



Discipleship is Friendship with a Vision

WORSHIP: Everyday/ My Heart Sings Praises/ Hosanna (Praise is Rising)/ My Heart is Set

WELCOME:

Copy Me. Break out into partners and ask one to be a leader and the other the copycat. The leader will perform a series of actions that the copycat must be able to follow the actions of the leader precisely.

WORD:

"Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ 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, ²⁰ 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 28:18-20

CCF LA's vision is to make loving committed followers of Christ who will make loving committed followers of Christ up to the 3rd and 4th generation in obedience to the Great Commission.

We can no longer be content to just be audiences during Sunday service. God has given us our marching orders – and the order is to go and make disciples. But before we can make disciples, we first have to be discipled.

But what does the word "disciple" mean? Disciple means to follow one's teaching. Discipleship in the Christian life means to follow closely in the footsteps of Jesus through an authentic, honest and God ordained relationship with a fellow believer. To have accountability and be accountable for someone entrusted to you by God as you journey together in the Christian life. CCF defines discipleship as the *process* of bringing people to Jesus Christ, and building them up in the faith towards Christ-likeness, for the purpose of spiritual multiplication resulting in the glory of God.

How?

Romans 8:29 and Romans 12: 2 explicitly tells us that we have been predestined to be conformed to the likeness of Christ Jesus. This then requires us to not be conformed with the world but rather, to set ourselves apart to be transformed by the renewing of our minds, to have a cleansed heart, and a surrendered spirit for the sole purpose to become a living example to others that God's will is not only good but perfect for our lives.

We are like putty in the hands of a potter, being molded and perfected for His perfect will and for His glory. But the process cannot be done on our own. God in His infinite wisdom knew that we are fragile and easily tempted, that is why His last marching orders was for us to *go and make disciples. . . to teach each other to obey all that He has commanded us.* Jesus, Himself modeled for us the concept of discipleship as He choose 12 men to mentor, to teach. He became invested in their lives in the same way that they were invested in His.

So in essence. . . to have discipleship, we need friendship. A relationship. Specifically we need a discipleship friendship.

The Christian life is not an overnight success, it is a gradual intentional and conscious effort to abide by God's commandments as we make a decision to be like Jesus moment by moment, day by day. This effort requires feeding – feeding through Sunday worship, feeding through bible studies, feeding through quiet time with the Lord, feeding through reading the bible, and feeding through an accountability relationship. Christian feeding, is likened to a child's growth in Hebrews 5. Initially starting with milk and later progressing to solids as the child matures.

The discipleship relationship is the process of developing a friendship with a vision – a vision of building Christian Character. An investment in each other's lives through accountability.

There is a warning clause to accountability – accountability equals vulnerability. We must allow ourselves to be vulnerable, to open our hearts and lives. Able to give and receive being rebuked in love. Proverbs 27:6 reminds us that *"Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but deceitful are the kisses of an enemy."*

Very much like a parent-child relationship, the discipleship relationship requires that we should be diligent in teaching our disciples. That we should talk to them when we sit together, when we walk, even as we lie down or rise up. Obedience to God's commands are not just taught, it is modeled. In all these instances sharing God's love and grace in each other's lives. There is a blessing for us when we open our hearts and lives to others so that we are able to share God's unconditional love and forgiveness in our lives.

Discussion:

1. Where am I in the discipleship process? Believing? Growing? Discipleship? Multiplying?
2. What do I need to grow? What is hindering me from my growth?
3. Have I found a discipleship partner/ accountability partner?

WORKS:

1. Romans 8:29

"For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters."

- Becoming more like Jesus is impossible without God's grace. When truly accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior, the Holy Spirit dwells in us and works in us to continue to conform us to the image of Christ as this is God's desire for each one of us. But obedience to God's will always requires an understanding of God's word. We cannot just be on automated pilot going through the motions and not know why. If we do this we lose out on God's presence in our life and miss out on the opportunity to share that intimate encounter to grow in the presence of God.
- Are we living Romans 8:29 in our lives? Are we allowing the Holy Spirit to mold us and conform us in the image of Christ?
- What are the difficulties I am encountering in surrendering my life to God?

2. 1 Corinthians 11: 1

"Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ."

- Each one of us communicates something by what we say and what we don't say, by what we do and fail to do. We are mirror images of Christ – what we are, are what people will see Christ as.
- Are we able to be good witnesses for Jesus? Are we able to give Him glory by the lives we live?
- Do the people around me see Jesus in my life? Especially my family?
- Am I able to be a role model to my children to teach them about God's love and faithfulness?

3. Matthew 28:18-20

- Am I ready to be disciple?
- What is hindering me from opening myself up to accountability? Is it pride? Fear?
- Do I believe that I need discipling in order to grow more intimate with God?
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Let us continue to pray for each other and for each other as we ask God to lead us to our next step in our discipleship process. Is the Lord leading us to start joining a dgroup? Is the Lord leading you to start a discipleship relationship? Let also ask for God's grace to allow the Holy Spirit to conform us to what God has predestined us to be. We can only truly benefit from the discipleship process if we become putty in the hands of the potter and allow Him to use people, events, experiences and His word to mold us into the character and likeness of Jesus Christ.