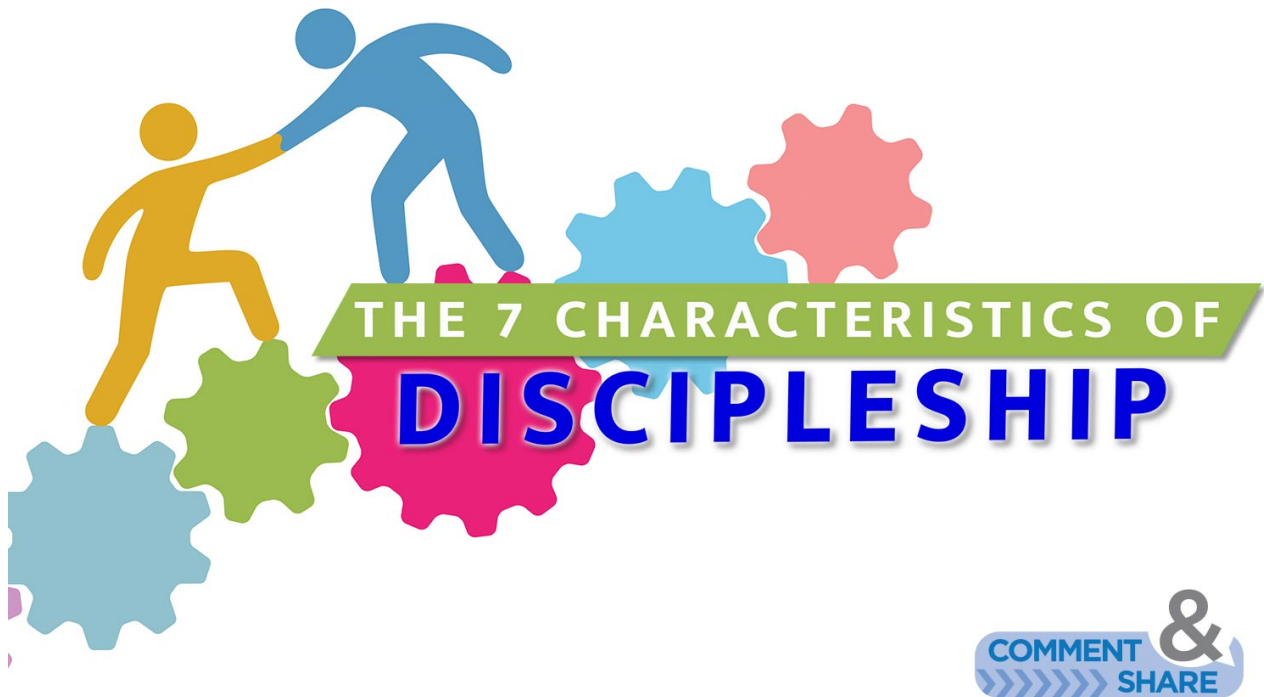


The 7 Characteristics of Discipleship

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2021 is the Year of the Local Church, so we thought we'd take an important look at an often-neglected function of the Church—discipleship. In Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus tells us to make disciples of all nations, teaching them to obey His commands.

Throughout the Bible, we see many examples of discipleship—Moses and Joshua, Eli and Samuel, Elijah and Elisha, Jesus and His disciples, Paul and Timothy, and so many more. That's because discipleship is to be a way of life for the believer. Giving and receiving discipleship is the path to spiritual maturity, and in each of these instances, great personal breakthrough.

Some are hesitant to disciple others, feeling inadequate to do so. If that's you, remember: To whom much is given, much is required; and to those who accept it, there is an anointing to achieve it.

What you've been given spiritually should be flowing through you! As you move into this powerful place of ministry, consider these seven characteristics of discipleship that will get you on your way.

1. Share the Gospel

“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” –Mark 16:15 (NKJV)

Discipleship begins here. Every believer is called to share the gospel, and it's the first characteristic of true discipleship. Mark 16:15 isn't just talking about the occasional overseas mission trip, it's about sharing the love of Christ with those around us *every day*. People at work, people at the grocery store, unsaved family members and friends all need to hear you "give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have"(1 Peter 3:15, *NIV*).

2. Go Beyond Evangelism

"Go therefore and make disciples." –Matthew 28:19 (*NKJV*)

You'll notice this verse doesn't say "Go therefore and make *converts*," but rather *disciples*. Sharing the gospel is important, but it's only step one of what we're called to do. Discipleship is lifelong. It never ends. Each of us is to continually grow and mature spiritually, and that includes new Christians!

The Great Commission in Matthew 28:19 isn't just about winning souls; it's about teaching people everything Jesus has taught us. Discipleship changes things—it changes people and their thinking. That's why it is so important to teach people the full Word of God and not avoid topics that we think might be offensive.

Discipleship goes beyond helping someone pray the sinner's prayer. It includes having the tough conversations, like how living with someone before marriage or no-fault divorce are not biblical. It also addresses politics through the lens of the Bible when it comes to abortion, the economy, criminal justice and education.

3. Be Imitators of Christ

"Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ." –1 Corinthians 11:1 (*ESV*)

Discipleship is far more than what we say to people—it's primarily found in the example we give in our own lifestyle. We cannot teach others to live a life of forgiveness and at the same time carry around bitterness and resentment in our own lives. We cannot teach others to walk in love, then allow strife to come into our marriages. Our lifestyle serves as both evangelism and discipleship.

Find A Checklist for Discipling Another Believer [HERE](#).

Watch Jeremy and Sarah Pearsons teach you why the life you live is the legacy you leave.



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4. Men, Become Spiritual Fathers

"In Christ Jesus I became your father" –1 Corinthians 4:15 (NIV)

Whether they express it or not, men of all ages value the insight, wisdom and counsel of strong Christian men who are willing to come alongside them and help them grow spiritually. They need spiritual fathers. This is one way discipleship is fulfilled.

A spiritual father nourishes, protects and upholds. He models right thinking, speaking and living. He encourages younger men to build their faith, love their wives, and avoid sin. He is a pillar of strength in a world built on sandy ground, and he is always ready to point young men to God and help them stay on the right path.

As a man of God, you are called to disciple younger men. Don't worry about feeling qualified—there is an anointing to disciple by taking the role of a spiritual father. Seek the Lord for this anointing and develop it. Everything else will fall into place.

5. Ladies, Become Spiritual Mothers

"Older women must train the younger women." –Titus 2:4

Ladies, while men are called to be spiritual fathers, you are called to become spiritual mothers. If you are a Christian woman, whether you know it or not, you're being watched. You're being studied. You are called to be an example of the Proverbs 31 woman.

To disciple younger women, you will not only correct and direct but cherish and defend. You will "live in a way that honors God.... teach others what is good.... train the younger women to love their husbands and their children, to live wisely and be pure, to work in their homes" (Titus 2:3-5). These are true characteristics of discipleship.

Young men also need spiritual mothers to encourage them to become the men God has called them to be. They hunger for spiritual mothers, and those women serve a special purpose in their spiritual growth.

Take your place—become a spiritual mother—and help the younger generation rise up in faith and follow the Lord. Embrace the anointing of discipleship through spiritual motherhood. Your spiritual children are waiting for your direction, guidance and love.

6. Make Connections

"If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge...but do not have love, I am nothing." –1 Corinthians 13:2 (NIV)

Effective discipleship can only come through a personal relationship that is developed on trust and love. That's why one of the characteristics of discipleship is making connections with other people. As you build relationships with other believers, you will position yourself to teach them the ways of the Kingdom. You will have an open door to help them change their thoughts and renew their minds.

This is also true of discipling your children. Your relationship cannot only be one of correction and discipline, but also of love and encouragement. Then, as you impart the Word into them and train them up in the way they should go, they will receive willingly from you.

7. Seek Out Discipleship Yourself

"To accept correction is wise." –Proverbs 12:1 (CEV)

God's plan for every believer is to disciple others. But the first step is to be a faithful disciple yourself. Pastor George Pearons says, "Show me a great leader, and I'll show you someone who has first been a faithful disciple."

In other words, discipleship isn't a one-way street. Each of us is called to disciple, but also to be disciplined. And it is a lifelong pursuit.

An important characteristic of discipleship is to seek out discipleship yourself. Don't wait around for the "perfect" person. Find someone who is spiritually mature to hold you accountable and challenge you to reach higher and grow faster in your faith. This won't always necessarily be someone who is older, and it certainly won't be someone who only tells you what you want to hear!

You cannot stand alone and expect to grow. We have been called to spur one another on in our faith. Find someone who is spiritually mature and willing to speak boldly to you. Don't shy away from correction, or you'll end up in the same place year after year.

And be sure your discipleship is occurring in a personal setting. Watching VICTORY Channel[®] is one way to receive teaching and instruction, but discipleship is a one-on-one experience that allows the Holy Spirit to speak directly to you through a person. It allows another believer to lift you up personally, hold you accountable and call you higher. There is no substitute for this important relationship.

Above all, remember that discipleship isn't an event, it is a way of life. If you don't have someone in your life who is helping you grow in your faith, reach out to someone whose life and faith you admire today, and ask to talk or meet on a weekly or monthly basis. Share with them and welcome them to speak into your life. Then, be prepared for God to do amazing things through the area of discipleship.

Now that you know the characteristics of discipleship, set a goal this year to live a lifestyle of discipling and being disciplined by others. These relationships, both on the giving and receiving end, will press the fast-forward button on your own life and faith. Discipleship creates an atmosphere ripe for breakthrough!

Watch Jeremy and Sarah Pearsons teach you why finding your faith family is a critical part of your connection with others.



Watch Video At: <https://youtu.be/cCmnEvKCJJK>

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