

A cowboy, a hippie, a heavy metal rocker, and a nerd walk into a church...this is not a joke, it is a significant milestone in my life...We can all look back and see these milestones that changed the course of our lives. I've had many.

As many of you stand at the starting line of a life in ministry, you can anticipate milestones that will cause you to rethink and redirect your ministry on a new path.

## 2 ministry milestones that have placed me on my path...

1. As a volunteer youth ministry worker, thirsting for knowledge...I still hear the phone call with my pastor, describing to him my longing to know God's Word that I may communicate it well. The next week, he greeted me at his office with a book.
2. The hippie, rocker and nerd were Randy, Mark, and Zeke...3 men as thirsty for the Word of God as I was. Longing for more than status quo, the four of us began gathering around the coffee table, the kitchen table or wherever we could...to wrestle with the Scripture, confess sin and fear to one another, and to dream of greater days to come.

These men (25 - 55) became my brothers, none superior to the other; we were all growing up together.

"Who are my mother and my brothers?" **34**And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! **35**For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother." Mark 3:33-35

For the first time, Jesus words make sense...these men, from all walks of life, are my brothers. These men fulfilled the need which my pastor didn't discern. Yes, the the book was used and helped in my search of knowledge...but he gave me a book, when what I desired was him.

## Discipleship is THE calling of the church.

Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and **make disciples** of all nations..." Matthew 28:18-19

Is it possible that we have traded our calling for classes?

Are we living in the reality of church where gathering is preferable to going?

Is the specialized calling of ministers effecting our ability to fulfill the general calling of Christ?

## Questions that measure the impact trading our calling...

1. Is your church short on male leadership?
2. Is your church segregated by age? Or anything else for that matter...
3. Is your church divided by preference?
4. Is your church a reflection of the past instead of the community?
5. Is church discipline and addressing sin left up to the pastor?
6. Is the pastoral staff the sole face of the ministry?
7. Is evangelism something we discuss more than something we do?
8. Does your spirit rise and fall with Sunday and Wednesday attendance?

If you answer YES to these questions...you are feeling the impact of trading our calling.

## **If discipleship is not a class or a gathering...what is discipleship?**

based on my understanding of the great commission, it is...

- helping others identify with Jesus.
- helping others identify with Jesus' Church.
- helping others grow in obedience to ALL of Jesus' teaching.
- helping others discern their dependance upon Jesus.

Since creating a discipleship model of ministry over the past few years...we answer no to the impact questions more frequently than we do no.

## **How do you create a discipleship model of ministry?**

### **CREATE A PRAYER LIFE.**

- Pray for God to prepare people who are primed and ready to walk with Jesus.
- Pray for God to help you to walk with wisdom and humility.
- Pray for ability and willingness to suffer well when you have invested your life in Judas.

### **CREATE RELATIONSHIPS.**

- Spend time outside the church with people and get to know them.
- Its ridiculous to even have to say this, but ministers who have traded their general calling for a specialized calling may rarely enjoy people as they focus on programs.

Enjoy your church and enjoy your community...if you are on staff this will require consistent intentionality.

### **CREATE CONVERSATION.**

- Whether we've just met this person in the community or have pulled them from the church, we are the one who must create **intentional conversation** to see where this person is spiritually and help them get where they could be.

The equally disappointing reality of the gospel without relationships is relationships without the gospel. If we don't create gospel conversation, it won't happen.

### **CREATE AN OUTLINE.**

- Discipleship relationships are not about curriculum...but must include curriculum.
- Ask two questions,
  1. "what do people need to know in order to get where they need to be?"
  2. "if I had one year with a man, what must he know to begin investing in others?"
- Whether its a formal study or informal outline...you must have a way to know you are getting closer to arriving at the goal.
- I found this of most men in my area...they aren't confident to lead because they aren't confident in the Scripture.  
I currently use Multiply by Francis Chan...it effectively addresses the answer to both questions for me by giving the overarching story of Scripture, pointing all things to Jesus while being practical and applicable.

## CREATE OPPORTUNITIES.

- Before Jesus left the 12, he created short term opportunities for them to do what He was doing and what they would do when He would leave.

he appointed twelve so that they might be with him and he might send them out... Mark 3:14

The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught. Mark 6:30

- For this reason I often gather with men in public spaces to create evangelistic opportunity, give them small groups in my ministry, let them teach in my place, let them lead retreats, etc...

in another instance the disciples returned asking “why couldn't we drive out the demons?”...as we create opportunities we must be okay knowing others will fail, but the end result is greater than the sum of its parts.

## CREATE AN INVITATION.

- In the same manner as Jesus, I invite men into a new type of relationship with the purpose of helping them go from where they are to where they could be.
- Invite them to meet weekly and be honest about intentions...

Before you invite...there are some things to look for.

## What to look for when stepping into your calling...?

### 1. LOOK FOR PEOPLE OF PEACE.

As you enter the house, greet it. **13**And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it, but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. **14**And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town

- People of peace receive you
- People of peace receive the Word of God

Some are drawn by the **challenge** of converting the Church Curmudgeon...**see slides.** generally, this is just frustrating and not a wise use of time and energy.

### 2. LOOK FOR PEOPLE WHO DIGEST WHAT THEY'VE RECEIVED.

by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food. Hebrews 5:12

With 4 kids I've seen more than one baby puke every once of milk they get...my wife, assuming they must still be hungry (they don't have anything in their belly), feeds them more!

Force feeding a baby is a messy waste of time, frustrating to the parent and child... discipling people who can't handle basic principles is frustrating in the same manner until one or the other quits coming to the table.

### 3. LOOK TO MAKE PEOPLE LIKE JESUS, NOT YOURSELF.

"Woe to you...For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves." Matt 23:13-15

#### Three ways I have fallen into this trap.

1. not having a curriculum.
2. focusing on tradition instead of truth.
3. not challenging others where I am weak.

#### **4. LOOK FOR DIVERSITY...THO YOU NATURALLY DRAW OTHERS LIKE YOURSELF, SEEK AND VALUE DIVERSITY.**

The names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; **3**Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; **4**Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. Matthew 10:2-4

- Who you attract is determined by who you are (generation, background, attitude, background, values, energy, giftedness, leadership ability)  
Don't believe it? Look at the lunch tables every Monday...
- Work at recruiting people who are different from you to staff your weaknesses.  
- Maxwell
- But you say, Maxwell is talking about staffing a company...we're making disciples...?
- The goal is not to see how many you can disciple...but how many can be disciplined.  
Seeking and valuing diversity provides influence in areas you won't reach alone.

#### **5. LOOK TO LEAVE.**

I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. John 16:7

Classes rarely have expiration dates...students become dependent upon teacher and tradition. Discipleship has expiration dates to ensure a student's dependence is in the Holy Spirit and to free them up to be a helper to another.

#### **6. LOOK FOR SAME SEX RELATIONSHIPS. :)**

- My ministry goal is summed up in this...to disciple the fathers and the fatherless.

**this always produces two questions...**

1. What about the kids with dads who are involved?

Let us not forget that discipleship was given first to the father before the apostle.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. **6**These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. **7**Impress them on your children. Deuteronomy 6:5-7

If we do well to help fathers...they will do well with their sons.

2. What about the women in the church?

Yet your desire will be for your husband, And he will rule over you. Genesis 3:16

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word. Ephesians 5:25-26

- The husband in sin is oppressing, the husband in Christ is sanctifying.
- If we do well to help husbands...they will do well with their wives.

And...Wives who have been washed with the Word by their husband, gladly become helpers to other women and young girls.

The discipleship model of ministry is not flashy, not quick growth and most of what you do, no-one will know about.

The discipleship model of ministry is necessary, it is healthy, and God will be glorified when Jesus followers are multiplied.

Discipleship is THE calling of the Church.