

## These Three Things Are Not Discipleship

If you want to solve a problem, you have to know there is a problem. When it comes to discipleship, we need to understand the bad definitions that persist in order to propose a better way. In this post, I want to point out the three bad definitions for discipleship that you need to recognize and move past.



### Knowledge Transfer

Discipleship must be rooted in truth but it must never be quarantined to a library. Too often, our discipleship programs in church are simply an overwhelming number of classroom settings. We convince ourselves that knowing more biblical factoids means holiness. But knowing that Malchus was the servant who got his ear cut off by Peter during Jesus' arrest will not help you live more fully for God. It is good to know all of the details of the Bible but it is not the sum total of discipleship. We must communicate truth but never stop with 3-ring binders filled with class notes.



### Behavior Modification

Do you recognize this Medieval torture device implemented by music teachers? The metronome has an unwavering beat that frightens school children into doing things on time,

repeatedly, and without hesitation whether they are passionate or not. Discipleship programs that ignore our passions damage the soul. If we only seek to make people moral then we reduce God to an impersonal being that only wants robotic followers. Behavior modification is easier than heart transformation. It is neater, cleaner, and avoids the mess of dealing with people's passions. But it is also temporary.



### **Plasticized Spirituality**

Go to any state fair and you'll find a line stretching out to the horizon filled with children waiting their turn to ride on the Carousel. It enraptures a child's imagination of flying through the air on a powerful steed. It also reflects too much of our what passes for discipleship in the church. The lights are bright. The music is upbeat. Everyone is moving. Everyone is smiling. But no one is going anywhere. We allow people to live fake lives before one another rather than sharing the truth of how we've been brutalized by sin and redeemed by Christ. The carousel is a temporary thrill that has no lasting impact.

[Read more from Philip.](#)

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Every pastor knows that *disciple-making* is easier to preach than it is to practice.

We have a unique perspective on how churches move toward a culture of disciple-making. We'd love to share some of our experience with you.

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