

**Maranatha Bible Church 2020**  
**Equipping Hour: Proactive Discipleship**  
**Week 6: Dangers and Joys of Discipleship**

**Schedule of Classes:**

**Theological:**

**Week 1: What is proactive discipleship?**

**Week 2: Why should we disciple?**

**Week 3: What are some common excuses and barriers to discipleship?**

**Practical:**

**Week 4: Discipling the hurting.**

**Week 5: Discipleship and Accountability**

**Week 6: Dangers and Joys of discipleship**

**Introduction**

Coming to our last class on discipleship, its important to understand where we have been in the journey. The first week we discussed what proactive discipleship really is. We looked at the importance of going to people, not only with the gospel message but also with the Word to teach and train them. The overall goal is not to change the behavior of anyone but to help them think Biblically and see the heart change. It is only when we rely on the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit that we begin to see real, consistent, permanent change.

Then we tackled the *why* of discipleship. This is how the church reproduces. It is ultimately for God's glory, our own joy, the individual to grow and the church to grow. Discipleship is the personal setting in which we as the people of God sanctify and encourage one another with His truths.

After that we dove into some common excuses and barriers that people have for discipleship. Really, after looking at the all the issues, it came down to an issue with the heart. If we see the importance and necessity of discipleship, then we should be following the command of Christ in **Matthew 28:19-20**.

After finishing with the foundational material, we moved into the practical section. We first looked at discipling materials and also how we can disciple those who are hurting. Last week we talked about discipleship and accountability. We talked about the fundamental differences between the two ideologies but how there is natural accountability built into proactive discipleship.

Coming to our class today, it is important to always keep in mind that anything we do as sinful people, we should be aware of certain inherent dangers, especially when we disciple others. As the person who initiates discipleship, you have a responsibility to make sure that things are going in a Biblical direction. On the contrary, if you are being discipled, you should be keenly aware if the other person is sticking to Scripture or simply giving some “good advice.”

This morning we are going to discuss some of the dangers that are common in discipleship. We will not just end there, but look at many of the joys which come too.

## **Dangers and Joys of Discipleship<sup>1</sup>:**

### **Dangers:**

#### 1) **Self-Importance**

- a) When people come to us, or we to them, there can be a tendency to place ourselves on a “spiritual pedestal.” We will begin to think that we have *all the answers* and whomever you are meeting with probably is the most well-off person in the church.
  - i) When we start to see changes in their life, it boosts our own ego, as we think that we had something to do with their spiritual health.
- b) What is the cure for this sin? There are two areas in Scripture which come to mind:
  - i) **1 Corinthians 3:5-7** “What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? *Servants* through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one. I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. So then *neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything*, but God who causes the growth.”
    - (1) You can see how Paul views, not only himself but Apollos as well, as servants and as nothing. In fact, Paul even says they believed *through* Paul and Apollos because *the Lord gave opportunity to each one*.
      - (a) Paul recognized their salvation and subsequent sanctification had nothing to do with him.
  - ii) **1 Corinthians 15:9-10** “*For I am the least of the apostles*, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But *by the grace of God I am what I am*, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, *but the grace of God with me*.”
    - (1) Paul knew that by his own efforts, he persecuted the church. But when God’s grace intervened, he became the man that we all have come to know.
    - (2) He labored harder than his contemporaries, but only because he understood God’s grace.

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<sup>1</sup> Loosely based upon <https://www.capitolhillbaptist.org/sermon/class-12-hazards-joys-of-discipling/> 03/24/2021

(3) We need to have a rich understanding of the grace of God. It certainly saves but then it empowers for service. You will have to use this grace in your Christian life and be able to point other people to it.

## 2) Self-Reliance

- a) Many of us have life experience, which is a good thing. We have been through the ups and downs of life, seen a lot things and been in a lot of situations.
  - i) These things can be good or bad, but they are not inspired by God.
- b) We can come to a place in life where we are quick to give answers, shoot from the hip. Instead of taking the time to pray and seek the Lord.
- c) **James 1:9 “This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger...”**
  - i) Many of us are quick to speak, dull in hearing and always angry about something.
  - ii) If we want to be effective disciplers, either at home or in the church, we must be able to lay aside all the noise and follow God’s Word.
  - iii) You must spend time in prayer and Scripture if you want to see others grow in Christ.

## 3) Sustained by Programs

- a) There are many helpful books and classes that you can go through for discipleship. But if you are dependent upon someone else’s work for your growth, there may be a problem.
- b) When you meet with someone to disciple, are you aware of their immediate needs or are you just in a hurry to get going on the weekly work?
- c) **1 Thessalonians 5:14 “We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone.”**
  - i) **Why do we need to understand this verse with regards to programs?**  
(1) \_\_\_\_\_
- d) When we have fallen into our favorite books and not the Bible.
  - i) There is a tendency to rely on authors who do the work for you instead of you doing the work. There are many good books out there...but they are all written by sinful, fallen men and women.
  - ii) If you find yourself constantly quoting your favorite author and Scripture, you need to realign.

## 4) Sense of Failure

- a) Unfortunately, everyone you disciple is not going to be a) saved, b) sanctified, c) make it the long haul.
- b) If you disciple enough, you are going to have people who are just along for the ride and others who will eventually come to dislike you and the message that you are teaching.
- c) You can see this in the **life of Jesus...**
  - i) Judas was just along for the ride and far too many disciples came to dislike and hate Him.
- d) You can see this in the **life of Paul...**

i) Demas was just along for the ride and many left him in the end.

#### 5) **Misguided Affection**

a) The closeness which can come from a discipleship relationship may start to invoke feelings towards one another. This is especially true when members of the opposite sex meet up together.

b) As believers, we are commanded in **1 Thessalonians 5:22** “...abstain from every form (appearance) of evil.” We should not give the onlooking world something to hold against us, if it is possible.

i) This means that we should not have men discipling women, one on one, or the other way around.

c) This usually happens when a woman is either single or in an unstable marriage and a Godly man comes and shows her Biblical love and kindness. She gravitates towards him and/or he begins to look too much into the relationship.

#### 6) **Misguided Dependency**

a) As a discipler, you may be the ultimate earthly authority in someone’s life. They may have not grown up with a strong father and/or mother and simply wandered through life.

b) When you come along and give them life-altering Biblical counsel, they see results and begin to desire to please you.

c) Though this is not totally up to you, you need to make sure that the individual you are discipling is not ultimately trying to please you but the Lord.

i) This may not be the case early on, but as you disciple someone, point them to the Lord.

#### 7) **Misguided Allegiance**

a) If you are discipling someone and they simply take what you say to be true, without looking into it, there could be some issues.

b) In our circle of churches, far too many people say “well MacArthur says...” This is a misguided and unhealthy allegiance to a man.

i) Do not get me wrong, he is a godly man who sticks to the Bible, but he is a sinful, fallible person just like any of us.

ii) Do not believe a doctrine just because he does, do the work of finding out what the Bible says.

c) My Greek professor told us “Do you want to eat a steak that someone else has already chewed? Do the work yourself and reap the blessed rewards!”

d) We do not want to make people believers in us but in the Bible. For sure, they are going to believe what you say, but make sure that you reference what you are saying in the Bible.

e) Jesus said in **John 8:31** “If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine...”

i) It is not the fact that we follow a man or a movement that makes us a disciple; we are Christ’s disciples when we follow His Word.

## **Joys from Discipling:**

### **1) See Your Hunger for Discipling Grow**

- a) Many people do not disciple *because they do not disciple!* It is similar to reading effectively reading books. The more that you read, the better reader you become and the more you want to read.
- b) When you start discipling people, you get to see the Lord work in your life and in the life of others.
- c) You start to see hearts change and miracles take place. You get to see people put off the old man and start to think and act as the new man.

### **2) See the Church Prosper**

- a) Ephesians 4:15-16 "...but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love."
- b) We are to grow into all aspects of Christ by what every joint supplies.
  - i) The phrase *by what* is literally *through* or *on account of*. That means that it is through the working members of the church that growth is going to happen.
  - ii) The church does not grow in depth without the body coming together and discipling one another.

### **3) See the Church Culture Change**

- a) 1 Corinthians 1:10 "Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment."
- b) One of the greatest bi-products of discipleship is unity among the church. To have a healthy church culture, the church must be unified. When we disciple one another, we are going into the lives of our fellow believers, correcting errors and growing in the knowledge of God.
- c) A church that is unified around the Scriptures is a church that the Lord will bless and use greatly.
- d) This means that the natural course of action, not a program, is discipling one another.

### **4) See Fruit in the Kingdom for the Glory of God**

- a) John 15:8 "My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples."
  - i) We are easily proven Christ's disciples by the fruit that we bear.
- b) God has used you in other people's life's to bring about fruit in their life and in ours.
- c) If our highest priority is to glorify God, we have the method here...bear much fruit.

### **5) See People Disciple More People**

- a) Those whom you have discipled should, one day, disciple others. I can say what John did in 3 John 1:3-4 "For I was very glad when brethren came and testified to your truth, that is, how you are walking in truth. I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth."

- b) John firstly says that he was blessed that Gaius was walking in the truth and then says he has no greater joy to hear that his “spiritual children” are also walking in the truth.
- c) While there are certainly horror stories when discipling, when we see people that we have poured into start to disciple others, it is such a great joy to be used by God.

### **Final Thoughts:**

#### **1) Discipling is the work of the whole church.**

- a) **1 Thessalonians 5:11** “Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.” This was written to the whole church, not the leadership or elders. Discipleship is the work of everyone, not just a select few.

#### **2) Discipling is a way of blessing people beyond yourself.**

- a) Just like a rock thrown in the water, the ripple effect of discipling will flow much farther than you can ever imagine.
- b) Quoting again **3 John 1:3-4** “For I was very glad when brethren came and testified to your truth, that is, how you are walking in truth. I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth.”

#### **3) Discipling starts in a church when you decide to do it.**

- a) A culture of discipleship does not happen by accident.
- b) Look for someone that you want to emulate as a Christian. But do not just stop there...look at the people that he/she has disciplined in the past. Look at their character, their Biblical fidelity and their love for the church. If you see that someone’s disciples are falling away, there is a good chance you will to.

#### **4) Continue growing in your discipleship of Christ.**

- a) **2 Peter 3:17-18** “You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness, but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.”
- b) To remain stable in you walk with the Lord, you yourself have to be growing in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- c) When we put our guard down or become lazy in our walk, we will be more susceptible to fall for false and unbiblical teachings.