

PERSONAL DISCIPLE-MAKING PLAN

As we follow Christ, he transforms our minds, our desires, our wills, our relationships, and our ultimate reason for living. Every disciple of Jesus exists to make disciples of Jesus, here and among every people group on the planet. There are no spectators. We are all born to reproduce the life of Christ in others. So how are you going to reproduce?

The purpose in asking this question is to spur you on to consider how the life of Christ in you might be multiplied through you in the world. And in response to this question, we want to encourage every member of our faith family to write out a “personal disciple-making plan.” Our prayer at Crossway is that every follower of Christ in our church might have an intentional plan for following Jesus and fishing for men (Matthew 4:19; Matthew 28:18-20).¹

So consider the following six straightforward questions. After a brief overview of the questions, there are sub-questions and space provided to answer as you flesh out what it means to follow Jesus in each of these ways. Certainly don’t feel like you need to come up with new and creative things to do in response to each of the questions. It is helpful with many questions simply to identify normal patterns of Christian obedience that may already be present in your life. In the end, these questions are not exhaustive, but they are essential. Our hope and prayer is that they will serve us as we consider what it means to be disciples of Jesus and make disciples of Jesus.

1. How Will I Fill My Mind with Truth? The life of the disciple is the life of a learner. We constantly attune our ears to the words of our Master. As He teaches us through His Word, He transforms us in the world. Consider a plan for reading, memorizing, and learning God’s Word, but don’t forget that disciples do these things not for information, but for transformation. Our goal as disciples is never just to believe God’s Word; our goal is to obey God’s Word. So as you plan to fill your mind with truth, purpose to follow the One Who is Truth.

2. How Will I Fuel My Affections for God? There is a dangerous tendency for discipline in the disciple’s life to become mechanical and monotonous. Our aim is not simply to know God; our aim is to love God, and the more we read His Word, the more we delight in His glory. Our aim in other spiritual disciplines is similar. As we worship, pray, fast, and give, we fuel affection for God. It is impossible to separate true faith in Christ from profound feelings for Christ. So as disciples of Jesus, we intentionally worship, pray, fast, and give in order to fuel affection for God.

3. How Will I Share God’s Love As a Witness in the World? God’s will in the world and for our lives is to spread His gospel, grace, and glory to all peoples. Instead of asking what God’s will is for our lives, disciples of Jesus ask, “How can my life align with His will for me to be His witness in the world?” Every person that God has graciously put around you is a sinner eternally in need of a Savior. You were once that person, yet someone intentionally sought you out to share the gospel with you. And now this is the purpose for which God has graciously created, saved, and blessed you. So with the Word of God in your mouth and the Spirit of God in your heart, end your quest to find God’s will by deciding today to follow it.

4. How Will I Show God's Love As a Member of a Church? The Bible flies in the face of American individualism and church consumerism, prompting followers of Christ to ask the question, "Am I committed to a local church where I am sharing life with other followers of Christ in mutual accountability under biblical leadership for the glory of God?" To follow Christ is to love His church. It is biblically, spiritually, and practically impossible to be a disciple of Christ (much less make disciples of Christ) apart from total devotion to a family of Christians.

5. How Will I Spread God's Glory among All Peoples? The eternal purpose of God is to save people through Christ. The clear commission of Christ for every single disciple is to make disciples not just generally, but of all nations. So regardless of where you live, how is your life going to impact every nation, tribe, tongue, and people in the world? This is not a question for extraordinary missionaries; this is a question for ordinary disciples. God wants His will to be accomplished through us more than we do. And as we follow Him, He will lead us to the people, places, and positions where we can most effectively make disciples of all nations for the glory of His name.

6. How Will I Make Disciple Makers among a Few People? Jesus spent his life investing in a few people. His strategy for reaching all peoples was clear: make disciple-makers among a few people. God will lead us to live in all kinds of different places in the world. Yet regardless of where we live, the task we have is the same. No Christian is excused from the command to make disciples, and no Christian would want to escape this command. So every one of us looks around and asks, "How will I make disciple-makers among a few people?"

No child of God is intended by God to be sidelined as a spectator in the Great Commission. Every child of God has been invited by God to be on the front lines of the supreme mission in all of history. Every disciple of Jesus has been called, loved, created, and saved to make disciples of Jesus who make disciples of Jesus who make disciples of Jesus until the grace of God is enjoyed and the glory of God is exalted among every people group on the planet. Making a personal plan for how we are going to join God in His mission is a huge step in joyfully experiencing the fullness of His grace in our lives as we join Him in His mission for the world.

1. How Will I Fill My Mind with Truth?

How will I read God's Word? You might start with a plan to read a chapter a day, or you could consider using an intentional Bible reading plan that covers all of Scripture over a certain period of time. As a starting point, you might consider using the weekly Crossway Bible Reading and Prayer Guide (found in our weekly Worship Guide). Or you might explore a list of suggested Bible reading guides at <http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justintaylor/2012/12/27/reading-the-bible-in-2013>

How will I memorize God's Word? As you read, look for verses, paragraphs, or even chapters that seem particularly significant and applicable to your life. Then commit them to memory. Again, maybe you can start by memorizing a verse a week, and then eventually can take on more. As a starting point, you might commit to memorize the verse of Scripture that is printed each week on the cover of our Worship Guide.

How will I learn God's Word from others? Reading, studying, and understanding the Bible is not just an individual effort; it's a community project. We all need pastors who are teaching God's Word faithfully to us and brothers and sisters who are consistently encouraging us with God's Word. Identify simple and intentional ways you will learn God's Word from others, whether that's in a worship gathering, a small group, the Institute for Disciple-Making, or through particular books and resources.

2. How Will I Fuel My Affections for God?

How will I worship? Consider intentional ways that you might focus on worship in every facet of your life. Then consider what priority you will place on weekly worship together with the church. Finally, consider ways you might use the Devotional Guide provided in the weekly worship guide to help facilitate worship together during the week with family and/or friends.

How will I pray? What will be your place and when will be your time simply to be with the Father? Concentrated prayer at a specific time is the best fuel for continual prayer all the time. Simply setting aside this time and place will substantially change your life as a disciple of Jesus. Consider using the weekly Crossway Bible Reading and Prayer Guide to direct some of your praying.

How will I fast? Once a week or once every few weeks, instead of eating breakfast, lunch, or dinner, spend that hour praying and reading God's Word. Once you've grown accustomed to this practice, plan to fast for two meals in one day, and then for an entire twenty-four hour period. Once a quarter during the year, the church will participate corporately in a day of prayer and fasting.

How will I give? One of the most effective ways to fuel affection for God is to give your resources in obedience to God. This starts with giving to the church, though it may extend above and beyond this, as well. Giving intentionally, generously, sacrificially, and cheerfully fuels selfless love for God that overcomes selfish desires for the things of this world.

3. How Will I Share God's Love As a Witness in the World?

Who? Take some time to write down the names of three, five, or maybe ten unbelievers God has placed in your life. Then begin praying specifically for God, through the power of his Spirit, to draw them to his salvation and to use you to share the gospel with them.

How? Think through how, in the context of where you live, work, and play, and with the people God has put in your sphere of influence, you can begin to speak intentionally about God's character, man's sin, Christ's provision, and our need to respond to that provision. Identify how you might most effectively share the gospel with the people you identified above.

When? It's wise to consider when you will actively share Christ's love by creating opportunities to tell people about Jesus. As you think about the people you identified above, consider when you might intentionally share the gospel with them (i.e., over a meal, during an activity together, after inviting them to a worship gathering, etc.).

4. How Will I Show God's Love As a Member of a Church?

Where? As a member of the church, remember that you are not a spectator on the sidelines, but a participant in the mission. So identify where in the church you can best plug into disciple-making community, primarily through a small group.

What? As you look across the church as a whole and your small group in particular, consider what things you can do to build up the body of Christ and what you will do to make sure that you have people who are watching out for your life in Christ. Identify specific ways that you will clearly express the love of Christ in and through the church.

5. How Will I Spread God's Glory among All Peoples?

How will I pray for the nations? Pray passionately for God's Kingdom to come and will to be done across the earth. Plan to deliberately focus your praying generally on the nations and specifically on the unreached people groups of the world. You may consider using *Operation World* (www.operationworld.org) *The Joshua Project* website and app (<http://joshuaproject.net>) as a guide for praying for the nations.

How will I give to the nations? Plan to sacrifice and spend for the sake of the nations. Sacrifice the wants in your budget to give to the needs of the world—most particularly the need for every people group to hear the gospel. This may simply involve giving to the church as the church gives to the nations, or it may involve giving to and through other avenues above and beyond your regular giving to the church.

How will I go to the nations? Consider all the avenues in which you might spend your life, lead your family, or leverage your work to penetrate the people groups of the world with the gospel, for this is what you were created for. Maybe you can go on a short-term mission trip. Or maybe the Lord is leading you to go for a little bit longer . . . or a lot longer (i.e., for the rest of your life). Intentionally plan how you might go to the nations, as the Lord leads.

6. How Will I Make Disciples among a Few People?

How will I bring them in? Consider two, three, or four people God has put in your sphere of influence whom you can lead to make disciples. Then invite those few people to spend intentional time with you in the days ahead for the express purpose of growing in Christ together.

How will I teach them to obey? Think through how you can teach the few people your life is focused on how to obey everything Christ has commanded you. Focus on seeing their transformation. You might start by using these questions to lead them to develop their own disciple-making plans. You might use other resources in this process, as well, including the Multiply Material which is available at <http://multiplymovement.com>.

How will I model obedience? As you focus your life on the few people God has given you, they need to see and hear and sense the life of Christ in you. Making disciple makers involves saying to them: "Follow me." So identify intentional ways in which you will serve them and model before them what it means to follow Christ. Include here specific ways that you will intentionally guard and cultivate purity and Christlikeness in your thoughts and actions as a disciple of Jesus who is making disciples of Jesus.

How will I send them out? The goal is not just for these few people you are focused on to follow Jesus; the goal is for them to lead other people to follow Jesus. So think through how you will commission those few to begin making disciples. And consider how you will serve them as you send them out.

Now that you've finished writing out a personal plan for growing as a disciple and giving your life to making disciples, make sure to share this with others in the church. Remember that we are created for community within the body of Christ, and realize both the practical necessity and personal benefit of good, gospel-saturated, grace-driven accountability in your life as a follower of Christ. As a final step, write down who you are going to share your personal disciple-making plan with here (and then share it with them):

¹ Slightly adapted from the "Personal Disciple-Making Plan" provided by The Church at Brook Hills, © David Platt, accessed online at http://www.brookhills.org/new/personal_disciple_making_plan.html. Watch or listen to the accompanying sermon here: <http://www.radical.net/media/series/view/1128/every-member-a-disciple-maker>