

# MBC MEN'S STUDY

## DISCIPLESHIP AND THE LOCAL CHURCH

### CLASS 3: DISCIPLESHIP TODAY, CHAPTERS 6-7

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- Jan 18: Current State of Discipleship & Defining Discipleship Biblically (Chs.1-2)
- Feb 8: Principles of Biblical Discipleship Part I & II (Chs. 3-4)
- Mar 8: Key Factors in Discipleship Today & Tomorrow (Chs. 5 & 8)
- **April 12: Discipleship Avenues for the Church & Personal (Chs. 6-7)**
- May 17: Becoming a Mature Disciple-Maker ([GIBC Grace & Granite Notes](#))

### CHAPTER 6: DISCIPLESHIP AVENUES FOR THE CHURCH

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- What avenues are there in the church for men and women to be transformed by discipleship?
- Remember our definition of discipleship, “the process of learning the teachings of Scripture, internalizing them to shape one’s belief system, and then acting upon them in one’s daily life.” (63)
- Simply put, we must know something, we must believe something, and then show that we know and believe it by the way that we live.
- If you believe that discipleship is a key component in your life and in the life of the church, how are you making sure this key discipline is being fulfilled.
- “It is important to view discipleship as an umbrella. Under that umbrella are many ‘ribs’ or supports that strengthen the umbrella. Several of those ribs in a church setting are preaching, Sunday school, adult Bible fellowships, small groups. Missional teams, mentoring, and coaching. A healthy church will incorporate a number of those ribs so that the discipleship process impacts numerous members and congregants in the church.” (64).
- In other words, if a church is going to be successful at discipling its members, it must offer multiple opportunities in multiple venues for varying groups of people to learn, internalize, and act upon what the Scriptures teach.

- “Members of the church need to be challenged to become involved in as many aspects or “ribs” of the ministry. As they attend, receive instruction and teaching, serve in these ministries, they grow as disciples of Christ.” (Burggraff, notes)
- It is part of the leadership’s responsibility to not only teach the Word to the people but then also encourage them to be part of the various ribs of the church’s discipleship umbrella.
- As he points out, there are “four key areas of ministry [that] must each become part of a believer’s/disciple’s life. it is important that you understand two main implications from this perspective”: (64...list also on page 64)
  - We must *stop* expecting complete discipleship to take place in just one or two of the avenues of ministry.
  - We must *start* a sustainable pattern of discipleship that incorporates these four areas of ministry for believers to be disciplined in the church.
- “The four main teaching avenues for the church to help disciples grow spiritually are 1) The Preaching Ministry, 2) The Teaching Ministry, 3) The Small Group Ministry, 4) The Mentoring Ministry.” (64)
- As we talk about how these four main teaching avenues should be in the church, take a moment and think about how you both learn from them and contribute to them.
  - “The term disciple marks an individual relationship, and though it has largely fallen out of use, it is of the utmost value still in marking that relationship, existing between Christ and each single soul, and suggesting our consequent position in all the varied circumstances of everyday living.”<sup>1</sup>
- In other words, what groups are you attending so that you have spiritual transformation taking place in your own walk with the Lord. Also, are you at a place in your walk with the Lord where you should be teaching others?
- Our goal should be to have our minds renewed by the Word of God so that we grow and then in turn help others to grow in the same way.
- **Hebrews 5:12** “For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food.”

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<sup>1</sup> G. Campbell Morgan, *Discipleship* (New York; Chicago; Fleming H. Revell Company, 1897), 12.

- The author to the Hebrews thought that his readers had learned enough that they should be teachers by now.
- This begs the question, were they not maturing because they were not saved or because they did not care about discipleship?
- Notice the “ironic” contrast that the author uses...they should be teachers but in they are the ones in need of someone teaching them *again*.
- “It was commonly believed that mature people should be able to teach the less mature.” “Teachers” as used here probably does not denote the office of teaching, as the word is sometimes used in the New Testament. The meaning here is that mature believers have the capacity to teach, even if they are not filling the office of teacher.”<sup>2</sup>
- In other words, our maturity level in the church is directly related to how well we are able to teach other about the Word of God.
- **On a side note:** this does not mean a *formal* teaching place in the church. This is counseling someone who is in a hard time or encouraging someone to use their gifts as you see them in the Scriptures.
- In fact, this is just the normal body life ministry as we come along side each other as brothers and sister in Christ.
- Remember from last time, 2 Timothy 3:16-17 and how God’s Word is used for daily living in the life of believers.
- We should not only think of ourselves as consumers in the church. While it is true that the church is here to equip the saints, part of the equipping for service is then to be an equipper as well.

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<sup>2</sup> David L. Allen, *Hebrews*, NAC (Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 2010), 335.

# The Four Main Teaching Avenues For The Church

## THE PREACHING MINISTRY (WORSHIP SERVICE)

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- “The preaching ministry, as an avenue of discipleship, serves to challenge individuals in their personal walk with the Lord through the public proclamation of the Word of God. The aim is to leave disciples challenged, encouraged, and equipped spiritually to serve the Lord in their daily lives.” (Burggraff, class notes)

### Jesus and the Crowds

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- “Throughout Jesus’ ministry, we see Him interacting and teaching large crowds. Because of His ability to perform miracles and His masterful teaching, Jesus drew large crowds to Himself. In Matthew 5-7, we read the longest sermon recorded by Jesus (The Sermon on the Mount). In verses one and two, Matthew writes, “Now when Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. And He opened His mouth and *began* to teach them.” There are a couple of important points to notice here.” (65)
- This is the largest aspect of discipleship. It is when all disciples, even those who may gather in smaller groups, come together to hear the preaching and teaching of God’s Word.
- When called disciples in Jesus ministry, they are not just referring to the 12 Apostles. Rather, it is a reference to all who were following Jesus, listening to His teaching and learning from Him.
- Teaching in front of large crowds was a main way that Jesus conducted discipleship.
- With this in mind, it should also serve as a main way for our modern discipleship methods.
- As was discussed last month, with normal weekly attendance down in churches and people’s desires are not to be at church, this puts a much heavier focus on the worship service.
- As Burggraff points out, “Jesus’ teaching was creative, unique, engaging, and developmental.”
  - “First, Jesus’ teaching was creative. Jesus would ask probing questions: Do you believe that I am able to do this? (Matt 9:28); Who do people say that I am? (Matt 8:27-32)...”
  - “Second, Jesus’ teaching was unique. Jesus understood the needs of each individual and uniquely crafted his teaching lesson to both meet those needs and challenge the individual to faith.” (67)
  - “Third, Jesus’ teaching was engaging. Throughout Jesus teaching ministry, a problem-solving mentality was used to draw individuals to become involved in the teaching process.”

- Lastly, Jesus' teaching was developmental. "Our Lord's goal was to take people from where they were to where they ought to be.... From our Lord we learn that good teaching involves helping the learner to assume responsibility for his thinking and living. He was forever encouraging and enabling people to make the best possible choices."<sup>3</sup>
- These are methods and/or techniques that we too should use in our preaching and teaching ministry.
- "Preaching should challenge, encourage, and equip disciples." (65)
- When we think about the difference in teaching and preaching, there is a clear distinction (but there is also some overlap).
- The primary goal of preaching is to affect the heart and will of the person who is listening. When the teacher takes God's Word and places in the heart of the hearer so that they are moved to follow after Christ. This is the preaching of God's Word.<sup>4</sup>
- The teaching then has a primary goal of transferring information. It is to get across instruction without a goal of persuasion.
- Preaching involves specific acts such as exhortation, admonition, encouragement, and comfort. It is "the ability to say exactly what the text is saying with force and unction" to bring about conviction.<sup>5</sup>
- Jesus used both during His earthly ministry. He moved people with His preaching but He also transferred information to His hearers.
- The point is that while both teaching and preaching, Jesus' methods were creative, unique, engaging, and developmental.

## **The Responsibility and Role of the Preacher**

- "The most relevant demonstration of Jesus' public ministry in our contexts would be the preaching ministry of the church. Through the Sunday morning preaching service, the pastor teaches larger crowds (depending on the size of the church)." (68)
- The role of the teaching pastor / pastor-teacher / lead pastor / senior pastor is vital in the overall discipleship ministries of the church.
- The man who is leading the Sunday morning service has been selected and commissioned by the Lord to be His representative before God's people.

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<sup>3</sup> Hendricks, *The Christian Educator's Handbook on Teaching*, 27-28.

<sup>4</sup> I heard something similar to this from a lecture or a book by Jerry Wragg. It's not my original idea.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

- As Calvin has said, “God is in the preachers mouth.”
- **James 3:1** “Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment.”
  - This “stricter judgment” is because the teachers is not just representing the Lord before the people but also leading the people in a direction.
  - It is not a loss of salvation, but certainly no less than a loss of rewards.
  - **2 John 1:8** “Watch yourselves, that you do not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward.”
    - “The thought is not of their winning or losing their salvation (which is a free gift), but rather their reward for faithful service. The metaphor seems to be taken from the payment of labour, since *reward (misthos)* is a workman’s wage (as in Matt. 20:8; John 4:36; Jas 5:4).”<sup>6</sup>
- Paul also exhorts the young pastor, Timothy, in his role as a pastor...
- **2 Timothy 4:1-5** “I solemnly *charge you* in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: {2} preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. {3} For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, {4} and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. {5} **But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.**”<sup>7</sup>
- “As one studies this passage several features appear that remind us of this important calling of the preaching ministry. **First, we need to remember the seriousness of this calling.** In verse one, Paul states that Jesus is our judge. God himself, watches and observes our preaching ministry. He is the One who will one day evaluate and judge how we preached His Word.” (69)
- “Second, we need to remember the substance of this calling. In verse two, Paul states that we are to “preach the word.” Many preachers spend their time telling stories, using humor, and “performing” before their congregations as they “preach” their sermons. It is important to understand and utilize appropriate communication techniques.” (69)

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<sup>6</sup> John R. W. Stott, *The Letters of John: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 19, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 213.

<sup>7</sup> This passage starts and ends with a direct address to Timothy. There are 8 imperatives (commands) he receives.

- “Third, we are to remember the timeliness of this calling. Again, Paul states to Timothy in verse 2 and 3 that we need to be ready all the time to preach the word because the time is coming when “they will not tolerate sound doctrine.” Preachers, we are in that time! This world does not tolerate the truths, principles, and commands of God’s Word. The importance of the preacher cannot be minimized! We have a sincere calling to preach God’s Word. We must follow Paul’s admonition to ‘correct, rebuke, and exhort, with great patience and instruction.’” (70)
- This is not just important if you are a preacher or plan to be a preacher. But, you must also be able to sift through what you are listening to, reading, or watching.

### **Discipleship in the Preaching Ministry**

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- “Though the preaching ministry may not be the deepest level of discipleship for a believers’ life, it is still a critical component in the spiritual growth of the individual disciples. Regular exposure to the preaching of God’s Word is critical to the diet of disciples. The pastor can share very personal truths but in an impersonal way. What I mean by this is that a pastor may touch on very personal sin issues in the life of a believer and yet not single out that individual. Also, preaching can tackle difficult topics which may produce awkwardness or be viewed as intrusive if spoken about in a smaller setting. Through preaching, the pastor can share vision and central teaching that can reach many individuals at one single time. Lastly, preaching can call for a spiritual response while still allowing for a level of anonymity<sup>8</sup>.” (71)
- The public preaching of the Word on Sunday mornings also allows for those new converts to come to an understanding of what God’s Word says in a “safe” environment.
- They are not sharing their personal life, they are not talking about their sinful past, but they are able to hear God’s Word, see other mature believers, and start to apply truth to their own hearts.
- As Burggraff states, the preaching of the Word is not going to be the deepest level of discipleship, but it is a place for them to start.

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<sup>8</sup> Harrington and Absalom, *Discipleship that Fits*, 76.

## TEACHING MINISTRIES

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- The teaching ministries of a church include the “larger” groups that meet in the church *outside* of the general Sunday morning meetings.
- These would include Sunday School, Adult Bible Fellowship Groups, Teen Classes, Children’s Classes, both Men’s and Women’s Ministries, College groups, etc.
- Essentially these groups meet and start to have a more centralized focus as to their purpose.
- “Different than the preaching ministry, the teaching ministry is designed for classes ranging anywhere from 15-100 depending on the size of the church. This specific avenue of discipleship is designed for people to ‘relate, connect, and discipleship occurs through community, mission, and practice.’”<sup>9</sup>
- This is, as Burggraff points out, the place where relationships start to form and connections are being made between the disciples themselves and the teachers.
- Part of the goal of discipleship is to have fellowship and friendship with others who are being discipled. It is not just a time for information to be disseminated, but relationships to be formed.

### Jesus and the Wider groups of Disciples

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- Luke 8:1-3... “Jesus is described as teaching, preaching, and bring the good news of the kingdom of God. Accompanying Him, were the 12 but also a large group of disciples including various women who helped support His mission. This larger group of disciples were taught by Jesus and supported Him on His journeys.” (72)
- Luke 6:12-13, “Jesus calls His twelve apostles. It is interesting to note that Jesus calls these 12 out from a larger group of disciples.” (72)
- From these texts, one can establish that Jesus not only had twelve disciples/apostles but also a larger group of disciples totaling up to seventy-two. These individuals included both men and women. This group went on mission for Jesus, supported Him in His ministry, and were taught on a more personal level than the crowds. (72-73)

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<sup>9</sup> Harrington and Absalom, *Discipleship that Fits*, 93.

## The Role of Teacher

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- “The teacher is to be a guide shepherding the learners through the amazing journey of spiritual growth. The perfect example of masterful teaching is the Lord Jesus Christ. Throughout the Gospels we see the powerful methods utilized by Christ to share truth. Whether the medium was parable, story, miracle, command, exposition, etc., Jesus revealed that He understood His audience and the appropriate method to apply truth to their life. Christ was the profound example of an initiator of learning.”
- Notice the wording that Burggraff uses when describing the role of the teacher.
- First of all, they are to be a guide who shepherds those whom he is teaching.
- It is not about the information (as important as it is), it is about making sure that those who are learning are not just understanding the content, but then growing spiritually.
- It is one thing to know what the Bible says, but that’s not where we end. We need to know how then to apply that to our own hearts and minds.
- If there is going to be true transformation in the daily lives of disciples of Jesus, the Word must be taught but the teacher must also seek to shepherd.
- Another point that Burggraff makes is that Jesus understood His audience.
- Jesus was not a “one size fits all” kind of teacher. He knew what people needed to hear and then adapted His teaching for them to understand.
- He did not change the message to meet the audience needs; He changed His methods so the message would be understood by all who were listening.
- This is really where the gifting of the teacher plays a key role in their message. Can the person take high level concepts and make them understandable to anyone in the room.
- Admittedly, there are people who won’t get everything and concepts that are just plain hard.
- But, in the normal teaching of the Word, can the teacher explain the Bible in a way that both the new and seasoned believer can understand and grow in godliness.
- This is vital in the discipleship process and also why “cookie cutter” discipleship programs really don’t have a place in the church.

## **Discipleship in the Teaching Ministry**

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- “Through the teaching ministries of a church, discipleship occurs to a smaller audience than the preaching ministry. In this avenue of discipleship, topics and biblical texts can be examined in a more personal and applicable way. The teacher can interact with the students and engage them in the lesson. Active learning techniques can be applied to the lesson so that individual learners become participants in the study. By doing so, these individuals appropriate the biblical truths in a more practical way. Teaching lessons can be hand-tooled to focus on specific issues that the class is currently encountering as well as answering specific questions asked by individuals or by the group.” (74)
- “The teaching ministry provides an excellent step in the discipleship process in that helps people connect through community, relate to the teaching on a more personal level, and practice mission in a group context with support.” (74)

## **THE SMALL GROUP MINISTRY**

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- When churches describe discipleship groups, small groups are often what comes to one’s mind. This group is an essential component in the discipleship process. In small groups, individuals experience accountability, support, closeness with others, and are challenged to grow spiritually on a very personal level. (75)

## **Jesus and the Twelve**

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- This is where Jesus spent most of His time. He was interacting with His disciples in a smaller setting so that He was able to hone in on certain topics He knew they were going to need to know.
- “*Jesus used the small group as his forum for leadership development.* Jesus called the future leaders of the church into a small group relationship with himself. He gave his life to these men as a trained and disciplined them and then entrusted the future of his whole ministry to them<sup>10</sup>.” (75)
- It was from this individual connect that Jesus had with these 12 men that He could confidently know they would not just use the information that was taught to them, but also share it with the next generation of Christians.

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<sup>10</sup> Harrington and Absalom, *Discipleship that Fits*, 133.

## The Role of the Small Group Leader

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- “One of the most prevalent trends for discipleship in recent decades has been the practice of small groups. Many churches have restructured their Christian education plans based on the certain belief that small groups will effectively promote the spiritual growth of adult men and women within the congregation. Small groups are so widespread that they may now be seen as the basic unit of the church community. The common assumption in many churches is that the small group educational strategy has greater potential to produce Christian maturity than do large group class formats or even one-on-one mentoring.”<sup>11</sup>
- Interesting to note, the 1990’s is when churches made the shift from Sunday night or even midweek Bible large group Bible studies to a formal small group ministry.
- By 1995, about 40% of adults were in some form of small group in church...about 80 million people.
- Church leaders saw this vehicle for spiritual transformation in the congregation.
- **Today**, about 44% of those who attend church also attend a small group withing the church.
- There are many benefits and cautions which need to be taken into consideration with small groups.

Benefits	Cautions
Close Relationships	Can be hurtful to one another
An instrument for Change	Can be self-centered
Open Discussion	Can have a group that is clique
Seeing others change for motivation	Not meeting the actual needs of the members
	Relational problems between members

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<sup>11</sup> Mary Rynsburger and Mark A. Lamport, “*All the Rage: How Small Groups Are Really Educating Christian Adults Part I: Assessing Small Group Ministry Practice: A Review of the Literature*,” *Christian Education Journal* Series 3, Vol. 5, No. 1 (2008): 116-117.

## **Discipleship in the Small Group Ministry**

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- “In the discipleship context, when dealing with the teaching of Scripture, it is important that a small group is aware and guards against relativism. Often, Bible study within a small group begins with the question, “What does this passage mean to you?” This question is harmful in that it confuses the *meaning* of a passage with the *significance* of the passage.” (77)
- The goal is not *what does it mean to me...* the text has only one meaning. We cannot assign a meaning to the text that is outside of what the original author meant when he wrote it.
- When he talks about significance, he is talking about application in the life of the believer. How does this text, in its original context, have meaning or significance to me?
- It is the role of the small group leader to make sure that each person is not assigning meaning as they see fit for their own life.
- Small group ministry can be one of the most impactful ways disciples experience real spiritual growth in the walk with Jesus.
- They have the Word, they have a teacher, they have other believers, and they have the opportunity to talk and work through passages with each other.

## **THE MENTORING (COACHING / ONE-ON-ONE MENTORING)**

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- “The most personal of the ministry avenues in discipleship is through mentoring. Mentoring occurs in one-on-one relationships or in a mentor to very small group (2-4 individuals). In this discipleship relationship, intimate accountability and instruction takes place. This is the deepest level of church discipleship in the lives of believers.” (79)

## **Jesus and the Inner Circle and with Individuals**

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- Within that group of twelve, there is a recognized inner circle of three individuals that Jesus taught at a deeper level. The inner circle was comprised of Peter, James, and John. These three experienced a deeper level of teaching and mentorship. The following are various passages in the Gospels where Jesus specifically and intimately instructed the inner circle. (79-80)
  - Mark 1:29-31 – Jesus healed Peter’s mother-in-law with Peter, James, and John present.

- Mark 5:37-43 – Jesus raised Jairus’ daughter from the dead. The passage states that He only allowed the inner circle to accompany Him.
- Mark 9:2-13 – On the Mount of Transfiguration, Jesus took only Peter, James, and John with Him.
- Matthew 26:37-38 – Jesus invites the inner circle to come with apart from the twelve to pray with Him in the Garden of Gethsemane.
- Jesus separated out this group of three at times for special instruction, prayer, and mentorship.
- Warren Wiersbe taught the Paul and Timthy model to people.<sup>12</sup>
  - The “Paul”... you should always have someone more mature than you who is pouring into your life.
    - They are able to give you wisdom, their experiences, accountability, and a pattern of life to follow.
  - The “Timothy” ... You should, at the same time, be investing in someone who is less mature than you are.
    - This ensures that you become a transmitter of truth and not just a reservoir. It also forces you to understand what you are learning because you are going to need to teach it to someone else.
    - It also moves the ball down the field and actually makes disciples.

## **The Role of the Mentor**

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- “The mentor serves as an example for a disciple to follow. Much like Paul stated in 1 Cor 11:1, “be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ,” mentors serve as a model to those that learn from them. The mentor also serves as an instructor applying truths from Scripture in a personal and meaningful way.” (80)

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<sup>12</sup> I don’t remember where I read this, it is not my original idea and I found some more information about it online from various sources.

## **Discipleship in the Mentoring Ministry**

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- “The most intimate avenue of discipleship within the church is found in mentoring relationships. It is through mentoring relationships that true vulnerability, accountability, openness, and personal transformation occurs in the life of a disciple. Scriptural truths come alive as one individual instructs another to appropriate biblical teaching on a practical and specific area of life.” (81)

## **CHAPTER 7: PERSONAL AVENUES OF DISCIPLESHIP**

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- While discipleship in the church is of very high importance, we must not be content to simply stop there and think that only what takes place in church is important.
- “An inaccurate assumption is made by these individuals that the church provides every avenue for discipleship. However, God calls us to be fervent in discipleship outside the walls of the church building.” (83)
- It is not enough to just get some filling for a couple hours a week and then live like nothing has changed.
- As Christians, as disciples of Christ, we are called to a complete overhaul of our spiritual life.
- To remain in the vine, we must maintain our connection with Jesus.
- **John 15:4** “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.”
- Abiding is not just a Sunday activity nor is it just in small group settings. It is a course of life that puts Jesus first and sees all of life holistically under His rule and authority.
- We can’t parse out our life, living for Jesus on Sunday and ourselves on Monday, if we expect to see real spiritual transformation in our lives.

## DISCIPLESHIP IN THE HOME

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- “One of the most neglected battlegrounds for discipleship is within our homes. Oftentimes, churches will have programs, events, retreats, children, and teen programs, etc. and the assumption of the parents is that my children are being educated by the church. As I have been involved in pastoral ministry for many years, I have heard the statement: “I’m leaving it to the church to educate my child in the Scriptures.” Nothing could be further from what is taught in Scripture, and nothing could be more heartbreaking to the church leadership to hear that discipleship is not taking place within the home.” (83-84)
- Parents are responsible for teaching their children through Scriptural training in the home. The church may provide some opportunities and even assist the process, but the overall burden falls upon the family unit for discipleship.
- **Deuteronomy 6:4-9** “Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! {5} "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. {6} "These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. {7} "You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. {8} "You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. {9} "You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”
- Moses specifically gives the parents the responsibility to keep instructing their children in a variety of ways throughout their daily routines.
- Parents are to have formal times of instruction for their children from the Bible. They are to show them how to apply biblical truths and principles to their personal, daily life.
- They are to model what they are teaching to their children.
- They are to keep teaching the Word throughout the whole day; no matter where they are with their family.
- There is no need for a formal or outside curriculum...the Bible is all that is needed.
- Really, this is about a whole life approach...or what we would call teaching a biblical worldview.
- While we are not teaching our children from the Bible when we are shopping for something, we are showing them what managing money and being responsible with our finances looks like.

- We show them what it means to live for Jesus through our time and money. We tell them that while other families may take extravagant vacations and have everything the world can offer; we choose to serve the Lord and His church with our resources.

## **DISCIPLESHIP AS A PATTERN OF LIFE**

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- “We all understand the importance of maintaining a deep relationship with our spouse or children. How does one foster a healthy relationship with their spouse? Among several appropriate answers to that question, one major answer would be through proper and regular communication. One cannot have a healthy marriage without proper communication.” (86)
- We have discussed these throughout this whole series, but I think it’s good to keep reminding ourselves of what we need to be doing in our private life.
- Not only do we need to learn new truths, but it is imperative that we remember what we have learned.

### **Developing an Intimate Relationship with God**

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- “To have an intimate and close relationship with our Savior, we must regularly communicate with Him. Without regular communication, how can we expect to know Him? So...to have a healthy relationship with God we must listen to Him as He speaks to us (through bible reading) and we must speak with Him (through prayer).” (86)

### **Regular Bible Reading and Prayer**

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- **Psalm 119:10-11** “With all my heart I have sought You; Do not let me wander from Your commandments. {11} Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You.”
- **Psalm 119:105** “Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.”
- **Matthew 4:4** “But He answered and said, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.'”
- **Romans 15:4** “For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.”
- “Is God’s Word precious to you? Are you regularly spending time reading and studying the Bible? The first component of a healthy relationship with God is regular Bible reading.” (90)

- “It has been said that prayer is a privilege. But do we treat prayer as a privilege? How often do we, as believers, turn to God as a last resort? When a personal issue arises in your life, examine your process for getting help. For many of us the list looks a lot like this: we call our best friend, then we talk to our spouse, then we turn to self-help books, then we worry about the problem endlessly until we cannot stand it anymore, then when all else fails, we pray. With our mouths we say prayer is a privilege, but our actions often prove otherwise.” (90)
- **Hebrews 4:14-16** “Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. {15} For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. {16} Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”
- “Scripture provides us with the need, the privilege, and the benefits of our prayers. God desires for you to talk with Him. Instead of running to everyone else, losing sleep at night, or wringing your hands in despair, take your concerns to your Heavenly Father. He desires to listen.” (93)
- We keep going to the Lord in prayer because it is through our prayers and much is accomplished.
- **James 5:16b** “The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.”