

Are You Called To Be A Disciple; to Make Disciples?

I am posing a two fold question, are you called to be a disciple and if so are you called to make disciples? One of the last things Jesus said, and His last command, before he physically left this earth was found in Matthew 28:19 and 20. "**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 unto the end of the age. NKJV"

If you have accepted Christ as your Lord and Savior, I guarantee you are called to be a disciple. I say this because the aforementioned scripture was Jesus giving His last instructions to His disciples. His instruction was not to merely "lead" people to Christ, or simply "win" people to the Lord, although that is the first step; His command was to **make** disciples.

You will note the action words or verbs in this "Great Commission" are highlighted. These are highlighted because they are the commands we are to do. We are to **Go**, **Make**, **Baptize**, and **Teach**. Let's first discuss exactly what is a disciple of Christ?

In the greek the word for disciple is "mathetes", it means a learner or a pupil. This word is not found in the Old Testament. All of Jesus adherents including the 12 apostles were called disciples. We clearly see accepting Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior is merely the beginning, or the first step of a christian walk. After all one must believe in Jesus, and who he said he was, before you can become a learner or a pupil of Jesus. Simply put you cannot make disciples until you are a disciple.

Are you a learner or a pupil of Jesus Christ? Do you read His word on a regular basis? Do you attend church to have fellowship with other believers, disciples of Christ, where you can get further instruction? Do you attend a small group, life group or Bible study? Do you pray building relationship with Jesus himself? If you do none of these things, I believe you would be hard pressed to call yourself a disciple of Jesus Christ, after all where is the learning?

This is not meant to be negative, or condemning, it is meant in the spirit of love and helping one in this position to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. You can find no greater joy or peace than in being an adherent, a learner, a pupil, a true disciple of Jesus. In Matthew 11:28-30 Jesus says, "Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and My burden is light NKJV."

If you are a learner, a pupil, a disciple of Christ, then the great commission was written especially for you. As Jesus, in this text, was addressing His disciples. If you are a disciple of Jesus, He is talking to you. There is no question or argument that you are to make disciples.

As previously pointed out the action words are Go, make, baptize, teach. Very straight forward let's analyze the first action word of the command "Go". Go where? The reference says all nations. Before you start googling Mission fields, let's start at home.

Many years ago I prayed fervently for God to make me a missionary, to send me out to all nations. One day during prayer time in church God spoke to my heart in that still small voice. He clearly said, "Dirk if you are not sharing the gospel, and making disciples in your local community what makes you think you are going to do this in other parts of the world?"

Did that ever sting. The Lord of course was absolutely correct? I wasn't doing it at home. Since then I have done short term international mission work. I was even on staff with Extreme Nazarene for two years. Yet God has called me and made me to be a missionary to my family, to my local community, to my country. What about all nations? Isn't my family, my local community, the United States of America a part of ALL nations? Do not misunderstand me we must make disciples of all nations, we must reach the whole world. I am just sharing my experience and calling as an example.

God has intentionally called me to make disciples for the last few years. I have come to understand our first responsibility to do so, is to make disciples of our family. Do you have unsaved family members? Do you have family members who have accepted Christ but are not learners, pupils, true disciples? If so you need to pray for them, to love them, to share with them, and if they are willing to, disciple them. This being said, Theodore Roosevelt once wrote, "no one cares how much you know until they know how much you care." You must share from a place of love. I challenge you to make disciples of your family before you cross the Atlantic or Pacific or any other ocean to make disciples.

Next we have a responsibility to our neighbors. After all Jesus said, "we are to love our neighbors as ourselves", as found in Matt 22:39, Mark 12:31 and 33; Luke 10:27. In Luke 10:29 we see the question posited "who is my neighbor?" Of course Jesus' answer is found in this text in Luke 10, the story of the great samaritan. Suffice it to say everyone we know or come in contact with is our neighbor. This does of course include co-workers.

What does it mean exactly to **make** disciples? What it looks like in my life is to invite people to come and "follow Jesus" with me. After all our savior's request to all disciples was, "come follow me". I further invite others to have a specific time they set aside daily to pray and read God's word, as a means to eventually "pray without ceasing" 1 Thess 5:17. Listening for God's response to their hearts. I invite them to a specific bible study where we can be disciples and learn to make disciples together, follow Jesus together, do life together.

The last command is to baptize and teach them to observe or obey all things I have commanded you. We all are familiar with baptism and its' meaning. I want to focus on the words observe or obey all I have commanded you to do. This is the holiness piece where we teach and strive to live holiness. Hebrews 12:14 tells us, "Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.

Jesus himself said in John 15:10, "If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my father's commandments and abide in His love." Jesus also tells us in Matthew 7:21, "not everyone who says to Me, Lord Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my father in heaven" NKJV. Jesus further states in Matthew 7:24, "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and DOES them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock. NKJV" .

In short we must obey, we must teach others to obey, to be His disciples. We must go to our families, to our friends all whom we come in contact with and the whole world. We must go and make disciples. You are called.

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