

Make Disciples 3

MAKE DISCIPLES

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MAKE DISCIPLES

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MAKE DISCIPLES 3 DISCIPLESHIP

REVIEW

Hint - Scriptures followed by "-note" link to in depth discussion of that respective passage. For example, click the following note on Eph 5:18-note.

How do you recognize a true disciple of Jesus?

Jn 8:31 = He abides or is at home with His Word. He remains. He does not leave the Word. "Jesus is saying that the mark of the true disciple is lasting, enduring, persevering, keeping on in the force field of the word. Temporary tastes of the truth and beauty and value and power and grace and bread and water and brightness of the word do not make you a Christian. The mark of Christians is that we taste and we stay." ([Piper](#)) In John 15:6 Jesus speaks of abiding in Him. So abiding in His Word is tantamount to abiding in the Word! Obviously, there is a caveat -- many people read the Word. Some even memorize it, including the entire OT in some cases. But they do not believe the Word and you can tell they do not believe the Word because they do not obey the Word. And of course the only way a genuine disciple can obey the Word is by the enabling desire and power of the indwelling Spirit of Jesus (Acts 16:7). **John Piper** says "For me, 1 Samuel 3:21 has been tremendously helpful. It says, "The Lord revealed Himself to Samuel at Shiloh **by the word** of the Lord." Himself by the word. And the same is true for Jesus—He reveals Himself to us today **'by the word of the Lord.'**" ([If You Abide in My Word, You Are Truly My Disciples](#))

I have often heard the teaching that in John 8:31 Jesus is not speaking of *believers* in general but of a subset that are known as *disciples*. **John Piper** however clarifies this erroneous idea asking

"What then is a true disciple? Or what does Jesus mean by saying in John 8:31, "you are truly my disciples"? Let's be really clear here: For Jesus "true disciple" is the same as "true Christian" or "true believer." Jesus is not saying that "true disciple" is a second stage in the Christian life. an important distinction... He did not say to these professing believers, "If you abide in my word, you will become truly my disciples." In other words, he did not teach that being a true disciple was a later stage after simple belief. No. He said, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples." Now that you have believed, here is how you can know what you now are. You can know if your belief is real: You are now my true disciples if you go on abiding in my word. So there is no thought here about "true discipleship" being a second stage of Christian maturity." ([Ibid](#))

I agree wholeheartedly with Dr Piper that every true believer is a true disciple and every true disciple is a true believer.

D A Carson explains that what Jesus is saying in essence that "perseverance is the mark of true faith, of real disciples. A genuine believer remains in Jesus' '**word**' (logos)... such a person obeys it, seeks to understand it better, and finds it more precious, more controlling, precisely when other forces flatly oppose it. (Pillar Commentary on John)

What two promises does Jesus make to His disciples in John 8:32?

(1) We will know (*ginosko* = by experience) the **truth**. This truth is significant because our spiritual warfare is not so much a power struggle but a truth struggle and the "battle field" in our mind. Since this knowing is experiential it speaks of fellowship and communion with Jesus, Who Himself is the Truth! So it follows that abiding in the Word is abiding in Jesus, experiencing time with Him which is never a waste of time!

(2) The Truth will set us free (*eleutheroo*) - The Greek verb was used to describe the emancipation of slaves. We were once **slaves** to Self and Sin (cp "slave of sin" - Jn 8:34) but now are free in Christ (cf "having been freed from sin" Who is our new Master? = Ro 6:18-note, Ro 6:22-note). Remember that freedom in Christ is not the right to do as we *please* but the power to do as we *should* and thus to please God! Not freedom to sin, but freedom from sin! As Piper says "You are fully free—completely free, free indeed—when you have the desire, the ability, and the opportunity to do what will make you happy in a thousand years."

How sure can we be of our freedom from sin and Satan from John 8:36?

When the Son makes us free we are free indeed

Ryrie writes - "Freedom given by Christ is the only true freedom. Delivered from the shackles and the bondage of sin, a Christian can do what he ought, and is no longer bound to his evil desires (cf. Ro 6:11-14-note). The unsaved man indulges in sin and has no power over it. Sin is in control. Sin binds him. Christ's offer is freedom from such bondage, and a life that wills to please God and (is enabled by the Spirit of Christ to do so)."

John Piper - Sin enslaves by making anything look more desirable than Jesus. That's what sin is: desiring something above Jesus and then acting on it.

Why is His Word so critical in the life of a disciple?

John 6:63 "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life." If the Spirit gives life and the Words of Christ are life, it follows that the Spirit uses the Word to give us life, not just the first time (justification) but daily (progressive sanctification).

2Cor 3:18-note "But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit." In this passage we see that beholding the Word of Christ, especially the Gospel, will be used by the Spirit to bring about spiritual transformation (growth in likeness to Jesus) from one degree of glory to another.

What is the most important verse in all of Scripture for a disciple and why?

The Eph 5:18-note effects and enables **every** aspect of a disciple's life (marriage, children, parenting, employees, employers, spiritual warfare and prayer - read Eph 5:18-note through Eph 6:18 - notice that the Spirit is like "bookends" of the entire section!).

To quote Dr MacArthur - "If we do not obey this command (be filled with the Spirit), we cannot obey any other—simply because we cannot do any of God's will apart from God's Spirit. Outside of the command for unbelievers to trust in Christ for salvation, there is no more practical and necessary command in Scripture than the one for believers to be filled with the Spirit."

ILLUSTRATION OUR DESPERATE NEED FOR FILLING BY COMPARING TO A WORK GLOVE – The glove has purpose (just as do we - Eph 2:10-note) but cannot fulfill its intended purpose unless it has an "indwelling" hand to enable it, to give it the direction (desire) and the power (cp the Spirit in Phil 2:13-note). Plainly put, the glove by itself can do nothing (cp Jesus' words in John 15:5 where "nothing" in Greek is the strongest way to say "absolutely nothing"... O yes, we can even do "religious works" that look very good to others and garner their adulation, but such fleshly empowered works yield no fruit for eternity - cp Jn 15:16). The picture of a glove's need to continually depend on the indwelling hand directly applies to our Christian life, which is not to be a natural (explicable) life, but a supernatural (marvelously inexplicable) life! We like the glove need to be continually filled with the Spirit, controlled by and empowered by the indwelling Spirit, if we are to accomplish anything supernatural. As we have repeatedly said, we CANNOT KEEP ONE COMMAND of the NT by relying on our natural, fleshly strength. We must continually, even moment by moment, deny our old self and seek the newness of the Spirit's work. We must continually renounce self effort, self reliance, self sufficiency (do you see the "key word"?) and instead make the conscious, volitional choice (the choice of our will, even that choice mysteriously being energized by the indwelling Spirit!!) to rely wholly on the Holy Spirit. This practice is of renouncing and relying will go on all day long, all the days of our life! It's what theologically is known as progressive sanctification. While Jesus was the basis of justification, the Spirit was His "Chief Operating Officer" applying the finished work of the Cross of Christ to our heart when we believed in Jesus. Similarly, in progressive sanctification, the Spirit is the "CEO" and gives us the desire and the power (Php 2:13NLT-note) to continually walk by the Spirit (Gal 5:16 - to be more fully discussed in our next lesson). In sum, apart from the Spirit of Christ filling us (*bearing* us along, *permeating* us so that Christ flavors all we say, do and think [cp 2Cor 2:14-16] and *controlling* us – like rage or anger controls us - read Luke 4:28-29, Lk 6:11) we can do nothing of eternal value! Absolutely nothing! The pride of our fallen flesh chafes at that truth and will until the day we die!

How does one assure that they are continually filled with the Spirit?

Ray Pritchard sums up how we are filled - There must be a sense of need—"Lord, I'm empty and I need to be filled by your Spirit." There must be a willingness—"Lord, I'm open to you. Let your Spirit fill me now."

By keeping short accounts with God (1Jn 1:9-note) - Remember that "**confess**" in this passage is **present tense which** speaks of ongoing confession and implies that we have need for this to be our habitual practice! As David said "Who can discern his errors? Acquit me of hidden faults." (Ps 19:12) So the truth is even if we have not committed any "big" sins the day before, we need to start our day with at least a prayer like David's.

What is the OT version of 1John 1:9?

Pr 28:13-note He who conceals (Hebrew = covers over) his transgressions will not prosper, but (a great, strategic **term of contrast**) he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion.

Ps 32:1 is a good parallel commentary on Pr 28:13-note where David acknowledges "How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered!"

How else can we assure that we are continually filled with the Spirit?

By letting the **Word of Christ dwell in us richly** (Col 3:16-note. See the chart below where we compare Colossians 3:16-4:1 and Ephesians 5:18-6:9. Notice that the results of being filled with the Spirit and letting the Word richly dwell within are virtually identical.

So what's the take home message? Spend time in the Word so that the Word finds a home in you.

FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT RICHLY INDWELT BY THE WORD

Colossians and Ephesians are parallel epistles in a number of respects and Ephesians 5:18-6:9 presents a very interesting parallel with Colossians 3:16-4:1 as summarized below. First, take a few minutes to pray (Ps 119:18-note, Eph 1:17, 18, 19-note) and read through both sections of Scripture, especially observing the similarities (Ps 119:130-note). Then go through the following chart to see if you agree with the parallel comparisons.

Ask yourself, what parallel truths is God teaching us in these two great sections of Scripture? Which of my interpersonal relationships do these passages address most directly? How can we apply these truths to our personal life, our marriage, our family, our workplace, etc? What might transpire in each of those points of application? Then read the explanatory notes that follow.

Ephesians 5:18-6:9	Colossians 3:16-4:1
Be filled (present imperative)	Let... dwell within you richly (present imperative)
THE SPIRIT	THE WORD OF CHRIST
Speaking to ONE ANOTHER Eph 5:19-note	Teaching & Admonishing ONE ANOTHER Col 3:16-note
In PSALMS and HYMNS and SPIRITUAL SONGS Eph 5:19-note	With PSALMS and HYMNS and SPIRITUAL SONGS Col 3:16-note
SINGING and making melody with YOUR HEART to the Lord Eph 5:19-note	SINGING with thankfulness in YOUR HEARTS to God Col 3:16-note
Always GIVING THANKS for ALL things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father Eph 5:20-note	Do ALL in the name of the Lord Jesus, GIVING THANKS through Him to God the Father Col 3:17-note
WIVES BE SUBJECT to your own husbands Eph 5:22-24-note	WIVES BE SUBJECT to your husbands Col 3:18-note
HUSBANDS LOVE your wives Eph 5:25-33-note	HUSBANDS LOVE your wives Col 3:19-note

CHILDREN OBEY your parents in the Lord Eph 6:1-3-note	CHILDREN BE OBEDIENT to your parents Col 3:20-note
FATHERS DO NOT PROVOKE your children to anger BRING THEM UP in discipline & instruction of the Lord Eph 6:4-note	FATHERS DO NOT EXASPERATE your children Col 3:21-note
SLAVES BE OBEDIENT to those who are your masters according to the flesh Eph 6:5-8-note	SLAVES in all things OBEY those who are your masters on earth Col 3:22-25-note
MASTERS DO the same thing to them (slaves) Give up threatening knowing that both their Master & yours is in heaven & there is no partiality with Him Eph 6:9-note	MASTERS GRANT to your slaves justice and fairness knowing that you too have a Master in heaven! Col 4:1-note
SPIRITUAL WARFARE Note it is also "linked" with being filled with the Spirit!" Eph 6:10-17-note	SPIRITUAL WARFARE Not found in this section
PRAYER With <u>all prayer</u> and petition pray (present tense participle used in an imperative sense) <u>at all times in the Spirit</u> (initiated and energized by the Holy Spirit), <u>and with this in view, be on the alert</u> (present tense participle used in an imperative sense) <u>with all perseverance and petition for all the saints</u> Eph 6:18-note	PRAYER DEVOTE yourselves to prayer, keeping alert (present tense participle used in an imperative sense) in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; Col 4:2-note
WITNESSING Pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the Gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly (Spirit gives boldness), as I ought (obligation, owe a debt) to speak. Eph 6:19-20-note	WITNESSING Praying at the same time for us as well, that God may open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ (Gospel), for which I have also been imprisoned; in order that I may make it clear in the way I ought (obligation, owe a debt) to speak. Col 4:3-4-note

Note that every verb in **bold red font** signifies **imperative mood** (commands, not good suggestions) and all are in the **present tense** (continuous action, habitual practice, as one's "lifestyle", speaks of our general "direction," not perfection!). In addition, the verbs **giving thanks** (Eph 5:20, Col 3:17) are in the **present tense** - how is it possible to give thanks in everything? (cp 1Thes 5:18-note)

Now stop for a moment and ask yourself - can I keep even ONE of these commands in my own strength? If you think you can, just try it the next time your spouse "verbally insults/assaults" your intelligence! None of us can keep these commands in our strength and to try to do so is to fall into the trap of self reliance and legalism. Here is the key that unlocks the door to supernatural living, supernatural warfare, supernatural praying and supernatural witnessing...

THE HUMAN SPIRIT FAILS UNLESS THE HOLY SPIRIT FILLS

Too often we read Paul's long list of commands and forget to examine the **context**, which is critical for accurate **interpretation** and in this case crucial for real-life **practical application**! The context in this case clearly gives us the answer regarding how we can

carry out the commands. These "holy" actions can **only** be energized or enabled by the Holy Spirit Who dwells in each saint. If we are filled with or controlled by Him, yielded to Him, depending on Him, casting off any semblance of self-reliance, then, and only then, can we successfully keep these commands. And as we do so, we are in effect also fulfilling Paul's (present imperative) command to **walk by the Spirit** which effectively prevents us from carrying out the desires of the **flesh** (cp Gal 5:16-note).

Notice that Spirit of Christ filling (Word of Christ indwelling) SHOULD RADICALLY AFFECT ALL of our relationships- wives, husbands, children, fathers, slaves ("employee"), masters ("employer")! **Every** vital social interaction is to be impacted by the Holy Spirit! So let me ask you a rhetorical (for effect primarily) question --

"How important is obedience to Paul's commands that **we** be continually filled with/controlled by the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18) and continually let the Word of Christ dwell within us (Col 3:16)? Can you even obey these command (be filled, let dwell) without the enablement of the Helper? Clearly the answer is "No!" Every moment of every day we are in desperate need for the Spirit to enable us. To say we need His help implies we just need a little "push" which is not the case to live this supernatural life. Meditate on that truth today! And then, as Ray Pritchard puts it, do what you do when you go to full service gas station (yes you younger folks, there once was such a service!) -- Cry out " Fill me up! " expressing your deep desire for and desperate dependence on the Spirit's enabling power to carry out God's commands which are not burdensome (1Jn 5:3)!

As an aside, it is interesting that we see so many Christian marriages and families in various states of disturbance, dissonance (lack of agreement) and/or even imminent dissolution. Paul was written us a "prescription", so to speak, for the "balm" (a soothing restorative agent) that can bring healing to families and marriages in dire (dismal, dreadful) straits! But like any medicine, the doctor can prescribe the best remedy, but the pill still has to be swallowed in order to effect a cure. What would happen to couples who made an intentional effort (initiated by and energized by the Spirit of Grace-Heb 10:29b) to study and **meditate** on Paul's prescription in these passages and related cross references? In Psalm 107 the Spirit says that when the disobedient and distressed children of Israel "cried out to the LORD in their trouble, He saved them out of their distresses. **He sent His Word** and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions." (Psalm 107:19, 20). Beloved, His Name is **Jehovah Rapha (Jehovah Rophe) The LORD our Healer** and He is the same yesterday, today and forever and His Word is able to bring hope and healing to hopeless and broken hearted marriages!

Notes on Walk by the Spirit will be posted in the next set of notes as we just began to study this passage and will complete it in Lesson 4.