



Ten Practical How-To's of Discipleship

Jesus' last words to His followers gave explicit instructions to make disciples of people all over the world. As followers of Christ, we are all commanded to make disciples.

But sometimes that command can be overwhelming. We may feel daunted about the process, thinking we don't have what it takes to disciple anyone. Others are qualified, we simply aren't.

Aside from feeling under qualified, most Christians are very uncertain about where or how to start obeying this command.

In this article we present ten practical "How To's" to help you start small, start simple, and start now.

1. Identify the Right Kind of Man/Woman

What is meant by "right kind" of disciple? You need someone who will be faithful, available, and teachable. In a word – HUNGRY. Your time on this earth is limited. Invest it wisely.

2. Meet Them Where They Are

Jesus gave us a model of how to participate in the culture without conforming to it in order to meet those who need the gospel. Jesus targeted the hearts of His disciples and was aware of their present circumstances, needs, fears, and failures. He stepped into the lives of the disciples right where they were.

3. Start Small and Raise the Bar

Heaping too much too quickly on someone may lead to feelings of defeat or burnout. There is wisdom in incrementally "turning up the heat" on someone. There is also wisdom in not agreeing to indefinitely disciple someone. Having periodic checkpoints allows for an "out" for you or for them if one is needed for any reason.

4. Be Relational

For many people—especially in the West—discipleship is typically program or curriculum driven. These elements aren't necessarily bad, but they are not complete. We tend to structure discipleship and put it on our calendars as if we are saying, "For me, discipleship will happen every Friday at 7:00." This is a far cry from New Testament discipleship where relationship was key and the disciple could learn from watching the master. If your investment in others is not rooted in genuine love and authentic relationship it is not discipleship.

5. Teach Unto Change

You must address three areas in your teaching:

1. Belief is important because there must be an anchor (the Word of God) that grounds you.
2. Behavior is important because it is a natural outflow from belief.
3. Purpose is vital because it gives you direction.





6. Build a Reproducer

Your primary goal in discipleship is to glorify Christ by being faithful with what God has entrusted to you. It is the Holy Spirit who changes lives and brings true transformation. However, you should also desire such heart change in others who will then be faithful to reproduce. You want to build into someone who will take what you have given them and pour it into other people. One of the best ways to imitate Christ is to train disciples who make disciples.

7. Stretch Them

Give others opportunities to be challenged outside of their comfort zone, so that their faith may grow. Often when you don't feel quite equipped or prepared for that to which you are being called, God works mightily to grow and strengthen you.

8. Expose Them to the Faithful

"You don't get the whole loaf of bread from one man." The diversity and uniqueness of the Body of Christ can be powerfully edifying in the discipleship process. Introduce disciples to both groups and individuals from whom they could learn.

Think outside the box – this list can include personal contacts, large group meetings and/or conferences, historical heroes of the faith, etc. Be creative. You do not have to be the only source of truth and life they receive.

9. Involve Them in a Local Church Body

The church is the God-ordained place of community, fellowship, teaching, and accountability for His people. To rebel against this would be to disobey God. The lone ranger Christian will not last long. Community among the family of God in a local church is crucial.

10. Be a Builder of Curriculum

Once you are living through the lens of the great commission you become an active listener and observer and less of a consumer of content. You become a conduit instead of a container. Now everything you experience in life has multiplicative potential.

When you build curriculum, you can personalize it for your specific relationship. You can deliver the right truth at the right time in a transformational and transferable way.

Downline Ministries partners with local churches and ministries to encourage a restoration of biblical discipleship. Through curriculum and resources, we equip churches and leaders with materials and training they need to share the Gospel and make a difference in the lives of others.

Want more lessons like this one? Check out Downline Builder, our customizable small group curriculum and discipleship resource, at www.downlinebuilder.com.

