

Defining Discipleship Training: Explaining Spiritual Growth

What is discipleship?

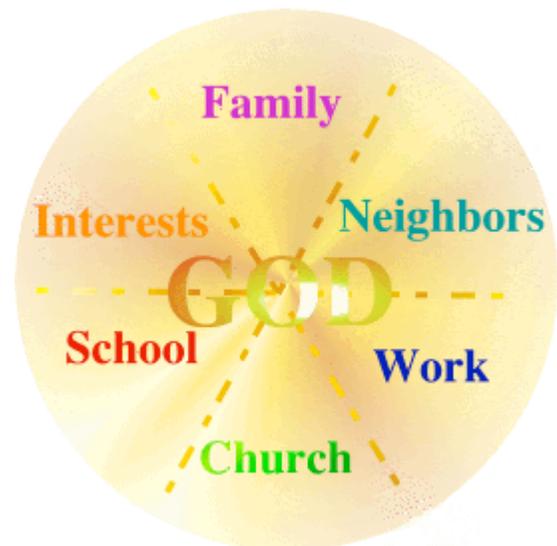
I remember when I was first seriously faced with the question, "What is discipleship?". A young man in a smaller city in Taiwan called "Phoenix Mountain" (actually there was no mountain there just like there is no such thing as a phoenix) came to know the Lord. We were just a few months into starting a new church, and I wanted to train this new Christian the right way.

Since there was no established program to plug him into, I went back to Christ's charge in Matthew 28:18-20 and began to think about the process of making disciples. I asked myself, "How do we do this?" "How do we cause a person to grow spiritually?"

Actually, I should have understood this many years ago when I became a Christian. Or if not, at least later on during my training. But I didn't. Perhaps it was my lack of interest, but this I know, I heard many speak on the charge to make disciples, but cannot remember one who explained how to do it. From that time onward there in 'Phoenix Mountain,' I have given much thought to this question.

Below is a graphic illustration of Colossians 1:10 and a description of how this helps us understand discipleship from one perspective.

**"So that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please [Him] in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God."
Colossians 1:10 (NASB)**



From the words 'in all respects' we can gather that each area of our lives should be made pleasing to our Lord. Discipleship describes this growing process in which we do this. A mature Christian disciple, then, is one who has been deeply influenced in each aspect of his life by the Lord Jesus

Christ. The end result is that he will bear fruit and have good works.

The truths from this verse are further described below.

1. When God is the center of our lives, we live to please Him.

Our life goal is to please Him in each aspect of our lives. If any area of our lives is not pleasing the Lord, then our whole lives become out of alignment. Idolatry is treating anything or person more respect than God.

2. When we please God, we want Him to influence each area of our lives. This is discipleship.

Effective discipleship occurs when each area of our lives is affected by God's teaching and purpose. We need to regularly meditate on God's Word so that it might shine light into our hearts and shape our thoughts and ways.

Discipleship describes the process of our spiritual growth in each area of our lives to be made more pleasing to the Lord. But we need to think more on how this is done. From many of the scripture's teachings, we discover the Christian's own regular growth is to be accompanied by deliberate training from those in the church. The Great Commission thrusts us all out to help develop other Christians around us. The Great Commandment (love one another) rightly motivates us to genuinely care for those we serve. The provision of pastors, apostles and teachers help strengthen all the Christians to take part in this training process (So what are pastors for? [Ephesians 4:11-16](#)).

Secularism has stolen our understanding that each and every aspect of our lives should be affected by God's person, perspective and power.

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Biblical Foundations for Freedom

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