

Dynamics of Discipleship - Part 1

Howard Hendricks

Introduction.

- A. I turned 60 a few years ago and I have been asking God how to invest the remainder of my life.
- B. My wife and I have decided to spend more time with Navigators and with ministry among business people.
- C. I want to speak on the dynamics of discipleship.

I. Discipleship is described by Peter Marshall as deep sea divers, pulling plugs out of bath tubs.

- A. The church today has many unemployed.
 - 1. Imagine preaching Sunday to wool gatherers.
 - 2. People come expecting to get out at noon.
 - 3. They count the tiles on the ceiling.
 - 4. Some are sleepy headed elbow learners.
 - 5. Wherever I go the great need is for leadership.
 - 6. God dispenses gifts but we aren't developing those gifts.
 - 7 The church will not survive without discipleship.
- B. We want to answer three questions.
 - 1. Why make disciples?
 - 2. Why should we make disciples?
 - 3. How do we make disciples?

II. Why make disciples?

- A. Superficiality is the greatest problem of Evangelists.
 - 1. We have many converts but few disciples.
 - 2. I am working with a man of 50 who has finally told me he wants to be a disciple of Jesus.

3. He is now seeing Jesus do great things in his life and is wondering why he took so long to trust Jesus.

B. Scripture commands making disciples.

1. The disciples were commanded to take the world. (Matthew 28:16-20)
 - a. Jesus told them all authority was his; the responsibility was theirs.
 - b. He promised to be with them until the end of the age.
 - c. There is only one main verb in these verses, “make disciples.”
 - d. Making decisions is easy; making disciples is difficult.
 - e. The superficiality of evangelisms is due to a lack of discipleship.
 - f. George Gallop polled many people saying the Gospel of Jesus Christ is making many converts but little impact on how they live their lives.
2. There are three participles in these verses.
 - a. Go, refers to the process of going into the world, and this is for every believer, not just preachers.
 1. I know an ophthalmologist that leads many people to faith in Christ.
 2. Most people think of evangelism as confrontational.
 - i. Only 10% of people are good at this.
 - ii. Many stop sharing because they got burned this way.
 3. But there is lifestyle evangelism that everyone can do.
 - i. This works with friendships.
 - ii. Many ball players come to faith through a friend.
 - iii. Many ballplayers that have good marriages are effective in witnessing for Christ because they are living in harmony with God’s will.
 4. Going is a process that takes time.
 - b. Baptizing is a second participle that indicates a time when decisions are solidified.
 - c. Teaching is a third participle that is coterminous with spiritual life.
 1. The length of years a person has been a Christian is not the point.

2. We need to be growing year after year.
 3. We need to teach people to obey Jesus Christ.
 - 4 Teaching the Bible must be for obedience.
 5. We are not to become smarter sinners but to become like Jesus.
3. So making disciples involves going and teaching.
- a. Some Christians never become disciples.
 - b. We've got great teaching but some evangelical churches see few people come to Christ.
 - c. If you have a program of discipleship and no one is coming to Christ you don't have discipleship.
 - d. If you have an evangelism program where people are coming to Christ yet their lives are not changed you don't have discipleship
 - e. God promises to be with us but not in whatever we do; he promises to be with us as we follow him.
4. Paul summarized discipleship as teaching others who can teach others. (2 Timothy 2:2)
- a. Discipleship is building into others' lives. This gives discipleship a new perspective; even small towns are strategic locations because the process does not end.
 - b. Every person we build into builds into others. A Sunday school teacher built into my life.
 - c. If you preach to 100,000 per day and are 4% effective, you have 4000 converts each day for 360 days a year you would have 1,460,000 converts per year.
 - d. If you preach for 15 years you'd have 23 million converts.
 - e. But if you reach one person in 6 months and each concert reaches one more.
 - f. In two years you'd have 16 people, but in 16 years you'd have 4 billion.
 - g. The early church was more effective in reaching the world than we are with all our technology.
 - h. Preaching is important but it must be coupled with discipleship.
 - i. After 40 years of expository preaching one preacher said he knew how to build a great church but he never know how to build great disciples.
 - j. Great preaching with great discipleship is the New Testament model.