace of God. Not because I deserve it, not because I merit it, but just because God loves me.

It was necessary that Paul should testify of the gospel of the grace of God, because nature, though it reveals God to man, does not reveal the grace of God to man. There is no gospel of grace in nature. Nature testifies to the God of law; to the God of power; to the God of wisdom; to the God who loves beauty; to the God of orderliness. But there's no testimony in nature to the gospel of the grace of God, and that is why God has called men to bear testimony of the gospel of the grace of God. And this testimony began with Jesus Christ. For the law came by Moses, but grace and truth by Jesus Christ. And so Paul testifying the gospel of grace.

And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more ([Act 20:25](#)).

Now this is what Paul felt. He's talking out of his heart. There are indications from some of the secular historians or early church historians that Paul did get to see those in Ephesus once again. The book of Acts leaves Paul sort of imprisoned in Rome awaiting his trial before Nero. But according to church history, the early church historians, Paul's first appearance before Nero ended in an acquittal by Nero. And that Paul was released



for a time, and just what happened during that period we don't know for sure. There are stories that he came back to the church of Ephesus for a time. And also stories that he went to Spain with the Gospel.

Secular history gives us something quite interesting. You remember Jesus told His disciples that, you know, that, "They're going to bring you before the judges and before magistrates and before the kings. And don't take any forethought what you're going to say in the hour that you're there the Holy Spirit will give you the words to say. And it will give you an opportunity to witness." Now Paul took this literally. Every time he was brought before a judge, a magistrate, or a king, Paul took the opportunity to witness. And the higher up the guy was, the heavier Paul laid on the witness. Because Paul, I think, always felt, "Man, if I can convert this guy, wow," you know. And so when he finally got before King Agrippa, I mean, he was really pushing, pushing hard. "Agrippa, do you believe the scriptures? I know you believe the scriptures," you know. And he said, "Wait a minute, wait a minute, back off, Paul. Wait a minute," you know. "Are you trying to convert me?" Paul said, "Oh, how I wish I could." Because I'm sure that Paul, and we'll get to that in a few chapters now, Paul's defenses were fabulous. I mean, Paul really was pressing. Because he, no doubt, thought, "Wow, if Agrippa would just accept Jesus Christ, what an influence this could have." Well, imagine when he got to Nero. I imagine that Paul really pressed the claims of Jesus Christ on Nero like nothing we have ever heard. I'm certain that Paul thought, "Wow, if I could just win Nero to Jesus Christ."

Now, as you follow secular history, you will find that Nero wasn't such a bad guy in his early reign of the Roman Empire. He did some good things. But there came a time in Nero's life where he had almost a total personality change. Where he became a beast. In fact, that's what they called him in those days, "the beast." It was as though he had a total change of personality, like a man who was almost demon possessed. And if you will study the secular history, you will find that this dramatic change came in Nero just about the time that Paul witnessed to him. I believe what happened is that Paul did lay on such a heavy witness to Nero, that it was a now-or-never situation for Nero's salvation. And in turning his back upon the Gospel, I believe he became possessed by an evil spirit. And that is why he became such a beast.

He released Paul on the first trial, but soon called Paul back from Ephesus and beheaded him, as he turned into that beast. So Paul is saying, "I don't think I'm going to see you again." It seems that maybe he did get to see them again.

Wherefore I call you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God ([Act 20:26-27](#)).

Paul felt it very important that he be up front with people as far as the Gospel is concerned. To declare the truth, the whole counsel of God to man so that he would not be accountable for them. "I'm free from the blood of all men because I haven't shunned to tell you everything, the whole counsel of God."



Now take heed therefore unto yourselves, and unto the flock, over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, that you feed the church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood ([Act 20:28](#)).

And this is the charge and the responsibility that God has placed upon the ministers: to feed the flock of God. But it is so difficult to find pastors today who will really feed the flock of God. We get letters by the hundreds. The other night when I was in Indianapolis, scores of people afterwards said to me, "Would you please start a work here in Indianapolis? We've been praying for five years that God would establish a Calvary Chapel here in Indianapolis. We want a place where we can just go and be fed the Word of God." People are hungry to be fed the Word of God. And so Paul said to these overseers of the church of Ephesus, "Feed the flock of God." Peter in writing his epistle said, "Feed the flock of God which is among you." Jesus said to Peter, "Feed My sheep." I don't know why pastors don't realize that this is the most important function of a pastor is to feed the flock of God. We have those who are seeking to entertain the flock of God. And then God help us, unfortunately we have those who are seeking to fleece the flock of God. But how few are really feeding the flock of God.

Also of your own selves.

For I know this ([Act 20:29](#)),

The reason why to feed them is in that they might become strong. Because wolves are going to come in.

after I depart grievous wolves are going to enter in among you, not sparing the flock ([Act 20:29](#)).

Paul stocked them that would come in. Weird concept and ideas. Men who would try to draw groups after themselves. There's always that. God establishes a work, and then there are always those who try and come in. Even out of your own midst, there will come those who will try to break off a group, to bring them as after themselves. Sad and tragic. Paul when he was writing to the Ephesians said that God has placed in the church, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastor-teachers, for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry. That's what we're here for. That you might be fed the Word of God, that you might be perfected for the work of the ministry. The building up of the body of Christ. Until we all come into the unity of the faith of the knowledge of the Son of God. Into that complete person. Unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of the image of Christ. That you be no more as babes who are tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine and slight cunning of men who lie in wait to deceive. The greatest burden on the heart of Paul, the greatest grief and sorrow were those men who would come in to prey upon the flock of God. To draw men after themselves. And so Paul said to these Ephesians, "I know that after I depart there are going to be grievous wolves that are going to enter in, not sparing the flock."

Also out of your own midst shall men arise, who will be speaking perverse things [not really teaching the word of God, teaching the concepts of man], who try to draw disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one of you night and day with tears ([Act 20:30-31](#)).

It doesn't make any difference. There are always those foolish little sheep that will go traipsing after any bell. And though Paul warned them three years night and day with tears that, "Hey, get sound in the Word, get founded in the Word." Yet I know that, you know, they're going to, you know, that they're going to rip some of you off.

And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance among all them that are set apart by God ([Act 20:32](#)).

I commend you to God and the Word of His grace. Oh, it's that which is able to build you up and bring us into that glorious inheritance.

I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel ([Act 20:33](#)).

Oh, God, give us more Pauls.

Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me ([Act 20:34](#)).

"Hey, fellows, you've seen the calluses; I've worked with my own hands. I've took care of myself and those that were with me. I, you know, I earned my living. I didn't covet your silver or gold or apparel. I wasn't here to rip you off or to fleece you. I was here to minister and to feed you." Now he was telling them that because those false prophets are always seeking to fleece the sheep. Always some new gimmick to take a second offering or a third offering. Always the emphasis upon your giving to God rather than what God has given to you. Watch that one who is constantly emphasizing what you ought to be giving to God. The New Testament emphasizes what God has given to you.

I have showed you all things, how that so laboring you ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of our Lord Jesus, who said, It's more blessed to give than to receive ([Act 20:35](#)).

We just completed a conference with the worldwide distributors of Maranatha music. They've come in from all over the world: Africa, Singapore, Philippines, Hong Kong, Europe, distributors of Maranatha music. We had a farewell luncheon with them Friday in which these distributors got up and just sort of expressed themselves concerning the conference that they just had. And they said, "You know, been to a lot of conferences but never one like this. It seems that all the conferences we go to their always trying to get something from us, but when we came here, you've been ministering to us. It's like you're giving and trying to give to us rather than taking from us." And I said, "You have just stumbled on to the philosophy of Calvary Chapel. We exist to minister to people, not to be ministered to by people. That's our basic philosophy. We're here to give, not to receive. And that is why there is never an emphasis upon your giving. The emphasis is always upon what God has given to us. And we are here to give to you in the name of Jesus Christ."

And it is so blessed to be able to go onto the radio all over the United States, not to be ministered to by the people, "Now, friends, please send in your offerings this week. Because if we don't hear from you this week,

we're so far behind in our bills and all, we've got to hear from you this week." Never, never, never. We are just there to minister God's Word to the people all over the country; to give. And thus, we send out the literature, we give away thousands upon thousands of tapes every year. Get the word out. We give away music albums. Get the music out, get the word out. People write and say, "Can we duplicate your tapes?" and we say, "Yes!"

I read in Christianity Today, someone wrote a letter into Christianity Today and they told how that they had problems their church was wanting to sing choruses. And so how they found out that they couldn't copy choruses on a little chorus sheet without infringing on the copyrights of those choruses. And so they wanted to print up these chorus sheets for their church and they sent to all of the publishers asking for permission and they all demanded a royalty. Just for these little, you know, mimeograph chorus sheets for the church. He said there was only one publisher who told us just go ahead, use it freely. He said it was Maranatha Music. And I said, "Praise God." "To give," Paul said, you know, "Our Lord told us it's more blessed to give than to receive."

Now, if we take that philosophy, God takes care of us. God takes care of the church. He more than supplies for our needs. But we never have to emphasize that side. God takes care of that side. Jesus said if you seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, all these other things will be added to you. But these poor unfortunate pastors who are striving to attain find themselves trapped. Because if you strive to attain, then you have to strive to maintain what you have attained. And you get in that position of constant pressure, constant striving. "Now what new gimmick can we include in our letter this week, you know to get the people to send more bucks to us, you know." You get in that trap and it seems there's no way out. If we would only learn, Jesus has established the principle, "It's more blessed to give than to receive." And if we give freely, even as we have received freely, God will take care of our needs. As He has proved, I believe that He has chosen to use Calvary Chapel more or less as a example of what God can and will do if we just follow His principles. And all over people look to us and say, "Well, Calvary Chapel is different." Sure it is, a whole different philosophy. We are here to minister rather than to be ministered to. We're here to give rather than to receive. And God takes care of the needs. More than takes care of the needs. He so blesses that we're able to sponsor "The Word for Today" all over the world. He is so good. Ah, when will people learn?

And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all ([Act 20:36](#)).

I can picture on the beach Paul the apostle; the ship is waiting off shore. There's a little dinghy there. And here are the elders of the church of Ephesus and Paul sitting on the beach there with them and he's talking and saying, "Hey, now feed the flock of God. Just take care of them. Because wolves are going to come in, and you know I've warned you with tears." I'm sure that Paul was crying now. And he said, "Watch over them. It's more blessed to give than to receive." And then I can see the circle of men kneeling as they join hands in prayer, not knowing what the future holds.

And they all of them began to weep, and they fell on Paul's neck, and they kissed him. Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they would probably not see his face again. And they accompanied him unto the ship ([Act 20:37-38](#)).

## Matthew Henry: Commentary on Acts 20

References for Act 20:17 — [1](#) [2](#)

### Chapter 20

In this chapter we have,

- I. Paul's travels up and down about Macedonia, Greece, and Asia, and his coming at length to Troas ([v. 1-6](#)).
- II. A particular account of his spending one Lord's day at Troas, and his raising Eutychus to life there ([v. 7-12](#)).
- III. His progress, or circuit, for the visiting of the churches he had planted, in his way towards Jerusalem, where he designed to be by the next feast of pentecost ([v. 13-16](#)).
- IV. The farewell sermon he preached to the presbyters at Ephesus, now that he was leaving that country ([v. 17-35](#)).
- V. The very sorrowful parting between him and them ([v. 36-38](#)).

And in all these we find Paul very busy to serve Christ, and to do good to the souls of men, not only in the conversion of heathen, but in the edification of Christians.

[Act 20:1-6](#)

BLOG · BOBBY'S BLOG

# Four Disciple Making Essentials



By Bobby Harrington

You want to make disciples because it was Jesus' last command and one of the most important expressions of love you could show to another human being. I cannot think of a more important focus.

Disciple making is to help a person place his or her faith in Jesus Christ (evangelism, conversion) and then to help him or her form their life around Jesus—becoming more and more like him (sanctification, maturation). Disciple making includes both parts.

There are four essentials when you are discipling a person – 1) the Word of God, 2) the people of God, 3) the Spirit of God, and 4) the Mission of Jesus. You must rely on all four.

I call them the four disciple making essentials.

***The Word of God*** – scripture is vitally important. We cannot objectively know the truths we need to know about God and how we are to obey him apart from scripture.

-Scripture (The Word) is the theme of our National Disciple Making Forum ([click here for more](#))

But, too many churches and leaders over-emphasize scripture and knowledge (at the expense of other elements).

***The People of God*** – relationships are essential in disciple making. Jesus' method, above all, was relational. In the gospels he was with his disciples—walking, talking, experiencing—most of the time. So, like Jesus, we must engage in meaningful relationships with those we are discipling so that we can relate to them, love them, teach them scripture and help them to obey it in practical ways.

But relationships and scripture are not enough.

***The Spirit of God*** – is the ultimate agent of transformation in disciple making. Scripture teaches us that it is the Spirit who convicts a person of sin and draws that person to place his or her faith in Jesus (John 16:7-11; 1 John 2:20-27). And then God tells us that the power that brings change in discipling relationships is the Holy Spirit, who transforms us from one degree of glory into the other, as we become more and more like Jesus. (2 Corinthians 3:17-18)

But, if all we have is 1) the Word of God, 2) the People of God, and 3) the Spirit of God, something is still missing.

***The Mission of Jesus*** – is the intentionality factor that grounds discipling relationships in purpose, forethought, and strategy. Every disciple and every potential disciple needs someone to guide them, to disciple them. They need someone who knows what Jesus meant when he told us that it is up to us to “make disciples.” (Matthew 28:18-20) Intentionality is to be purposive, to know where we are guiding someone. Many do not realize that God will partner with us in disciple making. He seeks to redeem the world as we co-labor with him—that is why he teaches us to make disciples. (Colossians 1:28; Galatians 3:19; 1 Thessalonians 2:18-19)

So, examine the disciple making strategy you are using in your discipling relationships. I call it your micro disciple making method. You must include each of these four elements for holistic and effective disciple making—do not neglect any one of them...

And, join us for the 2023 National Disciple Making Forum in Indianapolis (April 26 & 27, 2023) so that you can learn more about how to apply these four disciple making essentials, as you learn more about disciple making with others in our disciple making tribe ([click here for more](#)).



Biblical discipleship — both being a disciple and making disciples — is the key to walking with Jesus. But what does it mean to be a disciple? What does it mean to disciple someone else? What does the Bible say about discipleship, and where does the church come in?

Let's start with some definitions of discipleship.



## Learn how to make disciples: Free 7-day email challenge

*In just one week, discover the seven key elements of discipleship and learn how to effectively disciple someone.*

SIGN UP

# What is a disciple?

## *(Discipleship defined)*

At Crossworld, we define a disciple as one who is learning to live and love like Jesus and helps others to do the same. Let's break that down into three parts, or three characteristics of a disciple.

1

### **A disciple is a learner.**

Being a disciple of Jesus is a lifelong learning process. We move forward and we move backward at times, but we continue on this journey to become like him.

2

### **A disciple is learning to live and love like Jesus.**

Though we don't do it perfectly, we are consistently growing in two areas of Christ-likeness:

1. Living holy lives in obedience to God
2. Loving people sacrificially

Jesus summed up these characteristics of his disciples in three short verses: "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you (John 15:12-14, ESV)."

3

### **A disciple helps others do the same.**

By definition, a disciple is a disciple-maker because he obeys Jesus' commands — including the command to go and make disciples (Matthew 28:19).

Discipleship is not just about your own relationship with Jesus but about journeying together with others and building the body of Christ, the church.



If you know that you're a disciple, how do you then make disciples?

# What is disciple-making?

## *(Disciple-making defined)*

Disciple-making is helping people everywhere to live and love like Jesus by imparting God's truth through authentic relationships wherever life happens. Disciple-making is about three things: truth, relationship, and life.



### **God's truth: the content for disciple-making**

Our discipleship curriculum is the Word of God itself, and our teacher is the Holy spirit. That means we have to know God's Word and abide in the Spirit in order to disciple someone else.



### **Authentic relationship: the context for disciple-making**

Jesus modeled relational disciple-making when he lived among us and chose 12 men to pour his life into. God's truth is most effectively transmitted through relationship, because love builds trust.





## Everyday life: the setting for disciple-making

Jesus taught his disciples to shepherds in fields and fishermen in boats. God's truth must not be relegated to scheduled times and artificial environments. It's best learned in the everyday moments of normal life.

What happens when you passionately pursue God's truth with another person in the context of a loving relationship where truth is both modeled and taught in real life? *Powerful, lasting transformation.* That's how the church grew in the first century and it's how it will continue to grow today.

## How to make discipleship part of your life

### *(Practical next steps)*

You want to make disciples but where do you start? While there is no step-by-step guide for making disciples, here are some ideas to make biblical discipleship a priority in your life.

### **Make room in your schedule.**

Making disciples takes time. It's not a once-a-month or even a once-a-week activity. Pray about what you can cut out of your schedule so you can open up room for relationships and unhurried conversations.

## Free 7-day discipleship course

*Sign up for our free email course to learn disciple-making principles and practical steps you can implement today.*

SIGN UP

# The Biblical Basis for Discipleship

Looking for an example of discipleship in the Bible? Jesus himself was the perfect example of a disciple-maker. He spent three years calling people to walk with him, teaching them his ways, and empowering them to follow his example. Then, when he was about to leave them, he gave them one final command in Matthew 28:18-20. Many people point to this passage as the biblical basis for discipleship and missions.



**And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”**

— *Matthew 28:18-20*

Jesus spoke this final command, known as the Great Commission, to his followers in the first century 2,000 years ago. And it is just as relevant today as it was then.

## **Here’s what we learn from the Great Commission.**

1. Jesus has all authority, so we must obey his command. At the same time, we can do so with confidence in his power to help us accomplish it.
2. Our task is to make disciples of all nations. Every person on earth has the right and desperate need to know and follow Jesus. The church must pursue a global vision.
3. Making disciples includes baptizing new believers into the community of God and teaching them to obey all of Jesus’ commands. Discipleship begins before a person comes to faith and continues as they grow in faith and obedience through the rest of their life.
4. Jesus promises us his presence forever and always. For such a God-sized task as making disciples, we need this assurance.

Learn more about [the four “alls” of the Great Commission](#).

**What do these verses mean for you?** Your assignment as a Christian — no matter who you are, where you live, or what you do for a living — is to make disciples of all nations.

## How does disciple-making relate to missions?

Disciple-making is at the heart of Jesus' Great Commission to make disciples of all nations. "All nations" includes your home country, the countries on the other side of the globe, and everywhere in between. You can stay and make disciples where you already live, or you can pack your bags and move to a different country to make disciples in a new culture. That's what we call global missions.



The [purpose of missions](#) is to fulfill the Great Commission. Being a missionary, then, means living and working cross-culturally for the purpose of making disciples.

Do you have what it takes to be a missionary? Read more about the [six essential traits of successful missionaries](#) and a [portrait of a marketplace disciple-maker](#).

## Discipleship resources

Here are some resources to help you keep growing in your journey as a disciple-maker.

1. [Disciple-Making 101 email challenge](#)

Sign up for our free seven-day email course on discipleship. Each day, get a video lesson on one of the seven essential elements of disciple-making, plus action steps to put it in practice, all delivered straight to your inbox.

2. [A Better Way: Make Disciples Wherever Life Happens by Dale Losch](#)

This inspiring and practical book will help you understand disciple-making the way Jesus designed. The principles in this book are accessible to

everyone, no matter your age, occupation, or stage of life.

3. [Jesus Christ, Disclemaker by Bill Hull](#)

How did Jesus disciple 12 lowly fishermen and tax collectors to the point they were ready to revolutionize the world? This book outlines Christ's methods of discipleship and offers a biblical pattern for us to follow.

4. [Imitating Jesus: Love, Friendship, and Disciple-Making by Lewie Clark](#)

There's no secret formula, nor is there a one-size-fits-all plan for disciple-making, but there are examples to follow. And there are certainly adventures to be had!



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# CHRISTIAN STANDARD

## Authentic Disciple-Making: 5 Essentials

by Christian Standard | 1 March, 2022 | 0 comments

By Bobby Harrington

Fifteen years ago, I started waking up every day focused on disciple-making. In my roles as a pastor, trainer of church planters, network leader, and coach, it became my obsession.

I did this because I came to believe disciple-making is the core mission of the church.

Just as importantly: I came to believe disciple-making is the key to Christian faithfulness in this cultural moment.

Disciple-making has become such a passion that I have now published over 10 books on the topic, initiated and led multiple national conferences on the topic, and cofounded three national networks for church leaders focused on disciple-making: The Relational Discipleship Network, Discipleship.org (reaching 30,000 evangelical church leaders focused on *Jesus'* method), and Renew.org (reaching more than 15,000 leaders in Christian churches/churches of Christ with theology focused on *Jesus'* teachings).

Christian Standard asked me to share the keys to authentic disciple-making I have learned. I'm grateful for the opportunity. Here are the top five in my experience.

### **1. Altruistic: You Need the Right Motives**

To be authentic, our disciple-making needs to start with the right motives. Too many people launch discipleship or disciple-making efforts with distorted goals. Disciple-making efforts should not be

launched to get more numbers or grow the church, to keep people happy, or even to give people the fellowship they desire.

Love, which we define as cross-shaped actions following Jesus, should be our motivation (John 13:34-35). Disciple-making must spring from a desire to truly love God and love people. It must be that “Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died” (2 Corinthians 5:14, emphasis mine). We must desire to love people in the way of Jesus, for he came to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10) and he devoted his most focused energy and time to the making of twelve disciples.

If you seek to make disciples because you see and love people like Jesus saw and loved people, you are starting at the right place.

## **2. Intentional: You Need to Follow a Plan**

The Oxford English Dictionary describes intentionality as “the fact of being deliberate or purposive.” Our postmodern world prizes the modesty of uncertainty and self-professed doubt. In the same vein, Christians can back away from intentional involvement in discipling others into following Jesus. It can feel comfortable to be tepid and reserved about making disciples. We might think, After all, only God can guide people. My job is to pray and trust the Holy *Spirit’s* guidance in another *person’s* life. *That’s* all I can do.

The problem with this passive posture is that it is at odds with Jesus’ teachings.

Let’s examine the primary New Testament text on discipleship:

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age (Matthew 28:19-20).

This text begins with two commands: “go” and “make.” Jesus is commanding us to be intentional. We can follow Jesus’ teaching in this text only if we “go” into the world of lost people to reach them and “make disciples.” The second command (“make disciples”) is even more key. (In Greek, it’s the fundamental imperative in the sentence.) And we can make disciples only if we know what a disciple is and how to make one. A disciple maker, by definition, is guided by intentionality and planning. She guides people to follow Jesus.

If I do not have a basic path onto which I guide people, can I really make disciples? If I fail to have a plan or basic sense of direction, I’m deviating from what Jesus told us. For, according to the text, making disciples includes my role in baptizing them and teaching them “to obey everything that Jesus commanded.”

At a basic level, my job is to intentionally teach them about Jesus and help them do what Jesus commanded.

## **3. Relational: You Need to Base Everything on Love**

Relationships—genuine life-on-life connections grounded in Christlike love—create and sustain the environment for discipleship.

I became a disciple of Jesus at the University of Calgary because Dr. Mac Jacobs loved me enough to teach me about Jesus and show me how to follow Jesus. But he was able to do that because of our relationship, where he loved me enough to hang out with me, take my late-night calls, come over for family dinners, and put up with all my immaturities.

He walked with Jesus and loved me along the way.

It changed me.

Love changes people more than mere information does.

In the context of relationship, truth can be transferred from one life to the next. Questions can be asked. Real-life stories can be shared. Sin can be confessed. Accountability can be offered.

Encouragement can be given. Jesus’ ministry clearly shows us that disciple-making is a relational process built on trust.

In describing unconditional agape love, the apostle Paul provided a rich description of the context that makes for fruitful discipling relationships:

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails (1 Corinthians 13:4-8).

Let me make this personal. As I trust and follow Jesus and seek to help others trust and follow Jesus, I am seeking to become a person epitomized by this kind of love. I want my biography to become clear to all.

Bobby is patient, Bobby is kind. Bobby does not envy, Bobby does not boast, Bobby is not proud. Bobby does not dishonor others. Bobby is not self-seeking. Bobby is not easily angered and keeps no record of wrongs. Bobby does not delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth. Bobby always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Bobby never fails.

This is why we say agape love is to be the foundation for everything that happens in disciple-making. It is the ultimate sign of maturity and a top priority when it comes to relationships. We pursue a life of love (Ephesians 5:1-2).

- Love is our motivation as we seek discipling relationships.
- Love is our mindset as we plan and strategize discipling relationships.
- Love is our foundation as we nurture and uphold discipling relationships.
- Love is our model as we navigate conflicts, difficulties, and disappointments in discipling relationships.

Love is the motivation for discipling relationships, because as Paul said, “Love never fails.”

#### **4. Transformational: Your Goal Must Be to Change Lives**

The goals of disciple-making are leading people to experience eternal salvation and live lives of Holy Spirit-inspired obedience. Remember the goal of the Great Commission is not that we would “know the teachings of Jesus.”

Stop and think about that last statement.

Jesus calls us to obedience-based disciple-making. We are to teach those we disciple “to obey everything I have commanded you,” Jesus said (Matthew 28:20).

As stated earlier, here are things we do not focus on in disciple-making (even if some of the following end up becoming byproducts):

- helping those we disciple to be happy
- knowledge for knowledge’s sake
- close friendships
- increasing church members
- providing emotional support

Some of those things will likely happen when we disciple people the way Jesus did, but they cannot be our focus. I have made countless mistakes in discipling relationships because I have erroneously made each of those a focus point.

The apostle Paul described his discipling focus succinctly: “He [Jesus] is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me” (Colossians 1:28-29, emphasis mine).

The goal is developing people so they reach full maturity in Christ.

It is strenuous. It takes the energy of Christ. We ask God to powerfully work in us.

Here is what that looks like:

- helping people to find salvation
- helping people practice their new identity in Christ

- helping people to obey specific commands
- helping people stop repetitive sins
- helping people forgive the unforgivable and love the unlovable

The apostle Paul described the impact of his discipling relationship with the Corinthians this way: You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everyone. You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts (2 Corinthians 3:2-3).

### 5. Repeatable: You Must Graduate Disciple Makers

Authentic disciple-making repeats itself, where the disciple becomes a disciple maker, reproducing the disciple-making process.

As I prepared to launch Discipleship.org's national conferences and online training, I sought the input of some of the most effective disciple makers in North America. I was stunned by their uniform emphasis on one point: disciple-making is not biblical without an emphasis on multiplication. Remember Jesus' final command: disciples must go and make other disciples.

Jesus is our model. He showed us that disciple-making starts with lost people (he discipled the disciples before they were true disciples) and it reaches maturity when the disciples he made carried on the mission.

As disciples, we want to be like Jesus.

Here are summaries of what Jesus showed us about his style of disciple-making:

- He came to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10).
- He devoted 65 to 90 percent of his best time to discipling the Twelve (Luke 6:13).
- He told us students are to be like their teachers, and servants like their masters (Matthew 10:25).
- He commissioned his disciples at three different times in three different ways to go make disciples like he did (John 20:21; Matthew 28:19; and Acts 1:8).

The replication of disciple makers was Jesus' master plan.

### An Aha That Changed My Life's Focus

I am a church planter who spent years training church planters around the country. After training church planters for a decade, I realized something fundamentally transformational.

If you plant a church, you may not get disciples. But if you make disciples who make disciples who make disciples, you should always get a church.

Jesus' plan for multiplication is making disciples who make disciples who plant churches that make disciples.

Disciple-making is the best way to reach a lost world. It is the best way to bring the saved to maturity. It is the best way, in turn, to propagate the most important mission on planet earth for others.

That mission is to be disciples who make disciples.

Will you join with me and make it your mission too?

Bobby Harrington is the lead pastor at Harpeth Christian Church, Franklin, Tennessee, and the point leader for Discipleship.org and Renew.org.

## Jesus' 4-Step Process to Disciple-Making

By [Craig Etheredge](#) | [October 30, 2023](#) | [No Comments](#) | [Blog](#)

Let's go back up to the mountain in Galilee. Jesus is casting His global vision to His disciples. He said, ***"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 the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age,” (Matthew 28.18-20 NASB).*

As we have already seen, embedded in this vision statement, is the purpose of the church — make disciples. The church exists to make disciples. Also embedded in this statement is the process of how to make disciples. This is incredible and serves to underscore the brilliance of Jesus. In one sentence He summarizes the product and the process! “So what’s the process?” Jesus taught that making disciples involves four clear steps.

## 1. Engage Spiritual Explorers

The first step is to engage spiritual explorers with the Gospel of Jesus. As we have already seen, evangelism is the first step in the disciple-making process. An evangelist told me once, “You can’t spell Gospel without spelling go.” I like that.

Jesus told his men to “go make disciples”. The word “go” is actually a participle and is better read, “as you are going make disciples.” As you are going along your normal life, your normal routine, make disciples.

The Gospel in the early church ran clearly along relational lines. The Greek word *oikos* is used repeatedly in the New Testament. It is translated “household” but was also used in a broader sense to include extended family, friends, co-workers and neighbors.

The early church grew rapidly because they took the good news of Jesus back to their *oikos*. When Jesus healed a man possessed by demons, He told him to go back and share the good news with his family [*oikos*], **(Mark 5.19 ESV)**.

When Zacchaeus came to faith in Christ, Jesus declared that salvation had come to his house [*oikos*], **(Luke 19.9 ESV)**. So, disciple-making begins with going to your established relationships and telling them about Jesus.

## 2. Connect new believers

The second step in the process is to connect new believers with a biblical community. Jesus said to baptize new disciples “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” Baptism not only identifies the person as a follower of Jesus, but also includes he or she in the new community of believers where the person can grow and be nurtured in the faith.

## 3. Grow disciples and disciple-makers

The third step is to grow disciples and disciple-makers by training them to walk with God. Jesus said these disciples are to be taught to obey Him in everything. ***“Teaching them to observe (obey) all that I have commanded you...,” (Matthew 28.20 ESV).***



In this phase, the disciple is trained to walk with God on his or her own, and to begin to develop the character and competencies of Jesus. **(1 Timothy 4.7 ESV)** says, *“train yourself to be godly.”*

Paul said that just as the athlete “goes into strict training” to get a temporary crown, the disciple disciplines his or herself for an eternal reward **(I Corinthians 9.25 ESV)**. This phase of equipping and training involves discipline. It includes learning to read God’s Word on your own and learning to cultivate a personal relationship with Jesus through prayer. It involves learning to share your faith and reflect the love of God to the people around you. It involves learning to trust Jesus with every circumstance of life and put Him first in everything.

## 4. Release new disciple to multiply his life

The fourth and final step is not clearly stated in this passage, but it is implied. Jesus said this new disciple is to obey everything He commanded, which includes the command to “make disciples.”

Jesus intended for His disciples to make disciples. Therefore, the fourth step is releasing this new disciple to multiply his life in the lives of others. Before His death, Jesus told His men, *“By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples,”* **(John 15.8 ESV)**.

Things that are mature, multiply. A mature plant bears fruit. A mature animal produces offspring. And a mature follower of Jesus multiplies disciples. That’s what happened in the early church.

**(Acts 6.7 ESV)** says, *“...the Word of God continued to increase and number of disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem....”* So Jesus gave us a clear product: make disciples. He also gave us a clear process: engage explorers, connect believers, grow disciples, and go multiply. Jesus also gave us a wonderful promise.

In essence, Jesus said, “If you make it your goal to make disciples, and you follow the four-step process I have given you then I will be with you. Always. To the very end of the age.” That’s an incredible promise for you and me. When you are committed to making disciples the way Jesus did, you will never lack His presence or His power!

This blog features an excerpt from one of our books, [Invest In A Few](#).

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