

I think this is needed, because I just want to call something out. If you have been listening to the broader Christian conversation lately, this whole idea is having a bit of a moment right now. (It should have always had one, but ya know...)

But there has been renewed interest and attention given to the idea of going and making disciples wherever we go. Lots of pastors and podcasts and books and conversation around this idea, all using this term.

For some, this is a joy, a breath of fresh air, this return to a commitment to go and make disciples

For others, maybe those of us who find ourselves running a bit skeptical. The attention makes us squirm. It's not what you heard, maybe it's new. Could be a lot of things.

But one thing that is abundantly clear, without a single shadow of a doubt, that this is what Jesus told His direct followers to do. We can talk about how, what it looks like. But one thing we have to settle right at the start is that this is direct from Jesus, for every single person. No one gets a pass; this doesn't get outsourced. This idea of making disciples is not just a mission for the organization that is CrossPoint, planned and executed by "paid professionals." It's for every person who calls themselves a follower of Jesus—to do what this mission states and make disciples.

We are going to spend two weeks on this. But this first week, I think what we need to spend our time on is to actually figure out what we mean when we say a disciple. Then next week we will figure out how to make them? Sound good?

But I think part of some peoples' hang ups is it's not the most accessible word, not one we use a ton in regular day-to-day language in 2025, but it is the word Jesus decided to use.

Let's look at it. Matthew 28

Matthew 28:16-20

The Great Commission

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. 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."

Not the most accessible word in our culture today but very understood back then.

Not a new concept

When Jesus rolled up

Jesus came to us

In the old disciple-rabbi relationship, they approached the teacher, asked if they could follow, and were given permission.

We see something different in Jesus. He called them. He called us, as broken and ignorant and selfish as we are, to be His followers, and fishers of men.

The Four Jobs of a Disciple

In the first century, the disciples of the sages had four major tasks to perform.

1. To memorize their teacher's words. It was the job of a disciple to memorize his teacher's words. The oral transmission process was the only method practiced among the sages. The great rabbis and Torah scholars did not write scrolls or compose books for their students to read and study. Instead, they taught orally and their disciples studied by memorizing their words. Through constant repetition, disciples memorized their teacher's words verbatim and were able to repeat them to subsequent generations.

We have Scripture—never more accessible to us—do it

All this I have told you so that you will not fall away. They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, the time is coming when anyone who kills you will think they are offering a service to God. They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me. I have told you this, so that when their time comes you will remember that I warned you about them (John 16:1-4)

Later

I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world. (John 16:33)

But we should also consider the oral aspect of it—hearing from Him.

2. To learn their teacher's traditions and interpretations. It was a disciple's job to learn the tradition of how his teacher kept the commands of God and interpreted the Scriptures. Every detail about the teacher was important to the disciple. The disciple needed to learn how the teacher washed his hands, how he kept the Sabbath, how he fasted, how he prayed, how he

gave charity, how he affixed a mezuzah, how he said the blessings over food, etc. Furthermore, the way the teacher interpreted passages of Scriptures, the meanings he drew out, the midrashim he told, the parables and stories he used to elucidate with, the way he explained a verse or understood a concept, each of these was of utmost importance to the disciple. Details of this sort were not just trivia. To a disciple, these were like gems and pearls meant to be gathered and treasured.

Interpreting Jesus' words and actions, the way He intended—we have work to do here, don't we.

It's easy to spout off memorized words—a little more of a challenge to know what they mean.

(Memory verses at camp. Every year I have staff and some older students whine at me about memorizing the verses.)

Kids repeating what I say (the idea of idioms)

You are one to talk.

You're on thin ice.

That's the pot calling the kettle black.

Look at Luke 24:13-53. After Jesus rose from the dead, during the 40 days preceding His ascension, He explained His presence and ministry among them as the literal fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy.

Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled," Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things" (Luke 24:44-48)

3. To imitate their teacher's actions. It was the job of a disciple to be like his teacher. A disciple's highest calling was to be a reflection of his teacher. His goal was to one day be just like his master. A disciple studied to learn to act and to speak and to respond the same way his master would act and speak and respond. A disciple studied to do the things his master did. The Gospels express this concept with the words, "Every disciple, fully trained will be like his master." (Luke 6:40)

Dust of the rabbi

Modeling rant

The spotlight is on us, what will they see? Will it be consistent?

Ericka Kirk and Trump

4. To raise up disciples. It was the job of a disciple, when finally trained, to raise up his own disciples. He was to create a new generation of students and to transmit to them the memorized words of his Master, the traditions and the interpretations of his Master, the actions and behaviors of his Master. The goal was to pass the teaching and the torch of discipleship from generation to generation. So each disciple became the teacher, the rabbi, the master, and the father to a new generation of disciples.

These functions describe the cultural context of the institution of discipleship in the Gospels. When Yeshua called His disciples, these four tasks are the things they were called to do. This is how they understood their job.

This requires us to shrug off the consumeristic approach that is so easy to slide into when it comes to church and even Jesus.

And I'll just say, when I consume, I feel kind of gross. When I'm active. I feel better.

Weekends—on the go vs. sit at home.

He spent three years teaching them and training them. When He left them, He gave them this command, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." (Matthew 18:19, 20) The great commission is the normal job of a disciple, to raise up more disciples.

This is what we are after when we talk about making disciples—an entire transformation of our heart and soul.

Nicander example (bapto vs. baptizo) what we can learn from pickles

So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image. (2 Corinthians 3:18, NLT)

We are not after full buildings, more stuff, influence, power, knowledge, people finishing classes, or spouting off the right answers. We aren't after status. What we want our time and energy and resources to produce, are radically changed disciples of Jesus, who know His words, know what He means by them, acts like He acts, and goes and makes more. Anything less is a miss.