

The Making of a Disciple - Part 3

by David Roper

The goal of discipleship is to present every man mature in Christ through teaching, instruction, and truth incarnate in life.

Duration: 35:45

Scripture: Matthew 28:20, John 5:39, Acts 20:27, Colossians 1:28, 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Topics: "Discipleship", "Mentorship"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal story about a college student who was searching for something more in life. The speaker emphasizes the importance of taking the initiative to ask others if they would like to sit down and discover what God can teach them from the Word. They suggest using sermons and study materials as a starting point for studying the Scriptures together. The speaker also highlights the significance of living out the truth and principles of God's Word in our own lives as we teach others.

Transcript

Well, I've come this morning to the last of these studies. I have been enriched by my scriptures. There have been some verses that had to be said, because they're... And I felt sometimes that I was patting you about the head and shoulders.

But I hope you understand that I am as much the target of this as you. And that these are truths that I want God to make real. And I certainly am not on anyone.

Just accepting the principles and anxious to see them in the church. In my life and in the body at large. I'm struck in just re-reading the gospels.

These studies. To see that the Christian faith is... That the Lord disciple to the Christian faith. Were young men in their late thirties.

The Lord himself, my age, had wrapped up his program. It really strikes me. Men and women in the vigor.

The prime of their manhood and womanhood. Put them to work at that point in their life and continue. It took quite a while for the apostles.

John must have been in his late nineties. When he wrote the book of John. But the Lord started in his thirties.

Going back to what Roy said. About the youth of this congregation. And I see people who from the very beginnings have been taught in the word.

And now are growing into maturity in Christ and in years. Ready to be put to use. And that's exciting.

I just want you to grasp these principles. So. Now last week.

About some of the men. The Lord employed. For in lives.

The type of disciple. That he wants to be. Fruitful.

Loving disciple. We talked about the necessity. Quality of commitment.

There's a story. With Alexander the Great. I'm not sure about the historical.

But. The story is told of a young soldier. Alexander.

Because of. Of his. His laziness.

Appearance as a soldier. Alexander's tent. He said.

Soldier. He said my name is Alexander. Alexander sprang to his feet.

In his face. And knocked him down. As this young man was rising to his feet.

Young man. Either change your name. Or profession.

Story. But I thought how unlike the Lord. He doesn't strike us down.

Because though we bear the name of Christ. Our profession. Is not.

How unlike him. To move in and support. And to supply.

The grace. The resources. To be the kind of disciples.

That he. Follow him. As we saw last week.

And. And turn him into a soldier. If we're willing.

To set aside our rights. And make ourselves available. It's the type of man that he's after.

We're all men under construction. There may be bits of unfinished. Lumber.

Showing. A few nails. But you can see that a work is going on.

The builder. Has committed himself. To producing maturity in every life.

And though we're unfinished. He's at work. And as the Lord promised.

Hunger and thirst after righteousness. Bill. Hunger is to put us to use.

Available to him. Now this morning we want to. Aspects of.

Of discipleship. The goal. Of discipleship.

What. What we're after. And individual lives.

In contact with. And. Which this goal.

Is to be achieved. I'd like to have you turn with me to the passage. That we.

One. Twenty four through nine. And since it is.

I'd like to reread it just to refresh your thinking. Starting verse twenty four. In my sufferings for your sake and in my flesh.

I can. In Christ afflictions for the sake. That is the church.

Minister. According to the divine office. To me.

All's office was that of an. Teacher. Is given to me for you to make the word of God.

The mystery hidden for ages. Now made manifest to his saints. Chose to make known how great among the Gentiles.

Of the glory of this mystery which. You. The hope of glory.

Him we proclaim. Man and teaching every man. That's the method.

Warning. Teaching and as he says earlier that the word of God may be. In order that we may present.

Every man. Mature in Christ. That's the.

Present every man mature in Christ. For this I toil striving with all. He mightily inspires within me.

Now you may question the use of the. This way. Because he did have a. History.

Unique office. Our call to an apostolic office set of church. Is Paul's ministry to go into.

Serious pagan areas. Of Asia Minor. Europe.

Galatia. To plant. The gospel there.

To draw together a group of believers. Basic truth appoint leaders and move on. Later pastor teachers prophets would come.

Church so he had something of a unique ministry. But even though his ministry was unique. The method is the same in every.

Goal of a man's ministry is the same no matter what his office may be. And see this in the case. See the parallels.

Between. The Paul did. And the type of ministry that Christ.

Had different ministries. The method by which. The goal and the goal itself.

Would be the same. At the goal. Of our ministry.

And that's where we should always begin. Because if someone has said if you aim at nothing that's exactly what. We need to ask ourselves.

What are we doing to these people? I remember walking into Howard Hendricks office in seminary. And seeing a great big plaque on his wall. What in the world are you doing to these people? And he said.

To walk out of that door. To teach a class I look at that. What in the world am I doing to these people? What's the goal? What are we after? Not in there just to teach content.

Not there just to stand before a class. Not there to earn a living. But to.

Bring every. Every saint into maturity in Christ. And that's our goal.

Paul says. In verse 28. In order that we may present.

Every man. Mature. The word is.

In this passage is the same word. That you find in Romans 12. One where Paul calls upon believers.

To present their bodies. A living sacrifice. It's used again in Romans 6. Where Paul says.

Yield our members as instruments of unrighteousness to God. But to yield ourselves to God. And our members as instruments of righteousness.

It's a military term. It means essentially to stand at attention. We learned in the army.

Before you can give. Or receive orders. And close orders.

You must call your men to attention. And so what Paul is saying is. We need to stand.

Men at attention before God. Ready to take orders. Ready to move in whatever direction he desires.

Present. Every man. Mature in Christ.

And then we need to define. What this word maturity means. I think the simplest explanation is this.

An understanding. On the principle. That Christ.

Is our life. It's discovering that. As Paul.

In Galatians 2.20. I am crucified with Christ. Yet not I. But Christ lives in me. In the life which I now live.

By faith in the Son of God. Who loved me and gave himself for me. Continually walking.

According to that principle. That Jesus Christ. Is my life.

Depending. Acting. On me.

Out of that great majestic. Jesus Christ. That indwells us.

A person who understands that principle. And acts upon it. Is a mature man.

Not. But a mature man. The immature man acts.

And operates. Out of the law. He has an extreme.
Code. That coerces him. Into place.
He's doing. Things for Christ. And living.
For Christ. And obedient to Christ. Out of a sense of duty.
Paul says the law has that function. It's for the immature. It's for the person who doesn't understand.
That Christ is our life. But the mature man doesn't. He operates on the basis of grace.
Not that he's. But that Jesus Christ himself. Lives out through his life.
The righteous requirement. He allows. A living Lord.
To meet the demands. Of righteousness in his life. And I think that's.
Described in scripture. Of its effects. Or its results.
Between good and evil. The fact that. We can understand the scriptures.
Other. Other other. Descriptions of it.
In the New Testament. But basically. It's an understanding.
And acting upon this principle. Jesus Christ. Not dependent upon the law.
Dependent upon a church. Not dependent. Except as we need them for.
Our dependence. On Jesus Christ. Alone.
No other authority. No other matrix for action. What maturity is.
It is being independently. Dependent. Upon Christ.
Paul went to Ephesus. And established a church. In that town.
Appointed leaders. Left them for a while. Came back.
And in Acts 20. We have recorded the words that he addressed to those elders. Final words.
He was going away from the city. He told them I'll never see you again. I'm leaving you in charge.
He assumed that these were mature men. His words as he left them were. And now I commend you to the Lord.
And to the word of his grace. Which is able to build you up. And to give you an inheritance.
From all those that are sanctified. That's all they needed. Was the Lord of the word.
And the word. They needed nothing else. They didn't need Paul.

They didn't need any of the apostles. And that's what I think maturity is. And I think that's what God is after.

In your life and in mine. And in the lives of the people that God will put us in contact with. Paul is saying my goal.

Is to take a man who is independently dependent upon the Lord. And place him before the Lord. So that God can use that man.

Set him to work. Now if you want to go back a couple of pages. To the third chapter of Philippians.

There's another statement of this. That I think corroborates. What I'm saying.

I feel to be the. The thread that runs through scripture. In verse nine of chapter three.

Paul indicates his desire to be found in him. And then parenthetically. He explains what it means to be found in him.

Not having a righteousness of my own based on law. You see that would be. The law would be for the immature.

Who needs it. Not having a righteousness of my own based on law. But that which is in faith in Christ.

The righteousness from God. Depends upon faith. Activity that grows out of resting upon Jesus Christ.

Verse ten. Connects with the latter part of this first phrase in verse nine. And be found in him.

Verse ten. That I may know him. And the power of his resurrection.

And may share his sufferings. Becoming like him in his death. That if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Three attitudes. He says he carries about. In his thinking as a result.

Of his being found in Jesus Christ through faith. He wants to know him. A deep personal intent.

Intense fellowship with Jesus Christ. Know him. Intimately.

And he wants to know the power of his resurrection life. To be able to face every circumstance. With the mighty resurrection power of Jesus Christ.

And third. May share his sufferings. Becoming like him in his death.

Be identified with him in his death. On the cross. To the extent that we set aside our rights.

Our goals. Our ambitions. Set aside ourselves.

In order to allow him to live through us. And he does this in order that. In verse 11.

If possible I may attain. The resurrection from the dead. Several different times.

You've heard expositions on this passage. And it is a difficult passage. No question about it.

Certainly Paul is not saying that there is some doubt. That he will attain. The resurrection of the body. Because in other places he states. Without question. That this is his prospect. What he is saying here. Is that I want. So to live. That in every circumstance. I manifest the resurrection power of Jesus Christ. That I become a stand out. From among those. Who are dead. Who are spiritually dead. Who do not understand the principle of Jesus Christ. Living through me. That is my goal. Now notice in verse 12. He says not that I have already obtained this. Or am already perfected. But I press on to make it my own. Because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brethren I do not consider. That I have made it my own. But one thing I do. Forgetting what lies behind. And straining forward to what lies ahead. I press on toward the goal. For the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us. Who are mature. Be thus minded. Now you see what he is saying. If you are a mature man. This will be your mind. I want to know Christ. I want him living through me. I want self to be reckoned dead. On the basis of the cross. Now this is our goal. And Paul says my. My goal. The focus of everything I am doing in my ministry. Is to present men. As mature in Christ. Not to build buildings. Not to perpetuate programs. But to present people. Mature in Christ. And this Paul says. Determines his message. In verse 27. Of his passage in Colossians. Colossians 1.27. To them God chose to make known. How great among the Gentiles. Are the riches of the glory. Of this mystery. Which is Christ in you. The hope of glory. In Ephesians. He talks about Christ in you. In terms of a church. In Colossians he talks about Christ in you. All the way through the book. Christ is our life. Source of every activity. And Paul says. Because my goal is to see that. That Christ is my life. My message is. Christ is my life. Christ in you. Paul says. Him we proclaim. The content. Of our message. Is Christ.

The burden. Of our teaching. Is Christ.

As the songwriter says. Beyond the sacred page. We see.

The Lord. And as the Lord said to the Pharisees. Who were perhaps the best taught people of their time.

You search the scriptures. Because you think that in them. You have eternal life.

But they are they which testify of me. You see we miss the whole point. Of the scriptures.

When we teach them. Just to understand the argument of the book. Or the geography.

Or the history of the book. Or even to just know the book. As good as that may be.

The purpose of all teaching. Is to present Jesus Christ. As the one who is adequate for living.

And thus to present men mature in Christ. I think that not only is our goal. Maturity.

In terms of the individual. But maturity. In community.

As Paul points out in Ephesians 4. We will not take time to look at it. This morning. But Paul says.

That his goal is not only to see individuals mature. But to see individuals maturing. In relationship to other believers.

So that they understand their place in the body. They know what their place is. And they function in their place.

And all together as one body. Every member functions together. With the other members.

Each one drawing on the strength of the head. But interrelated. To one another.

That's our goal. Present men mature. To Christ.

Now the method. In general in verse 25. He says that he became a minister.

In order to make the word of God. Fully known. He wants to declare.

The whole counsel of God. Or going back to the mandate. That we discussed.

The first Sunday we were together. The Lord said that we're to teach. Men all things.

That he commanded. A full understanding of the principles. By which God works.

Not just learning books. But understanding those mighty principles. By which God.

Desires to bring every man into maturity. And to put him to use. And he breaks it down.

Into two segments. In verse 28. He says him we proclaim.

Warning every man. And teaching every man. In all wisdom.

Instructing. Both in public. And in private.

And admonishing. Both in public. And in private.

The admonishing. To use a figure that I picked up from Bob Smith. To bring down to a fine point.

The truth of the scriptures. And the life. To draw a man's life out to that point.

So that you take a specific need. And you link it with a specific scripture. And you tie the two together.

So that the man thoroughly understands. The principle. No other way.

To bring a man into maturity. But the teaching. The truth of the word of God.

Paul says all scripture is given by inspiration of God. And is profitable for doctrine. For reproof.

For correction. For instruction in righteousness. That the man of God may be perfect.

Same word. Mature. Fully equipped.

For every good work. Several things strike me about this. This is not just the responsibility of the so-called clergy.

It's the responsibility of every person. Because the commission given. To the disciples.

Was to teach all men. And that commission. Has rung down through the ages.

In many different places. But primarily in the lives of individuals. And God has put together.

Given the privilege of instructing another person. In the things of God. Several things seem to strike me with importance.

One is that. That if you're going to engage in this kind of teaching ministry. The scriptures say that.

This truth must be incarnate in our life. Not that we've fully grasped it all. And we're acting on it all.

Because who of us would have the right to speak. If that were the case. But that we're moving toward obedience.

And we're willing to be made obedient. To the truth. Yeah.

This is what gives us our authority. As the Lord said to. A group of people who were.

Who were rejecting him. Taunting him. He said if I do not the things that I teach you.

Then don't believe me. Just look at my life. And if you see obedience to those things.

Then you believe what I'm saying. Our authority rests. Upon our willingness to be obedient.

To the truth. And secondly. In the biblical description.

It's always truthing in love. Speaking the truth in love. In gentleness.

In honor. For the person. In regard for their rights.

To speak to them in love. Paul says a servant of God. Must not strive.

But be gentle with all men. In meekness. Instructing those that oppose themselves.

If perhaps. God may release them from. A slave who has captured them.

To do his will. Patient. Gentle.

Loving instruction. Out of the word. And third.

I think we need to. As Cameron Townsend says. Hit hard.

God's men will bounce. We need to instruct people in the scriptures. To the extent.

That they're forced to make some kind of a decision. They must be honest. They must change.

Because that's what the scriptures are designed to do. To change us. The goal.

To present every man mature in Christ. The method. By teaching.

By instruction. By truth incarnate in the life. And by teaching.

The truth verbally. Vocally. That's the way we're to make disciples.

Now if. If I. Just what I think are some practical steps. To achieve this in.

Because I know just how you feel. Because I feel the same way. It's just theory.

It's good theory. But it's still theory. Now how do we get this down into life? Because that's where the scriptures are supposed to be.

In life. Right down where we live. And I think that God.

Wants each one of us. To have a ministry of discipling. In the lives of people that we come in contact with.

And as we go we're to make disciples. It's this exciting touch on our vocation. Describes it in terms of the original intent of the word vocation.

Which means call. Your job. Whether it's a housewife or a business person.

Or a taxi driver or a laborer. Or an attorney or physician. Or whatever it might be.

Is to be done to God's glory. And it's as I said. Is to be done with a sense of restoring.

To order a world that's out of kilter. But primarily it's to be used as a platform. For discipling men and women to Jesus Christ.

Convinced of that. And that gives it an exciting touch. I don't know how many young businessmen I've talked to.

Who are so frustrated by their jobs. With no sense of fulfillment in them. And yet what an exciting thing.

To work out the implications of this kind of a view. Of your vocation. For life.

To be a platform. For discipling men and women. Where do we start? Well, I think number one.

We have to start with the individual heart attitude. Do we really want this? If we don't, God can change our heart. And if we do, God will put us to use.

But it starts right here. As Paul says to the same group of Ephesian elders. In the book of Acts.

Acts 20. He says, take heed to yourself. And to your teaching.

It starts here. With my attitude. Do I want to have a ministry? And then secondly.

I think we need to ask God. Specifically. To give us someone that we can disciple.

God delights to answer prayer like that. His very specific personal requests. That we lay upon the Lord.

God give me someone. In whose life I can make a major investment. And He'll do it.

You may start with some little group. You're presently working with. Like a Sunday school class.

Or a Bible study. And as you begin to pray for that group. God will give you a sense of affinity.

For one or more in that group. And you'll begin to sense that that's the one. The Lord has tagged you with.

Or maybe someone in your office. Who does not yet know the Lord. And the Lord will give you the opportunity.

Of winning that person. And discipling them. It may be a neighbor.

Maybe a business associate. Maybe a child. Maybe a relative.

It can be anyone. But if we begin to ask God. Amazing things happen.

We begin to discover. That He has put someone in our sights. And we just can't get them off our mind.

And then third. I think having discovered. This person.

We need to take the initiative. To ask them if they'll study with us. And we all hate that.

Because we hate to impose upon people. And nobody likes us. And they're not going to want me.

Invading their privacy. The amazing thing is. That the world is just full of people.

That are just starved to death. For love and understanding. And companionship.

And everything. The big front. That fends us off.

Is so unreal. And down inside. Is a great ministry to them.

I think I mentioned once before. The fact that when I was in seminary. One of my classmates was Ray Berry.

He now plays professional football. And I thought. Of all the guys who wouldn't be interested in Christ.

It would be Ray Berry. He has everything. An athlete.

Good student. Well liked. Popular.

He wouldn't be interested in Christ. And I never talked to him about the Gospel. I picked up this little book called *The Gold and the Glory* and he had his testimony in there and the first line I read was all through college.

I was desperately looking for something that would add another dimension to my life I was miserable and I just just Just wanted to crawl in a hole And you know they're just people like that all over who just want that kind of a of a loving touch and God will use us If we'll take the initiative to just ask them. Would you like to sit down? I know I need the time Let's sit down and just discover together what God can teach us out of the word And then fourth expose them to the word Your experience is important, but that experience must always be backed up by the Word of God And may I suggest some just some very simple Helps in this regard Because most of us really don't know where to start At the risk of Beating Mr. Stubman's drum, which I don't mind doing I'd suggest these sermons that are printed in the back as a as a Fundamental means of getting into the scriptures together. I've used these things given them to the person asking to read them And then we get together and discuss it Can't be beat really Then there are some other little helps that are available There is a new series of studies put out by inner varsity Christian fellowship that I think are very good called learning to love God The simple procedures and how to how to find out what God is really like and what he wants for your life And campus crusade has a series that we've used extensively with college and high school students called ten basic steps to Christian maturity We have supplies of these or they can be purchased in Newton's Christian bookstore Or they can be ordered directly from campus crusade or from inner varsity press But they're available to be used and we found them very helpful In instructing a person in basic principles of how to walk with the Lord and then fifth Pray for them pray for them.

Paul says I am convinced when he writes to this church in Colossians in the first chapter He says I know that God is going to complete what he's begun in your life And he follows that statement immediately with his statement that he's praying for them His confidence that God is going to carry them on is based Upon his dependence upon the Lord in prayer on behalf of these people John says I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth And let me say there is no more exciting joy in the world than to have the privilege of discipling someone and see them go on with Christ and duplicate themselves and Frankly, there is no thrill like it in the world Now this is an exhausting assignment Something about just giving yourself in a spiritual ministry to someone else that is there's draining of physical and and Spiritual strength you remember the count of the Lord who was walking down the street and a woman clutched his garment Since that the power Had had been drained out of him and you certainly feel that way at times It's very very easy to avoid the responsibility of bearing someone else's burdens We have enough of our own without picking somebody else's up The Paul gives us a word in our regard in verse 29 and with that we're through Paul says for this I toil It is to present every man mature in Christ I toil for this I give it everything I have Striving uses a Greek word *agonizomai* agonizing striving With all the energy which he mightily inspires within me literally all of his energy Which he mightily inspires in me It's the Lord who's committed to this responsibility. It's really not our task He said I am with you to the end of the age and he will be this promise and he never Reneges on his promises. He's always there in power It's a basis of our strength and when we were tempted to give way to fear and weariness Boredom because this is not always an exciting process.

Believe me There is by faith his strength his energy to accomplish the task Shall we pray? Our father what a marvelous thing it is that that we are our co-laborers with you That your desire is to build lives And you've you've committed to us the wonderful responsibility of sharing with you in that task It's an

overwhelming thing, but we thank you for your your strength available to us That enables us to to break through the fear and the selfishness and the indifference That we all we all feel And so we ask you this week to use us that we might be fishers of men we might disciple those That you're you're seeking And we ask this in Jesus name. Amen

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