

Becoming a Reproducer

401-4

The primary goal of the Church is to **exalt** the LORD *to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved. (Ephesians 1:6)*

Jesus even came into the world to show us the Father's glory and to reveal the glory of the Father.

John 1:14 the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. NKJV

But what about the mission Jesus left for us that flows out of the motive to reveal and give glory to the Father?

The LORD intends for His children to be disciples and then to make disciples, thereby **reproducing** themselves. The very first command given to Adam and Eve after the LORD created them in His image was found in **Genesis 1:22**.

Genesis 1:22 God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." NKJV

The LORD wanted Adam and Eve to multiply, but their offspring would no longer have perfect fellowship with the LORD in the garden due to their sin. Jesus repaired the

fellowship split that happened because of sin, but He also gave a mission statement in the Gospels.

Luke 19:9 And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham.

Luke 19:10 for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." NKJV

Because of the fall of Adam and Eve when they sinned, mankind was marred and needed a perfect sacrifice to allow them to approach the LORD again. Now that Jesus has come, died, rose again, He then gave us His Holy Spirit to empower us to tell others.

Acts 1:8 you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." NKJV

But Jesus told His Disciples that their mission was greater than just telling others how to get saved; He told them to go and make disciples.

A Disciple is someone who has a **desire** to learn from their Master, but it is also someone who attaches themselves to a teacher. There can be a difference between being a student and being a disciple.

A student may learn things from their teacher, without fully believing their teachings. A disciple completely **believes** and

acts upon their teacher's teachings. Soren Kierkegaard said, "*To become an 'admirer of Jesus' is much easier than to become a follower.*"

A Christian leader was driving in a rural area in Russia and saw two shepherds who came together in the middle of the road with their herds of sheep. Together, these two shepherds had 300 sheep, and the Christian leaders had to wait for the shepherds to stop talking and move out of the road. The Christian leaders wondered how they would separate all those sheep.

As the one shepherd was leaving, he bade his sheep come, and the two groups separated instantly and went their separate ways.

And Jesus said in *John 10:27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. NKJV*

The LORD receives **glory** when sinners are saved, and those who are separated from Him are brought back by His grace into fellowship, transformed, and brought into members of His family.

2 Corinthians 5:18 Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,

2 Corinthians 5:19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 5:20 Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

2 Corinthians 5:21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. NKJV

Read ***Matthew 28:16-20***

The mountain discussed here was obviously familiar to the Disciples, and notice that when Jesus appears to them, some worship Him but others doubted. This was not their first meeting with the risen Jesus, but it was an important one; this is where they received their new **orders**.

Matthew doesn't tell us about the Jerusalem appearances of Jesus to His disciples, as the ***Gospel of John*** does. Matthew was more interested in showing that the promise of Jesus in ***vs. 32*** was fulfilled.

R. T. France said, "*When they recognized him, it was natural that they worshipped him, but the whole experience was so mysterious and overwhelming that some doubted...*

The verb used does not denote a settled unbelief, but a state of uncertainty and hesitation."

Let's break down the Great Commission given by our commander and chief, Jesus Christ.

- ***All authority has been given to Me.***

How are we to fulfill our God-given mission, with His authority and power!

Zechariah 4:6 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of hosts. NKJV

The Lord does not call us to serve Him in our own strength or with our own abilities; rather, when He calls us to do something, He empowers us to do it as well.

In fact, if you want any lasting results or fruit from your endeavors for the Lord, it has to be done in His authority and empowered by His Spirit. And because the Father has given Jesus all the authority in heaven and on earth, He can empower us to....

- ***Go therefore*** and **fulfill** His commission.

We are not to be timid in fulfilling things for the Lord, but His authority sends us, guides us, and empowers us. His work and message continued to the world through the Disciples.

The word “**Go**” in *vs. 19* is actually a verb that means to **follow** a lead from someone and to **continue** on one's journey.

“**Go**” is not a onetime order, but it literally means to: be going, be teaching, be baptizing.

- ***Make Disciples.***

We are not to make **supporters** of a cause and not develop fans of a theology; we are to make Disciples of Jesus Christ, students willing to follow and obey the Lord.

In *Not a Fan* **????** said, “Jesus makes it clear that he will not share your affection. Following him requires your whole heart.”

In *Gods at War*, Kyle Idleman said, “Being a devoted disciple means they must acknowledge their own helplessness and their ultimate need — the need for rescue.”

- ***Baptizing.***

Romans 6:3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?

Romans 6:4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. NKJV

First, we are baptized into Christ when we accept Him as Lord and Savior, and then we are to be baptized by water to **publicly** demonstrate the heart change that has taken place within us.

France said, “In the name is literally ‘into the name’, implying entrance into an **allegiance**.”

Christianity is not simply a cleansing from sin; it is also a commitment to become a follower of Christ.

- ***Teaching them to observe.***

Disciples are those who have committed to following Jesus, and we learn how to follow by learning what Jesus taught. Of course, this happens as we learn His Word, the Bible.

What should be taught: the Word of God, not man's **opinion** or feel-good thoughts and motivation.

As followers of Christ, we should be learners and students of His teaching.

- *“I am with you **always**, even to the end of the age.”*

Jesus does not leave us orphans trying to navigate this life alone. He empowers us to go, to follow, and then He promises that there will not be one single moment He will leave us alone.

When Peter and John were arrested for speaking the name of Jesus, Peter addressed the religious leaders, and we are told...

Acts 4:13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus. NKJV

When we have been with Jesus, we will gain boldness and want to share His good news with others. When we think about His resurrection, we have a marvelous story to share. When we think about the empty tomb, we realize the Father did not forsake Jesus. When we think about the empty tomb, we realize death is conquered, and we have the Promise of Eternal Life. When

we think about the empty tomb, we realize we have a living friend in Jesus, who will never leave us alone.

Throughout the *Gospel of Matthew*, Jesus has called on us to place Him in the **first** place in our lives. This is a life whose energy is fully devoted to Christ, fully devoted followers of Christ.

John 14:21 He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."

We hear this and think we can just try harder and achieve this, but that is impossible.

1 John 4:10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

It has to be the Lord working in and through us to achieve any love for God or for anybody else. Our relationship to the Lord is the very reason we were created. Our Worship is for God alone, and He must be our deepest love, and He is the source of every other love. And so, first we are to come and see who Jesus is and all that He has done for us; then we are to go and tell all who need to hear! Every person who hears the Gospel message needs to **respond**, and here we learn the response that pleases the Lord is to *come and see and then go and tell*.

Obviously, becoming a disciple of Christ begins with becoming a Christian and receiving the gift of salvation, by faith alone, in Christ's finished work alone.

After salvation, being a disciple is a **life-long** learning process, learning about Jesus and doing what He says to do.

Colossians 3:17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. NKJV

The person whose whole heart is set on Christ will have His goals and priorities in mind. Jesus is our all in all, and when we allow Him to fill our thoughts and our intentions, we will desire to glorify Him and **want** to make disciples.

As the Apostle Paul said in ***1 Corinthians 11:1 Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ. NKJV*** We do not want to reproduce disciples after our carnal or sinful ways; we want people to imitate us, only when our hearts are on glorifying Christ, not our own comfort, we will focus on how we can win the lost and then train them to be disciples of Christ.

When we are focused on Christ, it means being **controlled** by the Holy Spirit, who is the only one who can cause us to call Jesus Lord.

1 Corinthians 12:3 Therefore, I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit. NKJV

Being focused on Christ not only means that you are controlled by the Spirit, but it means that your life is centered on the Word of God because the Word of God reveals the person of Christ.

Psalm 1:1 Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful;

Psalm 1:2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night.

Psalm 1:3 He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper. NKJV

The Christ-centered life, the worshiping life, is a life that is **yielded** to the Spirit of God, and it is centered on the Word of God, which causes us to mourn over our sin.

Psalm 139:23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties;

Psalm 139:24 And see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. NKJV

As we mourn over our own **sinfulness**, we remember the gift and sanctifying power we have received from the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1:17 And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear;

1 Peter 1:18 knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers,

1 Peter 1:19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. NKJV

A person who truly worships the LORD and is controlled by the Holy Spirit, centered on the Word of God, and whose life is cleansed from sin, truly has the Abundant Life.

Jesus said in ***John 10:10 I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. NKJV***

The Abundant Life Christian is willing to **strip** themselves of whatever gets in the way of the Kingdom of Christ, so that their life is lived with purpose. As Christians, Jesus is not just our Savior; He is our Lord (*kyrios*, GK), which means He is *the possessor and disposer of a thing, the owner; one who has control of the person, the master*.

Again, in ***Matthew 28:18***, we read, ***“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.’” NKJV***

The reason Jesus said '*All authority has been given to Me*' was to instill in His disciples an attitude of submission. If Jesus is in charge, we should listen and respond to what Jesus has said.

A disciple maker takes the attitude of **submission**, which says, "*It is not negotiable, it is not an option. Whatever He commands, I will do.*"

Matthew 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

Matthew 16:25 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.

Matthew 16:26 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? NKJV

I want you to notice that Jesus didn't ask His Disciples to join a club, or to form a picket line but to **follow** Him.

1. *If anyone desires to come after Me.*

Notice Jesus begins the verse with the word "**if**"; these words of Jesus are an invitation into a love **relationship**, not a command. Love can't be forced, and Jesus is a gentleman and won't force us to come after Him, but if you are willing to have a Love relationship with Jesus, it is available to you.

Jesus says *if anyone desires*, i.e., if a person has a sincere *desire* to belong to Christ, they must be willing to be Jesus' disciple. It starts with a person who has a sincere *desire* to *come after*.

The book, "*Not a Fan*," describes this statement as a phrase that was commonly used in the context of a romantic relationship.

When Jesus says, "*Come after Me*," He is describing a passionate pursuit of someone you love. Jesus wants His followers to pursue Him with the same passion they would pursue someone romantically; a pursuit that should consume their **thoughts**, their resources, and their energy.

2. Let him deny himself.

Adam Clarke says this means, "*To renounce self-dependence, and selfish pursuits - Let him deny himself.*"

Peter rebuked Jesus because He told the Disciples that He, Jesus, would suffer, be rejected, and die on a cross, and now Jesus is making it clear they will endure the same treatment. The only way it was going to be possible for the Disciples to deny themselves was for them to become FROGs: Fully **reliant** on God.

A. W. Tozer said, "*It is time for us to seek again the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Man's lordship has cost us too much.*"

Philippians 2:5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus

Philippians 2:6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,

Philippians 2:7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.

Philippians 2:8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. NKJV

But Jesus is not necessarily talking about denying yourself material things, because any religion can teach you to do that. He is speaking of giving yourself wholly to Jesus and His will, as we also share in his death and suffering. Self-denial means to stop looking out for your own interests and fully submit to the leadership of the Holy Spirit in your life.

These Disciples have been thinking of physical bread and kingdoms; Jesus is teaching them the cost of true Discipleship. It is only once we deny ourselves that we can fully discover the joy of following Christ.

3. Take up his cross.

We have all heard the statement, “I have a cross to bear.”

Some people say the cross I have to bear is my mother-in-law, illness, or something we cannot change in life. But that is not what Jesus is talking about here in our passage. Peter was urging Jesus not to take the cross of Calvary, and so Jesus is now telling Peter that he will have to take the Cross as well.

Jesus is talking about a complete surrender to the will of God. The Cross was an element of suffering and death. Jesus is telling His followers that becoming a disciple comes with a **hefty** price. In the Garden of Gethsemane, the night Jesus was arrested, Jesus prayed,

Luke 22:42 "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not My will, but Yours, be done." NKJV

Many of His followers will not have to be Martyrs, *but are we willing to completely submit to the Father's will for our lives?*

A. W. Tozer said, *"In every Christian's heart there is a cross and a throne, and the Christian is on the throne till he puts himself on the cross.*

*If he **refuses** the cross, he remains on the throne.*

We want to be saved, but we insist that Christ do all the dying. No cross for us, no dethronement, no dying."

4. ...and follow Me.

The word **follow** in the tense it is written, means to continually **follow** in a specific **direction**, following a specific person. The Lord has a direction for your life, and the choice of every man is to either follow Him or go the path of destruction.

Chuck Smith, *"Any dead fish can follow the current; it takes someone who is alive to swim upstream against the current."*

Ephesians 2:1 And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,

Ephesians 2:2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience.

When you were dead in sin, you followed the course of the world; now Christ has made you alive so you can *follow* Him.

Following Jesus is the only way we will ever find real life, the Abundant Life Jesus promised to give us. You will never truly live until you first die to yourself and follow Him! Jesus is our all in all, and when we allow Him to fill our thoughts and our intentions, we will desire to glorify Him and want to make disciples.

Our prayer should be for the Father to help us to live our lives in a way that brings Him **glory**, and that we may know the fullness of what it is to live a life pleasing to Him. That we might be true followers of Jesus Christ, Who, just as He gave His life to glorify the Father, that we might also give our lives to glorify the Father through making disciples for Christ.