

FOLLOWING JESUS
A Disciple's Handbook

Lesson 8:
“Following Jesus in Evangelizing and Discipling”

Evangelizing and Discipling Introduction

Read Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-18, Luke 24:46-49

Right before Jesus ascended into heaven after His crucifixion and resurrection, He gave His disciples what is called the Great Commission, or Supreme Commission. He told them that they were to go into the whole world, preaching the gospel to each and every person, making passionate, proficient and powerful followers of all who repented and believed in and on Him. In other words, He was calling and commissioning them to go evangelizing and discipling the people of the earth as their primary purpose and ultimate destiny. Souls saved, and disciples made was to be their mission, message and ministry—their main reason for living.

Jesus' final words were that His disciples and followers should go everywhere evangelizing and discipling. His final words were to be their first works. They believed Him and committed themselves to do that very thing, and so should we. Evangelizing and discipling are to be our main reasons for rising each day to meet a world lost and broken, in need of being reached with the love and power of God in Christ Jesus. All other things in our lives, however important they may be, must be subordinate and secondary to our primary calling to save souls and make disciples.

Evangelizing and Discipling Defined

Evangelizing has to do with declaring, defining, defending and demonstrating God's gospel (good news) of salvation through the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. *Declaring* the gospel has to do with what it says. *Defining* the gospel has to do with what it means. *Defending* the gospel has to do with why it's true. *Demonstrating* the gospel has to do with what it does. Evangelizing is clearly communicating the message of God's plan to redeem, reconcile and restore sinful mankind through His Sinless Son, and compellingly confirming this message with the signs of love and power that follow. (Read Mark 16:19-20; Acts 1:1-3, 8; 10:36-43.)

The following is a very helpful definition of the gospel from Evangelist Rice Brooks: *The gospel is the good news that God became man in Jesus Christ. He lived the life we should have lived and died the death we should have died—in our place. Three days later, He rose from the dead, proving He is the Son of God and offering the gift of salvation and forgiveness of sin to anyone who repents and believes in Him.* This is the message that sets men free from the penalty,

power, guilt and shame of sin when it is acted upon through repenting and believing. (Read John 3:14-17.)

Discipling is the process of taking believers from spiritual infancy to maturity as they are taught to love and obey Jesus in everything He has commanded, and as they are trained to be faithful and fruitful followers of Jesus in word and deed. On one hand, making and shaping new believers into highly functional disciples can happen in a relatively short span of time. (Read Acts 6:1-7.) On another hand, we become more and more mature and devoted and dynamic disciples over the course of our lifetime. (Read II Timothy 2:1-2; II Peter 3:17-18.) We are to help believers to lay a good foundation of faith and faithfulness, strong and stable enough to build a life in Jesus on. (Read Matthew 7:24-27.) Then we are to ongoingly develop believers as they continue to grow in faith and endurance through time, teaching, testing, trial and triumph. (Read James 1:2-4.)

Evangelizing and Discipling in the Life of Jesus

Jesus' earthly ministry was given in large part to the declaration and demonstration of the gospel of the kingdom and to teaching, training and preparing disciples to give witness to what they had heard and seen in Him. (Read Matthew 10:1-4; Mark 3:13-18; Luke 6:12-19.) He clearly communicated God's plan of redemption through the offering of His Son—the Messiah, Savior and King. He called men to respond to His message and ministry and then to call others to do the same. In a little over three years, Jesus made disciples and trained apostles out of those He had called to follow Him and learn of His Father's Word, will and ways. While He was still on earth, He sent them out to preach the gospel and to extend and express God's grace to heal the human experience—spirit, soul and body. (Read Luke 9:1-6; 10:1-9.) He modeled for His followers how to heal the sick and to cast out the demonic hordes that sought to bind and torment. (Read Matthew 12:22-30.) He left a gospel witness in every village, town and city that He went to as part of His plan to heal those oppressed of the devil, and to raise up and release a generation of Spirit-filled world changers who would carry on His mission of saving and healing after He ascended to heaven.

Evangelizing and Discipling in the Life of Jesus' Followers

As we have stated, when Jesus was still on earth, His followers watched Him work, worked with Him and were sent out by Him to do the works of God to rescue and restore in His mighty name. Upon His departure, Jesus commissioned His followers to carry out His kingdom cause of seeking, serving and saving the lost, broken and bound and to bring spiritual formation into their lives, making them more and more the people of God the Father and Jesus the Son. From the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, they went about evangelizing and discipling. (Read Acts 2:1-42.) They preached good news, performed good works of love and Holy Spirit power and planted grace-filled, Jesus-glorifying covenantal communities called the Church. (Read Acts 14:21-28.) They taught and trained believers in Jesus to be people totally and steadfastly devoted to the Word of God, and to engage in authentic spiritual fellowship and friendship with one another as they lived life together in Jesus praying, praising, and seeking

God individually and corporately. (Read Acts 2:42.) They made disciples who understood that they were to represent Christ in the earth and to reflect His glory in everything they said and everything they did. (Read Acts 6:1-7.)

Jesus' apostles wrote extensively about evangelizing and discipling. The Apostle Paul taught the believers at Ephesus that Jesus had made every provision to give gifts to men and make gifts of men. He taught them to thoroughly and dynamically equip His disciples and followers to grow and build His Church numerically and spiritually, resulting in the global multiplication Jesus intends until the end of this age. (Read Ephesians 4:7-16; II Timothy 2:2.) The Apostle Peter exhorted believers to winsomely and wisely declare, define, defend and demonstrate the gospel, convincing unbelievers and building their lives. (Read I Peter 2:1-10; 3:15-16.)

Evangelizing and Discipling in Our Lives

The message should be clear: *evangelizing* and *discipling* are our primary purposes and priorities—souls saved, and disciples made is the main reason we rise every day. This is our calling and commission with lasting and life-giving consequences in this life and the life to come. The Great and Supreme Commission given to Jesus' disciples of old is our commission as well. Getting the gospel to everyone, everywhere and making disciples of those who believe in and on Jesus is the greatest gift we can give to others and the greatest privilege we could possibly be granted. If you want to be filled with joy and a daily sense of fulfilling your divine destiny, give your life for what Jesus and His followers gave theirs—share God's gift of eternal life and use it to shape generations of future followers who do the same.

Evangelist Rice Brooks trains people to use something called the *S.A.L.T. Principle* to share the gospel and shape people's beliefs in the Word, will and ways of God. The first step is to *Start a conversation*. When we engage people in a gospel conversation, we open the door to a divine dialogue that can produce dynamic results. The next steps are to *Ask questions* and *Listen*. Asking questions and listening communicates interest in someone's story, beliefs and perspective. A sincere interview can turn into a sincere invitation to consider the claims of Christ and the eternal purpose of God. Finally, *Tell the story*. First, tell *God's story*. That is the gospel of grace through the offering of the Sinless Son, Jesus. Then, tell *your story*. That is how the gospel has impacted and influenced your life for eternal good. This is your testimony, or evidence for the case for Christ's power to save, heal and deliver. The *S.A.L.T. Principle* is a useful principle and process for both evangelizing and discipling.

MEMORIZE: *And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen.* (Matthew 28:18-20)

KEY TRUTH: Evangelizing and Discipling are our primary purposes and priorities—souls saved, and disciples made is the main reason we rise each day.

YOUR RESPONSE:

This is how you can respond in loving obedience to Jesus as you apply the truths from this lesson to your life.

- Make a fresh commitment each day to give yourself to your primary purpose of evangelizing and discipling.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to guide and empower you to lead people to faith in Christ and to help them to grow strong in Him. Use Evangelist Rice Brooks' definition of the gospel and the S.A.L.T. Principle to help to that end.
- The best way to guide people through the process of evangelizing and discipling is to use good written tools created by people gifted to equip believers for the work of evangelizing and discipling. Find proven resources that produce real results and use them regularly.
- The first tool, of course, is the Scriptures—the very Word and words of God. Read the Scriptures, meditate on them, memorize them and use them in evangelizing and discipling for the glory of God and the good of men.

WRITTEN RESPONSE: Life Reflection

Review each section from the lesson on the previous pages to fill in each blank below. This will reinforce the truths from this lesson in your life.

1. Evangelizing has to do with _____, _____, _____ and _____ God's gospel (good news) of salvation through the _____, _____, _____ and _____ of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
2. Discipling is the process of taking believers from _____ _____ to _____ as they are taught to _____ and _____ Jesus in everything He has commanded and as they are _____ and _____ to be _____ and _____ followers of Jesus in word and deed.
3. Jesus' earthly ministry was given in large part to the _____ and _____ of the gospel of the kingdom and to _____, _____ and _____ disciple to give witness to they had _____ and _____ in Him.
4. Upon His departure, Jesus _____ His followers to _____ His kingdom cause of _____, _____ and _____ the lost, broken and bound and to bring _____ into their lives, _____ more and more the people of God the Father and Jesus the Son.
5. The message should be clear: _____ and _____ are our primary _____ and _____ — _____, _____, and _____ is the main reason we rise _____.

WRITTEN RESPONSE: Life Reflection

Using the journaling section on the pages at the end of the lesson, write in your own words your responses to the following question.

1. What have you learned and what has impacted you personally from this lesson?
2. In reading the scripture references in this lesson, what are you sensing and seeing the Holy Spirit highlighting and revealing to you that will enable you to better follow Jesus?
3. As a disciple and follower of Jesus, what steps of loving obedience do you need to take to see what you have learned in this lesson become ongoing practices and patterns in your life?