

Prayer

Making Disciples Starts at Home

February 27, 2011

Text - Various

Scripture Reading - Deuteronomy 6:1-9

God has called us, as Christians, to make disciples (that is followers of Christ).

Matthew 28:18-20 (ESV)

¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and *make disciples* of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Acts 1:8 (ESV)

⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and *you will be my witnesses* in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Acts 2:41-42 (ESV)

⁴¹ So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. ⁴² And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

TWE Mission

To bring glory to God *and many to Jesus by raising up disciples* who are so passionate about being new creations in Christ and ambassadors for Him that they joyfully and sacrificially dedicate their lives to representing Jesus well in all they say and in all they do, and to teaching and encouraging others to do the same, wherever God has planted them.

The ideal environment for making disciples is loving, trusting, long-term relationships in which you are able to spend significant time with one another.

- Loving and trusting relationships are critical because following Jesus is *no easy deal*.

- o If you were asked by someone to leave everything you had behind and follow them down a difficult, dangerous, unknown road that almost no one else was on and that goes on forever, you would have to be absolutely convinced that that person was trustworthy and that they had your very best interests in mind before you agreed to follow them. Christianity is that difficult, dangerous, unknown road and that is exactly what we're doing when we ask someone to follow Christ.
 - Following Christ means a lifetime of self-sacrifice, self-denial, self-forgetfulness, and self-disclosure.
 - It means constantly swimming against the current of the world around us and often standing alone.
 - It means completely dedicating ourselves to a Person who cannot be seen and to a purpose that very few people understand.
 - And it means going to war daily against an enemy that is far stronger, far wiser, and far more dangerous than any earthly foe we could ever face.
- o When we ask someone to follow us as we follow Christ, we are asking them to do a very difficult and completely life changing thing, and that is why loving, trusting relationships are so important to discipleship.
- Long-term relationships in which you are able to spend significant time with one another are critical because discipleship is a progressive, comprehensive, ongoing process that is *better caught than taught*.
 - o **Matthew 28:20 (ESV)**
²⁰teaching them to observe **all** that I have commanded you.
 - o I think this is why when Jesus called His disciples He required them to leave everything to follow Him.
 - o He knew that an hour on Sunday morning and an hour on Wednesday night wasn't going to be enough.

- o In order to teach His disciples to obey **all** that He had commanded them He needed them to *live with Him* and to follow in His footsteps *day by day*.
- o As a youth pastor, I used to think about this all the time.
- o This is why discipleship programs like Teen Challenge are so effective

The ideal environment for making disciples is loving, trusting, long-term relationships in which you are able to spend significant time with one another.

The place where this ideal disciple making environment occurs most naturally is in the home, and that's why God has called parents to be the primary disciplers of their children.

- **Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (ESV)**

⁴"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ⁵You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷*You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.*

- **Ephesians 6:1-4 (ESV)**

¹*Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.* ²"Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise), ³"that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land." ⁴*Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*

Notice in verse four of Ephesians 6, that..._

Though God has especially gifted, equipped, and called mothers to care for their children and homes (Titus 2:4-5, Proverbs 31), He has especially charged *fathers* with the duty of discipleship.

- **Ephesians 6:3-4 (ESV)**

⁴*Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*

- We talked about this at the men’s retreat. Whether we realize it or not, we are in a spiritual battle (Eph 6:12), our children’s souls are on the line, and God has called *fathers* to lead the charge.
- You see the results of fathers leading, or failing to lead the spiritual charge both in the Bible and in our world today.
 - o Failing to lead – Eli (the priest who Samuel served under)
 - **1 Samuel 2:12 (ESV)**
¹² Now the sons of Eli were worthless men. They did not know the Lord.
 - **1 Samuel 2:22-25 (ESV)**
²² Now Eli was very old, and he kept hearing all that his sons were doing to all Israel, ...²³ And he said to them, "Why do you do such things? ²⁵ ... But they would not listen to the voice of their father..."
 - **1 Samuel 3:13 (ESV)**
¹³ And I declare to him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, *and he did not restrain them.*
 - o Leading – Joshua
 - **Joshua 24:14-15 (ESV)**
¹⁴ "Now therefore fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. ¹⁵ And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. *But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.*"
 - **Joshua 24:31 (ESV)**
³¹ Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived

Joshua and had known all the work that the Lord did for Israel.

o Leading - Philippian Jailer

▪ **Acts 16:30-33 (ESV)**

30 ..."Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" 31 And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, *you and your household.*" 32 And they spoke the word of the Lord to *him and to all who were in his house.* 33 And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, *he and all his family.*

o In our world today

In (a) 1994 Swiss (study) The question was asked to determine whether a person's religion carried through to the next generation, and if so, why, or if not, why not. The result is dynamite. There is one critical factor. It is overwhelming, and it is this: *It is the religious practice of the father of the family that, above all, determines the future attendance at or absence from church of the children.*

In short, if a father does not go to church, no matter how faithful his wife's devotions, only one child in 50 will become a regular worshipper. If a father does go regularly, regardless of the practice of the mother, between two-thirds and three-quarters of their children will become churchgoers (regular and irregular). If a father goes but irregularly to church, regardless of his wife's devotion, between a half and two-thirds of their offspring will find themselves coming to church regularly or occasionally.

A non-practicing mother with a regular father will see a minimum of two-thirds of her children ending up at church. *In contrast, a non-practicing father with a regular mother will see two-thirds of his children never*

darken the church door. If his wife is similarly negligent that figure rises to 80 percent!

- Note: This study is almost 20 years old, it's Swiss ☺, and it only measures church attendance (there is far more to discipleship than that). That being said, however, it certainly alludes to the unquestionable link between a father's willingness to take the spiritual lead in his family and the spiritual health of his children.
- Three words of exhortation
 - o Mothers with husbands who are not taking the spiritual lead - *Don't give up hope!*
 - Nothing is impossible for God (Lk 1:37)
 - He can overcome any statistics He wants and He can soften your husband's heart
 - Keep doing what you need to do
 - Keep being faithful, keep taking the spiritual lead until your husband is ready, and keep praying for your family, *especially your husband*
 - o Fathers who are not taking the spiritual lead - *Your family needs you to step up spiritually!*
 - If you don't yet believe, I want to encourage you, out of love for your wife and kids, to make every effort to support their pursuit of God and to begin to pursue God yourself (Jer 29:13).
 - Several encouraging conversations lately with guys who are doing this
 - If you do believe, begin to assume your God-given role as spiritual leader of your home today. Your family needs you!
 - o Church - Based on these facts it seems all the more clear to me that our primary strategy for raising up Godly children at TWE should be pouring into, praying for, exhorting, encouraging, and equipping *their*

parents, and especially their fathers, to play the primary discipleship role that God has called them to.

Top three hindrances to fathers taking the lead in the discipleship process

- 1) Unbelief
- 2) Lack of Confidence
- 3) Business

- *I've experienced all three*

Five things fathers need to do to lead the discipleship process well

- 1) Make it your top priority
- 2) Pray
- 3) Love and encourage your wife
- 4) Live it out
- 5) Lead family worship

Making disciples needs to extend beyond our nuclear families

- It may be tempting to limit the scope of your discipleship to your nuclear family, *but that would be a mistake.*
 - o **Matthew 28:19 (ESV)**
¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of *all nations*,
 - o **Acts 1:8 (ESV)**
⁸...you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."
 - o **Matthew 12:46-50 (ESV)**
"Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" ⁴⁹And stretching out his hand toward *his disciples*, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! ⁵⁰For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."
 - o Jesus didn't limit the scope of His discipleship to His nuclear family, His disciples didn't limit the scope of their discipleship to their nuclear families, and we shouldn't limit the scope of our discipleship to our nuclear families either.
 - o That being said, *discipleship needs to start at home.*

Closing addresses

- Those who aren't parents

- o Someday you may be
- o Pray for and come alongside those who are
- Parents who feel they've done all they can and are still waiting
 - o There's hope!
 - **Isaiah 55:11 (ESV)**
¹¹ ... my word... that goes out from my mouth; ... shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.
 - **Proverbs 22:6 (ESV)**
⁶ Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.
 - o Keep sharing, keep living it out, keep praying, and trust the Lord
 - o Ex. Francis Chan and Jim Cymbala's daughters
- Parents who feel they've failed
 - o If you are in Christ, God has forgiven you. You need to forgive yourself.
 - **Romans 8:1 (ESV)**
¹ There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
 - **Psalms 103: 12 (ESV)**
¹² as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.
 - o God can still use you
 - Ex. B.L.
- Kids
 - o You need to make your faith your own
 - God won't let you into Heaven on your parent's ticket
 - God won't let you blame your parents for your disobedience (Hophni and Phineas)
 - o You need to prayer for your parents, especially your dads

