

“Sent: Multiply Disciples”

2 Timothy 2:1-7

The Great Commission is the agenda of the church. Jesus Christ has commanded us to make disciples. This is not part of our ministry; this is our ministry. It is not simply one of the things that the church does--it is the ONE thing that the church does.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer - *"Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ."*

A disciple is a learner or a follower, someone who is committed to following a master. The term was used some 230 times in the gospels and 28 times in Acts to refer to the followers of Jesus.

A common idea says that a Christian is someone who by faith accepts Christ as Savior, receives eternal life, and becomes a part of the family of God. On the other hand, a disciple is a more serious class of Christian who is more active, more engaged, and more involved. Because of this, most people in the church today would consider themselves to be Christians but not disciples.

The New Testament does not make this distinction! Christians are disciples, and disciples are Christians. The distinguishing characteristic of a disciple is that a disciple is one who has FAITH in Christ that is authenticated by FOLLOWING Christ.

While it is true that some are following at a different pace than others, a person who claims to have faith in Christ but does not follow Christ is not a disciple. Such a person has the kind of faith that James speaks of that is without works, which is nothing more than a dead and lifeless faith.

Jesus has given us the task of making disciples who wholeheartedly follow Him, not casual associates who are merely fond of Him.

The Great Commission means that we make disciples whose lives are transformed by the gospel, who take on Christ's character and obey His commands, and whose lives are centered around His mission.

This means we live for the purpose of:

- **Delivering**--first step in making disciples is evangelism, sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with those who do not know Him

- **Developing**--commitment to Jesus Christ leads to the development of character and capacity
- **Deploying**--the life of the disciple is to be centered around Christ's mission of making disciples

The multiplication of disciples who live for Christ and radiate God's glory to a dark world is our objective. The Great Commission demands that we make, mature, and multiply disciples.

Which would you rather have?

- \$1 million dollars today
- 1 penny a day, doubled every day, for the next 30 days

Here's how this would shake out:

Day 1: \$.01	Day 16: \$327.68
Day 2: \$.02	Day 17: \$655.36
Day 3: \$.04	Day 18: \$1,310.72
Day 4: \$.08	Day 19: \$2,621.44
Day 5: \$.16	Day 20: \$5,242.88
Day 6: \$.32	Day 21: \$10,485.76
Day 7: \$.64	Day 22: \$20,971.52
Day 8: \$1.28	Day 23: \$41,943.04
Day 9: \$2.56	Day 24: \$83,886.08
Day 10: \$5.12	Day 25: \$167,772.16
Day 11: \$10.24	Day 26: \$335,544.32
Day 12: \$20.48	Day 27: \$671,088.64
Day 13: \$40.96	Day 28: \$1,342,177.28
Day 14: \$81.92	Day 29: \$2,684,354.56
Day 15: \$163.84	Day 30: \$5,368,709.12

This shows us the powerful difference in multiplication versus simple addition.

Jesus has outlined His agenda for His church in the Great Commission--we are to make disciples by going, baptizing, and teaching. This agenda involves the multiplication of disciples of Christ for the glory of God. This means that we teach God's Word through accountable relationships in the body of Christ in order to multiply disciples for Christ. The multiplication of disciples who know and glorify God through their life must be our objective.

Jesus Christ intends for His church to grow by multiplication, not simply by addition.

Multiplication is how the church spread throughout the book of Acts.

Acts 2:41 - "And there were added that day about three thousand souls."

Acts 2:47 - “And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.”

Acts 5:14 - “And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women.”

Acts 6:7 - “And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem.”

Addition soon became multiplication. In just the first few chapters:

- 11 become 120
- 120 become 3,000
- 3,000 became an untold multitude

In most churches, the congregation pays the pastor to preach, win the lost, and instruct the saved--while we have taught the church members to merely function as cheerleaders or spectators. The converts who are won are baptized and join the other spectators. This results in only partial evangelism.

There must be an emphasis in the body of Christ upon teaching others for the sake of reaching others.

Robby Gallaty - *“Every believer should be able to answer two questions. Who am I discipling? And who is discipling me? Every church should be able to answer two questions. Do we have a plan for making disciples? And is it working?”*

Multiplying disciples requires several things according to what Paul writes to Timothy in this text.

1. Disciples must be formed by DEVOTION

“You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus.”

Some translations render this verse, “Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” Paul is calling on Timothy to be unwavering in his faith and devotion to Jesus Christ.

At the time of writing, Paul was imprisoned in Rome. He knew that the time of his departure was near, and his life and ministry here on earth was about to come to a close. He was in

chains for his faith and treated as a criminal traitor to Rome because of his unflinching loyalty to Christ.

The church that he had planted in Ephesus had also fallen on hard times

Context shows that Timothy had gone through a season of spiritual struggle and weakness. He very well have been questioning God's call on his life or his own gifts or the sufficiency of God's grace. Based on what Paul says to him, it seems that he had been facing obstacles in his life and ministry.

2 Timothy 1:6 - "For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God which is in you."

2 Timothy 1:8 - "Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God."

2 Timothy 1:14 - "By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you."

"Be Strengthened" - *in the imperative which makes it a command*

Timothy was responsible for his own spiritual growth and formation in Christ. Spiritual growth is a process through which those who have received new life in Christ take on His character and likeness. This involves both personal effort and divine grace.

Personal Responsibility

Where there is no discipline, there is no discipleship!

1 Timothy 4:7 - "Train yourself to be godly."

"Train" - the word is gymnos from where we get 'gym' from

Paul wrote this because he knew that Timothy could not be godly or conformed to the image of Christ without personal discipline.

Discipleship demands personal responsibility. The only way to be strengthened is to eat and exercise!

God is all-powerful and has all authority. Salvation is His work of grace in the human heart. Yet it is equally true that He has given us the task of propagating the gospel of salvation.

Divine Grace

Be strong in the "grace" which is in Christ Jesus. This is divine enablement.

The call of God was on Timothy's life, and the effectiveness of his ministry would depend upon his solid confidence in God and his faithfulness to obey God despite the opposition he would face.

No matter how gifted or well-trained or knowledgeable someone is, if he lacks courage in the faith, he will not be an effective witness for Jesus Christ.

Making disciples requires that we have confidence. This is why Jesus sandwiched our task between two encouraging promises:

Matthew 28:18-20 - "And Jesus came and said to them, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Confidence in sharing the gospel does not come from clever techniques, or from more information. Confidence comes from God's Spirit and from simply being obedient.

We have a message that will never disappoint, we serve a King who will never fail, and we are given new life that will never die. This is to be my confidence in making, maturing, and multiplying disciples for Jesus Christ.

2. Disciples must be faithful to DELEGATION

"And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."

During Timothy's years spent with Paul, he had heard and been taught divine truth. Here in this verse, Timothy is instructed to take the truth that he had learned and teach it to other faithful men who will be able to teach others.

This is the pattern established by Jesus.

Acts 1:1-2 - "In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen."

Those apostles were empowered and commissioned.

This means that Timothy was to make disciples who would pass the truth on to another generation.

From Paul to Timothy to others who teach others encompasses some four generations of truth. This is the process of multiplication which began then and continues today.

Billy Graham - *"One of the first verses of scripture that Dawson Trotman, the founder of the Navigators, called me to memorize was 2 Timothy 2:2. He said, This is like a mathematical formula for spreading the gospel and enlarging the church. Paul taught Timothy. Timothy shared what he knew with faithful men. And the faithful men were supposed to teach others also. And so the process goes on. If every believer followed this pattern, the church would reach the entire world in one generation. If the church followed this pattern, we could reach the world in one generation. Mass crusades in which I believe and to which I have committed my life will never accomplish the Great Commission; one on one relationships will."*

This requires a willingness to be taught, as well as a willingness to take that information and apply it by passing it on to others.

Information + Application = Transformation & Multiplication

I read where several years ago, the Los Angeles Times reported the story of an elderly man and his wife who were found dead in their apartment. Autopsies revealed that both of them had died from severe malnutrition, although investigators found nearly \$50,000 stored in paper bags in one of their closets!

Many are spiritually malnourished in the church today, but it is not due to a lack of information; it is due to a lack of application. When this is the case, there will be no multiplication of disciples.

Disciples are to be faithful to take the gospel and teach others who in turn repeat the process. God is not only interested in reaching this current generation; He desires the worship of the next generation as well.

3. Disciples must be free from DISTRACTION

"Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him. An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops. Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything."

Since making disciples is the task that Jesus has given to His church, this means that His church cannot afford to be distracted in this mission.

Distractions can be deadly!

According to an article in Forbes:

- In 2011, 1.3 million auto accidents in the US involved cell phones which was 23% of all crashes
- In 2011, there were 3,331 killed in accidents involving a distracted driver compared to 3,267 the year before

Just last summer, 80 people were killed in a tragic passenger train crash in Spain. Investigators discovered that the driver was going 95mph on a stretch of track where the speed limit is 50mph. He didn't adjust his speed when he should have because he was on his cell phone at the time.

Distractions can be deadly, and this is the point that Paul is making to Timothy in these verses. He uses three metaphors:

Soldier can't afford to be entangled (v. 4)

"No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him."

"Entangled" carries the idea of being weaved in; not to get caught up or meshed in with things that are irrelevant to him

The aim or objective of a faithful soldier is to please his commanding officer. He must focus on being faithful to carry out all the orders that his commanding officer has given him.

Athlete can't afford to be disqualified (v. 5)

"An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules."

The athlete who gets careless cannot expect to win. If he or she does not compete according to the rules, they are disqualified. All of their training is then useless.

"Athlete" - *phrase refers to the one competing in athletics; verb used is 'athleo' which means to wrestle or struggle*

The idea being conveyed is that of a struggle that requires a great deal of determination to win. Athletes are not nonchalant when it comes to competition; they push themselves to the brink and do whatever it takes to win.

Determination is often superior to talent.

Farmer can't afford to be negligent (v. 6)

"It is the hardworking farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops."

"Hardworking" - *to toil intensely, to sweat, to strain oneself to the point of exhaustion*

The hardworking farmer is the man who gets up early and comes in late. He takes no shortcuts. Because he understands the urgency of his work, he endures the cold of winter and the heat of summer. He doesn't allow dry seasons to discourage him. He does not wait until convenient times. He works while it is day.

The farmer who doesn't sow when it is a time to sow will never reap when it is a time to reap. What drives this hardworking farmer is the joy of the harvest.

Proverbs 20:4 - "Those too lazy to plow in the right season will have no food at the harvest."

Jesus taught faithful stewardship in the parable of the talents in Matthew 25. The master holds his servants accountable for what he has entrusted them with. There is no time to waste being distracted lest we displease the Master!

Galatians 6:9 - "And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up."

In the 2008 Summer Olympics held in Beijing, China, much hope and anticipation was resting on the U.S. men's track team. The 400m relay team had aspirations of gold medals, but no gold was to be found for them in Beijing. In the thick of competition, runner Tyson Gay stuck his left hand behind him, waiting to feel the baton make contact with his hand when passed off by his team mate. He looked ahead and began to take off and glanced back at fellow teammate Darvis Patton. A moment later, Patton let go of the baton and Tyson Gay squeezed his hand shut while in full sprint-- only to discover a split second later that he had dropped the baton which disqualified both Tyson and his teammates.

Jesus Christ has entrusted us with His gospel. He has given us the task of making disciples. We can't afford to be distracted. Church, we can't afford to drop the baton!

"Think Over What I Say" - *full understanding that only comes from considering something carefully*

Look at your life under close inspection. Where are you in terms of your own personal discipleship? Are you committed to following Jesus and living a life that is centered around His mission?

Be **committed** as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Be **centered** around His mission.

Be **confident** in God's grace.