

Discipleship the Jesus Way Teaching them God's Word

Matthew 6:22–33, John 3:16, Matthew 22:36–40

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Rev Joe Sanders

First Baptist Church Coshocton, Ohio

You would think that a person my age wouldn't have trouble with worry and anxiety. Worry is the precursor to anxiety. As Jesus tells us in Matthew six that worry gets us nowhere. However, seeking God's Kingdom provides us with all that we need. You would think that a person who has been a Christian most of his life wouldn't have trouble anger issues. Frustration and anger are different levels of the same thing. But, Jesus tells us that seeking God's Kingdom provides us with all that we need. You would think that a person who has been a pastor for a few decades wouldn't have control issues. Being in control or having the feeling that I am in control is a bigger issue than I would like to admit. Jesus tells us that seeking God's Kingdom provides us with all that we need.

That's why every week I gather with a group to confess, repent, and pray for God's power. There's a lot of talking, and a lot of praying. Each week in this group somebody recognizes that they aren't seeking God's Kingdom. Then the praying begins. Does that sound too spiritual and not manly enough? Does it sound like there's a lack of testosterone? Well, that's because the world is thinking about manly stuff and testosterone. Which is why I spent the month of August talking about our enemy. We are in a fight against the powers that we cannot see. We need the full armor of God. We need to seek the Kingdom and it's God, Jesus Christ. That's why we need to help one another seek God and His Kingdom.

Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need. Matthew 6:33 (NLT)

Sinners and Christians alike need to know how to seek God. Sinners have no idea how to find God. By sinners I'm talking about anyone who doesn't know Jesus as their Savior and Lord. A sinner is a person who doesn't believe that Jesus died and rose from the dead to forgive their sin. A sinner is anyone person, we are all sinners, acting selfishly, disobeying God. Sinners are pursuing their own ideas, their own desires, their own wants. They don't care about God. They are indifferent to God. They may have even rejected God. Some sinners use God's name all the time. They speak His name, but aren't calling out to Him. They don't realize all they need to do is call out to Him, trusting Him.

Trust is the second reason sinners have no idea how to find God. They can't trust a God they don't understand. They can't trust in a God that has been misinterpreted to them. They can't trust a God that they believe doesn't care or exists. The first reason sinners have no idea how to find God is no one has helped them. They may have heard His name, but no one has introduce God to them. They may have heard about Him, but the stories are misrepresented. They need someone to show them how to open their mouths and call out to Him.

Christians haven't learned to continually seek God. People who are saved, redeemed, delivered from the power and punishment of sin don't have a regular routine of talking with God. They go about life's daily tasks and responsibilities. They lie down and wake up each day. They eat, drink, and are in relationships with others. But, they aren't praying continually. They aren't regularly talking with Jesus.

Christians are seeking to help others. They are committed to many causes. They are involved in numerous activities. They get along well with others. They have hobbies, interests, and take vacations. They love their families. Christians are pursuing things that keep them from listening to Jesus. For some Christians there isn't time in their life for being alone with Jesus. They may or may not be busy, but mediating on scripture, praising Jesus, and giving thanks doesn't rank very high on their priority list. They may or may not have had someone teach them how to pray. It's possible that some Christians have never learned about seeking God. Giving their lives to Jesus may have been the last time they talked to the Lord.

I know that I'm sounding critical. You can be a Christian and not be a disciple of Jesus. I'm not judging people in the sense of putting them down. I'm sharing the reality that there are many people who are Christians but aren't maturing in their faith. My point is that they need help, they need someone to walk alongside of them. Every Christian needs to be discipled into a deeper relationship with Jesus. I need to be discipled into a deeper relationship with Jesus. That's why every week I There are two things that disciple makers need to be sharing with sinners and Christians all the time. Let's take a look first at scripture you may have learned as a child. This might be the first passage you memorized.

For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16 (NLT)

Disciple makers remind people that they are loved by God. Scripture proclaims that God loves the world, but the world doesn't believe it. The world thinks that God is angry and judgmental. Why would the God who created us want to destroy us? God isn't angry. God isn't judging us. Just the opposite is true, God loves us. God has provided every possible opportunity for us to receive His love, to live in His love.

We keep choosing things, activities, and even people instead of Him. God who is all powerful could be angry, judge us, and destroy us. God loves the world – people in the world. God loves each person. God wants to be in a relationship with each person.

God's love for each person is so unfathomable that He allowed His only Son to die. People all around us and all over the world find it unfathomable that God would give His Son to die for us. This is God's love for each person that He would allow His Son die so that we would not be guilty of our sin and be punished for our sin. That is an unfathomable love that the Son would become our sin and pay the penalty for our sin so that the people of the world be set free from their sin.

This unfathomable love of God that allowed his Son to die as our sin is what every person needs to experience. Disciple makers remind sinners and Christians alike that they are loved. God's love for people forgives their sins.

God's love for each person is so perplexing that His Son's resurrection from the dead gives us a second chance. I have yet to me a person that doesn't want a second chance. The perplexing love of God brought His Son back from death to life. When this happened death was defeated, our penalty was paid.

People all over the world and all around us, from this age to the end of the age, are given a second chance at life. They can be born again, they can become a new person. Can you fathom this love? Can you comprehend this love? This is God. This is God's love. Every person, sinner and Christian,

needs this love. Disciple makers remind sinners and Christians alike that they are loved. God's love for them provides a second chance, a new life.

The axe murderer and liar are loved by God, He wants to save them and give them a new life. The drug dealer and adulterer are loved by God, He wants to save them and give them a new life. The homosexual and thief are loved by God, He wants to save them and give them a new life. The atheist and pretender are loved by God, He wants to save them and give them a new life.

Disciple makers, because God's Kingdom is first, and because we are inviting people to follow Jesus remind those around us that they are loved.

Jesus replied, “ ‘You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.’ Matthew 22:37 (NLT)

Disciple makers guide people to love God in every way possible. This is the second thing that Disciple makers do all the time. We are loved and we love God. Every person is loved by God and each one of them can also love God. The life of a disciple radiates a love for the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Jesus was telling a religious leader what is the most important commandment. But more than a commandment is this attitude of seeking to love God more and more. It's never being satisfied in their love for God. It's not just following rules, but loving God. It's not just following the regulations, but loving God. It's not knowing all the answers, but loving God.

As I have learned to love God, I've discovered that love is a choice I make. I choose God instead of lying. I choose God instead of stealing. I choose God instead of anger. I choose God instead of discouragement. I choose God instead of all the temptations. I haven't always made this choice.

I won't always choose God. I will act selfishly. However, when I realize I've made the wrong choice, I choose God. I come back to God. I express my thanks for His mercy, grace, love, and power.

Disciples of Jesus recognize they are going to let go of somethings in order to gain something better. When we are loving God we are choosing His hope. We have the hope that God is doing what is best. When we are loving God we are choosing His peace. That is we receive from God the assurance in the midst of chaos that He is working for what is good. When we love God we are living in His grace. Those are the blessings you receive throughout your day to make it through the day. When we love God there is within us a power to accomplish great things for Kingdom. Others may say it's impossible, but because it's Kingdom work, God gives us the strength we didn't know we had. When we love God we know we are loved. Not because we love God, but because God loves us.

Disciples teach others to focus their thoughts, attitudes, and actions away from themselves and toward Jesus. Since loving God is a choice we need to choose what gets first place in our lives. We can be focused on the glory and the majesty of our God praising His name. We can focus on the wonder of His creation and give thanks. We can focus on His compassion, kindness, gentleness, and care being made new. We can focus on justice, honesty, and integrity seeing our world in a new way. We can focus on His holiness, realizing there is no one like Him. We can focus on His promises, believing His Word.

Do you automatically do this? No. We all need to be taught how to focus on God. Every Christian needs other Christians, disciples, to help them see God as God. As we intentionally walk with one another we teach one another. As we intentionally look for ways to teach one another we are making disciples.

As disciple makers we not only remind sinners and Christians that they are loved, we also guide them in the various ways to express their love for God. We teach those who are around us to love God with our heart, our emotions. We teach those who are around us to love God with our mind, our attitudes. We teach those who are around us to love God with our soul, all that makes us a person.

Jesus replied, “ ‘You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ Matthew 22:37–39 (NLT)

Disciple makers teach with a genuine and sincere love. People, especially now, are looking for genuine and sincere love. What I once thought of as the extremes have taken over our world. Anger and hatred are more pronounced today than they have been in decades. Acts of violence are much too common. A power of evil has taken hold of many people.

Recently, there were people saying they had had enough of thoughts and prayers. In the wake of violence they felt the response of Christians was insincere and hypocritical. They were expressing their desire for what they saw as emptiness to stop.

This means it's time for Christians, every disciple maker, to be genuine and sincere. I'm not suggesting that you aren't genuine and sincere. But, if you are like me then people aren't seeing the genuine and sincere love of God in us and through us.

I mentioned just a few moments ago that every Christian needs to be discipled into a deeper relationship with Jesus. We do this by reminding people that they are loved by God. The God they don't care about, the God they have rejected loves them. Of course we say this with words, but we also say this with our actions.

Loving others isn't easy. Do you think giving up heaven was easy for Jesus? He did it because He loves us. Do you think facing the temptations of the devil everyday knowing you could destroy Him was easy for Jesus? He did it because He loves us. Do you think it was easy for Jesus to remain silent while being falsely accused and beaten? He did it because He loves us. Do you think dying on that cross to take away our sins was easy for Jesus? He did it because He loves us. Do you think it was easy for Jesus waiting until the third day to rise from the dead and give us a new life? He did it because He loves us.

Being a disciple maker isn't always easy. We have been called. We will answer that call. Intentionally find sinners and Christians who need to be discipled for Jesus. Ask Jesus to open the relationship so that you can talk about His mercy, grace, love, and power. Be ready for His words and actions to be heard and seen in your life.

We know our lives are about the Kingdom of God first. We know there are people who have potential to be near Jesus. We can be intentional about giving them the Word of God – God loves them.