

PRINCIPLES AND BASIC STEPS OF DISCIPLE-MAKING FROM THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF JESUS

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ABSTRACT

Satu-satunya keadaan yang pasti bahwa Kristus datang ke dunia ini adalah bilamana “Injil Kerajaan” itu sudah disampaikan kepada seluruh dunia, hal ini jelas disebutkan oleh Yesus dalam Injil Matius 24:14. Cara yang terbaik agar Injil Kerajaan ini tersebar di seluruh dunia adalah dengan mengimplemantasikan Amanat Agung yang diberikan Yesus yakni dengan cara “pemuridan.” Tulisan ini membahas tentang prinsip-prinsip dan langkah-langkah yang paling mendasar dari proses pemuridan berdasarkan hidup dan pelayanan Yesus. Dengan mengikuti prinsip-prinsip pemuridan Yesus, yang adalah guru Agung itu, maka proses pemuridan akan berjalan dengan baik dan akan menghasilkan murid-murid yang siap menyampaikan Injil Kerajaan, sebab memang “pemuridan,” adalah satu-satunya perintah yang disampaikan oleh Yesus kepada murid-murid-Nya untuk dilaksanakan sebelum kenaikan-Nya kie Surga.

INTRODUCTION

The Bible clearly explains Christ’s came to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10). He wants that all people will be saved (John 3:16, 17).

The main method used by Jesus to achieve His earthly mission was disciple-making. Jesus’ model of making-disciples is a good example for us today. We should follow His steps and work as He did, because “Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. “¹

Notice that Jesus was an educator”². He is “the most effective educator and teacher of teachers”³. His educational goal for the disciples was to equip them “to carry on the work of the gospel after returned to the Father.”⁴

White gives details on how Jesus disciple His disciples: For three years and a half the disciples were under the instruction of the greatest Teacher the world has ever known. *By personal contact and association, Christ trained them for His service.* Day by day they walked and talked with Him, hearing His words of cheer to the weary and heavy-laden, and seeing the manifestation of His power in behalf of the sick and the afflicted. Sometimes He taught them, sitting among them on the mountainside; sometimes beside the sea or walking by the way, He revealed the mysteries of the kingdom of God. Wherever hearts were open to receive the divine message, *He unfolded the truths of the way of salvation.* He didn’t command the disciples to do this or that, but said, “Follow Me”. On His journeys through country and cities, He took them with Him, that they might see how He taught the people. They traveled with Him from place to place. They shared His frugal fare, and like Him were sometimes hungry and often weary. On the crowded streets, by the lakeside, in the lonely desert, they were with Him. They saw Him in every phase of life.”⁵

This basic idea and method is clearly illustrated in the Great Commission. The following section will discuss Jesus’ basic concept of disciple-making.

Jesus’ Basic Concept of Disciple-Making

The main passage in the Bible which shows Jesus’ concept of disciple-making is found in Matt 28:18-20. “⁶

In the original Greek language, the central imperative or action verb in this Great Commission is “to make disciples”, not the word “go,” “teach,” or even “baptize”. The word “go” is a participle which should be translated as “having gone” or “as you go” and

therefore, rather than a command, it is the method of how to make disciples.”⁷ In Jesus’ thoughts, to make-disciples is the ultimate goal of the Great Commission,”⁸

The church of the Living Word, in their Disciple Course #1, gave a clear explanation about Matt 28:18-20.

In this Command, in Greek, there is one, IMPERATIVE VERB, and three temporal participles. This is crucial to our understanding. Why? Because most people think that the command, the imperative, in verse 19 is “go” But that’s completely wrong. The command in Matthew 28:19 isn’t “go”. The imperative verb-the subject “YOU” IS UNDERSTOOD-IS “make-disciples” (in Geek it’s aorist active imperative or MATHETEUEO).

So the emphasis of the GREAT COMMISSION is NOT ‘GO’ BUT ‘MAKE DISCIPLES’. (The King James Version although generally a good translation, badly mistranslates the passages “Go ... and teach all nations”. But “matheuo” should never have been translated “teach”. Because it was, and because the KJV has been used by most Christian in the English speaking world since its publication in 1611, the true meaning of the Great Commission has been hidden from many believers. Teaching alone is not making disciples, as we will see from our study, and the record must be set straight on this if a proper understanding of the Great Commission is to be gained. Jesus said, in the most unequivocal manner possible ‘MAKE DISCIPLES’.

If we use a more diagrammatic form to view these important verses you can see the meaning clearly:

GO (PARTICIPLE)

MAKE DISCIPLE (IMPERATIVE VERB)

BAPTIZING (PARTICIPLE)

TEACHING (PARTICIPLE)

Properly rendered from the Greek text, the Great Commission reads:

“AS YOU GO (wherever and however you go in the course of your lives), (I am commanding you to) MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL PEOPLE (of every race). BAPTIZING THEM (those who believe) IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND THE SON AND THE HOLY SPIRIT, TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE (to be obedient to) ALL THAT I HAVE COMMANDED YOU; AND, YES I AM WITH YOU THAT I HAVE COMMANDED YOU; AND, YES I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, EVEN TO THE END OF THE AGE.”⁹

From the explanation above, it can be seen that the primary imperative of the great Commission is to “make disciples” or “disciple making”. Hence, Jesus’ basic concept of disciple-making is that every follower must become a disciple maker.

For Jesus, the best instruments in bringing back sinners to God are human beings themselves. Coleman was correct when he said, “Men were to be His method of winning the world to God.”¹⁰ Even though Jesus was concerned about man being His agents, He also chose what kind of men would be His instruments.

Qualifications of a Disciple

In choosing His disciples, Jesus used a standard which was different from that of the world. He choose unschooled, ordinary men (Acts 4:13), but “they were teachable,”¹¹ and “men who are controlled by the Spirit of God...”¹²

Jesus’ qualifications in choosing His disciples are valid even up until today. Not all people are suitable to be Christ’s disciples. The story of the rich young man in biblical qualifications for a disciple of Christ:

1. A disciple must be born again. Jesus said, “Unless you are born again, you can never get into Kingdom of God” (John 3:3 LB). Christian can’t be a disciple by themselves. The desire to be a disciple is a work of supernatural power from God, and this desire can be found only by a dynamic relationship with Him. This relationship only begins at the point of our conversion.

2. A disciple must love God. “Love the Lord your God with all your hearts and with all your soul and with all your mind” (Matt 22:37)

3. A disciple must have a willingness to learn, he or she must be teachable. A learner is a teachable person (Prov 10:8; John 8:31, 32), a humble person (Rom 12:2), and hungry for the word of God (Neh 9:3).

4. A disciple must be a fully committed individual. Jesus does not want half-hearted followers. A disciple of Christ must be willing to give up everything, including home, family, relatives, wealth, and position, in order to follow him.

Jesus says, If anyone comes to me and doesn't hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he can't be my disciple. And anyone who doesn't carry his cross and follow me can't be my disciple ... In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has can't be my disciple (Luke 14; 26, 27, 33).

These passages indicate that in order to be a disciple of God, man should no longer live to please himself and indulge himself, but to live on behalf of Him.

5. A disciple should continually hold on to Christ's teachings. Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples” (John 8:13).

6. A disciple must produce fruit, showing yourself to be my disciples” (John 15:8).

Burrill, a Seventh-day Adventist writer, notes:

The Christian who is not reproducing by creating other is not really a disciple ... Disciples must only share, they must also make disciples, otherwise, they themselves can't be considered disciples.”¹³

Principle in Disciple-Making

Several principle can be identified in Jesus' model in disciple-making, these are: *the principle of selection, the principle of association, the principle of instruction and the principle of sharing and multiplication.*

Principle of Selection

Jesus started His discipleship program with the selection of His disciples. The Bible explains that Jesus choose ordinary people. He choose fishermen (Matt 4:18), tax collectors (Mark 2:14), and others like them.

Eims notes four important things in relation to Jesus' selection of His disciples. He says that Jesus chose His disciples from the common men, consisting of a variety of individuals, who were hard-working and teachable persons."¹⁴

In choosing the disciples, Jesus spent the night praying to God, so that would choose the right person (Luke 6:12-13). This is an important point in election. Jesus didn't did not hastily rush out and grab the first people who showed interest. He went to God and consulted Him, so that He could and would choose the right men to become His disciples.

This is why, whoever is involved in a ministry of making disciples should think soberly about this matter of selection. Prayer and communication with God is the key to Jesus' success. In selecting men and women, we have to abandon our proneness to conformity and follow the example of Jesus.

Principle of Association

Jesus asked His first disciples to leave their daily work and be with Him (Matt 4:18-22; 9:9) to be His disciples. Coleman understands that actually, to be with Him was “the essence of His training program.”¹⁵

To emphasize the importance of this principle, Coleman says that Jesus “spent more time with His disciples than with everybody else in the world put together.”¹⁶ According to the NT record, Jesus ate with them, slept with them, talked with them, traveled with them, and ministered to the crowds with them. Jesus used His time together with His disciples in most of three and a half years of His ministry in this world.

“Knowledge was gained by association before it was understood by explanation,”¹⁷ says Coleman. Association will produce a powerful, dramatic, change of life in a disciple.”¹⁸

Principle of Instruction

One of the purposes of Jesus’ association with His disciples was to give them instruction. He told them they would be like sheep among wolves (Matt 10:16-18), and would face opposition and rejection in doing evangelism (Mark 6:11).¹⁹

Giving instruction is the key to success in order to produce good disciples as Jesus did. Just before His ascension, Christ nurtured His disciples giving them instruction on what they should do, where they should do it, and how they should do it (Acts 1:8).

Principle of Sharing and Multiplication

Sharing is to give to others the things which a person has received. The book of Matthew records the importance of this principle when Jesus says, “the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit” (Matt 21:43).

Jesus shared with His disciples the truth and the art of making disciples. He wanted His disciples to do the same, by sharing the truth that they had, because He knew

that there were blessings in sharing the truth. The disciples who passed on the blessings to others became victors themselves.”²⁰

The following paragraphs discusses Jesus’ basic procedures of disciple-making. This is important, especially in relation to the procedures of disciple-making that will be adopted in chapter 4 of this paper.

The Basic Model of Disciple-Making in the Life and Ministry of Jesus

The Bible doesn’t only mention about the principles of disciple-making but also the steps of disciple-making. The Bible recorded that Jesus, in His disciple-making program used the following steps.

The first is “evangelism”. Matthew 28:19 says, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations...” Another bible passage recorded, that Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of salvation (Mark 1:14-15). These passages inform us that in disciple-making, evangelism should come first.

Hadidian agrees with this procedure. He says, “when Jesus says to make disciples, He is telling us to first go and “make believers”-evangelize.”²¹ Quoting Mark 16:15 “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation”, Eims proposed that evangelism is the first procedure for disciple-making.”²²

Evangelism is not the end of the process of disciple-making, it is just a beginning. Evangelism produces conversion, which is the initial decision to follow Christ. Conversion is the door of discipleship.

The second step of Jesus’ disciple-making is “teaching” (Math 28:20) which is included in evangelism. People aren’t baptized unless they have been taught God’s words, and accept and understand it. The term “teaching” here is similar to “nurturing”, or “equipping”. In order to produce a committed disciple, there should be a process of nurturing or equipping.

Many Christian authors confirm this second step. Though they call it by different terms, the concept is the same. There should be training for the lay members, because God desires a believer to grow in spiritual maturity (1 John 2:13-14).

Hadidian named this second step “Edifying”. He agrees with Jesus’ word that, “teaching them to observe all that I commanded you”, (Match 28:20), is the basis for this second procedure. This step emphasizes the nurturing aspect of disciple-making through teaching, strengthening, encouraging, admonishing and exhorting the believer.”²³

Gerber in more detail devices this second step into four levels, they are: incorporation, instruction, involvement, propagation.”²⁴

Incorporation (Acts 2:41): After the converted person has proclaimed to the public that they have received Christ as their personal Savior; they are incorporated into the body of the church.

Instruction (Acts 2:42): The new converted persons should be instructed by the church leaders so that they will be able to carry Christ’s mandate in making-disciples of others. Talking about the early church, Garber says, “The early church gathered for the purpose of instruction, that they might in turn be scattered to fulfill their evangelistic mandate.”²⁵

Involvement (Acts 2:42-46): The success of the early church came about because of members involvement in church work. The believers in Jerusalem were actively involved in the ministry both inside and outside the church.

Propagation (Acts 2:47): the believers in Jerusalem did church ministry even in the community. Their ministry was not merely for themselves, but also for others. Gerber says, “The church was not a closed fellowship of the elite or of the elect.”²⁶

The third step of Jesus’ model of disciple-making ministry is, “reproducing”. As mentioned above, the only imperative in the Great Commission is “disciple-making”, meaning every committed disciple should become a reproducer of other disciples. This is the main goal of the Great Commission. After “evangelism”, which produces baptized

and converted members, they should be “trained”. This training will produce committed disciples which are able to produce other disciples.

This third step is clearly seen in Jesus disciple-making ministry (Matt 28:19, 20; John 17:18; John 20:21). After He discipled His disciples, Jesus sent them out (the mature disciple) to reproduce other disciples.

The life and ministry of Jesus Christ on this earth provides a model of disciple-making. Jesus indicated the concept that a true and committed disciple should produce another disciple.

His method of disciple-making shows that in making disciples, there are four principles that should be followed in order to produce a committed disciple, they are: (1) the principle of selection, (2) the principle of association, (3) the principle of instruction and (4) the principle of multiplication.

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1. Ellen G. White, The Ministry of Healing Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1963)
 2. Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 5:256.
 3. See White, Testimonies, 4:343; White, Education, 82, 282; White, Evangelism, 148; and White, The Ministry of Healing (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1963), 23
 4. Neal F. McBride, How to Lead Small Groups (Colorado Springs, Colorado: NavPress, 1990), 17.
 5. White, The Acts of the Apostles, 17-18. Italics supplied by the researcher,
 6. The great Commission of Christ may be understood from a study of several passages, such as Mark 16:14-20; Luke 24:44-49; and John 20:19-23. but in this study we focus only on Matt 28:18-20.

7. Vergil Gerber, God's Way to Keep a Church Going and Growing (Glendale: Regal, 1973). 74.
8. Gerber, 15
9. "Discipleship Course #1", in *Church of the Living World* [database on-line], TX: Internet Ministry of Church of the Living Word, 1997-2001, accessed 20 October 2000); available from <http://www.churches.com/livingword/discipleship.shtml>; Internet
10. Robert E. Coleman, "Selection of Disciples", chap. in Discipleship, ed. Billie Hanks, Jr., and William A. Shell (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981), 41.
11. Ibid, 43
12. David H. Roper, *The Making of Disciples*, [book on-line] (Palo Alto: Discovery Publishing, 1968, accessed 5 May 2000); available from <http://www.pbc.org/leadership/0177-8-9.html>; Internet. Roper is a former pastor and elder at Peninsula Bible Church in Palo Alto. He believes that these disciples would qualify as that kind of a person. He think quite often that we do not think very highly of these men. Jesus had God's insight into lives. Jesus knew the quality of their lives. Jesus scrutinized the lives of these men. Jesus spent the night in a prayer before he made his decision. Roper does not think that Jesus was wrong, even in the case of Judas. Jesus knew from the beginning what Judas was to be. This man was accepted deliberately to accomplish the purpose of God, in terms of the prophetic scripture, says Roper.
13. Russell Burrill, Radical Disciples for Revolutionary Churches (Fallbrook, CAL Hart Research Center, 1996), 37. In the same book he discuss Jesus' qualifications to be a disciples as listed: (1) willing to endure persecution and ridicule for the sake of Christ; (2) live in total allegiance to the Lordship of Christ, being willing to forsake all-property, family, friends, etc. – for the cause of Christ; (3) understands and keeps the basic teaching of Jesus; (4) one was has given evidence that agape love has been found

- in his life because his connection to Christ; (5) bearing fruit by creating other disciple for Jesus. Burrill
, 38-39.
14. Leroy Eims, 29-30.
15. Robert E. Coleman, "Association with Jesus", chap. in Discipleship, eds. Billie hanks, Jr., and William A. Shell (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981), 57.
16. Ibid, 61
17. Ibid, 58
18. Eim, 33
19. Eims understands the need of the principles of instruction. He says, "When you are training potential disciples and workers, let them in on some of the trials and tribulations of the ministry that you have faced. Talk to them about some of the times you were rejected while witnessing in the neighborhood. Tell them about the cost of discipleship". Eims, 35
20. William Evans, The Great Doctrines of the Bible (Chicago: Moody, 1976), 286.
21. Allen Hadidian, Discipleship (Chicago: Moody, 1987), 21-23.
22. Eims, 61.
23. Hadidian, 21-23
24. Vergil Gerber, Discipling Through Theological Education by Extension (Wheaton, IL: Evangelical, 1984), 45-46.
25. Ibid., 45
26. Ibid.,