

The Mission: Making Disciples

// Matthew 28:19, et al //

START #4

Welcome all campuses... How many Civil War buffs do we have in here? History nerds...

One of the War's most intriguing figures to me has always been the Union's General-in-Chief, George McClellan.

On paper, President Lincoln couldn't have hoped for a better general. They called him "**The Young Napoleon**" because he possessed an incredibly strategic mind. He was the **youngest member** ever to be accepted to the U.S. Military Academy (at age 15—I'm sure he was homeschooled) and he graduated top of his class... (only reason he missed top spot: sup par sketching skills)

- Excellent recruiter; when he came on board, he increased the volunteers for the army by 300% in 4 months
- Troops loved him: under him, they started to *believe*

So **no one was surprised** when President Lincoln made McClellan General-In-Chief. **He had the experience. He had the talent. He had it all.**

And now he had a powerhouse army, outnumbering his enemy more than **2 to 1**.

There was just one problem:

The man would not fight.

For weeks General McClellan **readied his position, organized, and strategized**. Lee's army lay **dangerously exposed** just a few miles away. President **Lincoln repeatedly urged McClellan** to put his numerical and tactical advantage to use and crush the rebellion with one, swift attack. **McClellan understood the strategy**. He knew the odds. But he wouldn't fight.

If a military man is unwilling to fight, what good are all his other talents?

So, **after an excruciating year of inactivity**, Lincoln removed the greatest military mind of his time and eventually replaced him with a man with half his tactical talent, but a man who would have picked a fight with a beehive buck-naked: ***Ulysses S. Grant***.

*The **greatest asset** of a military man is his ability to fight. Without that, all other assets are—ultimately—useless.*

I share that because I want to talk about something as Christians, a church—***have to do well; something which, without it***, everything else we do is useless.

*That one thing is **make disciples**. No matter how good we are at everything else, if we don't do that well, we fail.*

- We can raise money and build **great buildings**; we can write great songs; have the biggest and best kids ministries, college ministries... I can preach **great sermons** or write great books; but if we don't make disciples, we fail.

The 4th week of our START series is on discovering your role in the mission. What we've been doing is looking at the 6 most essential things we need to master to thrive in the Christian life.

MATTHEW 28:19-20

Week 4: Discovering your role in the mission of God. I always explain that discovering that mission is found by looking at 3 things TOGETHER: **1. Your “secular” (or vocational) abilities**—God didn’t make all of you for vocational ministry, like me. He gave you gifts in business or medicine or as a mother and he uses you to bless the world. **2. Your spiritual gifts**—God gives each believer spiritual gifts by which he works through us in the world—we’ll talk about how to discover those in the weeks to come And **3. The GC to make disciples.**

- *I want to focus today primarily on that third thing—the commission to make disciples—because regardless of your vocation or your spiritual gifts the Great Commission given to you is to make disciples.*

What we’re going to do: Spend a few minutes showing you that **discipleship is the core of the GREAT COMMISSION**—both for us as a church, and for you; then, secondly I want to show you how to do it.

I. Making disciples is the central element of the mission for every believer

Matthew 28:19 “Go into all the world and MAKE DISCIPLES, *baptizing* them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, *teaching* them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

- In Greek, the words ‘go,’ ‘baptize,’ and ‘teach’ are all participles which derive their force from the **one controlling verb** “make disciples”... which means that those things: “going,” “baptizing,” and “teaching” are only good insofar as they contribute to making disciples.

Robert Coleman wrote a book in 1962 called *The Master Plan of Evangelism...* (It’s a classic book... Which, you know the definition of a classic book is a book lots of people have heard about but nobody has read.... I’m going to be quoting a lot from it today.) He says:

“The great commission is not merely to go to the ends of the earth preaching the gospel, nor to baptize a lot of converts into the Name of the Triune God, nor to teach them the precepts of Christ, but to ‘make disciples’—to build men like themselves who were so constrained by the commission of Christ that they not only followed Jesus themselves, but led others to follow him, too.

The criteria upon which any church should measure its success is not how many new names are added to the roll nor how much the budget is increased, but rather how many Christians are actively winning souls and training them to win the multitudes.

Most churches judge their success by how many **attend**; how big their budget; how many baptisms they have...

- But **heaven doesn’t celebrate** any of those numbers. It only celebrates disciples.
- Did you know **the word “Christian” only** appears in the Bible 3 times? Yet the word “disciple” appears 281 times in the New Testament.¹
- Which means it is **foolish to celebrate conversions**; heaven celebrates disciples.
 - You see, **what it means to become a Christian** is to trust in Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior. That’s conversion. But a true conversion leads to lifelong discipleship, which means you go on to pursue Jesus for the rest of your life and do *all that he has commanded*.
- I’m **not against counting numbers**, Summit. I just want to make sure we are counting the right ones.

This **priority on disciple-making is not just something for us**, as a church; it’s something for each of you to think about for yourself, too **Every follower** of Jesus has been given the responsibility to make disciples.

¹ Robby Gallaty, *Growing Up*, 20.

- Sometimes people read the Great Commission and they think, “Well, that charge just given to the Apostles. That’s what church leaders do.”
- *But think about it: when these disciples taught someone “all things that Jesus had commanded,”* that would sure include *this* command to make disciples, wouldn’t it? Jesus did not say, “Teach them all that I have commanded, except this command to make disciples; only give that to people ordained for ministry.”²
- *Everyone who follows Jesus is to be a disciple-maker.*

One more... **John 15:8**, “By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.”

- How is God glorified in you? That you bear **much fruit**. Not a little fruit...
- **Doing so proves that you are a disciple**... which means if you are not bearing fruit, you have reason to question whether you are a disciple at all.
- Things that are **alive grow**; things that are **potent multiply**.

So that’s the question you need to ask about yourself: Are YOU bearing fruit? Are you making disciples? Can **you point to people** in our church today that you have brought into the kingdom, or that you are bringing up into maturity?

God’s plan for how he would grow his church was not giving one guy a great preaching gift, or having the church start a bunch new creative program. *His plan was each individual believer making disciples of those around them.*

Coleman: “When will the church learn this lesson? Preaching to the masses, although necessary, will never suffice in the work of preparing leaders for evangelism. Nor can occasional prayer meetings and training classes for Christian workers do this job... *Men are God’s*

² See D.A. Carson, “Ongoing Imperative for World Mission,” in *The Great Commission: Evangelicals and the History of World Missions*, edited by Martin I. Klauber and Scott M. Manetsch (Broadman & Holman, 2008), 179.

method. God’s plan for discipleship is not something, but someone.”³
You are God’s method.

Why this has been on my mind a lot recently:

- **We have people who move to other countries.... We’ve had some go that were very involved.** Even that moved there on mission. But when they get there, they don’t know what to do.

I want you to know what to do and to do it.

- Ever have a day where you feel like you get slammed with stuff to do from the moment you get up... **kids** have a need. **Boss** is calling. You have to resolve a **financial issue with cable company** where they overcharged you by \$200 and you are busy dawn to dusk... you get the end, dead tired... you were so busy. But you can’t name a single thing you did that? Nothing on your to-do list. I am afraid some of you are going to be like that with your lives. You are going to go your whole life busy, come to the end, tired, realizing you never did the one thing Jesus said we **must** do.

In fact, let me give you **RADICAL thought:**

God gives you your vocation, in part, as a platform or network of relationships through which you can make disciples.

In saying that, I’m **not saying your work is not a good end in itself.**
You are blessing others through your work.

And, of course, when I say that I’m not talking about doing anything inappropriate, like using your position as a **public school teacher** to preach to your kids all day or being a doctor who attends sick patient by their, bedside whispering “turn or burn.” Dentist: cavity: in your soul.

³ All Coleman’s words, but pieced together from various places in *Master Plan of Evangelism*.

I'm saying that **your profession naturally puts you in contact** with people in your profession that are more likely to listen to you than to me.

That's why **in the book of Acts we see that the gospel** spreads faster through the hands of ordinary people than it does the Apostles.

- **In the book of Acts, the Apostles never, or rarely get anywhere first.** Normal Christians, carried on the wings of business, are the first people to take the gospel into new places.
- *I've told you that those of you who do not feel called to be full-time Christian workers play **a more strategic role** in the worldwide spread of the gospel than we who are in vocational ministry; you are **the tip of the spear**; you are **God's plan A**.*
 - Most of you think as coming to church supporting me in ministry: It's the other way around: I support you.
 - I sometimes tell you that when God called me to be a pastor I **left the ministry**.
 - 39 OF 40
 - Every day I come to work with Christians. **biggest frustrations**. Most of our pastors are Christians... Most of you don't.
- **So here's my question for you: Have you ever seriously considered that maybe God gave you your skill** (medicine, teaching, business) not just a tool for making money, but as platform for spreading the gospel?

And are you doing that?

So let me discuss 6 things that need to be true of you if you're going to become a disciple-maker...

II. How to Become a Disciple-Maker

1. Own the assignment

- Probably the biggest thing is just acknowledging that this is what God has told YOU to do. Not your neighbor. You. **Write it down**.

- **That might overwhelm you**, but when you own it, you can start asking God for help in getting it done.
- Jesus said, "Follow me, and *I will make you* a fisher of men." He does the making. **If you will accept the assignment**, he will make you effective.
- Unfruitfulness is not the problem (Peter by the nets); not being bothered about unfruitfulness is the problem. Just ask him.
- Don't hide behind "faithfulness." Spurgeon: it is true that a fisherman man not catch fish... but no true fisherman is ok with that. If I weren't bringing souls to Jesus I'd cry out night after night...

2. Understand the method: life-on-life

- Jesus' method was **life-on-life**.
- **Robert Coleman** made this observation about Jesus: "Whether he was addressing the multitudes that pressed upon him, arguing with the Pharisees who sought to ensnare him, or speaking to some lonely beggar along the road, the disciples were close at hand to observe and to listen... Through this manner of personal demonstration, every aspect of Jesus' personal discipline of life was bequeathed to his disciples... One living sermon is worth a hundred explanations."⁴
 - **Dr. Sheehan** and my dad—he taught and shared more with me through listening to him pray than any sermon.
 - Our **college ministry** says: 75% of discipleship is informal.
- What that means is that for many of you, you just need to open up your life to **live it with people**. **Invite others into the ministry as you do it**. Never do things alone.
 - A great example: At every campus... **BOILER ROOM**
- There is, of course, a cost to living this way: **Coleman says**, Such close and constant association, of course, meant virtually that Jesus had no time to call his own."⁵

⁴ Robert Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*; Ch. 5 (accessed online); p. 43, 39.

⁵ p. 47; ch. 8; p. 43.

- One thing a lot of Americans love is their free time. We **go in our garages** when we get home, shut the door, escape to our family and TV. Got a neighbor like this?
- You need to open up your life and share it! One of the things we don't talk enough about is **the evangelistic power of hospitality**. *Have people over for dinner.*
 - Hospitality has led to the best convos...and the worst. Muslim family
- Gut check: Are there **3 unbelieving people** in your cell phone you could call up right after church and ask to go have coffee?
- Jesus' method for reaching others was not preaching to the masses, or a program... it was men and women sharing their lives.

3. Be ready with a plan

- START
- Bible: REAP
- Other Summit resources: RightNow; Men's Fraternity; Women's Ministry
- Christian book you take someone through: SG teams can recommend

4. Make the invitation

- Invite someone into the process. You say, "How do I do that?"
- **Learn to share your story**, then ask: *Do you want to learn more about receiving Jesus into your life?*
- Invite them to read the Bible
- Invite them to church: a HUGE one (because of how we structure our service: what I often say at the end of the service)
- Invite them to your small group
- You never know what God is doing sometimes until you extend an invitation:
 - Me on airplane—of every 5 I talk to, 4 **crash and burn**. But that 5th one starts telling me things and I can see God is at work. To get to the 1; have to go through the other four.
 - Here's what I believe: **the HS is the real evangelist**. He's at work in the world—Jesus said it. I just need to uncover it.

○ MAGNET IN THE SAND

- And pray a lot about this. Every day. It is also significant to me that **before Jesus chose his 12**, he spent all night in prayer (Luke 6:12–15). Do you pray like that about who you should disciple?

5. Stop. Making. Excuses

- **"I don't know what to say."** I just gave you a bunch of things.
- **"I witness with my life."**
 - How do you do that? The **gospel is not an inspiring demonstration about what an awesome person** you are, but the news about what Jesus has done for you BECAUSE YOU were **so messed up** HE HAD TO DIE FOR YOU.
 - The gospel is not: "be a kind person like me." But Jesus saved me when I couldn't save myself. That requires your words.
 - Many Christians hide behind Francis of Assisi... newscaster telephone
- **"Talking to other people about Jesus makes me feel weird."**
 - Of course it does. I've heard evangelism defined as "two people talking to each other, BOTH very FEELING AWKWARD."
 - But here's the thing: is the message important enough to be worth a little weirdness...
 - **Illus.** Everything that is going on with the Ebola deal... All these mistakes. And a lot of times it seemed like someone didn't want to have the hard conversation. "Hey, I know this is terrible... but you are running a fever and we're going to have to keep you quarantined." And it seems that a lot of the doctors and nurses who saw it just didn't want to take action.... But we say, "That's your job to have that conversation, regardless of how you feel!" **Believer: How much more important is our job?**
- **"I don't have time."**
 - I have empathy for this one... We're busy people. I'm busy

- But I like one of our campus pastors says... “Oh, you’re busy. Well, Jesus was busy, too. Saving the world and all. **But as he was busy... he did it with people.**”
 - **Tim Chester: “Evangelism is doing normal life with gospel intentionality.”** *Life on life.*
 - Consider this: You eat **21** meals a week. Eat some of them with people you want to disciple. (Some of you eat twice that many).
 - *Get this: Every instance of Jesus making disciples in the **GOSPEL of Luke** involves him at, **going to, or coming from** a meal. That’s a Savior I can follow. I love Jesus.*
 - Are you going to be so busy with all the small things in life that you don’t do the one thing he told you to do!
- **“I’m not capable”**
 - After giving the Great Commission, Jesus said, “Behold, I am with you, even to the ends of the age.”
 - **How’s that for a promise?** If I promised Jesus would go with you, to help you talk with people, would you feel confident? How about if I told you he would go inside you?
 - Parliamentarian
 - So, you say, “I don’t have what it takes.” Yes, you do; you have Jesus’ Spirit speaking inside you.
 - It’s no longer about your ability; but your availability... just taking a chance, opening your mouth, and letting the Holy Spirit use you.

So, stop making excuses. And...

6. START somewhere!

- **YOU NEED TO FIGHT.**
- **Try one of these ideas I gave you.** Invite someone to church, small group, to read the Bible. This week.
 - Girl at our CHC. “Never done this.” 2 appointments with people to begin to do this.

- **Invite a new family** from your school or neighborhood over to dinner
- Go to lunch with someone new at work.
- **Trouble getting to know unbelieving people? Start frequenting the same places of business—go with me to eat sometimes;** they all know me and that I leave big tips. If you leave inviter cards to our church with lousy tips I will come to your house and kick you in the shins.

Conclusion:

*We’ve got to get really serious about this. **Robert Coleman: “A barren Christian is a contradiction. A tree is known by its fruit... Fruitlessness was the thing lacking in the lives of the Sadducees and Pharisees which made them so wretched in his sight.”***

- Jesus talked about Pharisees and Sadducees as people who had to circle the globe to find one convert and they couldn’t make any at home.
 - I always think of **people who go on mission trips** but don’t win people to Christ here.
 - **What we want** is for you to be disciple-makers wherever you are...
- **ENCOURAGE YOU: We have an extraordinarily high success rate** in planting churches. We’ve yet to have a plant that failed. Why? Before we send you to plant, you have to demonstrate that you can win people to Christ here. So we start you leading in a small group. *Are they growing that group, multiplying it?*
 - **Because we say, “Why send you** around the world to do what they can’t do here?”
 - **When you get labeled** a church planter, or go on a mission trip, **no angel sprinkles you** with “evangelistic effectiveness” dust. If you’re not doing it here, you won’t be doing it there.
 - There is no **“transformation by aviation.”**

You’ve got to get serious about this. “A barren Christian is a contradiction.”

- I have a lot of mature Christians (or Christians who think they are mature) tell me: “I want to go deeper. I want to go deeper, Pastor.” Fine...
 - **BUT people who say that to me** are, almost invariably, not making disciples.
 - “What else do you need to know that will make you obey the things you already know?”
- **You say you want to go deeper**; what I think you mean is you want to go ‘wider.’ Wider, —to increase the circumference your knowledge.
- **‘Deeper’ is an ‘intimacy with God’ term and an ‘obedience’ term.**
 - Many of you need **less precept and Greek word studies** and more obedience.
- **Charles Spurgeon**, who was plenty deep: *I would sooner bring one sinner to Jesus Christ than unpack all the mysteries of the divine Word, for salvation is the thing we are to live for*

Do you have others you are bringing along in the faith?

This is how I will be evaluated as a leader: Did I raise up others?

- I’m pretty sure my most effective ministry will likely not be my sermons, but the people I poured myself into (my ‘Thursday night’ Bible study)

Whether I disciplined others is how I’ll be evaluated. It is how you will be evaluated: *Who can you point to that is in the church, growing up in the faith, because of you?*

McClellan had it all, except for the one thing that mattered—the ability to fight. **Do you have it all**, except for the “one” thing of disciple-making?

Caveats

Second caveat: *I’m sure we have people here who are not Christians: You say, “Great, now after this that person I know who is a Christian is*

*going to be bothering me all week about this.” **Sadly, you probably don’t have anything to worry about.** Most Christians will live and work beside you every day and never even bring it up.*

- And **that IS a tragedy**, because they carry with them the cure to a fatal disease you have, called the curse of sin, and they are not sharing it with you.
- **They think your disease is none of their business. 10% respect for you, and 90% cowardice**
- So, you should ask them about it and then tell them you are insulted that they didn’t bring it up.⁶

⁶ Adapted from a conclusion Andy Stanley gave to a sermon on evangelism and Northpoint.

Bullpen:

Only as disciples were made could the other activities of the commission fulfill their purpose."

- *This is what we have to understand: Growing a church does not automatically equal making disciples. You can gather a large group of people, get them to raise their hand in an invitation, get baptized, and start giving money and still not have made any disciples. Disciples are followers who go on to do all that Jesus commanded, which includes making other disciples.*

Most churches judge their success by how many attend, how many they baptized, or how big their budget.

Summit, we're not against counting numbers (Jesus counted—the **Good Shepherd** in his parable was so in touch with the size of his flock he knew when even 1 was missing; a whole book in the Bible named 'Numbers'); I just want to make sure we count the right ones.

Heaven doesn't celebrate the number of people who come on the weekend or even how many people raise their hands to say they've accepted Jesus. It counts disciples.

- **Here's my burden, Summit Church:** *Just because you come to church regularly does not mean you have become a disciple-making disciple. Being a disciple-making-disciple is not the same as attending regularly giving money, learning all the praise songs, volunteering, or even shouting "Amen" while I preach. Disciple-making is teaching others who will teach others.*

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- *unbelievers: "This is what I hate about you Christians... always trying to convert us." You are daggum right we are. Let's all be on the same page about that.*

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- But sadly, you probably don't have much to worry about.
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- How could we not?
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- ~~(Here's a vision statement for every disciple of Jesus: "Whatever I am good at, I will do it well to the glory of God, and I will do it somewhere strategic for the mission of God.")~~
- ~~Whatever you are good at... not necessarily a church job. A secular job. Do it well for the glory of God...~~
- ~~And then "do it somewhere strategic for the mission of God."~~ **TC MAKE DISCIPLES**
 - ~~**Question for you: What determines where you live and pursue your career? What factors?** Where you can make the most money; best set yourself up for a life of luxury and ease: WHY ISN'T WHERE YOU CAN MAKE DISCIPLES THE PRIMARY FACTOR~~
 - ~~**John Piper:** "Lot moved to Sodom not for ministry but for money. It did not turn out well. How do you choose where to live?"~~
 - ~~**Why not make ministry the primary factor?**~~
 - ~~**I say to our graduates:** *You have to get a job somewhere... why not get it in a place where God is doing something?*~~
 - ~~I'm thinking of **Megan, a girl in our church** who took her nursing degree and got a job in the hospital of a city in Denver we were planting a church in...)~~

"One must decide where he wants his ministry to count--in the momentary applause of popular recognition or in the reproduction of his life in a few chosen men who will carry on his work after he has gone." (37)

I. Discovering The Mission: Your Vocation

- Gen 1 says that God created us in his image. Do you ever think about what that means? If you used only Gen 1-2 to give your answer ABOUT WHAT THAT MEANS, you would say that we were creators. God is referred to as Creator 12 times in Gen 1-2. IN TH

IMAGE You are a co-Creator. He put you into an unfinished world to take the raw materials and make something out of them.

- So the architect takes the raw material of sand and rock and makes buildings; the **lawyer...** the **doctor...** the artists
- In doing that, we are fulfilling the role for which God placed us on earth. God, in a providential way, WORKS through us.
 - Martin Luther said that in our secular vocations God wears us as his mask, caring for the world through us.
 - That's why some of you enjoy your work so much, because you've learned to see that happening.
- Now, of course, our world is under a curse which means our work has become toil, but discovering your mission, in part, means figuring out how God designed you, what he made you good at, and doing it with all your heart to his glory.
- *God did not make you all to go into full time ministry.* A lot of people assume if you really love Jesus, you go into ministry... like we take the top spiritual 10% of graduates and send them into ministry. No, God designed many of you to be mechanics, mothers, dentists and doctors, and your mission is to do that well in his world, out of love for your fellow man, to his glory.

II. Discovering The Mission: *Your Spiritual Gifts*

- I'd love to spend a long time talking about this one, but I can only give it a minute. A spiritual gift is something the Holy Spirit does in a special way through you for the blessing of the church and the extending of the gospel.
- Paul gives us several spiritual gift "lists" in Romans 12; 1 Cor 12; Ephesians 4. But here's the thing... None of these lists are exhaustive; none are the same, and what appears on one doesn't appear on the other. Which means that these lists should probably not be seen as a catalogue you look through to find your gift... they just give you examples of how God endows each member of his church with special abilities, by which he directly works through them.
- Spiritual places where God works in you in a special way to bless others.

- For example, I have the spiritual gifts of exhortation, evangelism, leadership, and faith. God uses those things in me to bless others. I figured that out early on, and I've built my career on them.
- Not all of you will build your career on your spiritual gifts, but you should all know what they are and they should be a key part of your life and your approach to ministry.
- I'd go so far as to say that if you don't know what they are how can you know what God wants you to be doing?
- Paul tells us that every believer has one. Do you know what yours is?