

HOLY SPIRIT—DISCIPLEMAKER

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If your neighbor had never driven a car before, would you give him the keys to yours?

If your friend had never used a hammer or saw, would you ask him to build you a house?

If a close relative was an atheist, would you ask her to address your church on the subject of the way of salvation?

If you had never used a computer to do more than receive and send emails, would you want to be interviewed on a live nationwide television show about installing and maintaining a local area network?

Intuitively, we understand that many things—important things—require preparation and training. We wouldn't dream of starting without a plan, a map, a blueprint, and some skills. Entering the Kingdom of God is like that, too.

Matthew 28 (NLT)

¹⁸ *Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth.*

¹⁹ *Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*

To whom did Jesus speak these words? (His disciples)

Therefore, you might consider this nothing more than factual information from the history of Jesus' ministry on the earth—things He told His disciples to do.

However, He told those disciples to go and make other disciples, and to teach those new disciples to obey all the commands He had given the first disciples, which included this command. So, the first disciples would make other disciples, who would, in turn, make other disciples, who would also make other disciples, and so on, down to the present time.

You and I sit at the end of a long line of disciples of Jesus Christ; and we also sit at the front end of another long line of disciples of Jesus Christ (until He comes again).

We have been baptized in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit, and now we are charged with making still more disciples, and baptizing them and teaching them to obey Jesus. In terms of function, this is the simplest enduring description of the Church, straight from the lips of Jesus Himself. This is what it means to practice our faith; this is what it means to live as a Christian.

What is a disciple?

A learner, a follower, a trainee, a servant.

The word is related to the term, discipline, as one would use that word of the process of learning to play a musical instrument or becoming proficient in a sport. It means instruction and training (more than punishment), and a great deal of practice, over a long period of time.

To whom are we to be disciplined?

To Jesus Christ alone. Paul expressed his fervor on this matter:

2 Corinthians 11 (NLT)

¹ *Please bear with me.* ² *For I am jealous for you with the jealousy of God himself. I promised you as a pure bride to one husband—Christ.*

When He wrote “one husband,” he did not mean “one among many,” but “one only.” Christianity is not religious polygamy and Jesus is not one of many spiritual leaders.

God has “*given Him the name which is above every name!*” (Philippians 2:9; NKJV).

“Only in him is there salvation; for of all the names in the world given to men, this is the only one by which we can be saved.” (Acts 4:11-12; NJB).

However, God uses people to assist in your development. Yet, while love and loyalty are virtues, He never intended for you to become more attached to any person than you are to Jesus Christ. You are, first and foremost, a disciple of Jesus. You are to learn to recognize and obey *His voice*, above all others, while living, growing, and serving in the context of His body, the Church.

If you are a member of this local church, God has given me to be your pastor—that is, your teacher and your coach. Yet, it is the Holy Spirit, and He alone, who is your disciplinemaker. Jesus said of Him, *“the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you”* (John 14:26; NLT). *“He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you”* (John 16:14; ESV).

How do I become a disciple?

Discipleship always begins with a revelation—you have an awakening, you make the discovery—that Jesus is the Messiah (the Christ) and that He has come in human form to ransom and rescue and revive us.

That revelation spawns faith—you respond to it by putting your trust in Jesus to save you, to change you, to love you faithfully, and to express something of His life through you.

You first express your faith in a commitment to learn to obey—perhaps you prayed such a prayer at this very altar, or in your home, or you may pray one from where you sit this morning—which obedience you then demonstrate by participating in water baptism, holy communion, and discipleship among a local congregation of Christ-followers. It is by these means that the Holy Spirit instructs you and orders your steps, filling you with His love and grace, and changing you incrementally into the likeness of Jesus.

Let’s see today how the Holy Spirit makes disciples of those who sincerely follow Jesus Christ. His activity is like the convergence of three great streams of water, becoming a vast and powerful river of life. The three are the stream of salvation, the stream of sanctification, and the stream of service.

He is Active in Salvation

As a witness to our hearts:

John 15 (NLT)

²⁶ *“But I will send you the Advocate—the Spirit of truth. He will come to you from the Father and will testify all about me.*

Drawing us to the Savior:

John 6 (NIV)

⁴⁴ *No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.*

Convicting us of sin:

John 16 (NLT)

⁷ *In fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don’t, the Advocate won’t come. If I do go away, then I will send him to you. ⁸ And when he comes, he will convict the world of its sin, and of God’s righteousness, and of the coming judgment.*

Converting us through a new birth

John 3 (NLT)

⁶ *Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. ⁷ So don’t be surprised when I say, ‘You (all) must be born again.’*

He is Active in Sanctification

Baptizing us into the family of God:

1 Corinthians 12 (NLT)

¹³ *We have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit.*

Cleansing our hearts from sin and shame:

Titus 3 (GWT)

³ *Because of his mercy he saved us through the washing in which the Holy Spirit gives us new birth and renewal.*

Healing us from wounds and brokenness:

Acts 10 (NLT)

³⁸ *And you know that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. Then Jesus went around doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.*

Transforming us into children of God:

Romans 12:2 (NLT)

¹² *Let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think.*

2 Corinthians 3:18 (NIV)

¹⁸ We... are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

He is Active in Service

Teaching us to serve as Jesus did:

John 14 (NLT)

¹⁴ When the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you.

Guiding us according to God's Word:

John 16 (NLT)

¹³ When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth.

Comforting us, so that we may bring comfort to others:

Acts 9 (ESV)

³¹ So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied.

Anointing us with power to serve:

Luke 4

¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free, ¹⁹ and that the time of the Lord's favor has come."

The Holy Spirit's activity in our acts of service is simply the process of our training in obedience. (To serve is to obey; to obey is to serve.) He is the Spirit of Obedience, the Spirit of Holiness. He comes to help you and I do the same toward God—to obey Him in all things.

Summary

Is there any part of this process He does not perform?

Could we do any of this without Him?

Have you decided to become a disciple of Jesus Christ? It is the single key to the Kingdom of God.

Some will progress more quickly than others, but it is foolish to seek approval by comparing yourself with others, for the pace and timing are not in your control, but in God's.

Do not grind your teeth about those who seem to leap ahead of you, nor despise those who seem to fall behind. Maintain a gracious spirit and focus on your own progress.

The only element that is in your control is your will to obey (or not to obey).

If you seek the joy, the power, the grace, the provision, the peace, and the victory of a disciple of Jesus Christ—choose to partner with the Holy Spirit today. Make Him your Leader and your Guide. Pledge to listen for His voice and obey what you hear.

Then, His strength will become yours. His power will overcome your weakness. His victory will replace your failure.

Luke 4: 18-19 (MSG)

God's Spirit is on you; he's chosen you to preach the Message of good news to the poor, sent you to announce pardon to prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind, to set the burdened and battered free, to announce, "This is God's year to act!"