

V. PROCESS, NOT PROGRAM

Why might it be easy to think of discipleship as a program instead of a process? Many programs have been developed to “grow” disciples. But because every person is different and has different struggles and temptations, discipleship cannot be so easily packaged.

At its core, discipling is essentially whatever we do to intentionally help other Christians to grow up in holiness. It’s a process of becoming like Christ; it’s not a program.

CONCLUSION

As we walk away this morning I want to remind you that:

- Discipling is *intentional* and *deliberate*
- Discipling is *relational*
- Discipling is *loving*
- Discipling involves *training in God’s Word*

Next Week: Why Be a Discippler?

Core Seminars—Discipling Class 1: What Is Discipling?



What do you think of when you hear the word “disciple?” What does the word “disciple” bring to mind for you?

I. What is a DISCIPLE?

What are some general marks of a disciple of God?

- Response to God’s initiating call (Mark 1:16-20)
- A desire to know what God says. (Job 23:12; Jer. 15:16; Deut. 6:5-7; Rom. 10:17; I Pet. 2:2)
- A break from the world’s standards. (I Cor. 10:13; II Cor. 5:17)
- Self-discipline. (Gal. 5:22-23; Matt. 16:24; Luke 3:11; I Cor. 9:25-27)
- A desire to seek and encourage with other disciples. (Rom. 15:5-6; Acts 2:42; Eph. 3:17-19; Heb. 10:25; I Pet. 1:22; I John 1:2, 7)
- Passion for Evangelism. (I John 3:16-24; I Pet. 2:21; II Cor. 9:6-7; Philip. 1:21; Matt. 10:32; John 14:12)
- Perseverance. (Philip. 3:13-14; I John 1-4; Ps. 37:23-24; Rom. 6:1-14; II Pet. 1:1-10; John 5:37-39)

II. The LARGER CONTEXT for DISCIPLING—the LOCAL CHURCH

There is not a single authoritative definition given in one place in Scripture.

For the most part, in this class we will be talking about relational or one-on-one discipling—you relating to another person or two with the aim to do them good spiritually.

Think of discipling on a much larger scale—what we do together as a church. What we are talking about in this class (i.e., one on one discipling) is one of the many tools God employs in his greenhouse (i.e., the local church) and it should not be considered in isolation to the others.

III. What is DISCIPLING?

Based on the synthesis of biblical truth, one way to define the work of discipling as: *The intentional encouragement of Christians on the basis of deliberate, loving relationships and training in God's Word.*

First, biblical discipling is intentional and deliberate.

¹⁸Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in^[a] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

This is not a charge simply to tell the Gospel message, but to make disciples. That is to be the focus of our evangelism – disciple-making.

Second, biblical discipling is relational.

The idea that *discipling is relational* is interwoven through much of the Old and New Testaments.

Perhaps the reason that the process by which we work to build up God's people is so relational is that it pictures and describes the larger truth of the relational nature of God.

Third, biblical discipling is loving.

Intentional relational discipling is not cold and utilitarian, rather it is near the very essence of how God has called us to love one another within his church. We are called to deliberately pour out our lives for the spiritual good of others, just as Christ poured out his life for our eternal good.

The Apostle John says it clearly in 1 John 3:16..."This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers."

Why did Jesus lay down his life for us? To glorify God and to do us good spiritually. To teach, model, encourage and love his disciples.

Fourth, biblical discipling involves training in God's Word.

Discipling must be rooted in the *Word of God*. It is God's Word that brings life, and not the discipler's sage advice. Scripture's self-attestation to its power and ability to transform is evident throughout the entire canon.

"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-18; cf. Isaiah 55:10-11; James 1:21; 2 Peter 1:3-4).

IV. BIBLICAL DISCIPLING IS BEING A PIPELINE

The purpose of a pipeline is to move fluid along in the direction it should go, making sure it gets from the source to the intended destination. *Biblical discipling is very much like being a pipeline.* Christians who root themselves in God's truth are in a position to do good to others. God uses Christians as conduits for his truth.