

Peter: The Principle of Making Disciples

Mark 1:17, Luke 5:1-11, Mark 3:14, Matthew 16:13-26, 28:19, Acts 4:13

Good morning, men. Let's go ahead and do a couple of shout-outs as we begin today. Today we welcome two groups. The first is the Coldwater Men. These are 8-12 men who meet on Tuesday evenings at the Coldwater United Methodist Church in Coldwater, Mississippi. Their leader is Gerald Starnes.

The second group is M2M which stands for Man to Man. It is a group of 8-10 guys who watch the Friday morning videos with us. They are part of Harvest Temple Church of God in Sullivan, Indiana and they are led by Pastor Brian Barrett.

Join me in giving these men a very warm welcome to the Bible study. Welcome. We are glad to have you guys here. One, two, three, hoorah! Glad to have you guys with us. Welcome.

We are in the series "How God Makes Men." We are looking at ten epic stories and ten principles that come from the stories. There is a great promise for your life that you can become and you are going to become the man that God wants you to be because He is making you to be that man.

This morning we are going to look at the life of Peter and the principle of making disciples. We are going to be looking at how God equips men, especially this morning, how God equips men to reach other men.

There are different stages along the way of becoming a disciple. The first stage is that you are a seeker or a man who needs Christ. The next stage is that you are a new believer or a young believer in Christ and you don't know much. Then you profess your faith and you know more and more. You increasingly become a biblical Christian.

It is an interesting thing to me that for many men, this is where it stops. I don't think it stops at this point of becoming a disciple yourself because that is what men intend. I think a lot of times it is that the people who are actually doing the equipping and discipling, helping men come around Christ so they can change the way they think or what they do, they are not calling men up with a greater challenge to go to the next step and the final step. The problem with giving any of these categories specific names is that you can call each of these categories by many different names. It is not some kind of mechanical process, but very organic and sometimes you have to look back and do things over. But this final stage we can call being a servant-leader or a disciple-maker.

You start out and it is about me. Then you realize that the futility of life, the pain of life, and you become a seeker and you want to know God. Then you receive Christ. It is about me and God. Then as you grow you realize, oops, I need to flip that. Really it is about God and me. That is when you really start to become a disciple. When you flip it again, you realize it is not God and me, it is God and others. That is when you become a disciple-maker. That is when you become a servant-leader.

We will talk about this today at two levels. We will talk about us become disciples ourselves, but we will also talk about us helping others becoming disciples. That is the role of becoming a disciple-maker.

What we are going to see, is that Jesus has a surprisingly simple way of making a disciple out of Peter, and then sending Peter to make disciples of others. Here is the big idea today. You might want to start jotting it down. It is a long one. **God makes men by a process of calling, equipping, and sending us so we can call, equip, and send others.**

The key word in this whole thing is the word disciple. We talk about disciple a lot around here. Just so we have a working definition, a disciple is someone who is called to live in Christ, equipped to live like Christ, and sent to live for Christ. Called, equipped and sent. The calling is to live in Christ; that is calling men to be born-again. It is showing them how to be saved. Equipping is helping men to grow in their relationship in Christ and their knowledge of Christ. Sending men to live for Christ is showing them how to do neighbor-love, abiding in Christ and serving Christ, especially in this area of making disciples. The chief mission of a Christian in his role as a Christian is making disciples.

Back on the camera today we have Dave, and on the sound we have Brian, and are they making disciples? Are they in the deal? Are they involved in the mission of making disciples? Absolutely. They are making disciples. Someone who sets up chairs on Sunday morning or does custodial services here at the civic center – are they making disciples? Even if they are not believers, they are making disciples because they are involved in this very important work. They have been sent to go and help others to be called, equipped and sent themselves.

In a previous series we learned that making disciples is God's designated way to release the power of His gospel on every problem that men face – all of the problems that men face.

We have this process of bringing men the spiritual maturity so they can help other men come to spiritual maturity. That is the big picture.

CALLING

First up, let's talk about the calling of Peter and how it applies to us and how it happens. There is no monolithic way that any of this happens. It is difficult to teach on this because there is no one way it happens. It happens however God wants it to happen.

Mark 1:16-17. "As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 'Come, follow me,' Jesus said, 'and I will send you out to fish for people.' At once they left their nets and followed him."

What actually happened is that Peter and Andrew – Peter took a sabbatical. He took a short-term mission trip. There was this tour Jesus made around Galilee and He invited Peter to come along to see what was going on. He was in the process of starting to call Peter to Himself. He did that by allowing Peter to observe what He was doing; to see how He thought, to see what He did. It was obviously very attractive to Peter because when the trip was over they went back to Capernaum where Peter lived and Jesus ended up headquartering.

Turn over to Luke 5:1. There is an unbelievable story about how Peter was out washing his fishing nets. They pulled the boats on the shore and were washing their nets. They come back from the tour. Jesus continued His ministry, but Peter needed to give some attention to his fishing business, and make some money, I am assuming.

In says in Luke 5:1-4, "One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God. He saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, 'Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch.'"

Peter is thinking, we have a carpenter telling a fisherman how to fish. Everybody Galilee fishermen know you don't catch fish in the day, you catch fish at night. But he was beginning to understand the identity of Jesus. In Luke 5:5-8 he says, "Simon answered, 'Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets.' When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, 'Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!'"

It is interesting, can you pinpoint when the twelve different disciples actually became Christians? It is pretty hard. You can pinpoint when they became disciples. You could be a disciple, a follower of Jesus and not be a Christian. You realize this? It says His disciples deserted Him because He was never with Him. He invites people to follow Him. He doesn't say you have to be a Christian to follow Him. He says follow Him and He'll show you how to be a Christian.

This is as good a place as any to speculate this is the conversion of Peter. Peter finally gets it. First, he calls Jesus, Lord, and secondly he confesses he is a sinful man. Faith and repentance are the two things we need to become a Christian. This is probably his conversion. Jesus is calling him to live in Himself.

Then Jesus says, in Verse 10, don't be afraid, from now on you will catch men. Then thus begins the illustrious career of the man we associate with courage, boldness, passion, curiosity, a little impulsiveness. He is a guy kind of like the rest of us, but he is a man who responds to the call of Christ.

How did Jesus call you? Can you remember back to the process by which Jesus called you to Himself? I remember mine. I was like Peter. I was doing my business. I was seeing Christianity all around me and it looked very attractive, and frankly, my life was so futile, doing what I was doing I had to do something to inject some meaning and purpose into what I was doing because the futility, the success sickness, the disease of always wanting more and never being happy when you get it, was consuming me.

My wife was praying for me – a big step. Then, we went to a church. There were some guys there, H. O. and Bob to be specific. They were living out and they exemplified Jesus to me, in the same way Jesus exemplified Himself to Peter. After a while, it looked so good to me I had to have it.

I couldn't live another day without it. I cried out. But it is not just enough to see it. I was also getting information about what it meant to be like that. My pastor Hugh Lake, was simply preaching the gospel. He was simply preaching the gospel the same way Jesus did.

In general, it takes a lot of people today to do what Jesus did Himself. You might have to have a lot of people involved for yourself to be called to Christ. Then it happens. You cry out, *God have mercy on me a sinner*. Or like Peter did, you say, *Lord, go away from me for I am a sinful man*. You are converted. It is absolute. It is powerful. You know that you know that you know that you have been born again. It is exciting.

How is Jesus calling men to Himself today? He is doing it the same way He has always done it – through His Spirit and His Word. In the day of Jesus with Peter, He did it through His own life because He is the living Word. Today we have the written word. It penetrates, separates joint and marrow, and divides spirit so we can understand the gospel. Also through the Spirit – it is the same Spirit today.

We have these four things going on all around us all the time by which Jesus is calling men to Himself. We have his works in creation, the whisper of the Holy Spirit, the Word of God and then we have us, His witnesses.

I've been building these relationships with guys at the gym and yesterday was a big day because two of them were just ready to take the next little step toward Jesus, because you can tell when somebody is watching you and is curious about what makes you a little bit different from the other people. You can tell this. I hope there is something enough different enough about you that is worth noting. It was the right time. One guy is an agnostic, an intense firefighter. There is not an inch on his body that is not covered in tattoos. He is a very unique individual. He is very bright. He is agnostic. I gave him one book and he read it. He said he loved it. He liked it because basically you filter everything through God. He said, "I don't believe in God but it makes so much sense to me."

It was my signal. I knew that we had gotten far enough in the relationship I could start talk openly about Christ. I got a copy of *Is Christianity for You?* It is very direct. We had a conversation about Jesus and I gave him this book. He was excited to have it. Then the same kind of thing happened with another guy.

Here is the thing – Jesus is calling you to live in Him. He is calling you to salvation. He is also expecting you to obey His command to go and make disciples, thereby making that a moral issue, whether or not you do this. Your mission is also to help others.

You might not be the guy that feels comfortable engaging somebody. I hope you get to that place. You just don't know what you are missing if you are not at that place. Maybe there is some other way of being involved in supporting people who do that in some particular way.

His challenge to you and His challenge to me is to both be called, and to call others to Himself. There are these different levels of what He is calling us to do and what He is calling us to help others to do.

The big idea today is **God makes men by a process of calling, equipping, and sending us so we can call, equip, and send others.**

EQUIPPING

The second piece is equipping. Turn with me to Mark 3:13-15. How did Jesus equip Peter? We saw how Jesus called Peter, how he calls men in general. How we can do that ourselves. Now let's look at how Jesus equipped Peter.

“Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons.”

Remember I said Jesus has a surprisingly simple way that He disciplined Peter and a surprisingly simple way that He disciplines us? He just simply invited them to be with Him. That was His strategy. That is the strategy of Jesus to make disciples. He just invites people to be with Him.

What does that mean? They lived together, they traveled together, they ate together. They prayed together, shared together, played together. They retreated together, they heard Jesus' teachings together. They were able to observe His life together. They just did life on life. When you hear in your churches about life on life, this is where it comes from. This is life on life. In fact, you know that later on, Peter reproduced this. In Acts the believers were sharing all things in common, doing life together because that is what they had seen modeled and exemplified of they didn't have to guess how to equip others in order to follow Jesus as well. It is a very simple thing.

Turn with me to Matthew 16: 13. This is just one example of many of the kinds of things that happened in this process of being with him. We say today that for us, equipping is simply bringing people together around the person of Christ and watching Jesus change the way they think and what they do. Peter had a different experience because he was around the incarnate Christ, and He was changing the way Peter thought and did.

This is a great example. Matthew 16:13. This is the Caesarea Philippi confession of faith. Jesus asks, “Who do people say I am?” Peter answers, “You are the Messiah, the son of the living God.” Then Jesus makes that incredible blessing – blessed are you son of Jonah. You are my rock and upon this rock I will build my church. It is a beautiful thing, because of the equipping that is going on and the recognition of Jesus being the Messiah.

Then Jesus goes on and starts predicting His death in Verse 21. He says He will go to Jerusalem, suffer, be killed and then raised to life. Then in Verse 22 – remember Peter had just made the confession that He is the Christ. Then Peter took Jesus aside and began to rebuke Him. Never, Lord, he said. This will never happen to You. Jesus said, Peter, get out of my sight, Satan. You are a stumbling block. You don't have in mind the things of God, but the things of men. He didn't mean he was Satan. He was demonstrating that there is a spirit at work in the world, and he was subject to that.

Any father does not expect his child to reach maturity until they reached maturity. They expect the child to make mistakes. Is there anyone here who had a little child who didn't think they would have a little sinner, too?

God knew what He was doing when He made us. He knew we would be little sinners and He knew He would have to discipline us. He knew we would be flawed. He loves us. You knew you were going to have little sinners but that didn't stop you from wanting to have children. You just knew you would have to discipline them along the way. That is part of equipping.

How is Jesus equipping you? What is He doing to help change the way you think and what you do? This Bible study. One thing we all have in common is we are being equipped in a Bible study to change the way we think and what we do to be more like our Lord and Savior Jesus. Every one of you have other ways, too, that you are being equipped.

I made a list of my own equipping. I will give you the list because we don't have time to go into it. Church, small couples group we got invited to be in, encouragement to do the spiritual disciplines, reading the Bible prayer, memorization of Scriptures is a big part of my spiritual disciplines, also fasting, being a part of a men's small group, reading books, going on retreats – marriage retreats, men's retreats, trainings, learning how to share my faith through Campus Crusade for Christ, classes, parenting classes, other classes as well, adult learning classes at my church. These are all different ways that I was equipped and they were always in relationships. You could miss the idea, the importance, that it was through a relationship that Jesus disciplined Peter. It was through a relationship that Jesus called him to live in Christ, equipped him to live like Christ, and then as we will see in a moment, sent him to live for Christ.

There is very much an incarnation. It is not just proclamation, it is also incarnation. You can't just tell people what they need to do, even if it is the truth – you also need to be involved in their lives in the same way Jesus did. Proclamation plus incarnation will equal a big ministry for you.

He has a challenge for you. He wants us to live like Jesus. We are being equipped to live like Jesus. There is a challenge to equip others to also live like Jesus. That is the big idea today. God makes men through a process. It is a repetitive process. It has been repeated over and over again. You could come up with a different way of describing it, but the thing itself. Take away the words and the thing itself is what it is. It is one thing. It is only one thing and it is only one way. It is calling men to Christ, equipping them in Christ and sending them to live for Christ and this other element that goes to the point of being a disciple-maker and servant-leader is so that we can call, equip and send others.

Just a sidebar here – do you think you can be a disciple if you don't have any desire to make disciples? You've just violated the definition of what it means to be a disciple. If a disciple calls, equips and sends, and one of the things he is sent to do, the main thing he is sent to do is go and make disciples, be my witnesses, as the Father sent me so I am sending you to do these things, and then you have no desire to do it, then you can't be a disciple. You just violated the definition.

What I am hoping is that some of us will realize as a flawed man in my development in spiritual maturity, I was thinking my highest aim was to become a disciple. In order to do that, there is another step. That is to become a servant-leader – to become a disciple-maker so that others

will also become disciples themselves. There is another level. There is a whole other tract of Christianity to be explored.

SENDING

Last is the sending. How does Jesus send Peter? Turn to Matthew 28. We've looked at this so many times you can probably lay your Bible down and it will probably open to this verse. Matthew 28:19. This is the great commission. It says, therefore, go and make churches. Which denomination? First of all churches are gatherings of relationships of Christian. Churches are very important but it doesn't say go and make churches, He says go and make disciples.

This is the marching order of the church. Turn to Acts. If your Bible didn't open to that verse it probably opened to Acts 1:8. These two passages are the last words of Christ on earth. "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

This is everyone's mission. This was Peter's mission. It is everyone's mission. What happened when Peter responded to this mission? In Acts 2, when there was some concern over the disciples, the Spirit was given at Pentecost and there was some concern they were all drunk. Peter stood up and addressed the crowd. He did what Jesus would have done. He spoke the way Jesus would have spoken. Because the Spirit had been given to them as it has been given to us, 3,000 men received Christ. Jesus had preached down His following between 120 or 500 followers. There were likely no more than 500 followers. Peter, the very first time he spoke there were 3,000 people who were converted.

This thing going on with Jesus, there are books and books and books, hundreds of years and thousands of books have studied this. Jesus had a ministry to the masses which was arithmetic. But he also had a ministry to His disciples, which was multiplicative. In Jesus you see the ministry of arithmetic which would have died out, but this principle of multiplication, He builds into us and then we build into others who will build into others. It is 2 Timothy 2:2. "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others." That is the big idea here today. God makes men by a process of discipling us so we can disciple others. That is what is going on.

How is Jesus sending men today? For example, there are guys all over Sam Hill who take these Bible study videos download the questions and facilitate their own group. Why did they do it that way? Cause they have a job and don't have 15 hours a week to prepare a message. They don't have the time. Sometimes they don't have the interest; sometimes they have the interest but not the aptitude. They can't put together the Bible study, but they can show the video and facilitate a group discussion.

Do you realize there are Bible studies and small groups going on all over America today and this week? They are in the Pentagon, in the Congress, in offices, in schools, everywhere. People who have been sent to go and make disciples because they are calling people and equipping people and they are sending people as well.

The challenge for us is to not only be sent to go and do the work of the cultural mandate but also the work of building His kingdom.

To close it out, let's get the report card on this strategy of how God makes men. Turn with me to Acts 4:13. **God makes men by a process of calling, equipping, and sending us so we can call, equip, and send others.** How did it work out?

Look at Acts 4:13. Peter and John had been arrested and brought before the Sanhedrin. "When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus." Let's pray.

CLOSING PRAYER

Our dearest Father, we all can look back to the day when we were filled with the anguish and pain of sensing no meaning and purpose in our lives and then You broke upon us and said, "Follow Me." You called us. You have equipped and are equipping us through all these different means to change the way we think. Through relationships, through Bible studies, to change the way we think and what we do. We thank You for that.

Lord, you are sending us so we can not only abide in You and love our neighbor, but also so we can help call, equip and send others so they can experience what we ourselves have experienced. Lord, we pray for Your power, the power of Your Holy Spirit, to tutor our hearts now how you would have us respond. We ask this in Jesus' Name. Amen.