

“One must decide where he wants his ministry to count – in the momentary applause of popular recognition (program splash) or in the reproduction of his life in a few chosen ones who will carry on his work after he has gone? Really, it is a question of which generation we are living for.”

Robert Coleman
The Master Plan of Evangelism

The Disciple-Making *Leader*

A New England

DISCIPLE-MAKING LEADERS WORKSHOP

What follows is not a talk or a lecture. It is an **interactive process** with other men and women that involves personal study, discussion, and application of what the Bible says about making disciples of Jesus, for the purpose of taking steps toward creating a culture of intentional, personal disciple-making in your church. This is an opportunity to **engage with other leaders** on the most critical issue facing the Church of Jesus Christ today:

MAKING DISCIPLES OF JESUS WHO MAKE OTHER DISCIPLES IN A WAY THAT UNLEASHES THE POWER OF SPIRITUAL MULTIPLICATION.

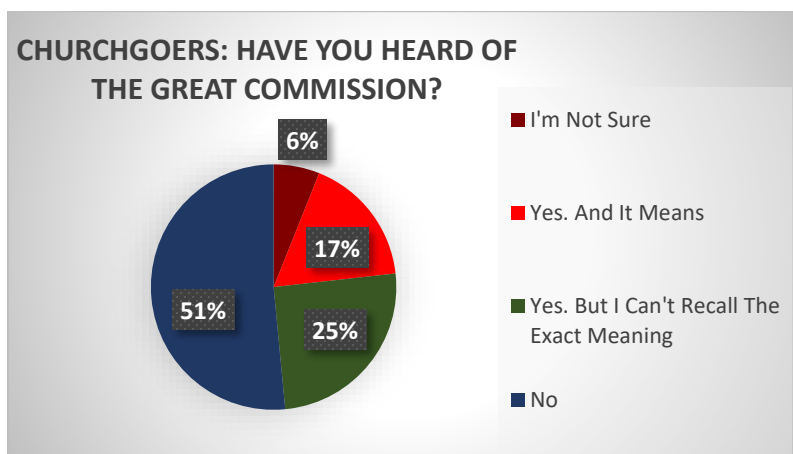
Investing in this process will make a difference for you, your church, and the kingdom of God.

Consider the following current realities.

“Nondiscipleship is the elephant in the church. ... The fundamental negative reality among Christian believers now is their failure to be constantly learning how to live their lives in The Kingdom Among Us. And it is an accepted reality. The division of professing Christians into those for whom it is a matter of whole-life devotion to God and those who maintain a consumer, or client, relationship to the church has now been an accepted reality for over fifteen hundred years. ... The fact is that there is now lacking a serious and expectant intention to bring Jesus’ people into obedience and abundance through training.” Dallas Willard, The Divine Conspiracy

“The Scriptures picture the church as full of proactive ministers. ... Yet when we turn from the biblical standard of the first-century church to the reality of the church today, we see a relatively small percentage of people who move beyond Sunday worship into the life and ministry of a congregation or who experience ministry as a way of life. ... There is an evident discipleship deficit in our churches and ministries that we know needs to be addressed, but we are not sure how to do so.” Greg Ogden, Transforming Discipleship

A 2018 report on “*Translating the Great Commission*,” by *The Barna Group* and *Seed Company*, revealed that “more than half of U.S. churchgoers have not heard of *The Great Commission*. Even when presented with a list of passages, 37 percent didn’t recognize which well-known passage typically goes by this name.” In addition, 25 percent who have heard of *The Great Commission* don’t know what it means.



One conclusion of the *Barna / Seed Company* report was this: **“Ignorance of this term can be attributed to churches not teaching this concept enough anymore.”**

So, a key question is, “*What are we teaching and modeling about the Great Commission in our church?*”

In 2018, the Cecil B. Day Foundation authored a survey and report on ***Transformational Discipleship in New England***. This study identified several characteristics and practices of churches in New England who are successfully leading the transformational process of making disciples in their churches.

“From observations made over years of visiting churches in New England, we’ve seen that many of the established churches are **busy with activities focused on the members**. These are often calendar driven events that have become traditions maintained for many years, often with little concern for their effectiveness in advancing the church’s mission. In many of these cases, the mission of the church has drifted with only a few members aware of the real reason for the church’s existence – *to make reproducing disciples by means of consistent evangelism and intentional discipleship, as spoken by Jesus in Matthew 28:18-20.*” (2018 report on *Transformational Discipleship* by The Cecil B. Day Foundation, Inc.)

Over the following four years since their 2018 report, the Day Foundation has cited many encouraging signs that **“disciple-making activities have been occurring at levels not seen for decades.”** However ...

“Still the weakest area for disciple-making to flourish seems to be at the local church level. Many churches are stuck in the old paradigm that ‘all things Christian’ done in the church constitute discipleship. Yet the last few decades have shown this is not true as Christianity’s waning influence continues, even in Christian homes. Major shifts in the ways disciples are cultivated must take place, and those ministries seeing active, reproducing disciples understand this necessity. One of the emerging tenets of effective disciple-making is that it is **highly relational** – most often occurring in the smallest of settings rather than in the classroom. The best disciple-making appears to occur with the presence of a competent teacher and a willing learner in an ever-deepening relationship. The method Jesus used of the **Master with a limited number of follower/learners continues to produce whole-life disciples.”**
(The State of TRANSFORMATIONAL DISCIPLESHIP in New England by The Cecil B. Day Foundation, Inc., Update December 2022)

This workshop is designed to help church leaders take some ***next steps*** to apply the recommendations of the Day Foundation reports. We will grapple with the challenges of creating ***a culture of intentional and personal disciple-making in your church where people make disciples of Jesus who in turn make other disciples of Jesus.***

This is a ***hands-on process*** including ***six interactive sessions*** as a member of a small group to interact on specific issues that are vital for disciple-making leaders (***DM Leaders***). In addition, between sessions, each participant will have the opportunity for coaching with an experienced disciple-maker to help him/her apply the previous session. During the sessions, we will focus on the following:

Session 1 – *The DM Leader’s Vision*

Creating a culture of intentional, personal disciple-making in your church.

Session 2 – *The DM Leader’s Mission*

Developing a specific kind of person.

Session 3 – *Leading Disciples Along the Pathway*

Growing disciples with heart, vision, and know-how one step at a time.

Session 4 – *The DM Leader’s Priority*

The function of leadership is to equip a disciple-making community.

Session 5 – *The Vision to Think Small*

Seeing the world through a few.

Session 6 – *The DM Leader’s Team*

Building a disciple-making team in your church and beyond.

Session 1 – *The DM Leader's Vision*

Creating a culture of intentional, personal disciple-making in your church.

"I have a dream ... I dream of a world where disciple-making is a reality and not just an ideal; where disciples make disciples, who make disciples, and unleash the explosive power of spiritual multiplication."

Dale Losch, crossworld.org

The Lord Jesus' Vision

Read, highlight, and then record your observations:

What do ***Jesus' early invitations*** in Mark 1:16-20 tell **you** about **Jesus' vision for disciple-making?**

1:16 As He was going along by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net in the sea; for they were fishermen. 17 And Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." 18 Immediately they left their nets and followed Him. 19 Going on a little farther, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who were also in the boat mending the nets. 20 Immediately He called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went away to follow Him. (NASU)

(Record your observations.)

Read, highlight, and then record your observations:

What does Jesus' **commission to His disciples** in Matthew 28:18-20 tell you about Jesus' **vision for disciple-making**?

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

(Record your observations.)

Discuss together:

Vision is about **what could be**. Based on the verses we read in Mark 1 and Matthew 28, what did Jesus say His disciples **could be**?

Vision is also knowing **what to do** and **how to do it**. Based on these verses, what did Jesus say about what He wanted His disciples to do and how to do it?

The Apostle Paul's Vision

Read and take notes on your own:

In Ephesians 4:11-16, the apostle Paul described **a disciple-making culture**. Ephesians 4:11-12 tells us that the leaders of the church are tasked with equipping the people of the church to make disciples who make other disciples. As you study these verses, focus on two questions:

1. What did Paul say that equipped people should **look like**?
2. What did Paul say about **how to equip** other people?

What Paul Said	What Equipped People Look Like	How to Equip Others
<p>11 And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. 14 As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; 15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.</p> <p>Ephesians 4:11-16 NASU</p>		

Discuss together:

Discuss your observations from Ephesians 4:11-16.

A Vision for a Culture of Intentional, Personal, Reproducing Disciple-Making

Read and take notes on your own, and then discuss together:

Both Jesus and Paul had a vision to create an identifiable culture of ***intentional, personal, reproducing disciple-making*** throughout the world.

Since ministry terms such as “discipleship” and “evangelism” often mean different things to different people the following terms are important to the purpose of this workshop.

Disciple-maker: a person who leads other people into a saving relationship with Jesus and teaches them to obey all that Jesus commanded (Matthew 28:18-20). This is a process over time that includes evangelism, discipleship, and making other disciples. The word “***make***” is important. Our purpose is not just personal discipleship (being in the process alone). It is also personal disciple-***making***.

Intentional: purposeful, deliberate, preplanned, not by accident. Making disciples requires objectives and plans that disciple-makers ***initiate*** and ***fulfill*** in order to lead people into a relationship with Jesus and train them to obediently follow Jesus. Intentionality requires continuous initiating and follow-up.

Personal: Every disciple of Jesus is an ***individual*** whom God draws to Himself personally. In turn, each believer has the ***personal responsibility*** to lead lost people into saving relationships with Christ and teach them to do all that Jesus commanded. As a result, intentional disciple-making must be ***tailor-made*** to the needs of the individual disciple.

Reproducing: produce a copy or representation of. We are asking God to reproduce the life and mission of Jesus that is in us in another person. (1 Corinthians 11:1)

The vision of this workshop is to help church leaders take steps toward creating an identifiable culture of disciple-making throughout the church by training men and women to live intentionally, and personally, as disciple-makers of Jesus Christ who will reproduce other disciple-makers wherever God has placed us.

Our Question: What if you had a team of men and women in your church who lived intentionally and personally as disciple-makers of Jesus and they reproduced other disciple-makers? ***What would be different in your church?***

BARRIERS TO LIVING OUT THE VISION

Discuss together:

List barriers that have made it difficult for you to intentionally, and personally, make disciples who reproduce other disciples in your ministry?

On your own:

Identify a key barrier to intentional, personal disciple-making that you want to help tackle in your church.

Describe the barrier.

Describe how that barrier has affected you in your disciple-making ministry.

Discuss together:

- Share your story with the whole group.
- Pray for each other for God's wisdom to best deal with those barriers.

Your Disciple-Making Applications

“But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.”
James 1:22

After completing **Session 1**, summarize the key insights and applications that you want to carry with you moving forward. We will share these at the beginning of our next session.

Session 2 – *The DM Leader’s Mission*

Developing a specific kind of person.

“The crisis at the heart of the church is a crisis of product.”

Bill Hull, The Disciple Making Pastor

A Parable

Once upon a time there was a group of men who owned some land outside of town. Each spring these men went out to work their land. The first week, they would till the ground in one field. The next week they would fertilize in a second field, different from the first field. The third week they would plant seed in a third field, different than the first two. The fourth week they would water in a fourth field, different from the other three.

One day a traveler happened by and saw the men working. The traveler asked, “What are you doing?” The men replied, “We’re farming ... we’re farmers.” The traveler, interested about what grew in that area, followed up by asking, “What are you growing?” Puzzled by the question, the men asked, “Growing?” “Sure,” said the traveler. “Farmers grow crops. What kind of crops are you growing?” The men replied, “Oh no, we don’t grow any crops. We till and fertilize and plant and water. That’s what farmers do.” As the traveler continued on his way, he wondered, “Are farmers really farmers if they never grow any crops?”

WHAT DOES THIS ILLUSTRATION SAY TO YOU AND YOUR CHURCH?

WHAT IS A DISCIPLE?

The word **disciple** (Greek - μαθητήσ, mathetes) basically means a learner, a pupil, or a follower. It is used widely in the New Testament to refer to those who followed Jesus.

Discuss together:

“It is unlikely that we can make disciples unless we can describe what a disciple looks like and the process of how a disciple is made.” – Andrew Tay, Intentional Disciple Making Network, Singapore.

“Who among Christians today is a disciple of Jesus, in any substantive sense of the word ‘disciple’? A disciple is a learner, a student, an apprentice – a practitioner, even if only a beginner. The New Testament literature, which must be allowed to define our terms if we are ever to get our bearings in *the Way with Christ*, makes this clear. In that context, disciples of Jesus are people who do not just profess certain views as their own but apply their understanding of life in the Kingdom of the Heavens to every aspect of their life on earth.” - Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission*

“A disciple is one who is learning to live and love like Jesus and helps others to do the same.” - Dale Losch, Crossworld.com

Read and take notes on your own:

Read the following passages and record your observations of what Jesus said about **being His disciple**.

(Note: A few of the passages do not use the word “disciple”, but it is clear from the context that a disciple is in view.)

Matthew 10:24-25

Luke 6:40

Matthew 28:18-20

John 8:31-32

John 13:34-35

Luke 14:25-33

Matthew 4:19

John 15:1-17

Matthew 9:36-38

Matthew 17:19-20

John 14:16-17

Luke 11:1-4

(Add other verses that you consider to be essential.)

Discuss your study together:

Read and take notes on your own:

The word **disciple** (Greek - μαθητής, mathetes) is not used in the New Testament outside of the four gospels and the book of Acts. How do the writers of the New Testament letters describe the **characteristics of a disciple of Jesus** in their letters?

READ the verses in each grouping below. Identify a common theme for each grouping. Then summarize what this tells you about the characteristics of a disciple of Jesus based on those verses.

1 Corinthians 4:14-17; 11:1
1 Thessalonians 1:6-7

1 Peter 1:13-16
1 John 2:3-6

Hebrews 11:1,6
Galatians 5:6

1 John 3:16-18
1 John 5:1-4

Ephesians 6:18-19
Jude 20

1 Thessalonians 2:5-12
2 Timothy 2:1-2

2 Peter 1:2-11
Galatians 5:16-26

ADD other verses that illustrate other characteristics of a disciple of Jesus.

Discuss your study together:

Based on your study of the above verses, **create a profile of a disciple of Jesus** that is sufficient to explain to the people of your church what a disciple of Jesus is.

WHAT IS DISCIPLE-MAKING?

“Too often Christians focus rightly on the gospel message of the Cross but forget about the discipleship process Jesus revealed and modeled. Again, He came not only to die but also to give us a model of disciple-making that trains Christians so they can accurately represent Him and deliver His message to the world.” - Jim Putman, *Real-Life Discipleship*

“Disciple-making is pouring our lives into intentional, Christ-centered, Scripture-based, prayer-covered, Spirit-directed relationships with others, helping them know Christ, teaching them obedience to what he has commanded, and growing together in love and Christ-likeness.” - Faith Community Bible Church, Loudon, NH

Read and take notes on your own:

In Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus told His disciples to **make disciples**. In light of Jesus’ ministry with His disciples, what **implications** do you see in the words “**make disciples**”?

Discuss your study together:

Read and take notes on your own:

In I Corinthians 3:5-15, Paul describes **the work of individuals** as participants in God’s work of growing disciples of Jesus. God causes the growth, but God uses people. Paul refers to each person’s “**own labor**” (3:8), “God’s fellow **workers**” (3:9), “**each man must be careful how he builds**” (3:10), “**each man’s work**” (3:13), “**if any man’s work**” (3:14,15).

From your experience, what is the **personal work** of making disciples?

Discuss your study together:

Create a profile of a disciple-maker of Jesus that is sufficient to explain to the people of your church what making-disciples of Jesus is.

Your Disciple-Making Applications

“But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.”

James 1:22

After completing **Session 2**, summarize the key insights and applications that you want to carry with you moving forward. We will share these at the beginning of our next session.

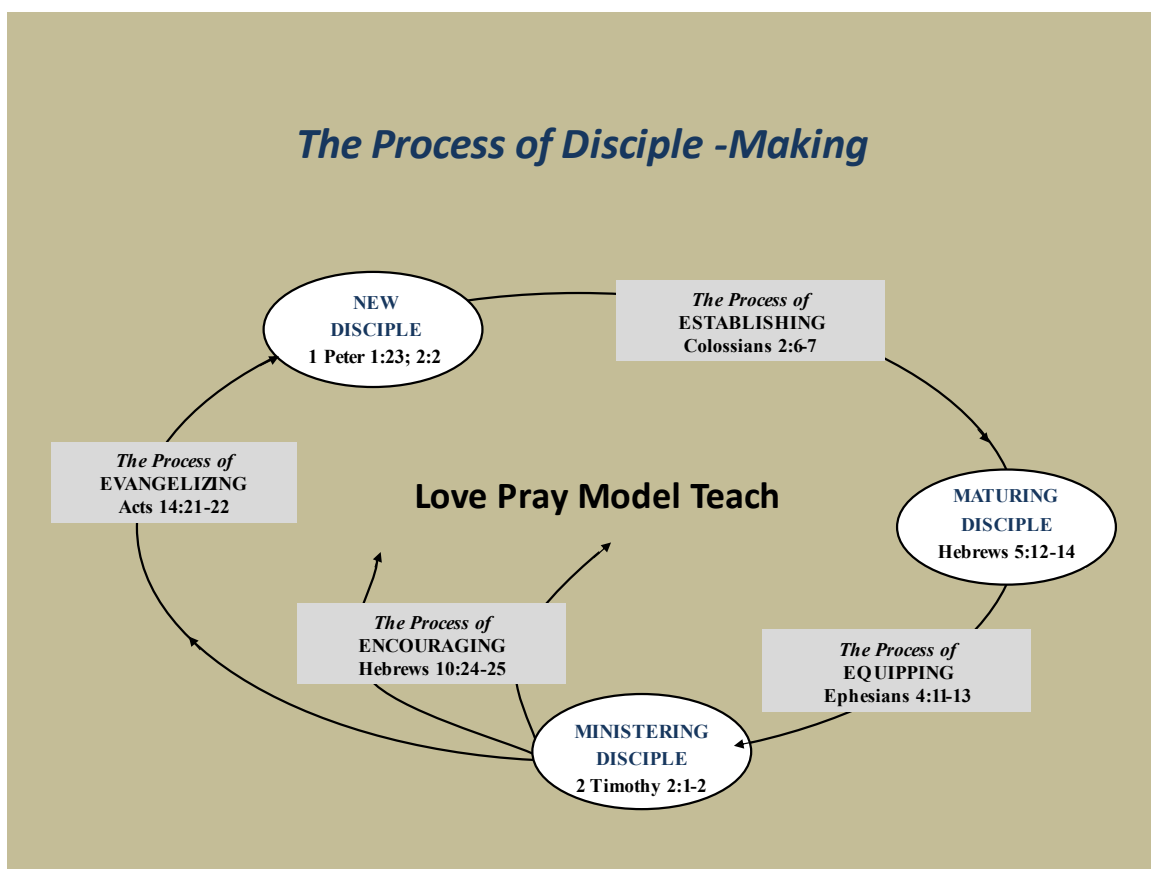
Session 3 – **LEADING DISCIPLES ALONG THE PATHWAY**

Growing disciples with heart, vision, and know-how one step at a time

The 2018 report on *Transformational Discipleship* by The Cecil B. Day Foundation, Inc. made the following important observations about **the process** of disciple-making:

“Churches attempting to disciple well **understand discipleship as a pathway leading to a deeper and abiding relationship with Jesus Christ.** ... Several pastors described in detail how every aspect of their discipleship process has “next steps” for the disciple as he/she becomes ever more transformed into the image of Jesus. Along the pathway, lessons are learned through intentional life-on-life relationships with more mature believers acting as mentors and coaches to encourage growth and transformation.”

Discuss together:



THE KEYS TO GROWTH

Read and take notes on your own:

“We define Christian discipleship as a process that takes place within accountable relationships over a period of time for the purpose of bringing believers to spiritual maturity in Christ. Biblical examples suggest that discipleship is both relational and intentional, both position and process.” – *The International Consultation on Discipleship, 1999*

“What is the disciple-maker’s part in this transformation process? To teach what it means to be a follower of Jesus and to show what kind of person God wants us to be. We need to teach *and* model spiritual transformation and help those we disciple connect to other believers who can serve as models.”
– Jim Putman, *real life discipleship*

The keys to a disciple’s growth are **love, prayer, modeling, and teaching**. These are the *means* by which disciples grow. For example, observe those four keys in the ministries of Jesus and Paul.

	Jesus	Paul
Love	John 13:1,34-35	Philippians 1:8
Prayer	John 17:6-26	1 Thessalonians 1:2-4
Modeling	Mark 3:14-15	2 Timothy 3:10-11
Teaching	Matthew 5:1-2	2 Timothy 1:13; 2:2

Disciple-makers are the catalysts who intentionally *love, pray for, model* the Christian life for, and *teach* newer disciples in a personal and relevant way. Because of this, **every disciple needs at least one faithful person** who will consistently do those four things for them.

Therefore, **Christian discipleship is not just a self-help program**. We don’t just give a new disciple a Bible and expect him/her to figure it out on his/her own. Instead, we give a newer disciple **a real person** (or persons) who will **personally** and **intentionally** help a disciple grow.

“A ministry that seeks to make disciples must support the personal responsibility and accountability required in developing individual discipleship. It can use a variety of methods, but it must always bring discipleship to the personal level of each individual.” - *Intentional Disciplemaking*, by Ron Bennett

“Discipleship demands intentionality and relationship – by which each person is invested in specifically.” – Jim Putman, *real-life discipleship*

Discuss together:

- What stood out to you from your study in page 15?

- Identify one spiritually newer disciple whom you know, and identify the point (**X**) where he/she is along the “path” (diagram on page 14).

Describe one specific area where you think God wants him/her to take ***one step forward*** in his/her spiritual maturity.

How could you apply the principles described on page 15 to help that person take that step?

Something to think about:

What would it take for ***the leaders*** of your church to know ***everyone’s next step*** along the path and help him/her to take that next step?

Your Disciple-Making Applications

“But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.”
James 1:22

After completing **Session 3**, summarize the key insights and applications that you want to carry with you moving forward. We will share these at the beginning of our next session.

Session 4 – *The DM Leader’s Priority*

The function of leadership is to equip a disciple-making community.

Read and take notes on your own:

“In most cases where disciple-making is thriving, leadership at the highest levels is engaged. Often, intentional training has been present with leaders having effectively been disciplined by other serious leaders who took an interest in them and assisted in the transformation process. Discipleship training is critical to success since so many churches appear to have lost the vision, purpose, and strategies for making real disciples.” 2018 report on *Transformational Discipleship* by The Cecil B. Day Foundation, Inc.

“We have to come to terms with the fact that we cannot become those who ‘hear and do’ without specific training for it. The training may be to some extent self-administered, but more than that will always be needed. It is something that must be made available to us by those already farther along the path.” - Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*

“Keep in mind that while a natural leader influences people, he or she may not be spiritually mature. Too often churches allow those with proven leadership abilities in the secular world to become leaders in the church without assessing where they are in the stages of spiritual growth. ... But a godly leader leads to the right goal (making disciples), in the right way (a discipleship process), for the right reason (the glory of God). When people aren’t mature disciples, they cannot value making mature disciples because they don’t understand what one looks like. This leadership problem is where we are right now in most churches in America.” – Jim Putman, *real-life discipleship*

“We might define discipleship as becoming a complete and competent follower of Jesus Christ. It is about intentional training of people who voluntarily submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and who want to become imitators of Christ in every thought, word, and deed. On the basis of teaching, training, experiences, relationships and accountability, we become transformed into the likeness of Jesus Christ.” - George Barna, *Growing True Disciples*

Discuss together:

What do the above quotes tell you about the importance of intentional training to build a disciple-making community?

Training Equipping Leaders

Read and take notes on your own:

(This section below is adapted and/or quoted from *Imagine Church, Releasing Whole-Life Disciples*, by Neil Hudson, chapter 5, “redefining the church contract”.)

“In 1990, I was a young leader of an inner-city church that belonged to a denomination for whom mission was part of its core DNA. You didn’t need to tell me that we needed to reach the UK, nor that we were called to ‘make a difference where we were’. Those phrases were second nature to us. ...”

“Why did anyone come? How did we grow? I have no idea. But I know what my task was. I was the arrowhead of the church’s mission activity. I was the recruiter for the vision. I was the heroic pathfinder of mission opportunities. I was the principal carer and teacher of the congregation. And if things did not go as well as planned, I was ready to play the role of martyr ...”

“So, it was unsurprising that after seven years I was burned out ...”

“The point is that the relationship I had with my church at the time was not dissimilar to many I see in other churches and other denominations with which I work. And it was a relationship that had not been written down on paper or even verbalized.... I wanted to lead a church that grew because people came to see the reality of salvation in Christ ... to be part of such a venture. We all just assumed that it would happen primarily through the activities of the gathered church with all the accompanying implications for the leader of that community. They had no expectation that I would be encouraging them to be missionary disciples in all of life. Nor did I. That wasn’t part of the relationship.”

“However, in all the churches that have begun to take seriously the call to become whole-life disciple-making communities, the most important change has been in the relationship between the leaders and the members of the church.”

Here are four things Neil Hudson highlighted from his subsequent understanding of what he experienced:

1. “... most leadership training is preparing people for the existing culture of the church” ... “new skills are needed, new perspectives need to be encouraged, new actions engaged in and some unlearning of old habits and responses need to be done.”
2. “... leadership is shaped in such a way that the leaders are unable or are too busy to understand how their ministry can equip people for the primary means of mission, individuals who live their life as scattered church.”
3. Leaders and congregations must “move from a pastoral *care* contract to a pastoral *equipping* contract.” ... “The fundamental role of church leaders is not to be the principal carers, nor the principal missionaries, nor the events managers for the local church. The fundamental role is to ensure that the community is a disciple-making one, a church that will help us to grow in maturity and mission.” ... “The truth is that we need to help people see that when they join a local church, they are allowing themselves to be intentionally *discipled*.” ... “As long as there are vestiges of this pastoral care contract being practiced, there will be inherent resistance to the concept of disciple-making.”
4. “If you assume that these changes can be introduced without any alteration in the role and activities of leadership, you haven’t introduced a new vision, you’ve tweaked the existing vision, and you will be in the same place.”

Discuss together:

What stood out to you from what Neil Hudson wrote?

Based on Neil Hudson's comments above, what are the key characteristics of ***a disciple-making community?***

What if you ***evaluated everything in your church's ministry*** from the standpoint of how it directly impacted ***equipping*** disciples who make other disciples? What might that look like?

Training for Growth and Competence

Read and highlight on your own:

Most volunteer organizations recognize the importance of training their volunteers in the core competencies that will make their volunteers and their organization successful. For example, *The Heart Rhythm Society (HRS) is a 501(c)(3)* that is a leading resource on cardiac pacing and electrophysiology. The HRS developed a *Volunteer Competency Framework* to guide their organization.

VOLUNTEER COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

This document provides an overview of the competencies and skills required for successful volunteer participation. Having volunteers with the right behaviors and skills is critical to the Society's continued success and will help ensure a positive volunteer experience.

A competency is a set of measurable behaviors that result in distinguished performance. Competence comes from one's experience, attitude, knowledge, and beliefs. The competencies below are grouped into four domains, with a summary definition provided for each domain.

As a volunteer progresses through the HRS Volunteer Tracks (Contributor, Leadership, Presidential), new competencies and skills evolve. Definitions of all competencies and skills, and the tracks in which there are both introduced, are provided.

The core competencies of this organization are outlined with specific expectations for volunteers in each level of the organization including ...

- Organizational knowledge
- Relationships in the organization
- Desired results of volunteer's efforts
- Vision and decision-making

Discuss together:

What do you see in the example of the HRS *Volunteer Competency Framework* that might be helpful for your church's disciple-making ministry?

The Church of Jesus Christ is the largest volunteer organization in the world, but leaders in the church rarely intentionally identify their church's core competencies or train people in them. Why not?

Work together to create a basic competency framework for a disciple-making church. Use the diagram on page 14 as a guide to list the key areas of knowledge, skills, and character that you would like to develop for each level of a disciple's growth.

Core Competencies for Disciple-Making

A New Disciple

Knowledge	Skills	Character

A Maturing Disciple

<i>Knowledge</i>	<i>Skills</i>	<i>Character</i>

A Ministering Disciple

<i>Knowledge</i>	<i>Skills</i>	<i>Character</i>

Conclusion

The key function of leadership in the Church is to equip a disciple-making community. This requires personal and intentional training by mature disciple-makers in the core competencies of discipleship at all levels of growth. If we fail to do this, we will create a community of disciples for whom growth to maturity and fruitfulness is both **optional** and **random**.

Your Disciple-Making Applications

“But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.”
James 1:22

After completing **Session 4**, summarize the key insights and applications that you want to carry with you moving forward. We will share these at the beginning of our next session.

Session 5 – *The Vision to Think Small*

Seeing the world through a few.

“Love them all; help some; but train a few.”

Noel Nelson, *The Navigators*

Many have recognized that Jesus’ disciple-making ministry was primarily to the few rather than the multitudes.

“His concern was not with programs to reach the multitudes, but with men whom the multitudes would follow. ... The time which Jesus **invested in these few disciples** was so much more by comparison to that given to others that it can only be regarded as a deliberate strategy.” - Robert Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelical*

“What we will discover in the ministries of Jesus and Paul is that they staked their fruitfulness on intentional, relational **investment in a few**. This is the way to ensure the linkage of discipleship from generation to the next.” - Greg Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*

WHY DID JESUS INVEST IN SO FEW?

Why so few? Because of what Jesus came to do. Jesus came to create a new kind of human beings: *disciples of Jesus*. Jesus’ goal was to make people who would become like Himself. To do that, Jesus intentionally limited the number of His disciples. Jesus understood that He could not minister both deep and wide at the same time. What Jesus did with His disciples was **spiritual reproduction**, so that they too could become **spiritual parents**.

The apostle Paul understood what Jesus came to do.

“The defining, though not exclusive, metaphor that shapes Paul’s understanding of the goal and the process of disciple making is spiritual parenting.” - Greg Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*

READ 1 THESSALONIANS 2:5-12 AND MARK/UNDERLINE/HIGHLIGHT YOUR OBSERVATIONS

For we never came with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed - God is witness - nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, even though as apostles of Christ we might have asserted our authority. But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children. Having so fond an affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us. For you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, how working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. You are witnesses, and so is God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers; just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children, so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

Discuss together:

List the characteristics of Paul's ministry to the Thessalonian believers above.

Over our lifetime, we will have opportunities to minister to countless people. But for most of us, the number of people whom God directs to our care will be small, so that we will be able to share Jesus' and Paul's heart for people.

"The nature of spiritual parenting goes beyond sharing the truths of God's Word. Spiritual parents invest deeply, consistently, relationally, and with love in the people they are helping to follow Christ. It's this kind of relationship, this spiritual parenting, that is at the heart of disciple making." - from "**five traits of a Christ-follower**," Doug Nuenke General Editor, NavPress

DEVELOPING DEEP DISCIPLESHIP IN SMALL GROUPS

Evaluating Your Small Groups

Read together:

The 2018 report on *Transformational Discipleship* by The Cecil B. Day Foundation made the following observations from small group ministries in New England.

Since the advent of mega-churches, **small groups have been the designated vehicle for disciple-making.** It was determined early on that the large weekly gathering within the seeker-friendly community was not the right venue for making life-long disciples. Small groups became the solution. In New England, these became part of the fabric of most churches seeking to develop a stronger sense of community and attachment to the larger church. Although it was thought that small groups were better suited for Bible study and spiritual formation, many newer churches found this to be lacking in their small groups.

Assessing the effectiveness of the groups was difficult, and many had developed into social gatherings rather than a place for consistent biblical training and transformative growth. They built a sense of connectedness but were not necessarily building up disciples. The problem was not the small group, but the lack of an intentional pathway with a roadmap as discussed above. Small group leaders lacked adequate biblical training, and the groups became more focused on special interests rather than discipleship intentionality. Meanwhile, the larger weekly gathering became the primary venue for biblical teaching, yet with the evangelistic, seeker-friendly, climate, **the teaching was often too light to effectively make whole-life disciples.**

More recently we're hearing church leaders addressing this problem with **better trained small-group leaders, sermon-based small groups studies, and more intentional and stronger biblically-based curriculum.** Many of these efforts are still too new for the leaders to report a change in effectiveness, but they were confident the strategies employed would lead to an improvement in their overall disciple-making results.

Discuss your observations from the Day Foundation above.

Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of your small group ministries.

The Disciple-Making Small Group Leader

The key to developing a disciple-making small group is ***the small group leader***.

Disciple-making small group leaders lead growth. We all know that God causes the growth, but God uses people as the instruments of that growth (1 Corinthians 3:5-15). As a result, the key to a spiritually mature, growing small group that is bearing fruit in each other's lives and in the lives of lost people, is training disciple-making leaders who have the ***vision and training to intentionally make disciples*** in their small groups.

Getting people of a church to meet in small groups helps create an environment for relational ministry. However, how well the small group actually achieves the goal of making disciples depends on the ***intentions and training*** of the small group leaders. A small group leader who has the vision and training for making disciples can use his or her small group to intentionally lead the process of disciple-making in the group.

“Intentional leaders move with purpose through their interactions with the people in their small groups and in personal one-on-one meetings to move disciples along the journey. A leader who is intentional in what he or she does drives the work of disciple-making.... They do not leave it to chance or random luck.” - Jim Putnam, *real-life discipleship training manual*

Discuss together:

The above quote highlights the keys to making disciples through a small group.

- ***“Intentional leaders move with purpose”***
- ***“through their interactions with the people in their small groups”***
- ***“and in personal one-on-one meetings”***
- ***“to move disciples along the journey”***
- ***“A leader who is intentional in what he or she does drives the work of disciple-making”***
- ***“They do not leave it to chance or random luck”***

Question: What are some practical ways that you can do those six things in a small group setting?

TRAINING THE FEW

Read and discuss together:

“In nearly every instance of churches experiencing effective disciple-making, we heard a common theme of **intentional relational connectedness**. In addition to small group leaders, we also found **mentors and coaches** to be crucial in helping disciples stay on the growth pathway. Some churches have well-defined mentor-apprentice models, while others emphasize the personal responsibility of every believer to be investing time in someone not as far along the discipleship pathway as they are. This is sometimes referred to as **life-on-life discipling**, the apprentice model, or making whole-life disciples.” - 2018 report on *Transformational Discipleship* by The Cecil B. Day Foundation, Inc.

“In today’s church we have replaced person-centered growth with programs as the means of making disciples. ... All these programs can contribute to discipleship development, but they miss the central ingredient in discipleship. **Each disciple is a unique individual** who grows at a rate peculiar to him or her. Unless disciples receive **personal attention** so that their **particular growth needs** are addressed in a way that calls them to die to self and live fully to Christ, a disciple will not be made.” - Greg Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*

“Few churches **intentionally guide** their people through a strategic learning and development process that has been customized for the student. ... Few churches have systems by which they measure what is happening in the life of church adherents. Few believers have lined up **a trustworthy and competent partner** who will hold them accountable to specific and measurable goals.” - George Barna, *Making True Disciples*

Record your “take-aways” from your discussion.

Consider the **bold** phrases in the quotes above. Does God desire **intentional relational connectedness, mentors and coaches, life-on-life discipling, personal attention, intentional guidance, and trustworthy and competent partners** for all of Jesus’ disciples. Or are those things only for some of His disciples? The authors of these quotes believe that those things are part of the birthright of all disciples of Christ. Jesus would agree with them, based on what He said in Matthew 28:18-20 and John 17:20.

So, the question is, “Who will give disciples of Jesus this kind of intentional and personal spiritual parenting today?”

The answer is, “Other disciples of Jesus who have been trained to parent others also.” (Luke 6:40; 2 Timothy 2:1-1).

Because it is God’s desire for all of Jesus’ disciples to have spiritual parents to minister to them deeply, it is imperative that a church makes it a priority to train a steady stream of spiritual parents for new believers and others in their church who have never experienced intentional, personal discipleship.

Determining Whom to Disciple Personally

“God usually brings two people together in a discipling relationship for a particular season. What happens is this: I am present and in the same location as a certain woman. I am praying that God will show me someone He wants me to meet with. I begin to ‘see’ her. She grows aware of her need for growth. God leads us to meet together. We agree upon why and for what aspect of her growth God has brought us together.”

- Dana Yeakley, *The Gentle Art of Discipling Women*

Read and study on your own and then discuss together:

BELIEVE GOD

When we embark on the adventure of disciple-making, there are some things ***we must continue to believe***.

John 3:16
Matthew 4:19
Matthew 28:18-20
John 15:16

PRAY

“Don’t miss this: Jesus taught His men to look to God for such workers. Doesn’t that mean that God will raise up such men as we ask Him for them?” Ken G. Smith, *With Him, a biblical model of discipleship for men*

Matthew 9:36-38

WATCH

“When you begin to desire more from your life’s pilgrimage than merely personal blessing, He will open doors of ministry to others ...” Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth, *The First Songs of Christmas*

Colossians 4:2-4

Watch what God is doing.
Watch who God is bringing into your life.
Watch for someone with ...

- a heart for God
- a heart for people
- hungry to grow
- available for help.

RECEIVE THOSE GOD SENDS

John 17:6

Walk with God yourself ... ***believe*** God ... ***pray*** ... ***watch*** ... ***receive*** those God sends your way ... and ***He will use you*** to help make disciples.

OUR CHALLENGE

Read and discuss.

“What is it that you want to leave behind? If you are a pastor, do you want to measure your ministry by the number of sermons preached, worship services designed, homes visited, hospital calls made, counseling sessions held, or the number of self-initiating, reproducing, fully devoted followers of Jesus? We are in the predicament we are in with the church of Jesus Christ today because we do not have enough leaders who have enough vision to think small.” - Greg Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*

“One must decide where he wants his ministry to count – in the momentary applause of popular recognition (program splash) or in the reproduction of his life in a few chosen ones who will carry on his work after he has gone? Really, it is a question of which generation we are living for.” - Robert Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*

Your Disciple-Making Applications

“But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.”
James 1:22

After completing **Session 5**, summarize the key insights and applications that you want to carry with you moving forward. We will share these at the beginning of our next session.

Session 6 – *The DM Leader’s Team*

Building a disciple-making team in your church and beyond.

FELLOW WORKERS

In his letters, the apostle Paul refers to over thirty men and women by name. However, some of these men and women received a specific designation/title by Paul:

- “Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers” (Rom 16:3)
- “Urbanus, our fellow worker” (Rom 16:9)
- “Timothy my fellow worker” (Rom 16:21)
- “Titus my partner and fellow worker” (2 Cor 8:23)
- “Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker” (Phil 2:25)
- “Clement also and the rest of my fellow workers” (Phil 4:3)
- “Aristarchus ... Mark ... Justus ... fellow workers” (Col 4:10-11)
- “Philemon our beloved and fellow worker” (Phm 1:1)
- “Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow workers” (Phm 1:24)

Paul talks about all believers as “fellow heirs with Christ” (Rom 8:17), “fellow citizens with the saints” (Eph 2:19), “fellow heirs, and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 3:6), but Paul doesn’t call all believers “fellow workers.”

Discuss together:

What is the significance of Paul’s designation “fellow worker”? What was different about Paul’s “fellow workers” in contrast to the other men and women Paul mentioned?

Who are your “fellow workers” in *the ministry of disciple-making*?

THE NEED FOR A DISCIPLE-MAKING TEAM

Read the article below and write one application for each main point, and then discuss together:

“Jesus’ goal wasn’t twelve disciple makers. It was a movement of disciple makers. It was a culture developed among those twelve that would be a catalytic force strong enough to transform everything it touched. It was a big goal and to the amazement of historians and social scientists, it worked.

As I work with pastors and churches in Dayton, Ohio, individual disciple makers aren’t the goal. The goal is a disciple making culture, a movement of disciple makers within a local church. It’s the goal because a disciple making culture will spin outward, casting out disciple makers into all sectors of Dayton’s – neighborhoods, workplaces, and associations. A disciple making culture will impact not only a city, but over time it will impact a region, a country, and eventually the whole world. This isn’t hyperbole, Jesus’ disciples, The Navigators, and other movements have proven it.

I’ve written previously about how disciple making cultures have God-sized vision, are relationally driven, intentionally focused, and are aimed at the lost, but there’s more; ***all disciple making cultures have a team of disciple makers at its core.***

This probably isn’t a surprise to you. After all Jesus’ core team was the twelve. Paul’s core team was Barnabas, Silas, and Timothy. On some level all pastors understand that teaming together is important and lone-ranger Christians are routinely lifted up as an example of what not to be.

Still, most pastors and churches don’t understand what it takes to build a core team or what characteristics such a team possesses. The result is frustration and failure in their quest to build a disciple making culture.

So what does a core team look like in the wild? To function as a powerful disciple making force a core team must be aligned in at least four commitments:

1. Members are committed to being a disciple before making disciples.

We start with a simple, profound, yet frequently discarded truth, living and growing as a disciple must always precede making disciples. Team members are unwilling to sacrifice their own growth for the work of ministry. They are deeply committed to their own basics and seek to be a model for those they seek to influence. Movements are fueled by the heat emanating from the living sacrifices of those on the team.

Your personal application:

2. Members are committed to the mission.

Discipleship is a dangerous, rusty word. Disciple making is a bit better, but still most churches assume a common understanding where there’s deep misunderstanding. Disciple making movements aren’t primarily about programming, church growth, or even helping believers grow. The mission of disciple making is to glorify God by making disciples who make other disciples. Just as teaching isn’t the same as learning, communicating the mission isn’t the same as knowing it. Most falter here because clarity is time consuming but the absence of missional clarity leads to both dysfunction and disunity.

Your personal application:

3. Members are committed to each other.

I encounter church after church who tell me they have a disciple making team. Yet, after asking a few questions I quickly learn the reality is the church has a few players, but not a team. Others have a group that discuss disciple making, but no real players, let alone a team! A team is different from a group. Teams know who is on the team and who isn't. Teams work *together* to accomplish the mission. They encourage and challenge one another. Players on a team are interdependent. Individual players and groups lack the commitment and coordination necessary to build a disciple making movement:

Your personal application:

4. Members are committed to a compelling vision.

Vision motivates. While a mission defines the what, the vision defines the why. In sports terms, the mission is to score more points or to win the game, but the vision is to become champions. A God-sized vision keeps a team focused on the big why and motivates the team to sacrifice. The vision of disciple making is to make disciples who will make other disciples to reach the nations, so that God's kingdom will be fully built for His glory. Upon completion, Jesus will return and every tribe, tongue, and nation will gather around the throne praising God together for eternity.

Your personal application:

Conclusions:

Making individual disciples is difficult. Growing a movement is even harder. Disciple making movements begin when a team is committed to these four things. It's not easy, there's tremendous joy in co-laboring with those of like heart. A core team of disciple makers get to be used of God to advance the Gospel into the world...and into eternity. It's an indescribable experience.

If you're a pastor or church leader, don't be content with simply making individual disciple makers. Ask God for one, then for another, and then plead with him for wisdom on how to develop a core team that will give birth to a movement of disciple makers!"

[Justin Gravitt is the Dayton (Ohio) Area Director for Navigator Church Ministries
<https://www.justingravitt.com/blog/dmculture-coreteam>]

The Benefits of a Disciple-Making Team

Discuss the impact if you had people in your church who were ...

- ***Models*** who illustrate and demonstrate what a disciple of Jesus is through their lives.

The apostle Paul illustrated the benefits of a team of men and women who can ***model*** the life of Christ for others: 2 Timothy 2:1-2; 3:10-11; 1 Corinthians 4:14-17.

- ***Advocates*** who speak and write to urge people to live as disciple-makers.

An ***advocate*** for intentional, relational disciple-making is a champion and spokesperson who is seriously focused over the long haul to make disciple-making the major goal of the church.

- ***Catalysts*** who invite people to begin their own journey into disciple-making with us.

A ***catalyst*** is a person who provokes or speeds change or action. When Jesus said, “Go make disciples ... baptizing them ... teaching them to obey all that I commanded you,” He commissioned people to initiate with other people and to be God’s change agents in their lives. No one becomes a disciple of Jesus by himself. Disciple-makers are the catalysts for reproducing other disciples.

Your Disciple-Making Applications

“But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.”
James 1:22

After completing ***Session 6***, summarize the key insights and applications that you want to carry with you moving forward. We will share these at the beginning of our next session.

NEXT STEPS:

CREATING A CULTURE OF INTENTIONAL, PERSONAL DISCIPLE-MAKING

Your small group during this workshop has *laid the foundation* for creating an identifiable culture of intentional, personal disciple-making where God has placed you. What can you do to grow that culture in your church?

- Start by intentionally, personally discipling one person. Discipling one person actually creates a “culture” of disciple-making. It’s small, but nevertheless, it’s the beginning of a culture of disciple-making where you are.
- Grow the culture by networking with other disciple-makers.
 - Pray with/for each other.
 - Encourage each other.
 - Learn from each other.
 - Feed the vision.

A New England

DISCIPLE-MAKERS NETWORK

WE ARE a network of disciple-makers living in New England who are training men and women to live intentionally, and personally, as disciple-makers of Jesus Christ wherever we are. We minister in a variety of churches throughout New England.

OUR VISION is to help create an identifiable culture of intentional, personal disciple-making throughout the Church of New England.

OUR PURPOSE is to train men and women to live intentionally, and personally, as disciple-makers of Jesus Christ so that they will in turn reproduce other disciple-makers wherever God has placed them.

WE BELIEVE the most effective way to teach people the concepts and practice of The Great Commission is through people who are currently disciple-makers:

- ***Models*** who illustrate and demonstrate what a disciple-maker of Jesus is through our lives;
- ***Advocates*** who speak, write, and urge people to live as intentional, personal disciple-makers;
- ***Catalysts*** who invite people to begin their own journey into disciple-making with us and personally train them to make other disciples also.

OUR QUESTION:

What if you had a team of men and women in your church who lived intentionally, and personally, as disciple-makers of Jesus and they reproduced other disciple-makers?

Maybe we can help you answer that question.

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Wisdom From Disciple-Making Leaders

(From “The State of TRANSFORMATIONAL DISCIPLESHIP in New England,” by The Cecil B. Day Foundation, Inc., Update December 2022)

As we encounter disciple-making at all levels of ministry, some of the findings congruent with disciple-making cultures emerge as necessary principles that can't be ignored. This section will capture some of this wisdom from those who have been engaged in intentional whole-life disciple-making for years.

1. Shifting from what has been called the church growth mindset to a disciple-making mindset must begin with the senior/lead pastor. If the leader who is most visible as the primary communicator to the church, whether at the gathered worship service or through online media, has not made discipleship a priority, the church is not likely to become a disciple-making church.

2. Knowing where the church is at regarding its disciple-making efforts is critical. Many assessment tools exist to help evaluate effectiveness. They provide a baseline from which progress can be measured. Currently, these assessments show that 95% of American churches do not have a disciple-making culture.

3. Lasting discipleship happens most frequently in smaller discipleship-focused settings. As it is highly relational, the more intimate the setting, the more fruitful the results. Classroom discipleship courses do well at transmitting information, but do not produce disciples. But not all small groups are disciple-making groups. Many churches have had small groups operating for years for the purpose of fellowship, encouragement, and assimilation into the larger body of believers. Yet, for true discipleship to occur, there must be a high level of intentionality in engaging with practices that help believers personally become conformed to the image of Christ through the transformative power of the Holy Spirit.

4. A discipleship pathway is critical for disciples to move from one stage of growth to the next. The church should provide resources to help disciples advance in spiritual maturity with the understanding that we never arrive until we are in the presence of Jesus. The most effective churches in disciple-making are helping direct their members along an intentional pathway through clear communication from every platform – pulpit, newsletters, social media, signage, gatherings, and other forms of messaging.

5. Beware of focusing more on the tools for disciple-making than on the goal. Jesus's command to “go and make disciples” had whole-life transformation in view, i.e., faithful followers who became more like Himself. The Apostle Paul used language such as “that I may know Him” and “I press toward the goal...” (Phil. 3). There is danger in performing practices to become good at them if the end goal is not in view. Becoming more Christlike in every aspect of life through the transforming work of the Holy Spirit is the purpose of whole-life discipleship.

6. If the Bible is not the core curriculum for disciple-making, true discipleship will not happen. Study guides and courses are helpful, but a disciple must become conversant with God's Word if lasting spiritual growth is going to occur.

7. Transitioning from traditional church culture to a disciple-making culture is a long process requiring patient and intentional leadership. Leaders typically wired to see quick results as they implement strategies for change. Unfortunately, disciple-making is a life-long process requiring continuous effort. It's why the Church exists, so it must become what the church does. Leaders must accept and embrace this fact.

8. Incorporating prayer as an essential element for both the church and disciples being “trained”. Learning to listen and hear the Holy Spirit is critical for developing one's walk with Jesus. As disciples gather and pray with each other, the transformative stories of spiritual formation are shared, and God's provision is manifested over time. Praying for God's leading and for His will to be accomplished is an important discipline for transformational disciple-making.