

Discipleship as Equipping

By John Babler

Pre-Session Assignments

One week before the session, participants will take the following assignments.

Assignment One

Read the comments related to Matthew 4:18–22 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share your answers to the following questions: How would you describe your call to be a disciple of Jesus? Was it hard or easy to follow that call? Why?

Assignment Two

Read the comments related to Matthew 5:13–16 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share your answer to the following question: What are two or three ways you can be salt and light this next week?

Assignment Three

Read the comments related to Matthew 28:18–20 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share your answer to the following question: What are some ways that you can go and make disciples?

Scripture to Memorize

“Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.” Matthew 5:16

Session Goal

Consistent with God's Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit—by the end of this session, disciples will understand that discipleship is equipping others to know what the discipler knows.

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It's in the Book

30 minutes

Real-Life Scenario

Imagine a younger youth or child in your church who looks up to you. This person contacts you with a significant spiritual struggle. This is the night before a big presentation at work, and while you have studied, you'd like to review your notes and get a good night sleep. You realize that if you help this person it will take time and you will not be able to study and you will likely not get much sleep. What would you do? Why?

Read Matthew 4:18–22 and Luke 6:13–16 out loud.

Studying the Passage, Matthew 4:18–22

Verses 18–20. While walking by the Sea of Galilee . . . Immediately they left their nets and followed Him. Note that Jesus called out some of the disciples while He was on the move. While He was walking, he saw Simon and Andrew.

Sometimes discipleship may begin as we see others while we are living life. There was something compelling about Jesus as these two working fishermen responded to His call and immediately left everything to follow Him. Jesus also gave insight into the equipping He would do with His new disciples as He committed to make them fishers of men.

Verses 21–22. Going on from there . . . Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed Him. James and John also responded positively to Jesus' call and immediately followed Him, as did Levi in Mark 2:14.

Studying the Passage, Luke 6:13–16

Verses 13–16. And when day came, He called His disciples and chose from them twelve . . . Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor. Jesus chose twelve to become His closest disciples. These were the ones He invested His life in while He was here on earth. They became the ones God used to establish the church and disciple others after His death and resurrection. They show us how Jesus equipped disciples and that discipleship is about equipping.

Assignment One Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment One** during the week can now share answers to the following questions: How would you describe your call to be a disciple of Jesus? Was it hard or easy to follow that call?

Read Matthew 8:19–20 and Matthew 19:27 out loud.

Studying the Passage

Matthew 8:19-20. And a scribe came up and said to Him, “. . . but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.” Jesus taught the scribe that being a disciple comes with a cost. Following Jesus would not be a way to riches and prestige. Even Jesus did not have a place to call home.

Studying the Passage

Matthew 19:27. See, we have left everything and followed You. Peter stated one aspect regarding the cost of being Jesus' disciple as he said they had left everything to follow Him.

On Your Own

Read Matthew 5:1–16. In the space below, write which of the Beatitudes (vv. 3–11) is most difficult for you to practice in your daily life. Then write a brief prayer, inviting the Holy Spirit to give you all you need to fill your life with that Beatitude.

Read Matthew 5:1–16 out loud.

Studying the Passage

Verses 1–12. Seeing the crowds . . . Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. Jesus equipped His disciples by investing His life in theirs. This included spending time with them, teaching them and demonstrating a right relationship with the Father.

Matthew 5–7 makes up a significant part of that teaching and is known as the Sermon on the Mount. In the beginning verses of chapter 5, we see Jesus teaching about the blessings of God. At the time (and many times today as well), the religious leaders believed good things happened to those who were right with God and bad things only happened to those with whom God was displeased. As Jesus equipped His disciples, He frequently pointed out that this was not the case.

Verses 11–12 provide a poignant example of this. How can Christ followers be blessed when they are insulted, persecuted and lied about? According to verse 12, Jesus calls His disciples to have a right response to persecution. Jesus said, **“Rejoice and be glad.”** He also provided a reminder that our ultimate reward, or blessing, is in heaven.

Studying the Passage

Verses 13–16. You are the salt of the earth . . . that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. Jesus also equipped His disciples by teaching them that they were to have an impact on the world. They were to be salt and light to impact a dark and decaying culture. Verse 16 reminds us that the focus of doing good is not for our credit or affirmation, but so that people will glorify God.

Assignment Two Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Two** during the week can now answer the following question: What are two or three ways you can be salt and light this next week?

Read Matthew 28:18–20 out loud.

Studying the Passage

Verses 18–20. And Jesus came and said to them . . . And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. After Jesus’ death and resurrection, He equipped His disciples by commissioning them. They were not to relish the fact that they had been close to Jesus and walked with Him. Nor were they to be content that they had seen and interacted with Him after His resurrection. Instead, based on His authority, they were to “go therefore and make disciples” and equip others to do the same.

Assignment Three Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Three** during the week can now answer the following

question: What are some ways that you can go and make disciples?

Heart and Hands

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven. Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit reveals to you below, and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

Since Last Week

5 minutes

Give the group this update: "In our last session I made a commitment to. . . . I want to let you know how that turned out. On that same issue I think the Holy Spirit now is leading me to. . . ."

Grace-Filled Accountability

5 minutes

Disciples can agree on a way to hold one another accountable. Confessing faults with other disciples allows them to offer grace, insights, and encouragement. Even more important is confession to Christ, the source of true forgiveness and cleansing.

Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service

5 minutes

Groups of disciples always are making preparations for evangelism, missions, and service. Use these minutes to work on the next plan.

Prayer

7 minutes

Every disciple will pray aloud, offering praise to Jesus, thanking Him specifically for His gracious acts, making heartfelt confession, committing to actions flowing from the Bible study, praying toward evangelism locally and globally, and interceding for others as prompted by the Holy Spirit.

At Home: Nail It Down

We often view discipleship as a curriculum used at church or in a small group. To the contrary, Jesus demonstrated that discipleship is not so much a program as it is equipping believers in the context of relationship.

Jesus taught that discipling may involve leaving people and things we love. He also demonstrated that discipling can be time-consuming and inconvenient. Genuine Christ followers are to be willing to make sacrifices for the good of the kingdom and the glory of God.

Jesus invested His life in His disciples by spending time with them and teaching them. In a similar way, discipling new believers today gives us opportunities to impact our culture by being salt and light. Nothing is more powerful than joining the Spirit in transforming newer disciples into the image of Christ.

The Beatitudes we studied in Matthew 5 provide ongoing encouragement and challenge for us as we live the Christian life. They also are at the heart of the discipling we offer those who follow our leadership.

Discipleship is equipping, and is right at the center of Christ's kingdom activity for the glory of God.

Follow up Question

Is there someone in your life you are discipling and equipping? If not, may I join you in praying for someone to disciple?

The Making Disciples curriculum is a gift from Southwestern Seminary to those who, for the glory of the Father and in the power of the Spirit, will spend a lifetime embracing the full supremacy of the Son, responding to His kingly reign in all of life, inviting Christ to live His life through them, and joining Him in making disciples among all peoples.