

March 10th, 2013

The Testimony of a Disciple

Matthew 4:19-22

From the beginning of Christianity, the natural overflow of *being* a disciple of Jesus has always been to *make* disciples.

“Follow me”, and I will make you fishers of men” (Matthew 4:19).

This was both a promise and a command: Jesus would take His disciples and turn them into disciple makers. He called each of His disciples to *“go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them and teaching them”* to obey Him (*Matthew 28:19-20*). From the very start, God’s design has been for every single disciple of Jesus to make disciples, who make disciples, who make disciples...until the gospel spreads to all peoples.

The tragedy of the 21st Century church is that we have subtly and tragically minimized the Great Commission into a comfortable call for Christians to come, be baptized, and sit in their local church and do absolutely nothing with their faith. Most churches have reduced discipleship to a spectator sport. The call to be a disciple is open to everyone, but none of us get to set our own job description.

Definition of discipleship:

The word “disciple” refers to a *student* or *apprentice*. Discipleship is the developmental process of the local church that develops spiritually immature Christians into mature saints that, in turn, reproduce themselves into someone else.

Dr. Chuck Kelley-President of NOBTS:

“We are planning and conducting our own funeral as a convention-the death of discipleship is the reason the SBC has taken its nosedive. Our Great Commission momentum as a convention has disappeared. The most significant and influential death in the modern history of the Southern Baptist Convention has been the death of discipleship inside our churches. We are like the grandchildren of farmers keeping harvest stories alive over coffee and dessert at family reunions. Today, our churches have more ministries, missionaries, and resources than we have ever had, however, we are bearing less fruit than ever before in our rich history. The typical Southern Baptist church is no longer anointed and Southern Baptists are distracted. Our behavior has blended into the culture of society and we simply don’t look or live like Jesus any longer. Simply put, we are not producing disciples.”

¹⁵ *For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.* ¹⁶ *Therefore I urge you, imitate me.* ¹⁷ *For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.*

--1 Corinthians 4:15-17 (NKJV)

Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.

--Hebrews 13:7 (NKJV)

A disciple is a “student” or “learner” of the things of God. A disciple is someone whose belief has been accompanied with a life of obedience. It is impossible to be a follower of someone and not end up like that person. How can a person call himself a follower, and not follow? Many in the church have taken on the name of Jesus but nothing else.

Recent Facts from Barna Research:

- ⇒ 4 out of 5 Americans identify themselves as Christians, yet their life isn’t any different than that of a lost person.
- ⇒ Less than half of them are involved in a church on a weekly basis.
- ⇒ Less than half of them actually believe the Bible as the inspired Word of God.
- ⇒ Most people today describe themselves as *marginally* committed to Jesus Christ.
- In April, 2009, research showed that “Most American Christians do not believe that Satan or the Holy Spirit exists.”

Five changes that take place when we repent:

1. We change our **minds**.
2. We change our **desires**.
3. We change our **wills**.
4. We change our **relationships**.
5. We change our **reason for living**.

The real question isn’t whether you said a prayer, raised your hand, or even whether you were baptized. The real question is whether you repented and placed your faith in Jesus Christ.