

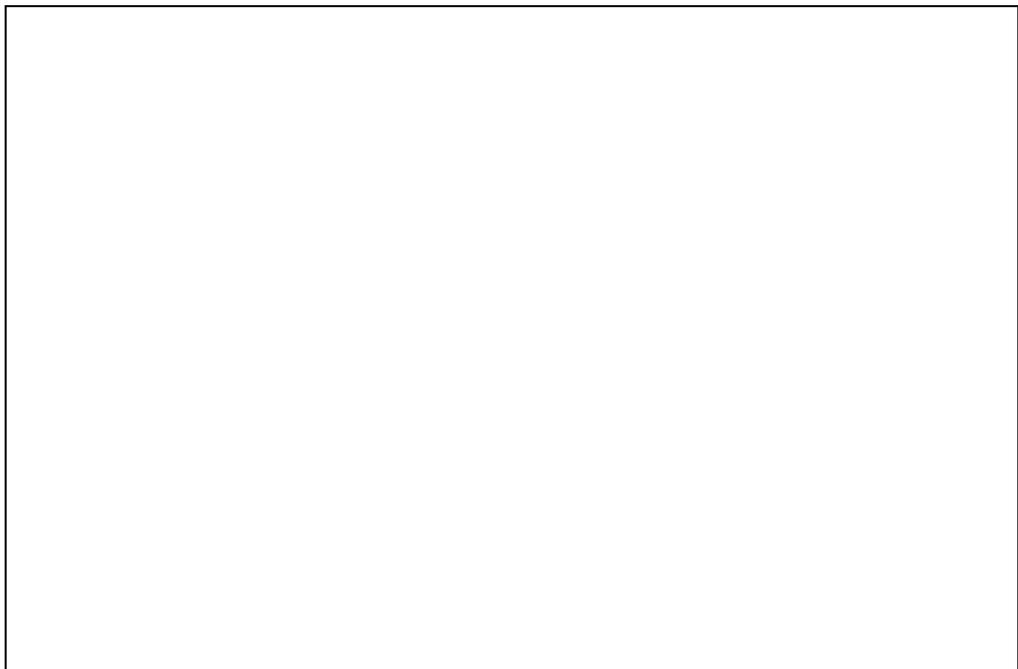
## Lesson 2: The 7 Principles of Discipleship

### Intro

In our last lesson we have seen that that Jesus' call to make disciples is much more than just teaching someone the 28 fundamental beliefs before baptism. After baptism it is extremely important to continue guiding the new believer and teaching them about discipleship. **The goal is that they become mature disciples of Jesus and in turn are prepared to lead others into discipleship with Christ. The commission implies the principle of multiplication.**

### The Discipleship Path

The model of the discipleship describes this process in four stages. Please review our last lesson and draw an outline of the the discipleship path in the following box.



### Jesus our example

When Jesus called His students to make disciples, He commanded them to do with others what He Himself had done with them. Thus, they had to remember how Jesus had made them disciples. Of course, they knew they could not improve Jesus' way of making disciples. The Bible does not only show us *that* Jesus made disciples of others, but also *how* He did it. It does not only show us the *message* but also the *method*. In this lesson we will discover the principles that describe how Jesus made disciples of others. Studying Jesus' way of making disciples is the best way to discover how we can make disciples of others today.

### Principle #1: **Jesus called the disciples to unconditionally follow Him.**

Jesus called the disciples to follow Him. In order to accept this call they had to leave everything behind. This required a clear decision. They could not follow His call just a little bit or most of the time. Jesus called them to follow Him unconditionally! He did not do this without giving them the opportunity beforehand to personally learn about Him and His mission. The *Come and see* preceded the *Follow Me!*



How did Simon, Andrew and Levi (Matthew) respond to Jesus' call?

Mark 1:16-18: \_\_\_\_\_

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Mark 2:14: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Principle #2: Jesus lived in fellowship with His disciples.**

In Mark 3:14, we read that Jesus called His disciples so that they "might be with Him." Jesus knew that discipleship requires an open relationship. That is why Jesus invested in such a small number of people. He could have reached more people during His mission, but He chose to concentrate the largest part of His ministry on the 12 apostles. Jesus could have established a University and held discipleship classes everyday. Of course Jesus preached before large crowds and many accepted Him through this public ministry. But Jesus knew very well that His public sermons would not be enough. It was clear to Him that true discipleship requires fellowship in the context of deep, transparent relationships. That's why Jesus invested a lot of time and energy into His relationships with His disciples.

Jesus had a very open relationship with His disciples. He encouraged them to speak with Him about their questions and quarrels, sometimes even bringing them up first. Jesus' relationship with His disciples was influenced by openness, mutual responsibility, and accountability.

**Quote #1**

"For three years and a half the disciples were under the instruction of the greatest Teacher the world has ever known. By personal contact and association, Christ trained them for His service. Day by day they walked and talked with Him, hearing His words of cheer to the weary and heavy-laden, and seeing the manifestation of His power in behalf of the sick and the afflicted. Sometimes He taught them, sitting among them on the mountainside; sometimes beside the sea or walking by the way, He revealed the mysteries of the kingdom of God. Wherever hearts were open to receive the diving message, He unfolded the truths of the way of salvation. He did not command the disciples to do this or that, but said 'Follow Me.' On His journeys through country and cities, He took them with Him, that they might see how He taught the people. They traveled with Him from place to place. They shared His frugal fare, and like Him were sometimes hungry and often weary. On crowded streets, by the lakeside, in the lonely desert, they were with Him. They saw Him in every phase of life." (*Acts of the Apostles, p. 17-18.*)

**Quote #2**

"The disciples came to Jesus and told Him all things. Their intimate relationship with Him encouraged them to lay before Him their favorable and unfavorable experiences, their joy at seeing results from their labors, and their sorrow at their failures, their faults, and their weaknesses." (*The Desire of Ages, p. 359*)

**Principle #3: Jesus was an example for His disciples.**

Jesus did not just speak publicly. He gave His disciples the possibility to observe His life and service. He did not just preach but also lived His message. It was His example that truly transformed His disciples.

**Quote #3**

“In the training of the disciples the example of the Savior’s life was far more effective than any mere doctrinal instruction. When they were separated from Him, every look and tone and word came back to them. Often when in conflict with the enemies of the gospel, they repeated His words, and as they saw their effect upon the people, they rejoiced greatly.” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 350)

**Principle #4: Jesus prayed with and for His disciples and thus taught them how to pray.**



What did Jesus do before He chose the twelve?

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**Luke 6:12-13**

Jesus did not randomly call His disciples. He prayed to God and asked for His leading before choosing the twelve.

**Quote #4**

“The Savior knew the character of the men whom He had chosen; all their weaknesses and errors were open before Him; He knew the perils through which they must pass, the responsibility that would rest upon them; and His heart yearned over these chosen ones. Alone upon a mountain near the Sea of Galilee He spent the entire night in prayer for them, while they were sleeping at the foot of the mountain.” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 291-292)



How did the disciples react when they witnessed Jesus in prayer?

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**Luke 11:1**

On many occasions, the disciples witnessed Jesus going off alone to pray. When close by, Jesus prayed loud enough that His disciples could hear what he was praying about. He also prayed together with them. In every situation the disciples experienced Jesus in prayer. Jesus’ personal example helped them to become men of prayer much more than any sermon on prayer could have without a living example.

**Principle # 5: Jesus taught that the word of God is a mandatory standard for life.**

In His ministry to others, Jesus always pointed to the word of God as the foundation of faith. The disciples often heard “it is written” from the lips of Jesus. Jesus taught His disciples from the word of God and helped them to understand what God was saying.

**Quote #5**

“While they had been with Him, the disciples had often been perplexed by the teaching of the priests and Pharisees, but they had brought their perplexities to

Jesus. He had set before them the truths of Scripture in contrast with tradition. Thus he had strengthened their confidence in God's word, and in a great measure had set them free from their fear of the rabbis and their bondage to tradition." (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 349)

**Principle # 6: Jesus trained His disciples.**

When Jesus decided to spend the majority of His time concentrating on the 12 disciples, it did not mean that He didn't care about the masses of people. On the contrary, He invested so much time and energy in the twelve *because* He wanted to reach the masses. Jesus understood the principle of multiplication. He knew He needed to train His disciples well so that they could in turn make disciples of others and those disciples could make disciples of others. It is with this method that the Gospel will truly be able to reach the whole world.

**Principle # 7: Jesus sent His disciples out for mission.**

Jesus knew that His training would not be complete without giving His disciples practical experience in reaching people for the kingdom of God. Therefore He sent them out. And of course, before He ascended to heaven, he gave them the Great Commission in which He commanded them to make disciples of others. Discipleship is never complete without reaching out to others and making disciples of them.



Read the following text found in the Gospel of Mark. How is this principle made clear?

**Mark 6:7-12,30-31**

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Jesus had invested a lot of time to show His disciples how they could win people for God. He taught them, showed them by example, sent them, and then reviewed their experiences with them.

**Quote #6**

"The apostles were members of the family of Jesus, and they had accompanied Him as He traveled on foot through Galilee. They had shared with Him the toils and hardships that overtook them. They had listened to His discourses, they had walked and talked with the Son of God, and from His daily instruction they had learned how to work for the elevation of humanity. As Jesus ministered to the vast multitudes that gathered about Him, His disciples were in attendance, eager to do His bidding and to lighten His labor. They assisted in arranging the people, bringing the afflicted ones to the Savior, and promoting the comfort of all. They watched for interested hearers, explained the Scriptures to them, and in various ways worked for their spiritual benefit. They taught what they had learned of Jesus, and were every day obtaining a rich experience. But they needed also an experience in laboring alone.

They were still in need of much instruction, great patience and tenderness. Now, while He was personally with them, to point out their errors, and counsel and correct them, the Savior sent them forth as His representatives." (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 349)

**Discipleship in the early church**

The disciples had a clear role model, since they had experienced first hand how Jesus had helped them to grow in their discipleship. And what Jesus had done with them, they in turn applied to their work with others. The New Testament and especially the Book of Acts shows impressively how carefully the early Christians followed the example of Jesus. Think of examples that demonstrate this and write them down in the table below.

	<b>The 7 Principles of Discipleship in Jesus' ministry</b>	<b>How did the early Christians follow this example?</b>
1	Jesus called the disciples to unconditionally follow Him.	
2	Jesus lived in fellowship with His disciples.	
3	Jesus was an example for His disciples.	
4	Jesus prayed with and for His disciples and thus taught them how to pray.	
5	Jesus taught that the word of God is a mandatory standard for life.	
6	Jesus trained His disciples.	
7	Jesus sent His disciples out for mission.	

**Challenge**

1. Continue to pray for people with whom you could establish a discipleship group.
2. Plan specific steps for starting a discipleship group.



**Bible Study**

Please study **Acts 14:19-28** carefully and take notes on the content, meaning, and life applications of these verses. Be sure to write down good questions for each.

**What does the Bible text say?**  
(content, meaning, application)

**How can I ask questions about this?**  
(Questions on content, meaning, and application)

