

222 X DISCIPLE

Introduction to Discipleship

Welcome to 222Disciple! You are undoubtedly here because someone has offered to disciple you. Their aim will not only be to build you up as a disciple of Jesus, but also to help you become an effective disciple-maker. One of the key ideas that we want you to embrace is this: “Disciples...make disciples.”

Jesus’ ministry operated upon this principle. If you read about Jesus’ ministry in the Gospels, you will see that the *scope* of Jesus’ ministry was very wide—in fact, it was worldwide. The *focus* of His ministry, however, was quite narrow. Although there were great crowds of people who followed Jesus’ public ministry, He chose just twelve people to share in a close and intimate relationship—His disciples. He gave them the inside access and the royal treatment. Both through words and through shared experiences, Jesus taught these twelve disciples everything about what it meant to be His follower. Then at the conclusion of His earthly ministry Jesus commissioned His disciples, telling them, “Go and make disciples” (Matthew 28:19). So, this is clearly Jesus’ model: raise up disciples who will, in turn, make disciples. “Disciples...make disciples.”

The 222Disciple program teaches participants a method of gospel-based discipleship training that aims at starting and sustaining a robust missions movement. We want you to be able to see and track the legacy that your disciple-making efforts build. This training program helps Christians and churches raise leaders and move beyond a “spiritual addition” model of growth to a model of “spiritual multiplication.”

Spiritual Addition

Let's suppose that you decided to spend the next 20 years of your life reaching the world for Christ. Suppose, in the process, you committed yourself to a plan of spiritual ‘addition.’ For the next 20 years, you were diligent in sharing the Gospel with at least 1 new person each day who would accept Christ as their Savior for the first time. Of course, this kind of daily addition would be an amazing accomplishment and blessing! At the end of 20 years, you would have shared the Gospel with and reached 7,300 people.

As wonderful as this unusual scenario would be, reaching 1 person per day every day sounds like an exhausting and impossible proposition to most people even

with the strongest gifts of evangelism. Also, in the process of enacting this plan, your concentration would be so heavily upon outreach that you would have no time to train and nurture the new converts. The result is that you would leave an unintended trail of baby Christians in your wake.

Spiritual Multiplication

Suppose instead, you decide to employ a different strategy—a strategy of ‘multiplication.’ Suppose each year you would select only two people whom you would disciple, training them to how to read the Bible and grow in Christ with the goal that they would be able to grow even eventually without your ongoing assistance. You would also show them how to share their faith and how to minister to new Christians. Now suppose that at the end of one year each of your disciples would be ready to disciple two more (and you would as well.) There would now be a total of 9 of you involved in discipleship ministries—not a big crowd, but it's a start.

However, if each of the 9 of you trained two more for a year, you would then have a total of 27, the next year 81, and the next year 243. You would have developed a multiplication network. In ten years there would be 59,049 in your multiplication network. In fifteen years you would have 14,348,907 and in 21 years approximately 3½ billion people — half the present population of the world!

Now, of course this scenario becomes unrealistic at some point as well. Not everyone is going to become a multiplying disciple on one-year intervals. God works uniquely in every person's life. But the point is still important. If you want to reach the world with the message of Christ, you will want to do it through multiplication.

In 2 Timothy 2:2, Paul gives us a clear picture of God's plan for multiplication: *“And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.”*

In 2 Timothy 2:2 we have four generations of spiritual multiplication. Paul is the first, Timothy is the second, ‘reliable people’ are the third, and ‘others’ are the fourth. Paul specifically invested his life in a number of individuals (including Timothy, Titus, Silas, Epaphroditus, Priscilla and Aquila, etc...). Paul then instructs one of these individuals, Timothy, to invest his life in reliable and trustworthy people—people who will be capable of teaching others to do the same.

The key strategy, then, of multiplication ministry is to build up others and train them to do what you are doing. Disciple-making x Disciple-making equals the fulfillment of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20).