

Introducing: Beginning With Discipleship

Matthew 28:18–19, “Then Yeshua came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations.”

-- On what basis does Yeshua tell us to make disciples or talmidim?

-- Why do we call it the Great Commission?

-- Why is it making disciples more than telling people about Yeshua, or praying with them to receive Yeshua as Savior?

-- In the Way of the Master video, Ray Comfort and Kirk Cameron point out that 80-90% of people who make a confession of faith in prayer wind up backsliding. They claim that a major reason is that they didn't really understand the good news in the first place, because they didn't understand that they are really sinners who have broken the commandments of God and stand in radical need of the forgiveness and atonement.

Could another reason for backsliding be that new believers don't learn that they need to follow Yeshua as disciples?

What is the relationship between discipleship and expansion of the Kingdom of God?

Robert Coleman and Billy Graham describe this relationship between disciples reproducing more disciples in their classic little book, *The Master Plan of Discipleship*.

Matthew 4:17–22, “From that time on, Yeshua began proclaiming, “Turn from your sins to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near!” As Yeshua walked by Lake Kinneret, he saw two brothers who were fishermen — Shim'on, known as Kefa, and his brother Andrew — throwing their net into the lake. Yeshua said to them, “Come after me, and I will make you fishers for men!” At once they left their nets and went with him.

Going on from there, he saw two other brothers — Ya'akov Ben-zavdai and Yochanan his brother — in the boat with their father Zavdai, repairing their nets; and he called them. At once they left the boat and their father and went with Yeshua.”

Why did they get out of the boat? What did they leave behind?

Are you willing to get out of your boat? What are you willing to leave behind?

How do you personally feel about the commitment involved in discipleship?

Why might it be useful?

The plan for discipleship. I am following a model that Chad Holland has developed for his congregation, Brit Chadashah in Memphis. Chad is Dan Juster's son-in-law, who grew up well-disciplined himself, then become a youth leader and was called to assist the Rabbi of Brit Chadashah shortly before he died of cancer. That was a challenging situation. Chad saw clearly that he needed to bring this congregation into discipleship to Yeshua in order for it to fulfill its purpose. Chad is now also a member of the Tikkun America Executive Team. I have great respect for his zeal for the Lord and maturity.

A few quotations from Chad's notes on “Beginning with Discipleship”:

“A discipleship relationship is one in which the whole person and whole life is being challenged and foundations are being laid from a Biblical perspective. Please remember that we are not making disciples unto ourselves but rather making disciples of Yeshua.”

How many of you want to be known as disciples of Yeshua?

How is that different from being a believer in Yeshua?

The long term goals of discipleship are three fold:

1. Teaching the importance of spending time with the Lord on a daily basis, centering our life around our desire to foster a growing relationship with the Lord and making this the priority of life.
2. Learning how to hear from the Lord through the different ways that we find in scripture and learning how to discern the voice of the Lord.
3. Be disciplined to obey what they have heard from the Lord (whether is be proactive growth, retroactive correction, conviction, repentance, theological adjustments, etc.) and be held accountable to follow through with the lessons the Holy Spirit is leading the disciple into and to what is clearly explained in scripture.

Is that what you want in your life? Is that what you want to pass on to others?

Why does discipleship require some one-on-one mentoring?

When I began discipling people last summer, I decided (with agreement from Chad and Dan Juster) to begin with Scott and Anita Smith, and after I got going, next offer it some of our shamashim. Why start with leaders?

Before I got very far, Ira and Alex came forward to accept the Lord on Yom Kippur. So we immediately offered discipleship to them. Why is discipling new believers a high priority?

Why is it important that we know that a potential disciple has the potential and willingness to start making other disciples within six months?

Plan for discipleship in a small group seeing:

Opening prayer and praise

15-20 minutes of bible questions

45 minutes of one-on-one mentoring (prayer life and bible reading, prayer needs, accountability in overcoming sin and weaknesses), then reviewing assignment.

Debriefing: either the disciple or mentor gives a one minute summary of how it went for each pair.

I give the lesson for the next topic and the next assignment.

If someone needs to miss a class, let me know, and try to make arrangements with the mentor to cover the material before the next meeting. It's possible that some pairs may eventually wind up pursuing discipleship on their own rather than in this small group setting. We can be flexible.

Questions?

Pass out 3 x 5 cards. Write down 1) your name, 2) whether you are willing to participate in discipleship as a disciple or a mentor at this time, or perhaps later

3) With whom you might like to be paired with (no guarantees), 4) Would you rather convene on Monday or Thursday evenings?

How to give a two-minute testimony: A testimony should 1) describe what you were like before (be honest and specific about your selfishness and sin), 2) how you accepted Yeshua—including the basic message of the Good News, God's love, Yeshua suffering and dying for us, in fulfillment of Scripture, to cleanse our consciences of sin and give us eternal life, and 3) how the *Ruach* brought transformation in your life afterward. Next time, we'll practice!