

Matthew 4:18-22

Who's Your One?

Main idea: God calls every follower of Christ to invite others to follow Christ. Who are you praying for and sharing your faith with, that they might become a disciple of Jesus?

For the next 4 weeks, I'm going to be heavily relying on sermons preached by two people: J.D. Greear, who is the pastor of The Summit Church in North Carolina and current president of the Southern Baptist Convention, and also Johnny Hunt, the pastor of First Baptist Church Woodstock in Woodstock, Georgia. A couple months back, J.D. Greear sent out these sermons to all of the pastors of all of the Southern Baptist churches, not telling us that we have to preach them, because that's not how it works as Southern Baptists, but just offering these sermons to us in case we wanted to preach them. And as I looked through them, I felt like this was exactly what we needed to hear and do, so that's what we're going to do.

Often when we think about evangelism, we think about it as something we have to do. It's a chore. And there's certainly an aspect of it that's a command.¹ But at its root, evangelism is simply sharing the good news,² and it's something that we ought to want to do as we ourselves have rested in the gospel.³ Along with discipleship and worship, evangelism is connected to the question of how when you strip everything else away, what's at the core of who we are and what we do as a church and as Christians?⁴

So to get us thinking about that, let's play a little word association game. First, what comes to mind when you think about President Trump? Don't say it out loud! I want to keep it civil this morning. But just think of the first word that pops in your mind when you think about Donald Trump. Okay, how about a NASCAR fan? What's the first word that pops in your mind? Or how about millennials, what word do you think about them?

Odds are you have certain mental associations with each of these. Now, what comes to mind when you hear the word Christian? Odds are you associate that word with certain characteristics as well. The broader culture also forms impressions of what a Christian is and whether or not they are one. Some people say, "Of course I'm a Christian! I'm an American!" Others say, "Yes, I'm a Christian, because a long time ago I walked the aisle and prayed a prayer." And many others in America want nothing to do with Christians because to them, we're just a bunch of judgmental, homophobic moralists who think that we're the only ones going to heaven and secretly relish the fact that everybody else is going to hell.

But here's a strange and interesting fact. The very first followers of Jesus didn't even call themselves Christians. That was not a name they chose for themselves. Actually, the title "Christian" was probably first used as a derogatory term that was used by people outside of the faith, as it says in Acts 11:26:

In Antioch the disciples were first called Christians. (Acts 11:26b)

It meant something like "little Christ," like people were telling them, "you all just want to be little Jesuses walking around." It was a derogatory term. So you might ask, "Well, if they didn't call themselves Christians,

¹ It is, after all, the Great Commission. Matthew 28:19-20

² As the angels did when Jesus was born. Luke 2:10

³ Salvation is not a work that we do, and yet once we receive it, we will begin to walk in the works God prepared for us. Ephesians 2:8-10.

⁴ Paul told Timothy to do the work of an evangelist. 2 Timothy 4:2. While many will undoubtedly and rightly see this as instructions for pastors, nobody would say that only pastors can benefit from the letters to Timothy. Rather, pastors are to be shining examples of what all Christians should do.

what did they call themselves?” And you actually you find the answer right there in Acts 11:26 as well. It calls them “the disciples.” In fact, in many places in the New Testament, we see that the first Christians referred to themselves not as Christians, but as the disciples of Jesus.

Consider this. The word Christian is actually only used three times in all the Bible. In contrast, the word disciple is used 281 times in the New Testament alone. You might say, “Well, so what?” Andy Stanley says this:

“I want to suggest to you that in changing the primary word that we use to describe ourselves, we lost the clarity that the word disciple conveyed about what a follower of Jesus actually is.” - Andy Stanley

Now, some of you are probably wondering, “Okay, he’s going say that we need to stop calling ourselves Christians, and from now I want you to go to work and tell people you’re not a Christian, that you’re a disciple.” And you’re like, “I just feel like that’s weird, and I’m not going to do that.” So let me just ease your mind and let you know that’s not what I’m saying. But I do want to show you that our use of the term Christian today obscures the fact that a lot of people who call themselves Christians are not actually disciples.

You see, the term “disciple” is much clearer. Terrifyingly clear in fact about what you actually become when you choose to believe in Jesus. We’re going to go back and try to get into what a disciple actually was, and in Matthew 4 we have the calling of the first disciples.

Matthew 4:18-22.

While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Immediately, [immediate obedience], they left their nets and followed him. And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him. (Matthew 4:18-22)

Let me ask a question. Have you ever wondered how Jesus did this? Like, He’s just walking by, and tells some people in a boat, “Follow me,” and they do! But why? Was it a Jedi mind trick? How did Jesus just convince these guys to come and follow Him? Whenever I read this passage in the past, I always just assumed it was His special divine powers making people follow Him. But when you understand the history behind what’s happening here it actually makes a lot more sense.

You see, all Hebrew boys in those days went to what they called Torah school. Torah school was all about just learning the first five books of the Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. They started at age 5, and for the next five years they’d memorize large sections of the Torah.

Well, by age 10 they had kind of a weeding out. They only took like the very best students, say the upper 20 percent or so, and then the rest of them who didn’t make the cut went back home to their fathers, and they would begin to pursue being apprentices in the family business, like being fisherman or something. The boys who remained in a Torah school would study on till about age 17 where they would learn the rest of what we call the Old Testament, Joshua through Malachi, and so they would learn that for the next seven years.

Well, when they got to 17, there was kind of another cut, and if you wanted to go on with your religious studies after that, then you had to find yourself a rabbi—a rabbi that you admired—and apply to become that rabbi’s talmid. Rabbi just means teacher, and talmid means disciple. It’s the Hebrew word for disciple. And when you

found your rabbi, you would go and sit at their feet. That was your request to learn from that rabbi, and the rabbis would examine you with a series of questions and put you through a series of tests to see if you were worthy to be their talmids: their disciples.

You see, the rabbis were able to be really selective because in those days, becoming a religious ruler was the best of all possible jobs, and so almost every Hebrew boy dreamed of becoming a religious expert one day. They didn't dream about becoming basketball players or rock stars, 'cause they didn't have that back then. They dreamed of becoming religious experts so, therefore, the rabbis could choose only the smartest, most talented boys to be their talmidim. That's the plural for disciples: talmidim.

Another reason the rabbis were so picky is that when they chose a disciple, they were choosing somebody that they believed had the capacity to become just like them. Not just to know what they knew and to hear their teaching, but to do what they did. And for several years these talmidim would follow around their rabbis, imitating them in every way.

They would learn their mannerisms. They would learn how they answered certain questions. They would learn how to respond in situations. Supposedly the highest compliment you could pay a talmid in those days was to say to them, the dust of your rabbi is all over you. That wasn't like saying, hey man, you need a shower. That was saying that whatever your rabbi stepped in sprayed up on you. That's how closely you followed him. Everything that your rabbi does, you do. You got covered with it.

Now, one more thing here. In Jesus's day, there was a really rare form of rabbi who possessed a characteristic that the Jewish people called smicha. Smicha just translates as authority, but I think it sounds so much cooler in Hebrew, doesn't it? Smicha. You say it. Smicha. Smicha means authority, and some rabbis had this smicha. They were very rare, these kinds of rabbis. We only know of a dozen or so that were recognized as smicha rabbis in the first century, and they all had names that if you know anything about Jewish history, you recognize names like Hillel or Gamaliel.⁵ These guys were first of all, masters of the Torah. They were mystical, and they had this spiritual authority where they could give interpretations of texts. They were thought to be so close to God that they could give new, unheard of insights into Scripture. And that was a pretty big deal, because as Jewish people they weren't into new stuff. Everything that they needed to know, they'd always known. So new stuff is frowned upon. But these rabbis had smicha. They had the ability to say, "you didn't understand this, but I'm gonna explain it to you."

Couple other things here. To be regarded as a rabbi with smicha, there had to be evidence that you had done miracles, credible evidence. Finally, if you were regarded as one with smicha, it had to be officially conferred upon you by two other rabbis with smicha. All that to say this was a really exclusive club that was pretty hard to get into.

Now, back to Matthew 4. Here comes Jesus who knows the Torah so well that we find him at age 12 in the temple correcting the religious rulers.⁶ All right? He frequently says things when He's teaching like, "You have heard it said, but I say to you."⁷ We see that His hearers are constantly amazed at His authority.⁸ Just a couple of chapters after Matthew 4, He says this, Matthew 7:28:

⁵ Gamaliel was Paul's rabbi according to Acts 22:3. Hillel is not mentioned in the Bible.

⁶ Luke 2:46-47

⁷ Matthew 5:21-22

⁸ Luke 4:32

And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had... (Matthew 7:28-29)

In Hebrew, they would've said, "One who had smicha." They taught him as one with smicha, not like the other scribes. Everyone else, all the other scribes, just repeated what everybody else said. But throughout Jesus' career, they're saying things like, "Where'd you get smicha? Where'd you get your smicha? Who conferred it upon you? We need to know. He does miracles."

Matthew 4:23, the verse right after the ones that we read, said that right after this passage He goes to, throughout the region, healing every disease and sickness among the people. And this is probably the best part. Right before this account in Matthew 4, Jesus goes out into the wilderness where John the Baptist, the camel-skin-wearing, locusts-and-honey-eating prophet preaching in the wilderness, who was a teacher dripping with smicha sauce if there ever was one. He tells everybody that's listening, "Hey, there's somebody in this crowd," points to Jesus. "He is so much greater than I am that I'm not even worthy to untie his shoelaces." And then at the same moment, God the Father speaks from heaven and says, "This is My beloved Son in whom I'm well pleased."⁹

Now, at that point, the little smicha light on your dashboard is going all smicha, smicha, smicha, smicha. Jesus has got smicha. It's very, very obvious to everybody. Now, get this. Matthew 4. Jesus, this new rabbi just oozing with smicha, chooses Simon Peter and Andrew, who are fishermen. The fact that they were fishermen, what does that show you? They hadn't made the cut. They were the rejects. Take note of what's going on. When Jesus assembled His force by His choice to transform the world, He chose the B team.

He skipped over all the A players and went straight for the B ones. So, the point is, of course they wanted to follow Him. Of course they wanted to follow this rabbi with all this smicha who had chosen them, guys without much potential or personal power that He chose them to follow Him, become like Him, to know God like He knew God, to do what He did and be filled with His power.

So, here's a few things we notice about being a disciple from Matthew 4. Number one, He doesn't choose the best. He chooses the willing. He doesn't choose the best. He chooses the willing. John MacArthur explains it this way:

"In choosing His disciples, Jesus skipped all the wise of the day. The great scholars were in Egypt. The great library was in Alexandria. The great philosophers were in Athens. The powerful were in Rome. He passed over Herodotus, the historian. And Socrates, the great thinker. And Julius Caesar, the great ruler. He chose men to be His disciples so ordinary it was comical." - John MacArthur

No teachers, no religious experts, not even a synagogue ruler. Half of them were fishermen. One was essentially an IRS agent and one of them was a former terrorist.¹⁰ Jesus chose the B team because His work in the world would not come from their abilities for Him.¹¹ It would come from what He would do through them. You see, people with a lot of talent and ability would only get in the way because they would never really learn to lean into His power. Instead, Jesus wanted to show that His power in the weakest vessel was infinitely greater than the greatest talent apart from Him.

⁹ Matthew 3:11-17

¹⁰ The zealots sought to incite the Jews to rebel against the Romans, often violently. Luke 6:15.

¹¹ 1 Corinthians 1:27

Now, think about that. Being the weakest member means you know the least about the Bible. Being the least means you have the least talent. It means you're the least eloquent. It means you have the least amount of spiritual gifts. Somebody at our church right now, somebody in this room, is the least in the kingdom of God of Grace Baptist Church. Right?

And I'm not trying to be mean, but mathematically that has to be true. One of you has the least talent, you're the least capable, you're the least eloquent, you know the least about the Bible, and right now you're thinking, "I think he might be talking about me," and God in heaven is like, "Yep, it's you." You're at the bottom of the pile. But even if that's accurate, you, whoever you are, have maybe more potential than anyone else here to make a huge impact for the kingdom of God.

Why? Because God chooses the foolish things to shame the wise. He chooses the weak things to shame the strong.¹² And if you know Jesus, you have the Holy Spirit inside of you,¹³ and because of that fact alone, it's no longer about your abilities for Jesus, it's about your ability to be available to Him, because He didn't choose you 'cause you could be a great witness. He didn't choose you 'cause you could be a great preacher. He chose you because He knew that you could be a willing vessel that He could work through, and the Holy Spirit in the mouth of one believer is more powerful than an army of the most eloquent orators in the world.

J.D. Greear told the story about how when he started college, him and a group of his friends started a small Bible study that was just designed to introduce a few of their new friends to Jesus, and it kind of pattered along for a few months, but didn't go anywhere.

Well, one day they decided that they were going to have a night where they invited all their friends that they could get to come at the same time where they would explain the gospel and tell them about Jesus. And so, they planned it for about a month, and they passed out flyers and the day before they were going to do it, they were having a meeting about it during lunch in the college dining hall, and there was one member of their team named Amy who was one of the shyest girls. The kind that just seems like it's painful for her when she's trying to talk with people. So, she was sitting next to J.D. on his left, and J.D. was talking to somebody to his right, and all of a sudden he heard this commotion on his left, and he looked up and Amy was standing on top of the dining room table just looking out over the entire dining hall.

And then she stamped her foot, and J.D. thinks, "This girl has lost her mind!" Like, what is happening to this girl? So, she stands up, gets the entire place quiet and in a very small, kind of as loud as she could project, her mousy voice, she says, "Hey, I know most of you don't know me, and you probably think I'm crazy, but I consider all of you my friends and tomorrow night, some friends of mine and I, we're gonna explain what the greatest thing is in our life, how Jesus Christ has changed our lives, and we believe He can change yours, and I really think all of you should come."

And then she sat back down, and J.D. looked at her, and said, "What just happened Amy?" And she said, "I don't know. I just really felt like the Holy Spirit told me to do that." Now, listen I'm not saying when you listen to the Holy Spirit, you hear voices all the time or that you're gonna start doing wacky things continually, but the next night, they had 700 people show up to hear about Jesus. And in large part it's because of people like Amy who were listening to the Holy Spirit and doing what He told them to do, because the Holy Spirit in the mouth of one available believer is more powerful than the most eloquent army of talented people in the world.

¹² 1 Corinthians 1:27-28

¹³ John 14:17

You understand that when you face the things that God has told you to face.¹⁴ He didn't choose you because you were awesome. He wanted to make you awesome because He chose you. Your awesomeness was not gonna come from your abilities. Your awesomeness was gonna come from His power in you. So, the question is not, "how able are you?" The question is, "how available are you?" Have you surrendered yourself to Him to say, "God, I'm gonna stop making excuses, and I'm gonna quit looking into my family, into my marriage, into my ministry, into my workplace and asking, what can I do?" I'm gonna start asking God to work through me in all of these areas. So, number one, Jesus didn't choose the best, He chose the willing.

Number two, we see from Matthew 4 that God chose us, not we Him. Like I explained, the normal way all of this went down is that if you were in the best of your class, then you applied to a rabbi, and if he liked what he saw, He choose you back. Now, what we know is that that became a great source of confidence to these talmidim, because when everything else was going against them, they kind of were like, yeah, but my rabbi, who I respect, he chose me. He must've seen something in me. It'd be like today if some well-known football coach...who's your favorite football coach? It would be like if he came up to you and said, "Man, you got real talent. I want you on my team." So even if everybody else was making fun of you, you'd be like, "It doesn't matter, because my coach chose me for the team!"

Well, Jesus starts the process even further back. He chose them when they weren't even looking for Him. He came seeking them when they didn't really have any idea that they could be His disciples. Do you understand what kind of confidence that gave them? One of the things you notice if you read the New Testament is how many times and how often Jesus and the apostles bring up this concept that He chose us as a means of instilling confidence.

Jesus said in John 15:16:

You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide... (John 15:16)

Now, I don't think this is Jesus trying to unravel the mysteries of predestination to you. What He's saying to His disciples and to you is that in the midst of a world where you feel overwhelmed by opposition, you can be confident that if God chose you, God's gonna see it through, and it doesn't matter what the size of the obstacles are in front of you, it matters the size of the God behind you and that God is greater than those. Greater is He that is in you!¹⁵ So stop worrying about the obstacles and start focusing on God.¹⁶ That's the whole point of choosing. Now, check this out.

Jesus says, I appointed you that you might go and bear fruit. Bear fruit means you're going to begin showing the fruit of the Spirit in your life. You're going to have love, joy, peace, patience, and so on.¹⁷ And it also means that you'll begin to win other people to Jesus. Often, we get fixated on the other fruit. We want more of the fruit that makes us happier people. But Jesus made it clear that the fruit His disciples would produce isn't just for their own personal happiness, but also for the eternal joy of others. He would make us fishers of men, so that other men and women would get caught by Jesus!

And this is where we often lack confidence. We're confident that Jesus can do all that He wants to do, but we're not always confident that we can do what He's called us to do. You're confident that if Jesus were at your

¹⁴ Philippians 4:13

¹⁵ 1 John 4:4

¹⁶ Hebrews 12:1

¹⁷ Galatians 5:2-23

workplace, He'd be doing a great job being a witness. But that's not what He promised. What He did promise is that He would do these things through you. And when your confidence falters, when life smacks you down, when you fail, when you feel like you are up against insurmountable obstacles in your marriage, with your kids, in your career, in your ministry, what you need to remember is He who called you is faithful, and He will do His work through you.¹⁸ That He who began a good work in you will continue it till He finishes it in the day of Christ Jesus.¹⁹ That greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. That what God has purposed, He will bring to pass.²⁰

I am convinced, Paul says, I know who I have believed in, and I'm persuaded that He is able to keep that which I've committed to Him against that day.²¹ When I am faithless, He will be faithful. He cannot deny himself.²² When I am unable, He is able. What I have said, Jesus says, that I will bring about. What I have planned, that I will do. When Jesus chose you, He had a plan. He had a plan to use you to bring forth fruit and not a bit of it is dependent on the amount of ability you brought to the conversation. What it's dependant on is His ability to do it through you, and you've gotta put your confidence in that. So Jesus tells you, "I WILL make you fishers of men." He said it, and He's gonna do it. You can trust in Him. Right? So, that was the second.

Here's the third thing. Our primary call is simply to be with Jesus. Notice just the first two words that Jesus said to Simon and Andrew in verse 19. "Follow Me."

I love that. He didn't tell them where they were going. He didn't tell them what assignment He had for them, because His primary call on you is not to do something, it's to become like Him. And to become like Him, you gotta know Him. And to know Him, you gotta spend time with Him. And to spend time with Him means that you soak in every single word that comes out of His mouth.

Here at Grace, we offer so many outlets for you to take advantage of this. Weekly messages, Bible study groups on Sunday mornings and Wednesday nights, and even memorizing the Bible while we bowl. And all I'll say is if you're really serious about being a disciple of Jesus, then you're gonna begin to take advantage of a lot of these, and I don't mean just coming to hear me teach once a week. You're gonna be getting into the word every day on your own. You're gonna be memorizing Scripture. You're gonna saturate yourself in the word of God, because you just want to know Him.

Do you want the dust of your Rabbi Jesus to be all over you? Then you're gonna have to have His word saturating you, inside of you until it dominates all your thinking and all your behavior. Until you think it and you talk it and you quote it and, as we often say, when life cuts you, you just bleed God's word. 'Cause listen: you cannot know Jesus any more than you know His word. Do you want the dust of your Rabbi all over you? Then learn His word. You gotta be with Him. That's number three.

Number four. To follow Him, you have to leave it all. Immediately, it says they left their boat and their father. Now, why do you think the author picked these two things and highlighted those? Well, because those two things represent the two most significant things in our lives, right? For the fisherman, the boat meant their career. It's what you depend on to take care of yourself. Your father, that would be your most significant relationship. And Jesus says, "To follow me, I gotta take precedence over both of those things."

¹⁸ 1 Thessalonians 5:24

¹⁹ Philippians 1:6

²⁰ Isaiah 14:24

²¹ 1 Timothy 1:12

²² 2 Timothy 2:13

Now, most of you, for you to follow Jesus, you're not actually going to lose your father and mother, although many believers around the world do. People who become Christians in places like China and Iraq and North Korea are often disowned by their families when they find out, and even reported to the authorities and arrested, and even threatened with death.

But most of you aren't gonna have that experience. Most of you aren't gonna be asked to leave your job to follow Jesus. Some of you. A few of you may be asked to quit your job altogether to become a full-time missionary. That will happen with a few of you. But for many of you, it's not going to be that dramatic.

But you are going to have moments in your life where you have to decide what holds greater sway over your life. For example, mission trips. Some of you have heard us talking about mission trips for years, and have always felt like God wanted you to go with us, but you've yet to do go because you always seem to have so many other things to do in life. And you're gonna have to decide what has greater sway over your life: your family, your obligations, or your God. Some of you have business choices to make. You're gonna face the temptation to cut some corners, which, you rationalize, everybody else in your field does. But you're gonna have to decide if you're gonna be patient and do things God's way. For some of you, it's simply what you do with your income. Scripture teaches in unequivocal terms that you give your first and your best back to Jesus when you're His follower.²³ This is an area where so many Christians demonstrate that they've never really become a disciple of Jesus, because they just don't want to obey God here.²⁴ They don't let Jesus have greater sway over that than their boat does. You see, to follow Jesus means you subject everything in your life to His lordship. You forsake all that He has forbidden, and you pursue all that He has prescribed unconditionally.

Number five. Last one. In here we see that Jesus commands us to reproduce spiritually. To be a disciple, He commands us to reproduce spiritually. Verse 19. "Follow Me," He says, "and I will make you a fisher of men." Just like Jesus had been a fisher of men, His followers, also, would become fishers of men. This is an essential part of being a disciple. It's not something that just a few of us are called do. It is something, according to Jesus, that all of us do. In fact, Jesus says if this is not a part of what you do then you're not really My disciple.

You see, Jesus gave all of us the Great Commission. Matthew 28:19 is the last thing He said before He ascended into heaven.

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. (Matthew 28:19-20)

Now, it's interesting that when you look at these verbs in Greek—go, baptize, and teach—all of them are participles. That means they're not the main verb of the sentence. There's actually only one verb in that sentence, and it's "make disciples," which means that the center of all the going, the baptizing and the teaching is to make disciples, which means that in everything else that we do as a church and everything we do as a Christian, the core of what we do is the one verb He gave us, which is to make disciples.

Some of you are moved by the needs of the world, and that's awesome. You're moved by the needs of people all around you. The greatest need in the world is the need for people to hear about the salvation of Jesus.²⁵

²³ Matthew 6:21

²⁴ Luke 12:20

²⁵ Romans 10:14

Some of you are moved by suffering. You're moved by the suffering of the refugee and the plight of people all over the world, and that's awesome. The greatest of all suffering is eternal suffering, which people who are outside of Jesus experience.²⁶ Which means, yes, give your life to meet needs. Give your life to relieve suffering. But as a disciple of Jesus, know that the greatest needs you can meet and the greatest suffering that you can relieve is the need of people to hear about Jesus and to experience the salvation of Jesus. So, in all that you do make sure the controlling verb is making disciples. You see, Jesus summarized His ministry in Luke 19 by saying the Son of Man, Himself, came to seek and save the lost.²⁷

Doesn't that mean that if we are His disciples, that's how we should summarize our lives, too? In other words, if the dust of my Rabbi is all over me, isn't that what my life will look like? This is the primary thing we do, and it involves every single believer. It's not just something we do in a few departments in the church. It's not just something a few members of the church are called to. It's something that each of you, as followers of Jesus, do. He has called and appointed you! Individually, you. He's called you to go and bring forth fruit.

God's plan for the Great Commission is not merely what we do on Sunday mornings. God's plan for evangelism in Nokomis is not merely a few preachers around town giving gospel invitations. God's plan is individual men and women. It's you. You are God's method. You are Christ's disciple, called to become a fisher of men, to seek and save the lost by bringing them to Jesus.

And by God's grace, I want you to pray about becoming a reproducing Christian this year. And this morning, I want to give you an opportunity to commit doing just that. Now, don't let this intimidate you. Disciple making is simply pointing people to Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes it means studying the Bible together, and just bringing them to our Sunday morning or Wednesday night Bible studies. But even more than that, it's simply opening up your life to let other people in. It's just inviting people into your home so they can see how Christians live. It's just teaching people to follow Jesus like you follow Jesus. And Jesus has promised to help you do that. You say, "Well, what do I do? What are you asking me to do, exactly?" I'll make this as practical as I can.

First of all, you need to get engaged in the church. Jesus said, "Follow Me!" So in order for you to make disciples, first you need to be obedient to follow Jesus. That means getting involved in growing, serving, and even giving to God through our church.

Secondly, you need to make yourself available to God. Pray, asking God for opportunities to share your faith, and look for those opportunities in your daily life to share how God has been good to you, and invite others to taste and see that the Lord is good.²⁸

And maybe most importantly, I want you to identify today your one. Your one. Who is your one? I'm gonna challenge you to have one person this year that with the help of God you're gonna introduce to faith in Jesus Christ. I know you can't control the outcome, so I'm not asking you to put it on you, but I'm saying, will you commit to God and say, "God, will you show me one person this year that I am supposed to seek to make a disciple, sharing my faith with them, and praying that they receive Jesus as their Savior and Lord?"

Here's what I'm asking of all of you, whether you're a youth, or middle-aged, or over the hill. I'm asking each one to commit to reach one.

²⁶ Matthew 25:46

²⁷ Luke 19:10

²⁸ Psalm 34:8

So here's our challenge. First of all, are you a disciple? Maybe you've never understood this until now. But are you actually a disciple or do you just call yourself a Christian? Have you committed to follow Jesus?

That's the first thing. And second, identify one person who God has laid on your heart to share the gospel with this year.

If the answer to the first question is no, you're not a disciple, are you ready to become a disciple? Are you ready to receive Jesus into your life, and trust Him to save you and give you a new purpose in life? If so, then you can pray something like this.

Lord Jesus, I'm ready to follow and become Your disciple. Every single part of my life, I surrender to You. I receive Your gift of forgiveness. And now, I pray that You'll give me that one person this year that with Your help I can introduce to Jesus. God, help me. Help me to reproduce myself spiritually. God, I commit to it. I commit to be a part of it. Father, I pray that this year would be marked by seeing an army of us become reproducing disciple makers in our community and our families and workplace. Help us to be obedient to share the gospel. We pray by the Holy Spirit in Jesus name. Amen.