

Intentionally Train Disciples to Do What Jesus Did

How do I develop a discipleship process while acknowledging the organic nature of making disciples?

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, writing in *The Cost of Discipleship*, states, “On two separate occasions Peter received the call ‘Follow me.’ It was the first and last word Jesus spoke to His disciple. A whole life lies between these two calls.”

Could it be possible that those two simple, yet profound words hold the key for pastors who are desperately seeking solutions to overcome the dismal state of discipleship in their churches?

The call to Peter – and to other disciples – is one of single-minded obedience. Jesus was asking them – and us – to rely on Christ’s word – the Word of God Himself.

Solution - Intentionally train disciples to do what Jesus did.

THE QUICK SUMMARY - [Conversion and Discipleship](#) by Bill Hull

Discipleship occurs when someone answers the call to learn from Jesus how to live his or her life—as though Jesus were living it. The end result is that the disciple becomes the kind of person who naturally does what Jesus did.

How the church understands salvation and the gospel is the key to recovering a biblical theology of discipleship. Our doctrines of grace and salvation, in some cases, actually prevent us from creating an expectation that we are to be disciples of Jesus. A person can profess to be a Christian and yet still live under the impression that they don’t need to actually follow Jesus. Being a follower is seen as an optional add-on, not a requirement. It is a choice, not a demand. Being a Christian today has no connection with the biblical idea that we are formed into the image of Christ.

In this groundbreaking new book, pastor and author Bill Hull shows why our existing models of evangelism and discipleship fail to actually produce followers of Jesus. He looks at the importance of recovering a robust view of the gospel and taking seriously the connection between conversion—answering the call to follow Jesus—and discipleship—living like the one we claim to follow.

A SIMPLE SOLUTION

In Jesus’ words in Matthew 28:18-20, which we refer to as the Great Commission, the primary action is not on *going*, but *making disciples*. Whatever making a disciple means, Jesus Himself did it. Whatever a disciple is, the twelve were.

It stands to reason, then, that understanding and practicing the principles that Jesus lived and taught His disciples is a sound starting place to making disciples.

Develop a plan that follows the lead of Jesus and intentionally train willing disciples to become the kind of people who will naturally do what Jesus did and react the way Jesus did.

Four phases mark Jesus' discipleship ministry. I think of these as four key invitations.

Come and See – An invitation to explore (John 1:38-39). This was a period when Jesus introduced a group of disciples to his nature and ministry.

Come and Follow Me – An invitation to learn (Mark 1:16-20). In this period, the chosen disciples and other followers left their professions to travel with Jesus.

Come and Be With Me – An invitation to serve (Matthew 9:37-38). During this period, Jesus kept his twelve called disciples with him and concentrated on training them so they could go out and preach.

Remain in Me – An invitation to multiply (John 15:7-8). Jesus introduces the new relationship he will have with his disciples and how they will relate to him as they take over the mission of making disciple. He wants them to know they will have a helper, the Holy Spirit. They will not be left alone; they will have special power to fulfill his instructions.

Bill Hull, [Conversion & Discipleship](#)

A NEXT STEP

Conduct a study with your team of each of the four phases of Jesus' discipleship ministry, beginning with the Scriptures listed above. List each of the four phases on a separate flip chart sheet, including the Scripture reference.

Work through each phase, brainstorming what it would take for your church to launch a discipling emphasis that is built on these four phases. As a part of these discussions, include each of these areas:

- **Preaching** – Pastors can often make a bigger difference, faster, than any other person. Develop individual sermons or a series that will encourage the congregation to be aware of, and more importantly, obey, the Great Commission.
- **Small Groups** – The best way to reach the most people in the most meaningful way is through the small group. Done correctly, small group involvement makes disciples, identifies leaders, and gives people the relationships and accountability they need.
- **Leadership Development** – Through small groups, leaders are identified and can be placed into a leadership development process.

Using your discovery, prayerfully develop 2-4 next steps toward a renewed emphasis on training disciples to do what Jesus did.

Consider this: Jesus only had three years to set a plan in motion that would rescue the world – both His existing world and all the people yet to come. Three years is not a very long time – it's less than one term of a U.S. president, one-half the term of a U.S. Senator, and just a year longer than one term of a U.S. Congressman.

But Jesus didn't come to establish a political system to rule over a world. He established a discipling process that changed eternity.

We must be His disciples and make disciples.

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