

Life in the Church

Multiply--week 4

DAY 1

Matt. 28:19 ...As you are going, make disciples of all nations...

1. This Great Commission was given to eleven disciples, ***together***. Do you think this is significant? Does He imply that they work and serve together? Why wouldn't Jesus have given the Great Commission to them individually?

2. We live in a very individualistic society. It's easy to hear this command and go charging off to get started. Can you think of how you've seen Christians teaming up to eventually lead people to Jesus? To help them grow? Jot down your observations, below.

3. Have you ever tried to persuade someone with a hardened heart to turn to Jesus? You pray; you share; you read scripture. It seems you're running into a brick wall. Is there something missing in our individualistic approach? Read John 13:34-35

John 13:34-35 A new commandment I give you that you love one another as I have loved you. By this, all men will know you are my disciples if you have love for one another.

4. What is the persuading agent in John 13?

5. Do people see you relating to other Christian brothers and sisters, or are you relying too much on your own individual efforts?

6. What are some ways you are trying to reach out to others?

7. List some Christian brothers or sisters you could team with.

DAY 2

1. The church is a critical piece of God's redemptive purpose. One of the reasons is that there are some people who will not be persuaded that Jesus is Lord in isolation. What has struck millions of non-believers is what they see in *genuine community*--the way we treat each other and the joy of teaming together.

2. Jot down a time when you saw genuine Christian community taking place. What was going on? What characterized the "atmosphere" of the time?

3. When you think of "church" which of the following items strike you the most? Check your top three. "Church" is a(n):

Building

Place where we worship

Organization (or "disorganization((??)))

Social club

Place to meet new friends

Place to learn the bible

Place to pray

An institution to support

A place where even I can make a difference

A place where I belong

I am a member of God's family.

A place with some good programs

A community of Christian brothers and sisters

A group of people through whom God is transforming me, and our world!

Other: _____

4. Would you say your focus on church is more inward focused or outward focused?

5. Much of our growing in Christ comes, not in isolation, but in community, loving and serving others! The paradox of Christian growth is that the more we give, the more we gain! What is an example from your life or another's where you have seen this?

DAY 3

1. The "church" gets bashed around a lot in our culture. It's an easy target. We're a group of sinners (saved, yes, but the sanctification is ever so slow). Worse, we forget our natural sin nature, assume we're waaaaay better than we used to be, and go out to "save the world." The world is not impressed with an attitude that trumpets, "Look at me."

Have you been embarrassed by another well-meaning Christian?

Hebrews 3:13 But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called 'Today', that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

3. What does the writer warn us may happen if we live in isolation?

4. What is the antidote to the "disease" of isolation?

5. To "exhort" means to encourage in a good direction. The Greek word is "parakaleo," a compound word. "Para" means above, and "kaleo" means comfort. The idea is to comfort from above. This implies that you live *in community*, with a few close Christians who actually know you. The opposite would be to live *in isolation*, either without a few close Christians, and/or hiding in isolation in spite of a few close Christian brothers or sisters.

a. If you are a Christian man, do you have a few close Christians brothers? If you are a Christian woman, do you have a few close Christian sisters? Who are they?

b. On a scale of 1-100, how much of your "real" story does someone know? A "1" means "almost nothing of significance." A "100" means they know "the good, the bad, and the ugly."

c. How much of someone else's story do you know? It takes care and other-centeredness. Who is someone you need to know and exhort?

DAY 4

Galatians 6:1 Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. ² Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. ³ If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. ⁴ Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, ⁵ for each one should carry his own load.

1. These verses are loaded with "golden nuggets" of what it means to live in Christian community! Let's unpack these verses!

2. For this passage list below any of the following that you see...

a. What dangers are there?

b. What attitudes should we avoid?

c. What attitudes should we strive for?

d. What duties to our Christian brothers should we be on the lookout for?

3. There is an important distinction made in 6:2 and 6:5.

In 6:2, Paul tells us to carry each others' ***burdens***.

In 6:5, Paul tells us each of us must carry our own ***load***.

The Greek word for "burden" means "boulder." The Greek word for "load" means backpack. What distinction is Paul making?

4. Is there something from this passage you need to do with someone else?

DAY 5

1. One of the hardest lessons for us to learn in making disciples, is that we are too "quick fixes" and "easy answers." These are *usually* not all that helpful. In many cases they are

a. Defeating!

Why would "quick fixes" or "easy answers" be defeating to people?

b. Discouraging!

Why would "quick fixes" or "easy answers" be discouraging to people?

(Note: many people have already tried the advice you gave. They, and it, failed. That's defeating. And, getting a "quick fix" minimizes the problem. People don't feel like you take them seriously or their struggle seriously. They feel *more* alone after being with you, because you left them in isolation. That's discouraging!

2. Can you think of a time a well-intended someone (Me??) gave you a "quick fix" or "easy answer" but the effect was defeating or discouraging to you?

3. Much of the life transformation that happens isn't because you are the "bible expert." It happens when one person shares his life, his heart, his struggles, his aspirations, his learning, etc., with another. People learn most from example.

a. List some people from whom you have learned something significant.

b. What did the power of their example do for you?

4. There is a man-written parable about heaven and hell. In both heaven and hell there is a banquet table with twelve people sitting around the table. The banquet table is covered with rich and plentiful food. There are plates, glasses, and forks that are three-feet long.

In hell, the people around the table are starving. They are gaunt, emaciated, and MAD!!!

In heaven, the people are well-fed, contented and happy to be at the table with their Christian brothers and sisters.

What's the difference? In hell, each person scrambles to feed himself, but the fork is so long, they can't get the food to their own mouth. And, "No one will help me!!!!"

In heaven, the twelve are more caught up with feeding each other, that they hardly notice they are being fed without having to tend to their own needs!

5. Review today's notes. This is core stuff in disciple-making. What do you want to do?