

BE A DISCIPLE, MAKE DISCIPLES

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

This directive of Jesus is what we have come to know as the Great Commission. It is more than evangelism; it is about discipleship. In order for us to walk in this mandate, to make disciples of all nations, it is imperative that we ourselves become a disciple and then disciple others.

Jesus called the twelve disciples after a night of prayer and the Father giving Him Divine wisdom for the selection. They were given the choice to follow Him. This call would require them to be with Him and learn from Him. They needed to learn kingdom principles; that greatness comes by serving, authority comes by a true heart of love and that it is a choice to be a disciple. As they followed Him and came under His training, they would in turn become the ones to disciple others.

A disciple is one who has made a dedicated decision to be a follower of Christ, learning to become like Him & living a life of obedience to Him. It is living a transformed life; one conformed to Christ's pattern and plan. The whole purpose of every teacher-student relationship is an invitation from the teacher: "Follow Me". God's promise to those who follow Him is "I will make you to be". In other words, He would make us to become all that He has destined us to be. Jesus modelled the life that we are supposed to live. We are to follow His training in life and live with the same purpose and satisfaction that He himself experienced.

LUKE 9:23 Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me."

We decide to follow Christ. Notice that it says 'if anyone desires'. Jesus gives us the invitation as He did to the disciples. Becoming a disciple is a conscientious decision on behalf of the follower. As a disciple of Jesus we make Him the centre of all we desire, need and dream about.

ROMANS 13:1 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.

HEBREWS 13:17 Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

The concept in the church today is that a person can be a Christian without being a disciple. This is not biblical as it gives people the false notion that they can live self-centred lives and be saved. This is where the need for 'accountability' comes in.

'Accountability' and 'submission' are not greatly embraced by people, but they are essential and necessary in God's discipling process in our lives.

God has placed people over us who in turn are accountable to God for our lives. Although still imperfect, they have authority to hold us accountable because they themselves are under authority. While they lead with the heart and insight to mature and equip us for the work of the ministry, we are to submit ourselves to them as unto the Lord.

Some people have an attitude that they only listen to God and not to man. This is error and sets people up for deception. 2 TIMOTHY 2:2 God uses Paul, a mature follower of Christ who is an example of Christ-likeness to nurture Timothy, a disciple who learns to be submissive and accounts his life to Paul as his mentor/teacher. Some people have an independent and proud attitude. Others are willing to follow their leader from a safe distance, while maintaining a certain level of autonomy in their lives, often choosing not to be accountable in areas where they struggle in their flesh to surrender. They do not understand that by doing so, growth is stunted and they come out of God given covering, His appointed leaders and expose themselves to possible attacks of the enemy.

Relational accountability to one another is essential in the process of discipleship. We need to be delivered from individualism and our insistence on privacy and learn to relate to one another beyond the veneer of the smiles we give and superficial conversations. There needs to be a place of vulnerability where we feel safe enough to open up our lives to one another, whether to share our successes or failures, confess our sins or for correction and counsel. How are our relationships with one another? Are they deep enough that we can speak the truth in love and provoke each other to get to the deeper things of God?

Today, Jesus is still calling out, 'Follow Me!' He does this through His people who are following His ways. Is your life one of being transformed through discipleship, submission and accountability or is it characterized by the outward show of attending, serving and giving? Let us not settle for the routine of religious activities without evidence of a life being transformed by true and faithful discipleship.

Let's make the directive of Jesus our greatest commission to become a disciple and then disciple others.

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