

**Rethinking what it means to be a disciple**

Do you know what the word disciple actually means? We use the term all the time in our religious settings, but what does it actually mean to be a Disciple of Jesus? This question is HUGE when you consider that Jesus tells us, in the Great Commission, to go out and make disciples! So, let’s rethink the idea of being a disciple!

If you look up the term “disciple” in the dictionary you will find a few different definitions. One definition is, “One who embraces and assists in spreading the teachings of another.” This is a pretty good description of what God wants from us. He doesn’t just want us to make converts; He wants us to embrace following Jesus wholeheartedly. Even to the point of sharing our new found life with others. Yet we live in a reality where nearly 100% of Christ Followers can recite the Great Commission but very few are actually making new disciples. Why is this?

Somewhere along the way, we lost the spirit of a disciple. Do you know the root of the word disciple is actually a word that means “learner?” Think about your life, have you lost the spirit of a learner? Do you come to God in prayer and come to the Word ready to listen and learn? And do you come together with others to learn together? We cannot live in isolation and we cannot learn in isolation.

Here are a few ways to regain the spirit of a learner:

1. **Join a small group of learners.** Whether it is in a Sunday school class, a Bible study, a home group, or an Action Group, make sure you are meeting regularly with others who want to learn and grow. You need the support and challenge of like-minded friends.
2. **Read a book that addresses an aspect of spirituality in which you want to grow.** Maybe you need to read a book about evangelism, maybe a book about prayer, or maybe one about simplicity. The key, though, is to read it with others and make it part of your spiritual journey.
3. **Find someone to mentor.** One of the best ways to learn and grow is to have to teach it!
4. **Seek relationships with unbelievers.** A pastor said something the other day about his neighbors. He said he would rather have pagans living by him than Believers. At first that seemed odd to me—wouldn’t it be better to have like minded people around us? The truth is, though, our pastor sees his neighbors as his mission field. Do you see those around you as a mission field, or is it simply part of what has become our comfort zone?

Sometimes coming home from a mission trip can be a souring experience. Instead of continuing in love for one another, we turn to judgment and criticism. This only leads us to withdraw from relationships in an unhealthy way. As you seek to grow closer to God, don’t forget to grow closer to others. There is a reason why Jesus tells us the greatest commandment is to love God and love others. There is an unexplainable link between God and others. The way that we love God is to love others and the only way to truly love others is to love God.