

“DEVELOPING DISCIPLES”

Part 5

OBJECTIVE: ANALYZE THE DIFFICULTIES THAT HINDER THE DEVELOPMENT OF DISCIPLES AND DISCOVER HOW WE CAN OVERCOME THEM IN OUR PURSUIT OF PERFECTION.

KEY SCRIPTURES: PHILIPPIANS 4:9/ PHILIPPIANS 2:14-16/
LUKE 5:11/ LUKE 18:28-30/ PHILIPPIANS 3:8

WE ARE IN A SERIES ABOUT BUILDING A DISCIPLESHIP CULTURE BECAUSE DISCIPLESHIP SHOULD ALWAYS BE THE TOP PRIORITY OF THE CHURCH. JESUS TOLD US TO GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES, THAT'S OUR JOB DESCRIPTION. EVEN THOUGH DISCIPLESHIP SHOULD BE OUR TOP PRIORITY, IT DOESN'T ALWAYS PLAY OUT THAT WAY IN REAL LIFE.

WHY? I'M SURE THERE ARE A NUMBER OF REASONS BUT THE SIMPLEST AND MOST OBVIOUS IS THAT IT'S HARD. IT'S EASILY THE HARDEST PART OF MINISTRY. PUTTING ON A SUNDAY SERVICE IS EASY, CHILDREN'S MINISTRY ISN'T EASY BUT IT'S NOT COMPLICATED. SMALL GROUPS ARE A PAIN TO MANAGE BUT LOTS OF PEOPLE DO IT. I LOVE DOING COUNSELING, BUT SOME PEOPLE DON'T, AND OUTREACH IS MOSTLY JUST ABOUT EFFORT AND PASSION FOR THE LOST.

DISCIPLESHIP IS ANOTHER MATTER ENTIRELY. DISCIPLESHIP IS HARD FOR A COUPLE OF REASONS.

FIRST, IT NEVER ENDS.

WE NEVER STOP LEARNING! WE NEVER STOP FOLLOWING JESUS!

YOU ARE NEVER DONE BEING A DISCIPLE. THERE IS NO FINISH LINE, NO WAY TO WIN. BEING A DISCIPLE IS LIKE BEING A RUNNER (WHICH I AM NOT). YOU ARE ONLY A RUNNER IF YOU RUN. WHEN YOU STOP RUNNING, YOU ARE NO LONGER A RUNNER. YOU ARE AT BEST A FORMER RUNNER, AND LIKELY JUST CURRENTLY LAZY. THE SAME IS TRUE FOR DISCIPLESHIP. YOU ARE ONLY A DISCIPLE IF YOU ARE PURSUING JESUS. THE MOMENT YOU STOP, YOU STOP BEING A DISCIPLE.

SECOND, DISCIPLESHIP IS ABOUT DOING AND BEING.

DISCIPLESHIP IS A SET OF PRACTICES THAT WE ADOPT BUT IT ISN'T ONLY A SET OF PRACTICES. IT'S ALSO ABOUT WHAT THOSE PRACTICES DO TO YOU, IN YOU AND THROUGH YOU. WE DO DISCIPLESHIP IN ORDER TO BECOME DISCIPLES, WHICH IS HONESTLY KIND OF CONFUSING, AND CONFUSING THINGS ARE HARD FOR PEOPLE TO DO.

THIRD, "IT TAKES TWO TO MAKE A THING GO RIGHT. IT TAKES TWO TO MAKE IT OUT OF SIGHT."

DISCIPLESHIP USUALLY REQUIRES BOTH A DISCIPLER AND A DISCIPLE. CONSISTENTLY FRUITFUL DISCIPLESHIP IS THE RESULT OF A CHURCH THAT WANTS TO MAKE DISCIPLES (NOT JUST PUT BUTTS IN SEATS) AND A WILLING PARTICIPANT THAT WANTS TO KNOW HOW TO FOLLOW JESUS. (MARK 6:7)

WHY DID JESUS SEND THEM OUT BY 2?

- *EFFECTIVENESS – ECCLESIASTES 4:9-10*
- *ACCOUNTABILITY- 1 THESSALONIANS 3:12/ 1 PETER 4:8*
- *UNITY IN PURPOSE – MATTHEW 18:19-20*

LASTLY, DISCIPLESHIP IS HARD BECAUSE IT'S ABOUT THE HEART.

FOLLOWING JESUS REQUIRES US TO TAKE TANGIBLE, PRACTICAL STEPS AND SUBMIT OURSELVES TO SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES. HOWEVER, IT'S POSSIBLE FOR US TO DO ALL OF THOSE THINGS FOR REASONS THAT HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH A GENUINE PURSUIT OF JESUS. LOTS OF PEOPLE HAVE DONE IT THROUGHOUT THE CENTURIES FOR LOTS OF REASONS. MAYBE IT'S CULTURALLY ADVANTAGEOUS TO FOLLOW JESUS, MAYBE IT'S LINGERING GUILT FROM YOUR MOM, MAYBE IT'S ABOUT A GIRL. THERE ARE A VARIETY OF REASONS, BUT ONLY A HEART-LEVEL COMMITMENT TO KNOWING, LOVING, AND BEING LIKE JESUS CAN REALLY BE CALLED DISCIPLESHIP.

SO, COUNT THE COST.

MAKE THE COMMITMENT.

NEVER STOP STOPPING. (The greatest gift you can give your people is to never stop calling them to more).