



First Baptist Church At The Villages

Ministry Plan 2020 • Church Planting and Making Disciples •

Acts 14:21-23; Galatians 6:1-2; 1 Thess. 2:19-20 • 11/17/2019

MAIN POINT

There are great personal benefits and challenges when it comes to making disciples.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What is one experience you regret not having participated in even though you had the chance to do so? Why did you end up choosing not to do that thing?

What did you miss out on because you didn't?

Whether big or small, most of us have certain regrets from the past. Perhaps we regret having not gone to a certain place when we lived close to it, or we wish we had participated in a sport or activity that we had the chance to. Though we didn't realize it at the time, choosing not to participate in that experience meant we lost out on something. The experience of making disciples is more than a command; it is a gift that comes with great benefits. If we choose not to participate in this great task, we will miss out on rich fellowship with other believers, accountability for personal growth, and the joy of leading others in their journey.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

What kind of experiences have enriched your life because you participated in the task of making disciples?

How did those experiences help your love for and devotion to Jesus grow?

| Have a volunteer read Acts 14:21-23.

What kind of experiences did Paul and Barnabas have because they were making disciples? How do you see the rich fellowship with other believers displayed in these verses?

Through their process of disciple-making, Paul and Barnabas came alongside these believers and lived life with them. As they did, they shared the richness of fellowship that only comes when people are seeking Jesus together. Partly because of this fellowship, one of God's greatest gifts to us is the church.

What are some excuses Christians might make for not being an active part of the local church? How would you answer those excuses? Why is it essential for Christians to connect in the local church?

What experiences of rich fellowship would you have missed out on if the church wasn't important to you?

The idea that a Christian can follow Jesus and not love the church is foreign to the New Testament. The bulk of the books in the New Testament itself were not meant to be read in isolation, but to be read, interpreted, and obeyed in the context of the community of faith. It was this community of faith, rather than isolated individuals, that God had in mind when He saved us. In addition to this rich fellowship, we also miss out on accountability for personal growth when we don't embrace the task of making disciples.

How does being involved in discipleship offer accountability for personal growth?

What kinds of traits need to characterize accountability in order for it to be a true catalyst for personal growth?

| Have a volunteer read Galatians 6:1-2.

What did Paul emphasize in these verses that is key to accountability?

What is the difference between the restoration described here and looking down on others for their sin?

Why is bearing one another's burdens linked so closely to personal accountability? What do you demonstrate about the nature of God when you bear one another's burdens? How does doing so fulfill the law of Christ?

Part of the disciple-making process is being intimately involved with another person. When we are, it means we should know deeply personal things about them, but we know them not

so that we can heap condemnation on them for their sin, but so that we can help each other continue to grow in Christ. This kind of intimate knowledge that leads to personal growth embodies Jesus' command to truly love our neighbor. If we aren't involved in the discipleship process, we will miss out on this kind of accountability. We will also miss out on the joy of leading others in their journey.

Think about how Jesus' led His followers in their journey of discipleship. What traits of that leadership can you identify? Does that task of leadership ever truly end? Why or why not?

| Have a volunteer read 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20.

How did Paul refer to these believers in this passage? Why did he refer to them like that?

What does this indicate about the benefits of leading someone in their discipleship journey?

How have you personally experienced this kind of joy in leading others toward discipleship?

What are some of the things that must be true about your life, priorities, and schedule if you don't want to miss out on this kind of joy?

Jesus showed us that there is no greater joy than leading someone else on a journey. This kind of joy is one of the great benefits of making disciples, and certainly something we would not want to miss out on.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

How can you give yourself to a greater degree to the fellowship that is found amongst believers?

Are you holding back the intimate details of your life from those close to you? Why? How are you going to take a greater step toward personal accountability?

How can you shift your schedule to make sure there is room to lead someone else in their journey?

PRAYER

Thank God for the great joy and privilege of being and making disciples. Pray that we would clearly see the benefits from what God has told us to do, and we would whole-heartedly give ourselves to this great task.

COMMENTARY

| Acts 14:21-23.

Acts 14:21-23. Barnabas and Paul established churches by evangelizing the lost (meaning they shared the good news) and making many disciples. “That town” refers to Derbe, the most distant point from Antioch of the journey. Having reached the limits of the province, they retraced their steps, returning to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch (not Syrian Antioch from which they were sent out, but Pisidian Antioch in southern Galatia). They could’ve taken a shorter route and easier journey. Instead, they risked their lives to return to the churches they had established in these towns. They accomplished their disciple-making through a threefold process. First, the believers were strengthened or instructed. Second, the believers were encouraged to remain true to the faith. The faith here indicates the core collection of doctrine or beliefs central to following Jesus. Third, the believers were warned of persecution. Not only did Paul and Barnabas establish new churches, they also organized the churches with a leadership structure. The word “elder” was often used for older persons, but here it referred to mature believers, overseeing a congregation’s spiritual health. The elders and the members were committed to the Lord to whom they already belonged; He surely was trustworthy to care for His own people.

| Galatians 6:1-2.

Gal. 6:1-2. Rather than exhibit destructive attitudes and actions (see Gal. 5:26), Christians are to help one another. Paul again addressed the Galatian believers as brothers, signaling a new topic but also emphasizing their spiritual kinship and his warm feeling for them. He gave the example of someone who was caught in a wrongdoing. Whatever the nature of the person’s sin, spiritual believers are to restore the individual. He urged any believer engaged in restoration to have a gentle spirit rather than a harsh, judgmental attitude. The word “gentle” has the idea of strength under control (see on 5:22); the restorer is to be firm but kind. Paul then exhorted believers to carry one another’s burdens. The word “burdens” refers to loads too heavy to bear alone. It could indicate oppressive loads in general but well may have referred specifically to moral faults referenced in verse 1. The guilt and shame from such sins would be heavy loads. Believers, however, also struggle with other loads that threaten to overpower them. Helping shoulder others’ heavy loads would fulfill the law of

Christ.

| 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20.

1 Thess. 2:19-20. Here Paul gives a glimpse into why he was so persistent. These people were his hope, joy, and crown. Paul understood life today in the light of the eternity to come. He built the present upon the certainty of the future. Everything pointed toward that day when he would stand in the presence of Christ. He knew that people were the treasure and glory for which God worked and suffered. To Paul, the Thessalonian believers were “our glory and joy.”