

KICKSTART

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO
KICKSTART A DISCIPLESHIP CULTURE
THAT WILL LAST FOR GENERATIONS

BRIAN LA CROIX

And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.

2 Timothy 2:2

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	2
INTRODUCTION TO DISCIPLESHIP DNA	3
WHAT IS KICKSTART? 4	
A Word to Pastors	8
HOW TO USE THIS MATERIAL	9
PRIOR TO SESSION 1 – DISTRIBUTE, COLLECT/SUBMIT SURVEYS	11
ASSESSMENT SURVEY	14
SESSION 1 – RECOGNIZE YOUR CURRENT CULTURE	16
SESSION 2 – BRING THE BUILDING BLOCKS	18
SESSION 3 – BOLD LEADERS BUILD (AND SOMETIMES TEAR DOWN!)	33
SESSION 4 – THE KICKSTARTER EVENT, RECRUITMENT, AND OUTREACH EVENT.	49
SESSION 5 – GROWING AND MAINTAINING THE CULTURE	58
SESSION 6 – TRAIN AND RELEASE!	63
FOUNDATIONS (LEADER’S GUIDE)	64
INTRODUCTION TO THE FOUNDATIONS MATERIAL (LEADER’S GUIDE)	65
HOW TO USE THE FOUNDATIONS MATERIALS	69
FOUNDATIONS	81
“THE GREAT 8”	94
THE KICKSTARTER EVENT AND TRAINING COORDINATOR HANDBOOK	125
ABOUT THE AUTHOR	130



COPYRIGHT

©2020 Brian La Croix. All rights reserved.

Unless otherwise noted, all scripture references are from THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION® NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society®. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Scripture references marked “ESV” are from The ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Permission is granted to print/copy as many copies of the printed material as necessary for use ***WITHIN THE CHURCH PURCHASING THE MATERIALS***. Please do not share copies of this material with other churches except for evaluation purposes as they consider purchasing this training for their own churches.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My wife, Debra, is the one who encouraged me to pursue this project full time, and I am grateful to her beyond belief. Thanks, Sweetheart, for asking the questions, “Do you have a message to give?” and “Do you feel you have the ability to share it?”

My adult children—Dani, Noble, Lance, Olivia, and Ellene—have all been incredibly encouraging, asking great questions to help me gain the focus necessary to realize this was something I could do.

Josh Latterell, with ELM Digital Marketing, has been most instrumental in helping me put all this together and get it in front of the people who actually need and would benefit from it. His immeasurable patience as we worked through questions and confronted my ignorance has been a blessing. Plus, he actually laughs at some of my jokes.

Stuart Schreur led me to Christ as a freshman at South Dakota State University in the fall of 1982. He followed up with me and introduced me to the ministry of the Navigators in college, which God used to shape my heart and mind for evangelism and discipleship. Also, the foundational habits they built into my life kept me going even when experiencing a very long desert period.

Joe and Ronni Bernardy and David and Colleen Little were the Campus Staff for the Navs while I was in college. They continue to speak into my life at times, and I am eternally grateful.

God has used a number of pastors in my life, particularly Joe Colaw, Tim Purcell, Mark Butcher, and Sam Crabtree, as well as Rev. Isaac Smith—who was a literal godsend during my time as a pastor.

The list could go on and on. God has used countless people in my life, from childhood friends like Mark Peacock to pastoral colleagues such as Jon Droege. I simply can't list them all, but God knows who they are, and I pray that He blesses them abundantly. I also pray that God will show them the fruit they have borne not just in my life but in the lives of those I've worked with in discipling relationships and those impacted through these materials.

Thanks to Leonard Lee, who took the time to review these materials and offer suggestions to make this a better offering for pastors and church leaders. And lastly, thanks to Dara Ekanger who proof-read, edited, and helped me clarify some things in print.



INTRODUCTION TO DISCIPLESHIP DNA

Throughout my life as a believer in Jesus, one of the keystones of my ministry – both as a layman and as a pastor – has been the importance of helping people find Jesus and live for Him.

Coming to Jesus in college through the ministry of The Navigators and being involved with them probably had a lot to do with that, and I am extremely thankful.

One of the great things I see in churches today is the proliferation of small groups. These are great arenas for growth, accountability, and service. However, what I'm NOT seeing as much of is an intentional effort to establish brand new believers in Jesus, helping them with things like knowing they have been forgiven, being assured of heaven, how to read the Bible, how to pray, etc. There are ministries and materials out there doing that, for sure. I'm just not seeing as much of that as I am "regular" small group materials.

So I felt God leading me to start a company that focuses primarily on equipping congregations to follow up and establish people who come to Christ through the ministries of the church or through individual efforts to share Christ – and give them tools to continue in personal discipling relationships whenever possible.

Discipleship DNA is what came of that effort to follow God's leading.

The primary piece of the ministry is this training: **Kickstart**. However, I also publish a blog that can be read at the main ministry website, www.DiscipleshipDNA.com, and a podcast as well (oddly enough, called "Discipleship DNA with Brian La Croix"), available on numerous platforms. You can also check us out on Facebook.

Our mission is to help you establish a culture where establishing new believer, maintaining long-term discipleship relationships, and reproducing disciples is part of the fabric of your church. It becomes part of who you ARE as church, not just something you DO as a church. We want discipleship to be part of your church's DNA. And it's because the people in the seats are at the heart of it.

If you want more information about Discipleship DNA, send an email to info@discipleshipdna.com.



WHAT IS KICKSTART?

A number of years ago, I decided that I had had enough of my “dad bod” and wanted to actually do something about it (Don’t worry – I won’t post pictures...). One of my sons and I looked into a popular program I had heard of. Finding that it was a bit advanced for where I was at that point, I chose a related one that would serve as a kind of an introduction to the one I really wanted to do. I ended up doing 4 different programs from that company and have done other programs as well. As a result, I’m stronger and in better shape in my 50s than in my 20s and 30s.

These days I continue to look for ways to stay in shape and build muscle (I’ve still got 4 unmarried daughters to protect by intimidating any and all guys who get the silly idea of dating them...), and have found something extraordinary: there is no shortage of programs out there designed to help old guys like me get into the shape they want.

Something else I’ve found: they all seem to talk about and teach the same basic things in terms of exercises and nutrition, with little variation. If you were to put them all in one room and lay them side by side, the basic essentials would all be the same. ***And that’s okay.***

When it comes to discipleship, the fact of the matter is that there are many programs out there designed to help churches in their efforts. ***And that’s okay, too.*** Like the exercise programs, most of them would cover the same basic essentials of discipling: things like establishing a new believer in the basics of the faith, developing a lasting and deep relationship with the people we’re discipling, and helping that person do the same in the lives of others.

Why would I bring one more program into the mix? Well, please allow me to refer back to the exercise programs for a moment. Among the multitude of programs out there, only a few “fit” me – they fit the time I have, my goals, my equipment, and even my budget. Or think of clothing – there are countless shirts out there that are “my” size (that’s none of your business, by the way...), but only some of them actually fit me.

Kickstart is the same way. It’s gonna be a great fit for most churches and not for others.

But the main reason I’ve made one more program is simply this: I want even more churches filled with more individuals who are ready and equipped to make disciples of Jesus.

When I’m told by my own pastors that they have a new believer they’d like me to work with, my eyes light up and I get all pumped up inside, because I’m going to get a chance to help someone grow in Jesus. I lose sleep over the excitement of that kind of thing.

I want others to know that joy. I want churches to have this so ingrained in their operations that every single new believer is followed up with and established. I want pastors to be free to



do what God has called them to do as leaders and shepherds without the added burdens of non-biblical expectations. And I want God's kingdom to grow so that He is honored above all.

WHAT MAKES THIS PROGRAM DIFFERENT?

Two things I would ask you to consider:

First, I think what makes this different is the “starting point.” The starting point *isn't* the Great Commission. **The starting point is the fact that Jesus owns the church.** And because He owns it, He gets to tell it what to do. He told the Church to make disciples. We'll discuss this at length in Session 2.

Second, this isn't just something you do for 4-12 weeks, take a break, and then move on to the next program. I think of this less like a *program* and more like a *loom*, weaving discipleship into the fabric of your church. Once a discipleship culture is in place, it doesn't matter what programs you do afterward. You will have this as part of who you are as a church – not just something you've done as a “one-off” program.

Kickstart is focused on 2 main areas: (1) creating a culture where following up new believers and establishing them in the faith is part of the everyday workings of the church, and (2) getting the congregation involved in long-term discipling relationships that are used by God to mature and equip people to establish and disciple others.

Please note that these materials are not meant to take someone from new believer to mature disciple. The honest truth is that there are countless resources a person or church can use to help someone grow in maturity after they are established (remember the exercise programs and shirts?). If the Lord leads, I may develop some for use after the initial program, but for now the focus is helping churches change the DNA of their congregation so that new believers are routinely and intentionally established and brought into discipleship relationships in which they can mature and become equipped to reproduce their transformed lives in others.

Even though the training is geared toward pastors and church leaders, Kickstart is meant to be usable for anybody – professional minister, dude in the pews (even dudes with dad bods!), housewife, entrepreneur, dentist, laborer, fast-food worker, Democrat, Republican, Independent, lawyer, doctor, teacher, Lyft driver, or anybody else you can think of. I want these materials to be accessible and easy to understand and use by anybody who wants to help other people find Jesus and live for Him.

There are three main components that Kickstart specifically offers to your church:

- Teaching on what needs to happen in a church to have a generations-long, effective discipleship culture and action steps to help you get there.



- A Kickstarter Event where you challenge and invite your congregation to become involved in the ministry of making disciples for Jesus. And...
- Training for Discipleship - specific training that will equip the people in the seats to follow up new believers and get them into long-term discipling relationships – where they can equip their people to make disciples themselves, thereby having an impact in your area that your pastor couldn't have just with his own efforts.

One of the training components is “The Great 8,” which covers eight essential areas that should be introduced into the lives of all new believers. These are eight areas *I* believe are important as I have worked to disciple people over the years. You may feel differently and want to emphasize different areas or emphasize these areas differently than I do. If that is the case, I only have one word for you: REPENT!!

Just kidding. The fact is that what you choose to emphasize isn't as important as the fact that new believers are followed-up and established INTENTIONALLY and SOON. So feel free to add, subtract, multiply, or divide this stuff as you feel God would have you do in your specific circumstance. I'm totally good with that, and you won't hurt my feelings at all. In fact, I would love to see what you do. I want to learn what others are doing to help new believers.

One of the benefits you get with your purchase of the Kickstart program is lifetime access to the downloadable print materials and video training, including updated editions.

These materials will be revised and updated as I continue to research what works, or to share insights from successful people and churches that are making the impact we all want to see. So feel free to check back from time to time and see if anything new has been posted in the client-only area of the Discipleship DNA website.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE WHEN IT COMES TO THIS CULTURE SHIFT?

Initially, success looks like leadership buy-in to the decision to obey Jesus' command to intentionally make disciples. Then, it is getting congregational buy-in by successfully moving through the Kickstarter Event with people (including the leadership) on record as wanting to be disciplers and going through the Discippler training.

But success is ultimately seen when people are actually discipling other believers with the design of equipping those people to disciple others.

For some churches, this culture change might start with just a few people (e.g., the leadership) promoting and modeling discipleship themselves, and the people they are discipling reproducing their lives, who in turn reproduce their lives – all while the original people are



discipling yet others who do the same thing. This is called multiplication, and it can start with very few numbers.

Don't judge success by how many people sign up to be disciplers after the Kickstarter Event nor by how many complete the training. If no one but the leadership gets involved – and in their involvement models discipleship in their own lives – **this is success**. That will spread as the people being disciplined and reproducing grow. Just don't give up. The command to make disciples is always in effect, even if you are the only one in your congregation is doing it.

On a more personal note, you might notice a bit of a mid-western twang in these materials and in our sessions together. I grew up on the Indian Reservations in western South Dakota and have Native American blood from my father's side. Growing up in small towns of just a few hundred people and going to college in a town of 16,000 doesn't lend a person to a very metropolitan tone of voice. I still live in a town of less than 30,000 people. So at times I may use words or phrases that don't seem very "author-like." Part of that is because I wanted these materials to feel more conversational than "lecture-al" (not a real word, but you get what I mean). I'd apologize, but quite frankly I love my small-town roots and what that heritage has contributed to my character, my mannerisms, and my walk with Jesus. (I also use parentheses a lot. Sorry about that...kinda...)

Related to that, I am not the most politically correct guy around. So I'll say some things in these materials that might offend you, especially when I discuss leadership attitudes, traditions, pastoral roles, etc. My goal isn't to offend. My goal is to get you to honestly evaluate some things in light of your church's obedience to Jesus. I say some things that might be hard for the pastor to say for fear of losing people (or even his job), but which need to be said, because they relate directly to obeying Jesus in this all-important work of making disciples. I speak from the frustrations I've seen and heard from other pastors as well as my own experience. Like many of you, I bear the scars of trying to help a church move forward.

My prayer in all this is that you and your congregation will open yourselves to the Holy Spirit as He works in you to make discipleship part of your DNA – part of the actual make-up of your church, so that discipleship isn't just something you DO – it's who you ARE.

I would love to hear how God uses this material in helping you achieve this culture change in your congregation. I will rejoice with you, giving glory to the Father as people become lifelong followers of His Son. Again, please feel free to share stories that will encourage others to explore changing their cultures. And if you give me permission, I'll post those stories so others can see them and be encouraged.



A WORD TO PASTORS

Having been a pastor before, I can appreciate the heavy lifting you do day after day, week after week, year after year, often with little or no thanks, even during “Pastor Appreciation Month.” (Don’t even get me started about that!)

So please know that as I write this stuff, I hope what you see isn’t a “Hey, Pastor, you’re not really leading if you’re not doing this” kind of thing. What I hope you see, and what I’m trying to communicate, is “Hey, Pastor – I’m here to help.”

There are times when I hit on leadership in here, but it’s mainly to work to free you to do what you were called and meant to do as you lead your church rather than get bogged down in the minutia of secondary/tertiary/dodecatiary (that’s twelve, I think—I kinda just made that up, but I hope you get the idea) stuff that people expect pastors to do but which isn’t biblical.

I’m cheering for you, brother. I’m the loud bald guy with the goatee and glasses on the sideline (and probably wearing a Minnesota Twins jersey). I want you to be awed at how God works in and through you to lead your church in obedience to Jesus’ command to make disciples. I want you to hear, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

May God be honored and His Kingdom advanced through our partnership in the gospel. Amen.



HOW TO USE THIS MATERIAL

This book is the printed material for the KICKSTART program. It contains all the teaching and instructions necessary to carry out the program and help you establish a generations-long discipleship culture in which new believers are automatically followed-up and established.

The materials are broken down into sessions, which you can use in group settings with your staff and key congregational leaders. If you use it that way, I suggest each group member have their own copy. Your purchase allows you to print as many as you need for use within your church. The reading for each session be done by the group before the group session, so you can focus on discussing and implementing what you learn, as well as praying through the process.

The training videos are meant to guide your discussions and are not step-by-step readings of the material. They are supplemental to this printed material.

Each session has Action Steps you should attempt to complete before moving onto the next session. This will give you some tangible action that you can implement and evaluate. Some of the action steps may require hard decisions and conversations, particularly when it comes to bringing unity in leadership around obedience to Jesus' command to make disciples and identifying/overcoming barriers to establishing the culture of discipleship. If taking an action step requires more time before moving on, that's just fine. Take all the time you need. However, after a step is completed, it's best to move on to the next session as soon as you can, so you don't lose momentum.

Continually pray for and encourage your leadership during this process. When coming into full obedience to Jesus in any area, our enemy gets riled and will try to block the process (I discuss this in more detail later in the materials).

This process takes time. It may take you months just to get through the material as you work through the teachings and implement the action steps. That's okay. Just don't give up! Jesus WANTS you to succeed in making disciples and He'll bring it to fruition – and give you the strength, stamina, wisdom, and grace to do your part in leading your church in this.

Remember – you're not just studying about discipleship, ***you're changing you culture***. And that takes time.

While this book gives you all the information you need to establish a lasting discipleship culture, I would suggest you consider the group coaching/personal coaching options available. These give you more resources for training, and also brings in additional support in the form of input from other pastors going through the training, prayer with and for you, and one-on-



one coaching from me as we work to implement this program in your unique situation. For more information about those, contact us at info@discipleshipdna.com.

In any case, please know we're praying for you. We may even drop you an email or phone call once in a while to see how things are going and pray with you. It would be our genuine pleasure to partner with you that way.

God bless you!

Brian



PRIOR TO SESSION 1 – DISTRIBUTE, COLLECT/SUBMIT SURVEYS

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Without knowing your starting point, it's pointless to try and get directions to your destination. When programming your GPS for a trip, you need to know your starting point. The great part of using a GPS, however, is that it will actually TELL you your starting point if you need it to. This assessment is a tool to help you do just that.

All of us in church leadership would say, “I want our church to make disciples.” Or I want our church to be *better* at making disciples.” Or, “I want our church to make *more* disciples.”

That's all awesome, but if we don't know what's actually happening in our churches, including the attitudes of key people in the congregation toward intentional action, our best intentions will only stay intentions – because we run the danger of trying lots of things and not making any headway.

Lack of clarity regarding where you are starting from will hinder the process – this assessment will help bring that clarity.

The assessment on pages 12-13 is a tool to give you an overall view of your current culture of discipleship. You are welcome to make or print as many copies of this as you like. It is not exhaustive (eight questions), and should only take a few minutes of prayerful, thoughtful consideration to fill out.

WHO SHOULD TAKE THE SURVEY?

It is essential that all paid pastoral staff members take it, as well as any volunteer leaders. If you have an Elder board, Deacons, or any other form of lay leadership board or council, especially if they exercise any authority in the congregation, they need to take it as well.

In other words, everyone in leadership for your congregation should take the assessment survey. It is important to see what your leaders think about these things so you can begin to get on the same page as to your current culture and how to move forward.

You might also be wise to have key people within the congregation who are not currently in leadership positions take it as well, just to get some input from there as well.

There is no limit to who can take the survey – but it is critical that those in leadership positions take it.

SUBMITTING THE SURVEYS (IF USING DISCIPLESHIP DNA FOR FEEDBACK)

Surveys, once completed, need to be returned to Discipleship DNA at least 2 days prior to the first group coaching session so the assessment can be evaluated in time to have fruitful



discussion. (NOTE: If you have not purchased one of the group/individual coaching packages, there is no deadline. However, getting them back from the participants as soon as possible helps to get the process started sooner and begins to help you build momentum for any needed change. If you want to learn more about group/individual coaching, please contact us at info@discipleshipdna.com)

How you choose to have your leaders submit the survey is up to you. However, all the surveys should be submitted the same way, to make it easier for your coach to assess that church's survey's together.

You should have received a link for you and all the leaders you listed to take the survey on a Google form, so it can be submitted to Discipleship DNA directly. If not, contact us and we'll get that out right away.

You can also choose to print out the survey from the digital file or photocopy it from this book and have your leaders submit them directly to us at info@discipleshipdna.com or give them to you to send to us all at once (If using Discipleship DNA for review and feedback). Again, whichever option you choose, it needs to be done by everyone or confusion might reign... If you are having them submitted us by the individuals themselves, please let us know who is taking it so we know how many to expect and from whom so we know when we have received all of them. Then we can begin the assessment process on our end.

Your decision for how to submit might depend on the level of trust and presence of conflict in your leadership. Some of your leaders may not be comfortable filling out the form and handing it to you directly, in which case you would want them all to submit it electronically.

If you have any questions on distributing/submitting the survey or you have a situation in your congregation which causes you to desire clarification as to which submission method is best, please contact us at info@discipleshipdna.com.

GATHERING OF SURVEYS (IF NOT USING DISCIPLESHIP DNA FOR FEEDBACK)

If you feel that your team is comfortable enough to simply fill them out and return them to you, that's great. If you feel some hesitancy or simply want to offer confidentiality, then I would suggest something like emailing the survey to them, allowing them to fill them out on their computers, and printing out their completed surveys to physically turn in to your mailbox.

Then you can come up with a master copy that you will have and can distribute to your people when you meet to discuss the survey results.



GIVE THEM A DEADLINE!

As mentioned earlier, this should only take a few minutes of prayerful thought to fill out. However, if someone feels they need more time, that's fine. You want this to be as accurate as possible, so rushing through it might skew your results. But give them a deadline of 3-5 days maximum.

Since we will be discussing your results in the initial phone assessment (if applicable), and in the group coaching and personal coaching sessions, it's important that we receive the surveys as soon as possible to allow us to be efficient with your time. Remember, we need to receive them at least 2 days before the first group coaching session.

Even if you are not using Discipleship DNA to help you with the assessment, a deadline of 3-5 days should be given so you can be sure to get the surveys in a timely manner

HOW IS THE ASSESSMENT USED?

By looking at the different answers given, we can get a decent idea of where your leadership team's views regarding a number of different areas relating to your congregation. The questions are broad, but revealing, and go a long way to helping us help you recognize your culture – your starting point.

The surveys received by Discipleship DNA are evaluated by a coach, and the results are sent back to you to begin discussing with your leadership team (this can be before your first group coaching session if you wish) During your first group coaching session, we will share the overall results with the group so we can begin to pray, encourage, and assist each other. Then during the first one-to-one session, we will discuss your specific answers so we can work around your specific congregation's situation.

(While the program and coaching have some great principles useful for all to churches establish an effective discipleship culture, each congregation is different and faces different challenges. This is why the one-to-one coaching is so valuable. We work with you to fit these principles and strategies to YOU. To learn more, contact us and we'll be glad to answer any questions.)

So distribute the survey – and expect to be surprised – by the answers you get back.

ACTION STEP: DISTRIBUTE/SUBMIT SURVEY

(See pages 12-13)



ASSESSMENT SURVEY

Please return to your pastor or submit electronically to DiscipleshipDNA according to the instructions given to you by your pastor.

Church name and city_____

Person taking survey (circle one): Pastor Staff Pastor
Congregation leader

Pastors and leadership team: rate your agreement with the following statements:

- 1. The **majority** of individuals in my church have deepening personal relationships with Jesus that are **evident in their everyday living.**

Disagree strongly 1 2 3 4 5 Agree strongly

- 2. My people are **intentionally feeding themselves** through the Scriptures apart from Sunday sermons. (This can include small groups, personal devotions, etc.)

Disagree strongly 1 2 3 4 5 Agree strongly

- 3. The majority of people in leadership recognize a need to be ready to help new believers become established in their faith.

Disagree strongly 1 2 3 4 5 Agree strongly

- 4. This congregation, as a whole, reflects the love of Jesus toward people who don't yet know Him and **they desire to reach them.**

Disagree strongly 1 2 3 4 5 Agree strongly

- 5. Obedience to Jesus by fulfilling His command to make disciples is a high value with us and is **evident in our programs and budget.**

Disagree strongly 1 2 3 4 5 Agree strongly



6. Our pastors' PRINTED and actually EXPECTED job description puts disciplemaking as a **primary function ahead of non-biblical roles and expectations.**

Disagree strongly 1 2 3 4 5 Agree strongly

7. Our current discipleship structure is working well to **equip lay people** to share Christ, establish new believers in the faith, disciple them long-term, and equip them to do the same for others.

Disagree strongly 1 2 3 4 5 Agree strongly

8. If our discipleship structure is not adequate, we would **support pastoral efforts** to obtaining and maintaining a discipleship culture with a congregation-wide campaign.

Disagree strongly 1 2 3 4 5 Agree strongly

Anything you would like to add that would help us in determining your current culture? Would you like to explain any of your ratings for the questions?



SESSION 1 – RECOGNIZE YOUR CURRENT CULTURE

After getting all the surveys, tally up the answers and note trends, agreements, disparity, or anything else you feel is pertinent to the group discussion you'll be having about the survey.

If the survey participants have submitted them directly to Discipleship DNA, we will get back with you regarding the results within 2 days of getting the last one so you can have fruitful discussion for this session.

DISCUSSION OF SURVEY ANSWERS

NOTE: IF YOU ARE PART OF A COACHING GROUP, THIS SESSION WITH YOUR LEADERS SHOULD TAKE PLACE *BEFORE* YOUR FIRST GROUP COACHING SESSION. CONTACT DISCIPLESHIP DNA WITH ANY QUESTIONS.

Go through EACH question and take the time to discuss anything that comes to mind. If there is disparity or disagreement within the questions, NOW is the time to bring that up and discuss it. It's essential that everybody see what the others think (as a group). If there is a gap in the responses, ask if there is anyone willing to discuss their answers in front of the others. If they don't, offer them the chance to discuss it with you privately. If someone chooses that option, you absolutely must give them the freedom to speak freely.

But in any case, if you find that there is a wide variety of responses, you will need to take the time needed to discuss what your vision is for the church, affirm your commitment to bringing your church to greater obedience to Jesus, and communicate your commitment to doing all you can to help your leaders all be on the same page regarding establishing this all-important discipleship culture.

Then you will need to begin the work of bringing unity within your leadership. This will not always be easy, but it is always worth the effort to help a church become more obedient to Jesus. This program is designed to help you do just that.

ACTION STEP FOR SESSION 1:

Contact Discipleship DNA by email or phone and let us know how this discussion went so we can give you some relevant thoughts and pray with you!

PREP FOR SESSION 2:

Let your leaders know you are welcome to continue discussing the results, and that over the next few sessions, they will receive teaching that will help all of you gain unity. So even if totally unity is not present, they will see why it is important and how it can be achieved.



You will want to affirm that this training will move forward with the goal of your church achieving “5’s” on each of the questions, because that will bring health and long-term effectiveness as you seek to obey Jesus’ command to make disciples.

If you need input on having these discussions, or would like us to pray with and for you as you prepare for them, please contact us at info@discipleshipdna.com. We will gladly offer suggestions or pray for you at no charge. We want you to be successful – because that will honor God and advance His Kingdom.



SESSION 2 – BRING THE BUILDING BLOCKS

Confusion or feeling overwhelmed about what is involved in building an effective discipleship culture can lead many pastors and leaders to throw up their hands in frustration. We will address what I believe to be the four main building blocks necessary:

- Premise – what is the foundation for discipleship (it’s not quite what you think...)
- Players – in other words, the “who’s” of discipleship
- Process – the nuts and bolts
- Prayer – inviting God to do awesome work and fighting the battle against an Enemy who wants nothing more than to thwart this important work.

The goal of this session is to give you greater understanding and confidence to move ahead, including in how you approach other leadership in the congregation to bring about change.

THE PREMISE: A TWO-PART FOUNDATION

I’m not a construction expert by any means. In fact, I can barely tell you which way to turn a screwdriver. You will probably never hear my name mentioned in the same sentence as “power tools,” unless the sentence is, “Get Brian away from those power tools!” My wife does most of the fixing at our house, and when she can’t do it, we rely on a really great handyman to do it for us. I’m also perfectly happy paying someone to change the oil in my vehicles and fix leaky pipes in my house.

But as weak as I am on stuff like tools and fixing things, even *I* know that you need a good foundation in order to have a solid building.

So what’s the foundation of discipleship? If you answered, “Jesus,” well, you’d get the gold star for the day in Sunday School class, or maybe a shoutout from the pastor during the service. But that’s only part of the answer.

The foundation of discipleship has two parts, and we’re going to look at them now.

PART 1: JESUS OWNS THE CHURCH.

Newsflash, right? Not really. You already knew that. But let’s look at Matthew 16:18 anyway:

*And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build **MY CHURCH**, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (ESV – emphasis mine)*

Jesus OWNS the Church, free and clear. He BOUGHT it with His blood.

That’s the *theological* truth of the Church.



But when the rubber meets the road at the local church level, sometimes a very different picture develops. Because truth be told, there are people in some churches who actually think THEY own the church. For instance...

The pastor might (knowingly or unknowingly) think he owns the church. He makes all the decisions, and everything must be approved by him. That might have its place at the very beginning of a church plant, but that is not the biblical ideal of a pastor in the long-term. The pastor is supposed to LEAD the congregation in the vision he believes God has given him for that fellowship, which should obviously include fulfilling the Great Commission.

By the way, I have never witnessed this in my own experience with pastors, although I've heard the stories. The vast majority of pastors are more than aware that they are servants of Jesus, called to serve his church by leading it. I've met a few pastors who are rather full of themselves, but thankfully, that also has been rare.

Maybe it's not the pastor, but the elder board (or church board, or deacons or whatever they are called in your church). In this case, everything is done by committee, nothing can be done without their express permission, and the pastor is often just seen as a hireling to do their bidding. Power is the issue – power over the pastor and direction of the church, no matter what anybody (including Jesus) says...

In some churches it's the high-dollar givers who think they own the church. They are keenly aware of their power to withhold their substantial funds for purchases and programs they don't like. The church leadership is often forced to cave in because losing those funds would be catastrophic to the budget. This attitude by the givers has a simple name: sin. And it might take a brave word from you and your leaders to let these people know that you are moving on with the mission of Jesus regardless of their willingness to participate financially, because obeying Jesus is more important than their money, and Jesus is more than capable of making up the difference.

Another group who often thinks they own the church is the long-termers. For them the congregation is their baby and they'll protect it to the death (and sometimes they do!). "We've never done it that way!" is their rallying cry. Or this one: "We've seen a lot of pastors come and go – and if you don't fall in line, you'll be gone, too. We were here before you got here, and we'll be here long after you're gone..."

Maybe it's the Kitchen Committee, a former pastor who is still around, a long-term church bully, a powerful family or even a denomination. The "ownership" might be different for each congregation, but the issue is the same: Jesus owns the Church, including the local church. No one else has a legitimate claim to it.



The second part of the foundation is this:

PART 2: JESUS GETS TO TELL THE CHURCH WHAT TO DO.

Because Jesus is the owner, He gets to order it around. Not just individuals IN the Church – He gets to dictate the operation of the whole Church, including the local congregation.

And in this instance He did that specifically in giving what we call the Great Commission, which we find it in the closing words of the gospel of Matthew:

*Then Jesus came to them and said, “**All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples** of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

Matthew 28:18-20 (emphasis mine)

These are some of the final words of Jesus to the Church before His ascension to the Father. These are words that I think every follower of Jesus should memorize. These are the marching orders for the people of Jesus.

What is the command given in this passage? It’s “go,” right? Actually, no. The command is to “**make disciples.**” In the original language of the New Testament, you’ll find that the sentence is more along the lines of “As you are going, make disciples...”

Jesus, anticipating both evangelical fervor among His followers and the dispersion about to come as they were persecuted, wanted them to focus on the task of helping other people become lifelong followers of Him.

OBEDIENCE TO HIS COMMAND DISPLAYS OUR LOVE FOR HIM.

Now here’s the hard part for people in the Church around the world to swallow: if we’re not obeying Jesus, we don’t really love Him as we should. (Track with me here. It applies to our discussion, I promise.)

We don’t gain His love by our obedience. Scripture is very clear we don’t earn His love by anything we do or don’t do. We demonstrate our love for Him by our obedience. Look at John 14:21, 23 –

*“**Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them...Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.**”* (emphasis mine)



Everybody in church would say they love Jesus, but Jesus says our love for Him is shown in our obedience to Him.

A few years back a young couple asked me to officiate at their wedding. The bride was from a family where the parents were strong believers in Jesus, and I had a positive relationship with her and her family. The groom was not a believer and follower of Jesus. They were living together and wanted to make everything official with a church wedding. This was going to be an awkward conversation...

I started by saying to the bride, “I see from your Facebook posts that you talk about loving God and praying and stuff. You go to Christian concerts and you say how much you are blessed by them and other things. And that’s awesome. I don’t doubt you have an *emotional attachment* to Jesus. But Jesus says that if we love Him, we’ll obey Him – that we show our love in our obedience. And right now, you’re not living in obedience to him since you’re shacking up with your fiancé. Your first marriage didn’t work out, and I’m assuming you want THIS one to go the distance, right?”

Then I said to the groom, “You aren’t a Christian yet. So I’d like to talk to you a bit about what that means, if that’s okay. Because the biggest key to a successful marriage is a shared faith and life in Christ.” And I shared the gospel with him right there.

Confrontation is not something I look for or enjoy, so it was difficult to have that conversation.

I offered to meet with them again the following week if they still wanted me to do the wedding. As they walked out, I figured that would be the last I heard from them. But before the week was out, I got a call asking to meet again.

At the second meeting, the groom told me that he had given his life to Jesus and had moved out of the bride’s house. His new roommate thought he was crazy. He told his future father-in-law about his new faith, and it was obvious that he had truly given his life to Jesus. It was a joy to witness his baptism later. At the same meeting the bride shared that she had recommitted her life to Jesus and was ready to live for Him from that point on. It was great to see what God had done. The wedding was awesome. The couple continues to love Jesus and live for Him. (I love those kinds of stories – don’t you? Of course, you do.)

What happened to convince this couple? The Holy Spirit, using Scripture and a flawed dude, convicted them – and they were obedient. The tipping point came when they saw that warm fuzzies for Jesus wasn’t enough. They needed to obey the One they claimed to love.

It’s the same with the Church, including the local congregation. If a church wants to claim that they really love Jesus, then they need to show it in their obedience to His command to make disciples.



Unfortunately, many churches are not intentionally making disciples, and that can happen for a number of reasons, including the following:

There is disagreement as to the definition of “disciple.” Some think that every believer is a disciple. However, Jesus had many people who believed in Him and followed Him until He talked about counting the cost of following Him as a lifestyle. They decided that believing was enough, and that following was too hard.

My definition of a “disciple” is this: “a follower of Jesus who strives to love and live for Him above all else.” Admittedly, that encompasses a lot – being in the Scriptures, praying, obedience, making Jesus the highest priority of living, growing in spiritual maturity, denying oneself, displaying the fruit of the Spirit, giving, etc. And I’m very aware that not every disciple lives for Jesus above themselves all the time. But as a general lifestyle, that is one of the things that defines them.

Not everyone who puts their faith in Christ automatically submits to Jesus as Lord, right? You and I probably both know people who “prayed the prayer” years ago, but are not maturing, and are living for themselves instead of Jesus just as much as before. Would they be counted as disciples? I don’t think so, and I’m guessing you don’t really think so, either.

Discipleship is seen as completing a program rather than a deepening relationship with Jesus. I don’t have a problem with programs to help with discipleship. Obviously, I wouldn’t have developed this one if I did! But the goal of discipleship isn’t completing a program. The goal is maturity in Christ and the ability to help others reach that goal. Programs are TOOLS, not GOALS.

Involvement in small group Bible studies, Sunday School, or membership classes can aid in discipleship, but it can’t end there. Creating a discipleship CULTURE is the process where the very fabric of church life becomes made up of people in the church making disciples and raising disciplemakers using whatever tools are available and necessary.

Intentional disciplemaking is not a priority in terms of time, budget, recruiting volunteers, or staffing. This is especially true if your definition of discipleship ends at being a believer. Then there is no need to spend money or find someone to help in that area. But since I think it goes much farther than that, I would suggest it needs to be a bigger priority in the everyday operations of the church.



Being a former pastor of a small church, I can totally relate to the fact that dollars and time can only go so far – especially when you might already be stretched just to keep the lights on, keep up on current programs (maybe some of these need to go???), getting the carpet cleaned or replaced, fixing a leaky roof, and pay the pastor enough to support his family, not to mention that your volunteers are already stretched to the breaking point.

But creating a discipleship culture is worth the effort, money, and time. Because obedience to Jesus is worth it.

I discuss more of these barriers in Session 3, but I think you get the picture so far.

We need to get back to the foundation – Jesus owns the Church and gets to tell it what to do. He told the Church to make disciples. That’s what this journey is about.

THE PLAYERS: THE “WHO’S” OF DISCIPLESHIP

Discipleship is about people, not programs. Programs can be tools to help people become disciples, but ultimately, discipleship is about people.

Discipleship is best done – in fact, maybe only REALLY done well – in one-to-one relationships and small groups.

It’s extremely difficult to make disciples in a large group, including the worship service. Sunday sermons are actually not the best way to make disciples. Unfortunately, in many churches, this is the only time many people will sit and listen to teaching from Scripture; so the pastor has to hope that some will take the teaching and apply it to their lives so they can be more like Jesus. Many will craft their messages to be application-oriented so the people will walk away with something they can put into practice. I know, because that is what I do, and I know plenty of other pastors who do the same.

I’m absolutely fine with application-oriented messages, by the way, because the vast majority of the New Testament is application-oriented; and because James tells us that if we’re just listening to God’s Word and not making it part of our lives, we’re only fooling ourselves.

But my heart aches for the pastor who feels that Sunday services are his only real shot at bringing life-changing words from Scripture to a people who may or may not take heed. It’s not supposed to be that way.

So let’s look at the main players in a successful discipleship culture:

First, there are...



PASTORS EQUIPPING THE PEOPLE FOR WORK

We'll talk more in Session 3 about how pastors are often saddled with unbiblical and unrealistic expectations regarding ministry, but what I want to focus on here is that the pastor has a KEY role in establishing a discipleship culture in a church.

Look at Ephesians 4:11-13 –

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. (emphasis mine)

The *main* job of the pastor isn't to do all the work of ministry in a church. His *main* job is to equip the congregation to do the work of ministry. Isn't that AWESOME? He does that through any number of ways – preaching, praying, and generally making sure people are becoming mature in Jesus.

But what about the other stuff at a church? He can't focus completely on equipping. He needs to visit the sick, chair all the committees, choose the music for the service, and clean the bathrooms, right? Not exactly.

In Acts 6, we see a situation where a complaint came to the apostles – some widows were being overlooked in the food distribution. That's not a good thing by any stretch of the imagination. This was a legitimate need that had to be dealt with.

How did the apostles deal with it?

“Wow. That's horrible. Okay, tell you what. We'll personally cook and deliver the food to the widows from now on so they don't miss out. Then we'll pray with them and print out a schedule for food delivery so we don't forget again. Thanks for making sure we step up to the plate (no pun intended...) on this deal.”

Umm....no. That's not what happened, is it?

They said –

“It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.” (Acts 6:2-4, emphasis mine)

Whoa – that seems pretty harsh, huh? “Waiting tables?” Really? “Leave us alone so we can pray and preach?” Yowza. But that's what they said.



But they ALSO said – “Here’s a solution: pick some people **from the congregation** who are godly and wise and they’ll do an awesome job of making sure this is taken care of.”

And what happened after that, you ask?

This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith. (Acts 6:5-7)

It wasn’t the “church leaders” who took care of the task. They merely suggested a solution. It was the congregation who took care of this very real and pressing need. When the church leaders were freed to do the job they were supposed to do because the congregation stepped up to meet the need, everybody was taken care of.

And... the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

People became disciples – partly because people saw the Church acting like a family and caring for each other instead of just throwing the task at the apostles and hoping for the best.

Pastors need to be free to equip their people to live for Jesus, serve in and through the church, and make disciples without getting bogged down in other tasks that take him away from that primary responsibility.

CONGREGATION MEMBERS STEPPING UP FOR MINISTRY

We just saw in the previous section how the congregation actually did the work of taking care of the widows so the leaders could do what they were actually supposed to be doing.

If more churches had a culture where the congregation does the “work,” pastors would be free to do what they are actually supposed to do: equip.

This includes the “work” of discipleship – in particular, following up and establishing new believers.

I completely believe that pastors should lead by example in this area – but he cannot be responsible for discipling every new believer. He doesn’t have the time. Besides, who would print and fold the bulletins (Did I really just say that? Yup...)?

The really great news is that the job of making disciples is open to **anybody** willing to do it. You don’t need a seminary degree, special teaching or speaking skills, or even a great knowledge



of Scripture. All you need is to be available. God and godly people guiding and training you will help take care of the rest.

Jesus gave His Great Commission to a group of people, who before meeting Jesus within the previous 3 years, were “regular Joe” kinda folks; fisherman, tax collectors, and the like. None were “professional” ministers before Jesus came on the scene. They were prepared for their ministry by being with Jesus.

In fact, another episode in the book of Acts makes that very point. In chapter 3, Peter and John healed a lame man, then proceeded to preach to the crowd about Jesus. This brought the ire of the local religious leaders, who didn’t like Peter and John preaching about the guy they had spent so much energy getting crucified – only to hear that He hadn’t STAYED dead.

In chapter 4 these religious leaders gathered up Peter and John and threw them in jail overnight, then brought them out and questioned them. They didn’t like the response that the man had been healed by the name of Jesus.

Here’s what it says in 4:13 –

*When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they **were unschooled, ordinary men**, they were astonished and **they took note that these men had been with Jesus.** (emphasis mine)*

That is the main qualification of disciples – and disciplemakers: they have been with Jesus. Nowadays that means spending time with Him in the Scriptures, prayer, worship, and fellowship with other disciples who seek to reflect Jesus to each other and the world around them.

The need is for members of the congregation to step up into the ministry of making disciples – it not only lets you be PERSONALLY obedient to Jesus’ Great Commission; it helps your church overall be obedient to it as well.

NEW BELIEVERS (POTENTIAL DISCIPLES)

Hopefully your church sees new believers on a regular and frequent basis. If not, then establishing a discipleship culture will actually HELP that because the disciplers will be trained to share the gospel and pray for opportunities to do so.

These new believers need to be followed up to solidify their decision for Christ, put in relationship with a discipler (and/or a small group that will help them become established in their faith), and equipped for service in and through the church.



As these people become established, they can grow in maturity, becoming followers of Jesus in every area of life.

The goal is that as they grow, they will also be equipped by their discipler to continue the cycle of helping another new believer become established, grow, and equipped to impact other lives. As more and more people do this, more lives are impacted, because ideally all the people are continuing their involvement – so more people are involved, impacting more people. And on and on and on and on it goes.

The goal isn't to just get them through what we call "The Great 8" of essential things for new believers. The goal is to give them the opportunity to grow, mature, and reproduce their own lives.

That takes the personal involvement of people sold out to obeying Jesus and His command to make disciples.

When all the "who's" are in place, things happen for the Kingdom of God. And He is pleased. May it be the case in your church – for His glory.

Now that we know what players are needed for a lasting discipleship culture, let's now look at...

THE PROCESS OF CREATING A DISCIPLESHIP CULTURE

If you had to break down the Kickstart process, it would have five main steps:

1. Leadership conviction of need to establish the culture;
2. Congregational invitation to get involved;
3. Training the congregation;
4. Pairing trained disciplemakers with new believers;
5. Repeat.

There is plenty of stuff involved with each of these main steps, but this is what it basically boils down to. If you invite people and they respond, then you can train them, and then you can get them into the actual work of discipling people.

But just so we're all on the same page, let's start off by defining the important terms we'll be using:



“**Discipleship**” is the process of helping people become more like Jesus. That’s pretty broad, but as you look at the following definitions of other terms, hopefully it will become a bit less vague.

A “**disciple**” is a follower of Jesus who strives to love and live for him above all else. A disciple is not perfect, and will stumble and sin sometimes, but his or her life is marked by growing devotion and obedience to Jesus even when it is inconvenient and countercultural.

“**Disciplemaking**” is the intentional interaction of a more mature follower of Jesus with a new or less-mature believer in Jesus, with the goal of helping that person become a fully devoted follower of Jesus.

“**Maturity**” means growing in love, devotion, and obedience to Jesus, and growing in the ability to use the Scriptures as the guide and authority for living as they also develop in wisdom and Christ-like character.

A “**disciplemaker**” or “**discipler**” is the more mature believer who works with the new or less mature believer. The task of doing this is called “**discipling**.”

I’m sure there are some really awesome dictionary definitions of all these things. But these definitions reflect the goals and tasks involved in discipleship as envisioned by Discipleship DNA and the Kickstart program.

Kickstart uses what we call a Kickstarter Event to make a clear and urgent call to the congregation to get involved as individuals in this exciting ministry of following up and establishing new believers. At that event, the congregation is invited to sign up **that day** for training on how to follow up with new believers and get into long-term discipling relationships. The goal is to have people trained and ready to go for any upcoming outreach opportunities through the church or for any opportunities to personally share Christ with someone.

But while this program uses the Kickstarter Event to spark a discipleship culture and gain more congregation-wide participation at the beginning, the truth is this:

It only takes ONE to start: one faithful Christian discipling another Christian. Then the two of them each disciple someone else, and then the four of them disciple others. And the next thing you know, you have a discipleship culture.

But in my opinion, for that culture to really take hold, the leadership has to grab this idea like a bulldog on a mailman and refuse to let go until Jesus returns. This is discussed in more detail in Session 3.



If all the leadership is unified and on board, great things can happen. The people in the seats will catch your excitement, and if you invite them to be part of it, giving them the tools and opportunity, culture shift will happen. And that's exciting!

So, the overall process looks kinda like this:

Leadership buy-in → Congregational invitation → Training → Opportunities → Continued leadership enablement and encouragement → Continued congregational invitation → Continued training → More opportunities → And on and on and on.

All this assumes that the leadership buy-in is based on the foundation laid out in this session and that they love Jesus as individuals and want to obey him. Obviously this is critical, right? But most of us can think of church leaders (maybe even some pastors) whose love for Jesus isn't very evident in their everyday living. It's a sad condition and completely alien to what Jesus wants for His Bride, but it exists nonetheless.

As it involves using Kickstart and the Kickstarter Event, here's how the process looks:

1. Survey completed by leadership and initial consultation based on results of survey;
2. Decision of date for Kickstart Event based on upcoming outreach event (e.g., Christmas, Easter, etc.);
3. Scheduling of Discipler training;
4. Kickstarter Event;
5. Discipler Training;
6. Outreach Event;
7. Pairing of new believers with trained disciplers (and/or starting of Foundations groups if more new believers than disciplers);
8. Maintenance of culture with periodic emphasis from pulpit and training.

When the leadership gets excited **and involved**, and the congregation gets excited **and involved**, leadership gets even more excited, and the congregation is continually trained and encouraged. They're sold out to obeying Jesus' command to make disciples. And you're not just talking about it; you're actually **seeing it done**.

The result? The culture of your church is changed to the point where discipleship is part of your church's DNA. And guess what happens then? Your area is impacted for Jesus—His Kingdom is expanded. He is honored. My guess is that this is where you'd like to see your congregation. Am I right? (Yes, I am.)

This bring us to...



PRAYER: ESSENTIAL FOR CULTURE CHANGE

Since I'm writing to people who intentionally want to follow Jesus in the area of discipleship, it's probably safe to guess that you all pray – or at least know that prayer is important, right?

Prayer – in the instance of bringing change to your church culture and seeking to be more obedient to Jesus – does two things. First, it signals your submission to Jesus as Lord of your mission to fulfill His Great Commission. Second, it puts the devil on notice that you're serious about it.

The bad news is that the enemy will NOT like what you are trying to do. He hates it when we are intentionally obedient to Jesus. He will actively work against you in this. His working may come in different forms such as: opposition from people in the congregation (maybe from people you initially figured would enthusiastically jump on board), division within the leadership, loss of families to other churches, illness of key players, frustration with budget issues, or other things.

But the good news is that Jesus gave His promise that He would be with us in this process – to the very end of the age. And with Jesus as the Head of the church and at our side as we do our part, we simply cannot lose.

That being said, do not be slack in praying over this process of culture change.

- Pray that there would be unity within the leadership regarding the mission of discipleship.
- Pray that God would be preparing the hearts of those who will become disciplers to be excited about joining in His work.
- Pray that the enemy would be restrained from interfering and sowing discord and disunity.
- Pray for protection of the leadership and all those involved with the work of transforming the culture to obedience in making disciples.
- Pray that God would transform your church so it's very DNA is reflective of Jesus' command to make disciples.
- Pray that the lead-up to the Kickstarter Event would be smooth.
- Pray that the gospel would be clearly proclaimed at the services following the Kickstarter Event.
- Pray for whatever God lays on your heart in the midst of this process.

Pray, pray, pray, pray, pray, and then pray some more. It's that important.

Here's some more good news: these kinds of prayers are pretty much a sure-fire YES from God. Why? Because of the promise in 1 John 5:14-15 –



This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.

I think it's safe to say that making disciples is His will, and therefore so is praying for that to happen in your congregation. Pray with confidence, anticipating God working IN you and THROUGH you – as a congregation and as individuals in the congregation.

I would suggest praying intentionally and regularly for this culture change, the Kickstarter Event, and all involved. Make it part of all your leadership meetings. Feel free to recruit people to pray on their own as well.

I can't wait to hear what God does, and I would love it if you let me know about it. I would also love to pray with and for you, so please contact me at brian.lacroix@discipleshipdna.com. Whether it's to join you in praising Him for the successes you see or to join in praying against barriers you're facing, I'd love to be part of it.

CONCLUSION

These four building blocks are key to building an effective disciplemaking culture that can last for not just years, but generations – and hopefully be thriving when Jesus returns.

We also need to remember that Jesus Himself is the bedrock on which to build this foundation. He is the True Foundation on which we build, and unless the Lord builds the house, those who labor, labor in vain (Psalm 127:1). But I think God is more than happy to build this “house” of discipleship among your congregation.

Stay in constant prayer, asking God to steer your heart continuously back to submission to Him throughout this process.

SESSION 2 ACTION STEPS:

Examine your church's mission/vision statement: does it specifically call for specific obedience of the church to Jesus' command to make disciples?

If so, discuss whether your church is, in fact, ACTING in obedience to Jesus when it comes to intentionally making disciples.

It doesn't matter what your mission statement says, even if it says that making disciples is a high priority. If you're not actually DOING it – helping people find and follow Jesus as a lifestyle, then that needs to come under the submission of Jesus.



Identify any “owners” in your congregation.

I talk more about handling these people as well as others later in the material. For now, as a group, discuss and identify the “owners” in your congregation and begin praying for wisdom in confronting this problem. You can begin by asking God to change the hearts of all involved (including yours and the leadership).

Discuss whether or not all of the players are present in your congregation. If not, why not?

Discuss: Is the pastor in your church seen primarily as an equipper or something else? What? For instance, some pastors are seen primarily as a “chaplain” rather than a leader or equipper. Some might see him as a “shepherd.” But what is he leading the sheep to do and be? Is he leading the flock to make disciples? Is he primarily an evangelist? Preacher?

Take some time right now to pray together as the leadership, asking God to bind you together in heart and spirit and to give you a spirit-fueled excitement and determination to do what is necessary to bring this change.



SESSION 3 – BOLD LEADERS BUILD (AND SOMETIMES TEAR DOWN!)

THE ROLE OF THE LEADERSHIP IN SETTING THE CULTURE

Changing a culture isn't easy, especially if the culture you're trying to change has been entrenched for decades or even generations. If this is the case for you, you'll be swimming upstream for a while at least, but so did the early church and look what happened with them – they turned the world upside down!

I want to affirm here something that I hope is clear throughout the materials but might get lost in the midst of them: I believe the vast majority of pastors and church leaders **want** to lead a disciple-making church and would **love** to have a congregation filled with people who automatically follow up with new believers to get them established in a lifetime of following Jesus.

I also believe that many pastors have a hard time juggling all the demands on them and finding time for this can be next to impossible.

So, as you read this section, know that the idea here is to help spark a team that will get behind you as you lead your church to more fully obey Jesus' command to make disciples.

The goal of this session is to give you freedom to operate in obedience to Jesus – without the fetters of non-biblical models of how a church should operate. Not that you need MY permission or freedom from ME. My point here is that understanding some things about leadership in the local congregation can free you to lead with confidence – even when you come up against misunderstanding or even opposition.

Okay? Let's get started!

It's absolutely essential that ALL the leaders get on board with culture change. Divisiveness among leadership is bad enough for churches who are struggling just to keep the status quo. It's a death knell for any church wanting to grow and impact their area. Scripture says divisiveness is a sin, and it cannot be tolerated among the leadership.

If leadership cannot agree to be unified in developing a discipleship culture (even if you decide not to use *Kickstart*), then you need to take time to fix your leadership culture to be in line with Scriptural principles of leadership, unity, and obedience to Jesus' commands for the Church. Implementation of any program will be impeded if there is disunity among the leadership.

Keep in mind that unity does not mean unanimous agreement on every detail of implementing something. That's a rare bird even among the most solid of churches. But unity does mean agreement on the essential things – for instance, obedience to Jesus' command to make



disciples. If leadership cannot agree on that, you have a problem. There can be healthy debate on HOW to best make disciples in your church. That's totally cool. But if you're not in agreement about the specific area of obedience, that needs to be addressed.

Assuming you have unity in this area, I would suggest delegating responsibility to someone (pastor or other key leader) who can serve as the Coordinator for the Kickstarter Event to make decisions and spend money for materials, signage, etc., without having to come to the rest of the leadership for approval of every decision or expenditure. Giving that person a reasonable budget and the freedom to operate within it will make things go infinitely smoother than having everything filter through a committee or church board.*

The elected/appointed leadership needs to step up in 3 major areas:

1. Promoting the new culture (and events leading to adoption of it). This includes:

- Building vision within the congregation and leadership about what it would look like to have people in the congregation actively and intentionally reaching people for Jesus, helping them mature in Him, and training them to reach yet others – and the impact that has for the Kingdom of God.
- Talking up the Kickstarter Event to the congregation to build anticipation as well as talking with individual potential disciplers about getting involved.
- Giving the Kickstarter Event prominent publicity in their advertising, social media, bulletin inserts, signage, and promotion from the platform.

2. Participation in the culture. Particularly in these three areas:

- Being at all promo events and training sessions.
- Being willing to be paired in a discipling relationship with a new/younger believer.
- Long-term continuing at least one discipling relationship as much as possible.

3. Continued support of the culture.

- Periodic congregation-wide emphasis on discipleship, what it means, and how it looks in your congregation. Give 1-2 messages each year re-emphasizing discipleship and inviting others to become involved as a discipler or as someone needing to be discipled;
- Intentional pairing of new believers with disciplers whenever possible and offering training for new disciplers as necessary;



- Frequent intentional public celebration of God's working through disciplers as people are reached for Christ and helped to follow Him as Lord.

Remember, you're establishing a **culture**, not a **program**. Discipleship doesn't end with the Kickstarter Event or establishment of a Foundations group (this is a small group made up of 2-4 new believers using the Foundations Material included with this training). It is meant to be part of your church culture until Jesus returns!!

Here's what it looks like in terms of tangible action for leadership to take:

Leadership Decision

- Decide to make discipleship (making disciples and raising disciplers) the **operating policy** of your church; part of the budget, training, time for staff, etc.
- Continue to expose the congregation to the concept of Jesus' ownership and command to Church.
- Intentionally recruit, adequately equip, and loudly encourage disciplers.
- Commit to making sure every new believer will be contacted within forty-eight hours of a decision for Christ by a personal discipler, Foundations class leader, or Discipleship pastor/ministry leader.
- Work to secure congregational buy-in as described below.

Congregational Buy-in

- Present message of Jesus' ownership and command to church.
- Challenge congregation to step into Plan A of discipleship. (There is no Plan B.)
- Actively and intentionally invite the church to make discipling part of its culture;
- Actively identify and invite individuals to become disciplers;
- Present specific opportunity to sign up for training (such as a Kickstarter Event).

Much of the congregational buy-in can occur in the weeks prior to and at the Kickstarter Event, which is designed to cover the five areas above.

What if the congregation doesn't buy in?

The pastor and leadership do it anyway. The command of Jesus to make disciples is as much an individual command as it is a congregational one. So the pastor and other leaders who do buy into it become disciplers, intentionally modeling it to the rest of the congregation. As



they make disciples who reproduce other disciples who reproduce other disciples, change can take place in the life of the congregation.

There's another issue that leaders need to take to heart: accountability to God. Look at Hebrews 13:17 –

*Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, **as those who will have to give an account.** Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you. (ESV – emphasis mine)*

I think every pastor is aware of this awesome and heavy responsibility. And I can guarantee you that the vast majority of pastors have lost sleep on occasion wondering if they are doing the job in a way that will stand up well when they appear before God to give this account. I know I did. Leaders are accountable to God for how they lead the church.

And this isn't just the pastor – it's all the leaders, including board members, elders, deacons, or whatever you call those who guide the direction of the local congregation.

You will stand before God to answer for how you led the church. Will you be able to say to Him that you did everything in your power to enable your church to fulfill His Son's command to make disciples?

If you are part of the leadership and you don't feel you can support an emphasis on developing a discipleship culture, then in all honesty, you need to reconsider your place in leadership. I know that sounds harsh. But leadership needs to be paving the way for and modeling obedience to Jesus *in every area of life*. Standing in the way of that for the sake of personal convenience and holding on to power is a serious matter to God.

Do you want to try to convince Him you were right to stand in the way of your church fulfilling the command of His Son?

If you cannot wholehearted support such a change, then you can start by asking God to change your own heart to embrace this new emphasis on biblical obedience. If you cannot do that, then I would suggest, tenderly, yet with the authority of Scripture, that you step aside from leadership without backbiting or causing division, and pray for God's will to be done in the church and in your own heart.

Please understand I don't say this lightly. But obedience to Jesus isn't something to be taken lightly, either. The place of leadership is too important to allow divisiveness to get in the way of that obedience. Don't put yourself in a position of having to answer to God for putting up obstacles to it.



For the rest of you, get ready for a great adventure of culture change. Begin to anticipate God's working among you as a leadership team – maybe like never before. You will be able to praise Him for how He brings you together, and how He guides you in implementing a culture where discipleship is part of the very fabric of who you are as a local church. As this happens, your congregation will also witness God's working as they allow themselves to be used by God in His awesome work. His kingdom will advance in your area, and He will be glorified. Amen.

i *This book includes a handbook for the Coordinator discussing the Kickstarter Event itself. That portion is formatted so it can also be printed as a separate piece.

BARRIERS TO SETTING THE CULTURE

This will probably be the hardest section to cover, and will most likely cause some squirming, embarrassment, and possibly outright anger – if not from you, then from others in your congregation. We'll be touching on areas that are sensitive to a lot of people. But they need to be discussed. If any of these barriers are in place, we will need to work on them before you can adequately establish a discipleship culture – or any culture where obedience to Jesus is the primary focus of your congregation.

I'm taking a lot of time here to discuss the hard topic of barriers for two main reasons: (1) to help you identify and call out any that may exist in your congregation, and (2) to encourage you to tear them down for the sake of obedience to Jesus.

Pastor, my hope is that as you and your leadership work to identify any existing barriers, you will be motivated to work together as maybe never before in effectiveness for Christ and his Kingdom.

Question: Why is it that more churches can't honestly say they have a disciplemaking culture – one that makes disciples and raises disciplemakers who multiply their lives? One would think it would already be part of every church, right? Unfortunately, that is not the case. Especially in American Christianity, comfort and convenience take a higher priority than discipleship in many churches.

Let's look at some reasons for that. This will be a long list, but it is not exhaustive...

UNBIBLICAL DEFINITIONS OF WHAT A DISCIPLE IS / "OWNERSHIP" ISSUES.

I talked about these in Session 2, so I won't go over them again here.



FEW (IF ANY) CALLS FROM THE PULPIT TO SELF-DENIAL IN FOLLOWING JESUS.

Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me." Luke 9:23

Jesus calls us to follow Him. He also calls us to die, if necessary, in our following. We put *Him* as the priority, not our comfort, paycheck, vacation time, and even family.

That's not a popular message, especially among adults in their 40s and above. But I think more pastors are focusing on this more and more, and I believe it's resonating well with younger people. It's very refreshing. We live in a time when the current younger generations, overall, want to live for more than themselves and to give themselves to impacting the world. Younger Christians are not afraid of the challenge to live for Jesus above themselves – in fact, they relish it. The Holy Spirit is moving in their lives, and it is exciting to see. And they are setting an example for the older generations.

So while we still have plenty of people who resist a call for sacrifice, no matter their age, there are plenty who see past the *cost* to the *cause*, and are willing to go for it, if you are willing to bring them challenge to them..

TRADITION

Here are just 6 areas of tradition that can stand in the way of developing a discipleship culture:

1. Worship Service.

Woe to the pastor or leader who dares to mess with this, particularly in an older church!

When I introduced video screens to the service at my church, there were a couple people who I thought were going to have heart attacks. One of them had threatened to leave if we went ahead with them (we did, she didn't...).

Music, special music, technology, Bible version used for preaching, order of service, how and when to take the offering – all of these can be hardened into traditions that are only broken with the greatest peril for those trying to fit new wine into old wineskins, or to bring new wineskins altogether.

2. Programs.

Certain programs like Brother Smith's adult Sunday School class (using the exact same materials for the last 65 years) or the Wednesday night prayer service or Sunday night hymn-singing are seen as staples of the church life and are off-limits for change or removal for the sake of focusing people and resources on making disciples.

3. Events.



Sister Jones always puts together such a nice Christmas program – and her rutabaga squash linguine casserole is the hit of the pot-luck dinner every year! No matter that attendance at the Christmas program is only made up of a fraction of the congregation and the grandparents of whoever is playing Baby Jesus this time. Not to mention the fact that next year you'll need to find a new Baby Jesus – or go back to using the doll...

This covers other regular/special events that served a purpose in days past, but no longer serve to help the church in its mission for the Great Commission.

4. Physical appearance of property.

It could be that the sanctuary/worship space, lobby, or classrooms need to be updated, but there is resistance because of emotional attachments to these areas.

When we repainted our nursery, one lady was very upset because we'd be covering the handprints her daughter and another girl made when it was originally painted. And I caught some flack for moving the flags to the back of the sanctuary instead of keeping them on the front platform.

It could also be that you want to rearrange the platform to accommodate a keyboard and other instruments or furniture. Or add a screen. Whatever.

If you've tried to change anything like that, you know the hassle. Changing something can be dangerous to the tranquillity of a congregation. But if the property and the sanctuary scream "1950s!!" something needs to change.

5. Dress codes.

Whether it's for the pastor, the people on the platform, or the congregation members, this can be a touchy subject.

Many feel everyone in church should wear their Sunday best, others feel that you should dress in a way that is comfortable and allows guests to not feel out of place.

Some of this depends on your geography. In parts of the south, even the poorest families wear suits and nice dresses to church. In Hawaii, it's aloha shirts and flip-flops (and that's just the pastor). Up here in the Midwest it's often jeans and an untucked checked shirt or football jersey (especially if the Vikings are playing that day...), with some people in suits, but mostly business casual.

The question you have to answer is this: are dress codes keeping you from reaching people for Jesus and making disciples? Can you articulate a **biblical** reason for dressing as you do or expect from others? If you can, can you welcome someone to your service who doesn't meet



that, especially if they are new people looking for Jesus and/or a church home? Can they come to your church and not be looked down on for how they dress? I hope so.

6. Pastoral roles.

This is a huge one. Oftentimes the job description for a pastor at a given church is not biblical and is many times simply unrealistic given the time restrictions pastors are under to prepare for Sunday worship.

Sometimes the printed job description doesn't match the actual expectations. For instance, the pastor is told in the job interview that his primary responsibilities will center on things like preaching, counseling, and administrative issues of leading the congregation. But in reality, he is in charge of visiting all the sick, leading all the Bible studies, making the mowing schedule (and filling in when someone can't make their turn), scheduling the pot-luck dinners, making sure the church gets cleaned, leading the services at the nursing home, putting together the worship services – including getting the PowerPoint slides ready and getting the music out for rehearsal, visiting every home in the congregation at least once a year, and chairing every committee.

These pastors are expected to be available 24/7/365 (366 in Leap Years!) to do the congregation's bidding without complaint, all while running a stable household with a wife who serves in every other area of church ministry and raising kids who are perfectly obedient in every situation and circumstance (especially if Sister Gertrude is there that day...).

Can you tell I'm not a big fan of that pastoral model? Maybe because it is NOT what Scripture says a pastor should be doing.

You really need to study what the role of a pastor is. I'll give you a hint: it's not doing all the work of ministry. Many tasks assigned to pastors have to do with tradition, not biblical roles.

I'm not totally opposed to traditions – if they serve to help the congregation make disciples and raise disciplemakers. Unfortunately, many traditions stand squarely in the way of doing that. Jesus rebuked the religious leaders of His day for letting traditions get in the way of following the will of God as shown in the Word of God. We read about it in Matthew 15:1-9 –

Then some Pharisees and teachers of the law came to Jesus from Jerusalem and asked, "Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They don't wash their hands before they eat!"

*Jesus replied, "And **why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition?** For God said, 'Honor your father and mother' and 'Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.' But you say that if anyone declares that what might have been used to help their father or mother is*



‘devoted to God,’ they are not to ‘honor their father or mother’ with it. Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition. You hypocrites!

Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you:

“ ‘These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules.’ ” (emphasis mine)

If you are more concerned with traditions than you are with obeying Jesus, that’s a problem. In fact, it’s sin. You need to evaluate the hold your traditions have on your congregation to see if they are in the way of obedience to Jesus’ command.

Pastor, take some time, by yourself, and then with the rest of your leadership and list out any traditions you see that are hindering the task of making disciples and hindering the pastor from his main task of equipping his people for service and maturity in Christ.

As you identify them, prayerfully discuss these, and plan together to phase them out in a way that communicates clearly and shows sensitivity to those who hold them most dear, but that also shows the leadership’s determination to be obedient to Jesus, even when it is inconvenient or invites conflict.

Closely related (in fact, first cousins) to tradition is the presence of...

SACRED COWS.

Sacred cows are those things in your church culture that no one can touch without mortal fear of death or dismemberment.

These might be some of the traditions I listed above. But it might also be things like the kitchen, the organ, the pulpit, the nursery, the pews, the piano, the curtains in the pastor’s office, or even the lawn mower. Anything that people hold onto at all costs and that will cause trouble to change or remove can be a sacred cow.

If there is something that is hindering you from obeying Jesus’ command to make disciples, it has to go. You may have to do it slowly and incrementally depending on what it is, but it has to go, because the harsh truth is that sacred cows are only good for one thing: **slaughtering**.

But be prepared. Slaughtering sacred cows can bring some major pushback. People are attached to them in various ways that affect their emotional response. Sister Ewing donated all the plates and arranged the kitchen just how she likes it – even though no one else can find anything in there. Brother Donaldson donated that organ with memorial funds given at his sister’s funeral and wants it there until Jesus returns. Mr. Brown’s great granddaddy carved that pulpit from granite with his bare hands.



Handle sacred cows just as you would handle the stoppage of traditions – again with clear communication and sensitivity, yet determination to put obedience to Jesus above all.

Telling your people your plan and why these sacred cows have to go (“So we can be more obedient to Jesus, maybe?...”) and communicating that you are sensitive to the emotional ties with them will help. But it can still be a rough go.

You might even lose people over it. So be as sensitive and diplomatic as possible. But at the end of the day, the sacred cows need to be slaughtered, because obedience to Jesus has to be the driving force in a church that is intentionally submitting to Jesus and His command to the Church. If a sacred cow is in the way of reaching more people for Christ, it has to go.

Confession: I was horrible at this – I just did stuff and expected people to understand. Big mistake. Don’t do that. You’ll end up with even more resistance, and that’s not good either.

COMPLACENCY.

I pastored an evangelical church that was more than 120 years old when I got there. Even though they had just moved to a new property about eight years before, they were still stuck in ways that were detrimental to creating a culture of discipleship.

They had gone through many pastors in that 120 years. The average pastoral stay was 2.5 years!!! The longest-serving pastor before I arrived was eight years. I was there for twelve, and it was a struggle the entire time trying to drag them out of a mindset that was cemented in the idea of just keeping the doors open.

For all but a few of the congregation, outreach and discipleship weren’t even on the radar. Back in the day they had a vision for reaching many people for Jesus, but it had faded over the decades for numerous reasons. And so, the majority of the people simply didn’t care.

There are other churches where they simply don’t care about reaching people for Christ no matter what their denomination or mission statement would say. I visited with one of these after a particularly nasty pastoral resignation. The pastor had tried to lead them to deeper commitment to Christ on a personal and leadership level and had poured his heart into working to help them see the need to reach more people for Christ. But they didn’t want that, and in resisting, they caused a ton of pain for the pastor and his family. During my visit with them, I suggested that what they really wanted was a “chaplain” not a leader, which was sad, because the denomination this church belongs to is very evangelistic and makes available many resources, including coaching, for every church to reach more people. But they simply don’t see that as a priority.



For many churches, the goal is to just get through another Sunday. Or the goal is to NOT make any changes of any kind, because they're comfortable – they've got the right kind of people coming, the giving is good enough, the preaching is adequate, etc.

The cure for complacency is what back in the old days was called “unction.” It's basically the Holy Spirit getting the people of God fired up to be revived and get back in the game of impacting the world for Him. It can start with the pastor becoming filled with the Spirit (I'm not talking about the Charismatic/Pentecostal meaning here, although I've learned not to limit the Spirit!), asking Him to move in and through the pastor to fire up the people for Jesus.

Preaching against complacency helps in this effort. When you do that, the congregation is put on notice that complacency is not an option in God's church. You may have heard this numerous times, but it is true that one of the job descriptions of the preacher is to “comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable.”

Pastor, I can tell you I personally struggled with complacency at times during my time in the pulpit. The great news is that God is ready to fill you with His Spirit maybe like never before and to move in your congregation maybe like never before. I hope you'll take a moment right now and invite Him to do just that.

IGNORANCE.

I don't necessarily mean ignorance in terms of not knowing the Great Commission. What I mean is that some churches are ignorant about their part in it.

They might believe that if they give to their denomination's missions fund, or support children through the church's sponsorships for poor kids around the world, or support some missionaries with money and prayer, they are fulfilling the Great Commission.

A church SHOULD do these things, of course. But the fact of the matter is that there are people right in your area who need to find Jesus and helped to be disciples. Congregations need to be told this – or at least reminded of it regularly. If you're willing to send people and/or money overseas or to poverty areas in another city, but not willing to make disciples in your hometown, you've got a problem.

Or it might be that the church knows it needs to be involved but doesn't know how to go about it. So they're looking for materials and see an overwhelming amount of choices and throw up their hands in despair and frustration.

Intentional teaching on what discipleship is and what a discipleship culture looks like goes a long way to tearing down this barrier. Beginning with the leadership, start to intentionally and



boldly introduce Jesus' ownership and command of the church, and your intention to see it be carried out in your congregation.

This would also be a time to remind them that leaders are accountable to God – especially for what they know. And if they are aware that Jesus expects them to help the church fulfill the command of Jesus to make disciples, they will be held to account for their leadership – or hindrance to it.

But you may find that your leadership is hungry for just this sort of thing. If that is the case, then you have a tremendous head start, and you will find them supportive of needed change if done wisely and carefully.

Of course, a great way to introduce your congregation to the need for THEM to be involved is the Kickstarter Event we suggest in the next session.

RELYING ON PAST SUCCESS (THE GOOD OL' DAYS).

I hope your church has had successes – people reached for Jesus, making an impact for the good of your community, and helping the reputation of Jesus grow in your area. But if your church's history is highlighted by participating in a Billy Graham Crusade in the 1970's, you need to find ways to look forward.

Refuse to believe your church's best days are behind you! God still has plans for your church. Unless everyone in your area of influence is following Jesus, your job is not done yet. Let Him revitalize a vision for you in fulfilling the Great Commission in your area.

To do that, however, you need to grasp an important fact: **ministry methods that were successful "back in the day" will almost assuredly not work today.** People access and process information differently, and they explore spirituality differently. Definitions of "truth" and what constitutes acceptable preaching (in terms of speaking about sin, especially) have changed, among other things. People are asking different questions and aren't accepting pat answers.

It used to be that a church could just fling open the door on Sunday and expect visitors to come in just because that's how a lot of people found a church home. Or hosting a "revival" would bring in a ton of people. Or going door-to-door to invite people to church.

In my area of the country, those simply don't work well anymore. We have found that many, if not most younger people looking for a church go online and shop for a church by going to the church website long before they ever show up at the door. If you don't have a strong web presence, chances are that you will not have much success reaching younger people who aren't already connected to your church.



Who would have thought of that back in the 1980s, when I came to Christ in college and got involved in church? Personal computers were few and far between, and the internet as we know it was not even invented yet. But now it's considered almost criminal if there isn't at least one laptop computer and 3 smartphones in every home.

If you were to have an intentional outreach event, how would you do it? Would it reflect what worked in the past or would it reflect a knowledge of how people respond today? Hopefully it would be the latter, because that's what it will take.

MEMORIES OF PAST FAILURES (PROGRAMS DONE AND FAILED).

One of the cautions about introducing any program, even one that is designed to help your church be more obedient to Jesus, is that someone might say, "We tried something like that a few years ago and it didn't work. We don't need to try anything like that again."

I'm all for having a healthy skepticism when you're being asked to spend church money. But one program is not all programs. It's like saying, "I bought a pair of jeans once, and they didn't fit, so I'm done trying to wear jeans ever again." Silly, right? It's almost as silly as, "We tried telling people about Jesus once, and that didn't work – so we're done with that whole evangelism thing."

Yes, you may have tried something years ago. But that was *years ago*!! Hopefully you are not the same people you were then, and there are different resources from when you tried it before.

One of the greatest truths of life is, "You are a **product** of your past, but you don't have to be a **prisoner** of your past." It's the same with churches. Don't let the past rule your future.

So seek out and explore new life and new civilizations (methods of making disciples). Boldly go where no pastor of your church has gone before,,, And yes, this program will help you build a foundation that allows that to happen from this point on.

BUDGET PRIORITIES.

If discipleship is not a priority (or if your definition of discipleship fits one of the descriptions discussed in Session 2), it won't be very visible on the church budget. It's been said that your checkbook register doesn't set your priorities – it exposes them. That's true for churches as well. Discipleship is an intentional process. It needs to be budgeted for intentionally.

That may include such things as this program, other Bible study materials for small groups, discipleship materials aimed at the leadership, small group leader training, or anything else that will support your culture.



LITTLE TO NO INVOLVEMENT FROM LAYPEOPLE.

Let's look again at Ephesians 4:11-13 –

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. (emphasis mine)

The pastor's job is to equip the people for ministry, not do the whole job himself. When laypeople get a handle on their responsibility to get involved in the ministry of the church, transformation happens!

And the good news is that there are probably people in your congregation RIGHT NOW who would be thrilled to be used in this important task of making disciples. You just need to ask them.

Pastor, are you willing to invite and equip people to this awesome work? Are you willing to let God show you who is ripe for this kind of ministry? Are you willing to (here's the hard part) let go of some things for the sake of allowing other people to do the work of ministry?

If not, ask God to help you with that. You'll be surprised what God will do through your people if you'll equip and free them to do it. And you'll also find yourself able to breathe a little better because the burden will be lighter, allowing you to do what you were called to do rather than getting caught up in things that are not biblical expectations.

Here's the bottom line of this: If we love Jesus we'll obey Him.

Remember John 14?

*Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them...**Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching.** My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. **Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching.** These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.*

(John 14:21,23 emphasis mine)

Jesus says if we love Him we'll obey Him, so if we claim to love Him yet disregard His command to make disciples, what does that say about our love for Him? So we need to be bold in challenging our leaders and congregation to making sure discipleship is a **priority** – part of who you ARE as a church, not just part of what you DO as a church.



BOLD LEADERS' TOOLBOX

Here are some tools to have when leading through barriers:

- **Clear identification** of the factors that hinder effective discipleship.
- **Clear communication** with leaders about the need to become intentional in bringing a discipleship culture to bear in the congregation.
- A **clear and decisive plan** (with counsel of other leaders and prayer) to move past or tear down barriers.
- **Decisive action** that can be followed up and evaluated for modification if necessary.
- **Even more communication** with leadership and congregation so no one is caught unaware of what changes are taking place and why.
- **Lots of prayer!**

Pastor and church leader, this is what it all comes down to: Jesus, the Owner of the Church, including your congregation, has commanded your church to make disciples. Will you help your congregation – as a body and as individual members – become obedient to Him in this task?

Are you willing to face the barriers to obedience and tear them down for the sake of Jesus' Great Commission – even at the risk of losing some people, being misunderstood, possibly slandered, confronted, etc.?

If at any time you want to talk about this how this process is playing out in your congregation, contact me at Brian.LaCroix@DiscipleshipDna.com. If you want, I'll call and pray with you and we can visit. If you are part of the coaching program, the members of your group will also pray for you so you can gain the encouragement of your fellow pastors who may be fighting the same battles.

In the meantime, take some encouragement from these words:

*Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, **let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.***

Hebrews 12:1-3 (emphasis mine)



Jesus says He will be with you as you make disciples. And when the going gets tough, He will see you through it. Tackling barriers is rarely easy – but it is always worth it, because it allows us to better serve the Master.

SESSION 3 ACTION STEPS:

Survey your leadership regarding unity of purpose in terms of the importance of and emphasis on establishing a discipleship culture.

If unity of purpose is lacking, this must be addressed before moving forward – with any program. Remember, unity in the *details* is not the issue, but all leadership must agree about *direction*. This may take time, especially if there is resistance among leadership, because ultimately, all leadership needs to be on board with obeying Jesus. The key here is making sure only those who are fully submitted to Jesus in their own lives are in leadership positions. If there is resistance, they may need to be reminded that as leaders they will give an account of their leadership, and hindering obedience to Jesus will be part of that accounting.

This step alone may lead to a great revival among your leadership and the church overall as they are presented with the charge of Jesus to make disciples, how obedience to Him is the real test of our love, and what is standing in the way of that loving obedience.

Bathe this step in much prayer!

Go through each item in the “Toolbox” to make sure you have them all.

It is important that all of these tools be present as you move forward. As with the first step, this may take time. But it is paramount to go forward with a clear idea of what you’re facing in terms of hindrances, a clear plan, and clear communication.

Pray specifically that God will keep you mindful of the fact that while barriers need to be torn down, they are represented as PEOPLE.

People are broken, often selfish and fearful of change, even in church. Ask God to show you how to speak the truth firmly, but in love, demonstrating your care for them as they are affected by these changes.

If members of leadership are resistant to establishing a discipleship culture after discussion and prayer, you may need to bring in denominational support to give you specific guidance in re-forming a leadership team that is more in line with obedience to Jesus.

Find out exactly who that would be and what steps need to be taken to involve them should the need arise.



SESSION 4 – THE KICKSTARTER EVENT, RECRUITMENT, AND OUTREACH EVENT.

THE KICKSTARTER EVENT

- i** It is strongly recommended that a Kickstarter Event and Training Coordinator be assigned responsibility of ensuring the Event and Training is handled efficiently within the time frames suggested. The Kickstart Event and Training Coordinator's Handbook has a detailed description of the tasks, timelines, and materials needed.

The Kickstarter Event is a specific weekend where the service(s) is used to invite the congregation to participate in this new culture. The main component of that invitation is a message urging people to take action by signing up to train to be disciplers and commit to being in discipling relationships with new believers.

The order of the service is up to you. But the message should contain at least two key parts:

- Strong encouragement and challenge for them to be part of Christ's Great Commission in your area;
- Call to action by signing up for the training and committing to being in discipling relationships from now on, as God makes it possible.

There should be a lot of promoting leading up to the event to build anticipation. There are many things you can do to build that anticipation, and we'll focus on that during this first section.

WAYS TO "SET THE TABLE" FOR A SUCCESSFUL KICKSTARTER EVENT

- 1. Tie the Event to something like Easter, Christmas, or other special church event involving a larger attendance.**

Easter and Christmas are ideal, because many people who don't normally come to church will come during those two holidays, and you will have a great opportunity to (1) share the gospel and (2) pair new believers with the brand new disciplers who have just been trained to follow up with them.

This means you will want to have your Kickstarter Event 1-2 months BEFORE that weekend (depending on how you want to do the training for the disciplers), so the disciplers will be ready to follow up those new believers.

You can schedule your Kickstarter Event for any time of year, of course. The invitation to become a discipler and the training can absolutely happen whenever you want it to. Tying it to something like Christmas or Easter will work for many churches, but it may



not be your biggest outreach event. That event is the one I would suggest tying the Kickstarter event to.

2. Announcement at regular services regarding the upcoming event and basis for establishing discipleship culture.

Beginning up to 2 months prior to the Kickstarter Event, you should begin announcing it from the platform. It doesn't have to be specific (although it can be), but something along the lines of this:

“Hey folks, just wanted to give you a heads-up that over the next couple months, we're going to be promoting an event that we believe will really help us become more obedient to Jesus' command to make disciples. In a few weeks you'll be seeing more information but let me just tell you that your leadership team is really excited about this and we think this will help us be even more effective for the Kingdom in our area.”

Four weeks before the event, the announcements will need to be more specific. For instance, you might say something along the lines of...

“You should have noticed this bulletin insert about a special event we're having during our service on _____, and you've probably noticed the banners and signs. This event will be something we use to emphasize our commitment to making disciples in obedience to Jesus' command. But also, this will be an opportunity to invite **you** as individuals to be part of God's awesome work to impact our area and even the world. You're going to want to be here for that. We'll be bringing a very special message, and you're going to want to hear what God has for you that day. Please plan to be here for that. You'll see more information in the weeks leading up to it, but in the meantime, put it in your calendar to make sure you're here on _____.”

In the 1-2 weeks before the event, you might add something like –

“Pastor _____ is going to bring a message that will challenge you to a new level of participation in God's awesome work of making disciples. If you want to know you're doing something that will have an eternal impact on someone, you really need to be here next week.”

- ① Even if you don't normally give announcements during the service, this should still happen. It helps to reinforce the importance of what God will be doing in the hearts of people during the event itself.

3. Signage/bulletin inserts weekly beginning 4 weeks before Event.



You can download free editable bulletin inserts from the client-only portion of the Discipleship DNA website. You can also download free files you can use for signage to be printed locally.

But get these *out* for people to see. Put signs and banners by doorways to the worship area, in the lobby areas, or wherever they will be seen a *lot*. The idea is that it will already be part of people's thinking as the Kickstarter Event draws near.

4. Kickstarter Event will include a current pastoral staff member or special speaker preaching a message challenging the congregation to get personally and individually involved in discipleship, in obedience to Jesus' command.

This will include an invitation to sign up for training that will begin soon (within two weeks if possible) and a call to pray for the congregation and those signing up for discipleship. You will need tables set up in the lobby (or wherever they can be accessed easily) with sign-up forms and information about the training class. Make sure the forms have places for name, phone/text number, and EMAIL address.

5. Follow-up to Kickstarter Event.

Contact all who signed up to be disciplers within two days of the event. The training of disciplers should begin no later than two weeks if at all possible.* The training should be coordinated to be completed in time for the upcoming outreach event (Easter, Christmas, etc.). See the Coordinator's Handbook for more detail on follow-up tasks.

This event will serve as a gateway to a whole new mindset in your congregation: that obeying Jesus above all, particularly in obeying His command to the Church to make disciples, is part of who you are from this point on.

Therefore, it should be promoted with both urgency in obeying Jesus individually and as a congregation, and anticipation of God doing something huge within your church to impact your area – and even the world – through obedient servants of Jesus within the framework of your local church.

Lord, please build a sense of awe and anticipation of what you want to do with this church. It is YOUR church. We want to be submissive to your ownership and direction, and obedient to your call to make disciples of all nations. Please grant us unity, grant us peace, and grant us wisdom as we implement this, believing that You will work in us what You will, so that Your kingdom might advance and Your Name be honored. In Jesus' name, amen.

i *If you prefer to have your training the same weekend as the Kickstarter Event, contact Discipleship DNA to discuss timing and alterations to promoting the event.



RECRUITING DISCIPLEMAKERS

One of the main tenets of this program is that discipling is a job for the *congregation*, not just the pastors and other staff. God expects all His people to be involved in this awesome task.

The main tool you'll use to recruit discipling with this program is the Kickstarter Event. But you can also be using the weeks and months before the event to identify and recruit people you feel could play a part in establishing the culture of discipleship. So let's take a look at just how we can identify and recruit these discipling.

WHO IS QUALIFIED?

The great news is that there are really only 2 main qualifications to be a discipling – and they are very basic at that. You want someone who:

- Wants to grow in their own relationship with Jesus.
- Wants to help others find Jesus and grow.

Let's start with the first one. A discipling needs to be actively working to grow in their own relationship with Jesus – in other words, they need to be disciples themselves.

This can also include relatively new believers who are being established in their own relationship with Jesus. To say it another way, a new disciple can be a discipling.

Obviously, it's best if a person has a bit more maturity than the person they are discipling, but that can be taken care of by having the discipling in a discipling relationship of their own where they are meeting with a more mature believer. This allows them to stay “a step ahead,” so to speak, and allows them to bring questions they can't answer to the person who is helping them. Kind of like on-the-job training!

A person who thinks they are mature “enough” and doesn't need to keep their relationship with Jesus fresh is not qualified to disciple others. Their spiritual pride will keep them growing and helping others grow, because they won't see their own need.

Recognizing a need to continually stay connected to the Vine (John 15) is a mark of true humility and allows that person to be shaped to be more like Jesus, just as they want others to be. These people are perfectly positioned to disciple others.



Second, you need someone who wants to help others find Jesus and grow in Him. Sometimes these people walk up to a pastor or leader and say something like, “Boy, I wish there was something in place to help these new believers get established in their faith – maybe some sort of training that would help people like me help them. But alas, there seems to be nothing. Oh, the humanity!” But usually it’s a bit more subtle than that...

Many people would like to help with new believers but don’t know how or don’t think they are capable. A question you can ask them: “If you were to receive training and resources to help you, would you still want to do it?” If yes, then they are the right people for the job.

HOW TO RECRUIT

Some ways you can recruit members of your congregation to be part of God’s work of making disciples:

Invite whoever is already doing it.

It could be that you already have people in your congregation who are already in discipling relationships, often by their own initiative. You definitely want to invite them to be part of a church-wide emphasis to establish a discipleship culture in the church.

Talk to them about what you hope to accomplish in bringing culture change, and how they are EXACTLY what you want to see throughout the congregation. Invite them to participate in the Kickstarter Event by helping as they can to plan, work the sign-up tables, answer questions about the Event and discipleship in general, etc. Cast a vision of recruiting more disciplemakers and the exponential growth that can occur as others join them in discipling others.

You might even ask them to share a testimony of what God is doing in their relationship and how it blesses both people involved.

Invite anybody already expressing interest in discipling others.

I mentioned this in the previous section, but I’m mentioning it here again because you don’t want to ignore the person who has spoken up about this. These are also people you can ask to help with the Kickstarter Event. Showing them that not only do you agree with the need for establishing new believers in the faith but that you are making a church-wide emphasis for it will grow excitement in them. They will probably do some recruiting on their own for the Event.

Ask (congregationally and individually).



A lot of this will be taken care of at the Kickstarter Event. However, as God brings people to mind, or as you witness people in your congregation talking, acting, and praying in ways that tell you they would ideal disciplers, take the initiative to approach them about what you hope to see in your church culture and about the Kickstarter Event. Tell them you think they would be ideal candidates for helping your church fulfill Jesus' Great Commission.

Kickstarter Event.

This will be the primary avenue of invitation to the congregation. Because you'll be promoting this event rather heavily for the 4-6 weeks before the date of the event, people will be anticipating this invitation and be more open to it. Have the sign-up materials ready to go, along with very clear information on the training dates and location. This will be very helpful in recruiting people to become part of this new culture.

The Kickstarter Event message should be a positive invitation, with a reminder that loving Jesus means obeying Him – including His command to make disciples.

This event should be both an invitation and a celebration anticipating what God will do in your midst as you seek to follow Jesus and obey Him more fully in this important area of Kingdom work.

Caution: Don't let the Event be a substitute for what's already been discussed. You want to continually be looking for ways to invite people to become disciplemakers – not just the Kickstarter Event.

Ask God on a regular basis to show you people in your congregation who could be effectively involved to make disciples. If you are serious, He'll make it happen. It's His will that people make disciples, so He'll answer your prayers!

TRAINING DISCIPLEMAKERS

After the Kickstarter Event, you need to equip your new disciplemakers for the ministry they are joining. The people will be trained in how to follow up with new believers, lead a Foundations group, and establish long-term discipleship relationships.

The training for *Kickstart* is comprised of classroom training using printed materials in conjunction with live video training or downloaded video training. The specific printed training materials are found in Part IV. The downloadable materials are in the client-only section of www.DiscipleshipDNA.com. This section deals mainly with the process of preparing the training setting for those who have responded to the invitation to become disciplemakers.



Using this information along with the Coordinator's Handbook will help to ensure a smooth transition from the Kickstarter Event into the training.

Follow these steps:

- 1. Decide the mode of training** (live training by someone in your church, or downloadable video training).
- 2. Schedule the training** based on the mode you choose.
- 3. Have all training locations, times, and hosts assigned and confirmed** (these people will open and close the sessions, make sure snacks/meals are in place, etc.) before the Kickstarter Event.
- 4. Make sure all printed materials for training sessions are in place** at all locations, along with pens/pencils. These materials are in Part IV of this manual. They can also be downloaded and printed/copied as often as necessary to train everyone taking the training.
- 5. Anticipate a great time of God encouraging the hearts of those who attending the training!**

REMEMBER – THE TRAINING NEEDS TO END 1-2 WEEKS BEFORE THE OUTREACH SERVICE.

PUTTING THIS TOGETHER WITH YOUR OUTREACH EVENT

The “Outreach Event” is any special event where you expect a larger than normal attendance and you will intentionally be sharing the gospel and asking for a tangible response (for instance, filling out a response card).

The reason I suggest tying in the Kickstarter Event with an outreach event is that in doing so, you will have people ready, willing, and able to do the follow-up necessary with new believers and get them into discipling relationships very quickly.

This will help to ensure that no new believer who tangibly responds gets neglected. We don't want baby Christians left out to wither on the vine, right? We want to plug them into THE Vine as quickly as possible!

As you are no doubt aware, two obvious opportunities for an outreach event are Easter and Christmas, since many people will attend church on those days, if no other during the year. And the good news is that they are expecting to hear about Jesus, so you have an open door to preach a message of salvation. But maybe in your community there are other opportunities that work just as well or better.



You don't have to have a specific event, because any time you share the gospel and people respond, you will have people in place to follow up with them because of the training you've given them through Kickstart.

But if you do have such an event, I would suggest some things that will allow you to take the best advantage of the training you have given those who responded and were equipped as a result of your Kickstarter Event (or other training throughout the year):

1. Share the Gospel!

I know that statement might seem redundant given the fact that we're talking about an "outreach event." However, let me just encourage you to be bold in sharing their need for Jesus. Again, they are expecting that kind of thing, so take advantage of the opportunity God has given you.

2. Ask for a tangible response.

Every church and pastor does this differently, and that's perfectly fine. But one thing that is extremely important is that you give them something that lets them indicate they've responded to the message.

A response card is extremely helpful here. It doesn't have to be fancy, but it needs to have space for all the contact information they're comfortable sharing. You might also have something on the card saying that they will be contacted within the next twenty-four to forty-eight hours to visit about the commitment they made to Jesus (or an announcement from whoever is explaining the card to the people). This will avoid any surprises when the calls are actually made, and they won't come across as a telemarketing call.

Make sure these cards are explained very clearly so the people know exactly how to fill them out and turn them in. If there is confusion, you risk them not turning the cards in, even if they did give their lives to Jesus at the service.

Whatever you use to record their response, make it clear to the people that you will be collecting them and that they will be contacted soon.

3. Make sure the initial follow-up calls happen within twenty-four to forty-eight hours following the outreach service.

This will be a primary responsibility of the pastor or leader in charge of the Kickstarter Event, even if they are not the ones doing the calling. Since you told them someone would call, it's obviously important that someone do it.



It would be best if the newly trained disciplers made these calls if they are able, but anybody can do it. If you are able to give the info to the person most likely to actually do the personal follow-up, that's great, as it saves a step in connecting with them.

In the *Kickstarter Event and Training Coordinator's Handbook*, you will find some sample scripts your people can use when making the follow-up calls.

4. Pastoral follow-up with discipler to check progress, encourage, and pray with discipler.

It is extremely important that the pastoral leadership stay in touch with those who are investing in these relationships. It's a huge encouragement and gives you the opportunity to see how things are going.

God bless you as you intentionally bring the good news of Jesus to your community!

SESSION 4 ACTION STEPS:

As a leadership group, decide on a date for a specific outreach event.

You can use any date, including a natural holiday like Easter or Christmas, or any other date where you expect larger than normal attendance. You might also choose to create a specific event where your congregation is encouraged to invite people to church or other event on a specific date.

Appoint a Kickstarter Event and Training Coordinator

Task this person with reviewing this chapter, going through the *Kickstarter Event and Training Coordinator's Handbook*, and contacting Discipleship DNA to work through other scheduling in the near future, preferably before the next time this group meets for Session 5. Affirm the Coordinator's freedom to operate within the given budget and time to make the Event successful.

Pray specifically for the Coordinator, the Kickstarter Event, and the Outreach Event.



SESSION 5 – GROWING AND MAINTAINING THE CULTURE

PASTOR & PASTORAL STAFF INVESTMENT

I don't need to spend a lot of time on this, but you do. This will be a critical discussion for your pastoral staff or church board, if you are a solo pastor.

Fact: You and your church staff will need to make time in your individual work schedules to help establish and maintain a discipleship culture for the long-term.

And that's what we want to see, right? (The correct answer is, "Yes.")

One of the options you can discuss is to add the function of "supporting the discipleship culture" or some such wording as one of the PRIMARY job responsibilities of a staff or solo pastor. If you do this, you need to make sure they have ample time built into his/her schedule to intentionally focus on recruitment, training, and encouragement of disciplemakers, as well as his/her personal discipling relationships so positive modeling will continue. This can't be a "left-over" part of the job, where discipleship efforts get what's left over of this person's time.

It needs to be a priority.

Another option is to, of course, hire a pastor or staff member to have that responsibility as their main focus. I mention this throughout the materials, but ALL the pastoral staff should be in personal discipleship relationships with a less mature believer whenever possible. Why? Because it's absolutely essential that the pastoral staff model discipleship if you want it to be part of your church's DNA.

What if you are a solo pastor? Same thing. You need to be personally discipling someone and equipping your people to disciple others. The Commission doesn't change for smaller churches.

Believe me, I know what I'm asking here. Pastors are plenty busy enough, and all you need is one more thing to add to your already super-full schedule, even if it's only 1-2 hours per week. But really, it IS that important. I was bi-vocational almost the entire time I pastored for 12 years, and still made time to meet with new believers when I could. It can be done, I promise!

If you don't feel you can spare the time, let me ask you some questions: Is there anything in your schedule that you can delegate to someone else (or ask someone in the congregation to do instead)? Are you busy with tasks that are not actually *biblical* responsibilities of a pastor? If so, can you (a) give them to a congregation member who has a heart and passion for that, or (b) let them go altogether (maybe it's a tradition that's in the way or a sacred cow that needs to be slaughtered)?



Again, I know this isn't an easy ask. But pastors need to display their own obedience to Jesus' command to make disciples.

You might think that your part is to preach great biblical, application-oriented messages that people can use in their lives (I discuss this a bit in Session 3). Yes, you need to do that. But I'm guessing you are aware of the statistic that says people only remember about 10% of what they hear. When I preach, I like to give note-taking guides so people can have something to review through the week. But even then, how much will they actually review and apply?

In some churches, there are small groups that meet and study the sermon and the Scriptures it's based on, hopefully with the goal of applying it. I'm cool with that. But again, how many people will take advantage of that?

I hate to tell you this, but the sermon is actually not the best tool for you in your personal discipling efforts. You need to be in a personal discipleship relationship if you want the culture to take hold as strongly as possible. And here's the bonus: you will be blessed as you invest in the life of someone and see how they grow and mature in Christ. Not to mention that the person you're discipling will feel privileged to have private time with you, making it more likely they will take you seriously and listen as you speak truth into their lives over time.

Pastor and pastoral staff: you need to make time for this. Don't **find** time; **make** time. You'll never find time for something you're not sold out to. But you'll always make time for the things that are important to you.

Work to ensure that your job description and job expectations direct you to make both establishing and maintaining a discipleship culture a priority, and also allow you time for personal discipleship efforts.

Obedying Jesus' command in your own life is a **make-time** thing. Show your congregation and the rest of your staff that that is true in your own life and ministry. As the congregation sees that you are making the time to get personally involved in making disciples, they will buy into it more themselves, and chances are you'll find even more people wanting to get involved.

That's a win.

BUDGETING

One of the barriers I mentioned in Session 3 is budgeting. Remember, your checkbook doesn't set your priorities, it exposes them. If discipleship is not seen as a priority, it will show in your budget. Thankfully, creating a culture of discipleship doesn't have to cost a ton of money.



You will spend most of the money in the initial phase of creating the culture. The costs associated with the *Kickstart* Program (materials, and if applicable, the coaching portions) will constitute the majority of the expenses. After that, the cost of maintaining the program is minimal, because you are given unlimited downloads of the materials, even of revised editions, for your church after initially purchasing the training/materials.

Costs associated with maintaining the culture would be for things like materials you want to use for the occasional re-emphasizing of the discipleship culture. You may have to print out more bulletin inserts, more training manuals, etc. But the cost for those is only the printing cost on your end.

Other expenses associated with maintaining the culture might include something like a yearly appreciation/celebration dinner for everyone involved with the discipleship program. Or providing coffee/snacks for the Foundations group every time it meets.

As mentioned in the Introduction, this program isn't intended to be a complete discipleship program taking someone from new believer to mature disciple. There are plenty of materials designed for just that, should you choose to use them. If you do choose, then you'll want to make sure money is budgeted for that.

But quite frankly, ***I believe that just meeting together regularly over the Scriptures does the best job of long-term discipling in most cases.*** If there are specific areas that the disciplemaker wants to emphasize in the life of the disciple, special study might include other printed materials from other sources. That's perfectly fine. But don't let "materials" determine your discipleship efforts, either as a congregation or with individual disciplmakers.

Bottom line (since we're talking about budgeting...): Your yearly budget discussions should absolutely make sure that there is plenty of money to adequately fund your discipleship efforts.

Now that wasn't so painful, was it?

WHAT'S NEXT?

As I mentioned previously, this is not a "one-off" program that you go through for a few weeks and then move on to something else.

This is meant to be part of the fabric of your church – part of its DNA of who you are and how you operate within the Kingdom of God. As new believers come along, they are automatically paired with someone to follow them up or funnelled into a Foundations group (and then paired



with a disciplemaker as is feasible), where they can learn, mature, and become equipped to help other new believers as they come along.

Because this is so important, it needs to be brought to the attention of your people on a regular basis.

Here are some suggestions on how to do that:

- 1. Have a yearly dinner/dessert** inviting all disciplers and the people they are discipling to celebrate what God has done through the people. Hopefully, this will be bigger every year as people who were disciplined in the past are now discipling others, reproducing (even multiplying!) their lives in the lives of others.
- 2. Have an annual emphasis on discipleship as a part of who you are as a church**, and the importance of everyone possible being involved in it. This could be a message or series of messages leading up to or just after the celebration in #1 above.
- 3. Host semi-annual (at a minimum) training for new disciplers** following an invitation to join this ministry. One of these could tie into the celebration event, which could include introducing those who have taken the training in the last year since the last event. This would allow the newcomers to be encouraged from the start and also encourage the rest to see that the ministry is growing!
- 4. Continue with intentional recruiting and training of disciplers** outside of the annual emphasis. (Since you already have access to the video and printed materials library, you can always use them to train anyone, anytime.)
- 5. Continue with intentional pairing of new believers with disciplers** throughout the year. Don't wait for any special events. Know your disciplers well enough that you can pair them with someone they might click with. Obviously you don't want to overload anyone who might already be discipling someone, but if you really think a certain discipler would be a good fit for a certain new believer, you should at least see if the discipler is willing and available.
- 6. Take Pastoral Staff investment seriously.**

These are just suggestions, of course. You are certainly welcome to do anything you'd like. The point is that if you really want discipleship to be part of your culture – as opposed to just be something you do on occasion – you need to keep it in front of your people.

ACTION STEPS FOR SESSION 5:

As a leadership team, examine the job descriptions of each pastor/staff member:



1. Does the PRINTED job description reflect the ACTUAL unspoken expectations of the pastor/staff member? If not, what needs to change.
2. Does the printed job description identify making disciples as a priority? If not, look at ways to reflect that (this would be an great opportunity to align a discipling mission statement for your church and pastoral/staff descriptions/expectations).
3. Does the printed job description include an emphasis on the EQUIPPING role of the pastor above other roles? In other words, can the pastor focus on equipping his church to make disciples and leading them in that effort, or is the job description filled with other tasks and responsibilities that take away from that primary task?

If printed roles and expected roles are incongruent or do not reflect a biblical emphasis on equipping discipling, you will need to take some serious time for prayer and counsel among yourselves to work through this. You may need to consider input from denominational or other fellowship/support structures to assist in this.

But this is crucial. It cannot be ignored or glossed over. The leadership must be freed and empowered to lead the church to obedience, and the “official” documentation needs to reflect that so it can be referenced when disagreement arises.

4. Come up with a plan (including a deadline) for aligning the church mission statement with pastoral job descriptions and responsibilities.

Identify who in your congregation is a new believer YOU can begin discipling. If You cannot identify a new believer, identify a less mature Christian you can disciple.

Look for tasks that pastors/staff are currently doing that can be passed on to others so you can have more time for discipling relationships.

Start identifying how to show that discipleship is a foundational principle of your budget rather than just a line item.



SESSION 6 – TRAIN AND RELEASE!

This session covers the materials that your new disciplemakers will be using to follow up and establish all those new believers you will be seeing, either through overall church ministries or through their own efforts of sharing the gospel with people.

This material is called, “Foundations.”

We will not spend a lot of time going over the materials in this session. But it’s crucial that anyone involved with the training of your new disciplemakers read through these materials. All pastoral staff, and especially the senior pastor should read through these materials so you will know what is being covered with new people and new believers.

The first section covers the basic groundwork of following up new believers and helping them become full-on disciples of Jesus. This material is designed to help prepare the new disciplemaker to understand the importance of their involvement in this important ministry and give them guidance in meeting with new believers, including how to use the material in the next section.

The second section is the Foundations Material itself. It is presented here in a format that can easily be used in a group setting but can be adapted for individual use as well (this is discussed in first section).

Even though we are moving through all the material here in one session for training purposes, I would strongly suggest breaking up the discipler training materials as you take people through them. Here would be a suggested 4-part format:

Sessions 1-2: Disciplemaker’s Handbook

Session 3: Foundations Material (1-4)

Session 4: Foundations Material (5-8)

How you do this is up to you. You can cover everything in one long day, split it up over a couple days, a few days, or even 3-4 weeks.

The last section of these materials is the The Kickstarter Event and Training Coordinator Handbook. We will not be discussing this in our session but wanted to remind you it’s there. This should be given directly to the Coordinator. If a coaching package was purchased, a separate coaching session for the Coordinator is included. The pastor or Coordinator should contact Discipleship DNA to set a date/time to meet over video conference or telephone to discuss the planning and schedule for the Kickstarter Event.



FOUNDATIONS (LEADER'S GUIDE)



INTRODUCTION TO THE FOUNDATIONS MATERIAL (LEADER'S GUIDE)

You can print this section and the student section separately from the main Kickstart book file. Alternately, this material is also available as a separate download called, "Foundations," available for free. If you do not already have a copy of that, please contact us at info@discipleshipdna.com. Note: the format is slightly different from the Foundations book in that in this version, it is laid out for group training, with blanks for trainees to fill in, but the content is exactly the same.

"THE DISCIPLEMAKER'S HANDBOOK"

Welcome to FOUNDATIONS!

In these materials you will find everything you need to help a new believer in Jesus become established in the faith and able to become a life-long disciple of His. This is sorely needed today, and I'm thrilled you're jumping in to help with such an important ministry!

This material covers what I call "The Great 8." These are eight essentials that should be imparted to every new believer. The material covered can be used in both group settings and in one-on-settings.

This portion (everything before the actual Foundations material beginning on page 85) is what I call "The Disciplemaker's Handbook," because it gives you the tools you need to do a great job making helping these new believers.

These are **basic** essentials only meant to get a new believer started. So you won't find in-depth teaching about these things, and you'll find that maybe I left something out that you feel should be brought to bear. Talk with your pastor about that, and if he's cool with you adding or revising something, so am I. But I want to stress that this is for **BABY** Christians. Don't feed the baby with the fire hose. Get them started and as they learn to digest these basic things, you can give them more advanced teaching down the road.

Each session has a teaching outline and a group member sheet with fill-in-the-blank areas. These are formatted to be on different sheets so they can simply be printed out as they appear here.

Please read "Following Up Individual New Believers" AND "When Using Foundations in a Group Setting." Both of these sections are important. Don't skip them to go straight to the materials, even if you are a veteran in this type of ministry. It will be good review for you and might just remind you of something you had forgotten from your past learning and experience.



Let me also encourage you to be in constant contact with your pastors and other leaders. They can answer questions, give insight and encouragement, and pray for you and the person you're helping. And can't we all use some more of that? (Hint: the answer is YES...)

MOVING FROM "DISCIPLE" TO "DISCIPLEMAKER"

You are choosing to become part of God's PLAN A for reaching the world for Jesus. (BTW, there is NO PLAN B...). That's an awesome privilege and an awesome responsibility.

You and I are followers of Jesus because men and women have been faithful to Jesus' command for the last 2000+ years. Let's be thankful for that! And let's commit to doing our part for the sake of the next generations.

THE BASIS OF DISCIPLESHIP

The reason we do this is based on Jesus' last command to His followers just before He ascended to the Father, and it is found in Matthew 28:18-20:

*Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.**"*

What is the command given in this passage? It's "go," right? Actually, no. The command is to "**make disciples.**" In the original language of the New Testament, you'll find that the sentence is more along the lines of "As you are going, make disciples..."

Jesus, anticipating both evangelical fervor among His followers and the dispersion about to come as they were persecuted (we see this in Acts 8), wanted them to focus on the task of helping other people become lifelong followers of Him.

SOME HELPFUL DEFINITIONS:

But just so we're all on the same page, let's start off by defining the important terms we'll be using:

"**Discipleship**" is the process of helping people become more like Jesus. That's pretty broad, but as you look at the following definitions of other terms, hopefully it will become a bit less vague.



A “**disciple**” is a follower of Jesus who strives to love and live for him above all else. A disciple is not perfect, and will stumble and sin sometimes, but his or her life is marked by growing devotion and obedience to Jesus even when it is inconvenient and countercultural.

“**Disciplemaking**” is the intentional interaction of a more mature follower of Jesus with a new or less-mature believer in Jesus, with the goal of helping that person become a fully devoted follower of Jesus.

“**Maturity**” means growing in love, devotion, and obedience to Jesus, and growing in the ability to use the Scriptures as the guide and authority for living as they also develop in wisdom and Christ-like character.

A “**disciplemaker**” or “**discipler**” is the more mature believer who works with the new or less mature believer. The task of doing this is called “**discipling**.”

I’m guessing there are some really awesome dictionary definitions of all these things. But the above definitions reflect the goals and tasks involved in discipleship as envisioned in this training.

THE CONTEXT OF DISCIPLESHP

Discipleship happens best in relationship, whether it’s through one-on-one personal relationships and/or small groups of no more than four people (for new believers, that is; the group can be a bit larger for more established believers). This is just as true in a large church as it is in a small to medium one, which is why many large churches are intentionally working to get new believers as well as their regular attenders into small groups. This way the church becomes “smaller” (with people developing deep relationships in small groups) while it becomes larger in terms of total attendance and influence in the community.

Being a disciplemaker means developing a relationship with that new believer. It means getting to know them and their flaws/gifts, walking with them through the ups and downs of life, guiding, teaching, praying with and for, spending time with, and even getting in their face sometimes (graciously and in love, of course), all the while letting them see *you* as you continue to grow in your own relationship with God.

Making disciples is an **investment** of time, effort, emotion, and everything else that goes into a relationship that’s deeper than surface level.

So if you:

- love Jesus,
- love people,



- are ready to help someone become solidly established in their new faith in Jesus, and
- would like to see your own faith mature while doing that...

...then this is for you!

Get ready for God to work IN you and THROUGH you to fulfill Jesus' Great Commission.

THANK YOU for stepping up. God bless you.



HOW TO USE THE FOUNDATIONS MATERIALS

FOLLOWING UP INDIVIDUAL NEW BELIEVERS

Following up people who have given their lives to Jesus is not a very complicated process. In fact, it's so simple, even a dude like me can do it – and that's saying something. My late mother-in-law would agree. And I'm not letting you get hold of my sister-in-law to see what she thinks. Let's just say she would give a hearty "Amen" and we'll leave it at that.

Don't sweat this. It's really not complicated at all.

Generally the process of discipleship starts with you getting together with a new believer to follow up their decision for Jesus. This might happen when a pastor calls to inform you of someone he thinks would be a good match-up for you, or it happens when *you* have led them to Christ – and you get the awesome opportunity to see that they are established in a solid, growing relationship with Jesus.

Below are some general guidelines of what to cover initially. There is very little black and white when it comes to how to follow up someone's decision for Christ. But I would like to suggest a few things, based on what I call "The Great 8." These are 8 essential things that every new believer should be taught, and is covered more in-depth in the Foundations group material. I would also suggest printing out those materials to give you a guide on what to cover each time you get together. You can use that material almost word for word if you wish or you can modify it, so it sounds more like "you."

This will not necessarily be a step-by-step tutorial on what to say when you meet with your person; rather, it's a guide. You and I are different people, so how I do or say things might be different than how you would do or say them. Totally acceptable. The issue is making sure these things are covered. Having said that, however, I have included a couple of sample outlines you can use, as well as some suggestions that may be helpful for you.

The Great 8 – The Essentials for New Believers (found in the Foundations class materials)

1. Assurance of Salvation.
2. Introduction to the Bible.
3. How to Pray.
4. Importance of Being Part of a Church Family.
5. Service (in and through the church)
6. Sharing Christ with Others
7. Multiplication (helping others who help others while you continue to help others...)
8. Following Jesus 24/7

Sample outline of first time together:



(Use Session 1 of Foundations material to see what to cover.)

- Get to know each other. Take as much time for this as necessary!
- Ask how he began coming to this church, if that is how he came to Christ.
- Mention that since he had indicated that he had given his life to Christ, you'd like to review that with him.
- Share gospel with him to recap what was shared previously and make sure he understood what he responded to. As you are doing so, make sure he understands everything you're saying, and invite questions.
- After sharing gospel, ask, "Is this what you did last night (or whenever...)"
- If YES, go through rest of Session 1 material.
- If not, then invite him to do that NOW. "Well, is there any reason you wouldn't want to do that now?"
 - ✓ If NO, then help him to pray to receive Christ.
 - ✓ If YES, then ask what that is, and attempt to answer any objections he has. If you can't answer his concerns, tell him so, and that you would be willing to look for answers if he'd like to get back together sometime.
- If he gives his life to Jesus then, go through the rest of Session 1, but schedule another time to meet. At this second session, you'll want to review all of this as confirmation and assurance. You can move on to the actual session 2 materials the next time you meet.

Sample Outline of Following Sessions (Use whatever session you are on from the Foundations material to see what to cover)

- Conversation to catch up on life since last time together. If there is something significant going on, take all the time you need. If it seems to be droning along, especially about stuff that's not actually part of his own life, you may need to gently steer the conversation back to the purpose of the meeting.
- Ask what he's learned from his time in Scripture since you last met. Does he have any questions, or did he learn anything new from what he's read? Again, take all the time you need to discuss this. (If you don't get to the material, that's okay!! Go for it next time.)
- Cover session material, always making sure he is tracking along and understanding.
- Pray with him if he is comfortable. See if he has anything in particular to pray about for him, and share anything you'd like him to pray about for you.
- Set appointment for next session.



Although you do have material to cover, you want to try to avoid a lecture-style teaching session. Try to make your time conversational. Your disciple might prefer the lecture-style (some do), but in most cases it should be more like an actual conversation as much as possible – since that’s what it is.

To help with that, you might try having something like a 3x5 card with a checklist of things you want to cover regarding whichever of the eight core areas you want to help them in. If you are new to this process, it’s okay to have it out as you’re talking with your person – “making sure I cover everything I want you to get about reading the Bible...” or keep it handy to review just before you meet with them. Another idea is to give them a card as well. They can use it to remind them of what you’ve covered with them. (And guess what? You’ve given them a tool they can use when THEY disciple someone!!!)

Another option is to print out the “Answer Key” to each Foundations session and walk through that with them, each of you having a copy as you go through it.

Whatever tool works best for you is the best tool to use. Get creative! Again, the goal is to cover the material – what you use to do that is up to you.

I’ve mentioned that you may need to take time to talk and listen about what’s going on with the person and what they’re learning before you actually get to what you want to go over in a particular session. This is so important – because this is a **person**, not a project.

I learned this when I was in college and discipling a fellow student I had personally led to Christ. Somewhere over time, he got the impression that all I cared about was his spiritual life and didn’t care about his *life* in general. I found this out when the staff member for the student ministry I was involved with in college told me after meeting with this student. He was right. That IS all I cared about. And I was wrong. He needed me to be a FRIEND as well as a discipler. I don’t know that we had a single conversation after that. Please don’t make my mistake.

My tunnel vision sometimes spilled over to my pastoring. You can tell from the previous paragraph that I am not the sharpest lightbulb in the tool shed. I can’t tell when people are hurting unless they actually *tell* me. I can’t read body language to save my life, so I missed a lot, and it hurt people. I needed to learn to pay more attention, and I’m trying - God is still working with me on that.

So remember that this person you’re investing in has a life outside of church and meeting with you. Find out about their work, family, what they like to do for fun, and all that stuff. Some won’t want to share until they know you better. That’s okay. Some will have deep wounds and scars you’ll never be able to touch. That’s okay, too. Let them give you as much as they’re comfortable with. Don’t pry but give them the freedom to share as they are comfortable. Don’t



be afraid to open up about your life as well. Give them the opportunity to ask you questions, too. Friendship is a two-way street.

Be a **friend** who cares about their spiritual maturity. Love them unconditionally. It'll bless the both of you.

Now please allow me to give you a heads-up about something: sometimes a person will not want to be established in the faith and discipled. Some will think it is a waste of time, others will simply think it's not a big deal, and some might not have really come to Christ and don't want to have a relationship built on that.

What do you do when that happens? You wish them well, tell them you're available and that you are praying for them. And then you work with someone else, keeping the door open and the friendship intact.

Being a disciplemaker is one of the greatest adventures in the Christian life. Watching God work to illuminate someone's mind and spirit to the awesomeness of following Jesus is a blast.

So buckle up, Buttercup!!

BUILDING A LONG-TERM DISCIPLING RELATIONSHIP

What happens when you've covered all the essential materials in "The Great 8?"

That depends on the two of you. I would encourage you to keep meeting regularly and frequently, praying that he or she would find someone they could disciple down the road. Then you can release them to the joy of that ministry while you pray for someone else to impact.

But it still doesn't need to end there. You can have a relationship for as long as the both of you want it to continue.

Years ago I was discipling a graduate student at a local university. We met almost weekly. One day as we were leaving the student cafeteria, a pastor friend of mine came up to us and after a brief conversation asked us how long we'd been meeting in this discipleship relationship. I said, "I don't know – two or three years?" My student replied, "Brian, it's been **five** years!" I couldn't believe it. I would have thought he'd have gotten tired of me well before then, but he didn't. He still enjoyed getting together, because we were learning together and encouraging one another. I think part of the issue was that I didn't really think of him as "my disciple," but rather as a younger friend. Our relationship had developed into a great friendship that was still spiritual in its foundation.



Understand that ideally, this is a long-term deal. Discipleship is not an 8-session class. It's helping them develop a lifestyle of living for Jesus and equipping them to help others do the same.

There are three main goals in a discipling relationship:

1. Help the other person become established in the basics of their new relationship with Jesus by helping them learn about prayer, how to read and apply the Bible, and getting involved with other people through the church, etc.
2. Help them continue to grow in maturity as they learn to “walk on their own two feet” and encourage them to deepen their relationship with Jesus so they follow Him in every area of their life.
3. Help them become equipped to do the same in another person's life.

If your relationship can be maintained long enough to cover those goals, that's awesome! I wish I could promise everyone will want to do that, but I can't. The fact is, some won't want to go even past the first session. Others might get through the essentials but want to cut out after that.

But still others may want to continue for the long-term. And that's a good thing.

The good news is that it's not our job to convince people to be disciples of Jesus and be in a discipleship relationship with anybody. Just like with a person's recognition of their need for Jesus, it's the Holy Spirit's job to do the convincing. Our job is to cooperate with Him as He works in the lives of the people we come alongside.

If we make ourselves available, He will bring people to us who want the help we can offer them. But even if someone quits after the first session, you've still been able to speak something into their lives. And that matters.

WHEN USING FOUNDATIONS IN A GROUP SETTING

Although following up and discipling a new believer is most ideal in a one-on-one setting, sometimes your church may not have enough available disciplers to do that effectively. So, you will need to have something like this ready to take on those who can't meet one-on-one or for those disciplers who have more new believers than they can handle on an individual basis.



I would suggest making these groups very small—no more than four people. This allows for better coverage of the material, more time for questions they may have, and also promotes an atmosphere of bonding as they all grow together.

Some thoughts as you bring this to a group . . .

The teaching outline is only a guide, so feel free to use what you need, adding and subtracting anything you feel would be appropriate for your group.

When meeting with your group, make it as informal as possible. Meet at a coffeehouse, café, someone's house, or wherever. I would suggest not meeting at a church, as meeting away from a church allows for a less formal atmosphere. The host should provide snacks if possible.

Try not to reference it as a “class,” but rather as a small group. Talk like you're with a group of friends, not a teacher with his or her students.

Let people ask questions. There should be enough time at the end of each session for relevant questions; but if the questions are off-topic, defer to either a different session or you can arrange to visit after class (or privately another time if it is more appropriate).

Again, keep in mind these are baby believers—so some of their responses will reflect that and may even include language you're not comfortable with. Respond graciously.

LOVE THEM! PRAY FOR THEM!

As you lead, ask God to put one or two people on your heart that He might have you personally disciple from the group. You can meet with them individually to discuss these materials and encourage them in their growth for Jesus.

Now let's turn the corner and discuss some other things that will aid you not only helping the new believer, but in multiplying your own life in the lives of others:

SHARING CHRIST WITH OTHERS

One of my favorite episodes in Scripture happens in Acts 10. A Roman centurion named Cornelius was - a soldier for the oppressive Romans - was a really good guy. He prayed, he helped people, and he was well respected even by the Jews - and that's saying something in that culture at that time.

One day while he's praying, an angel says, “Hey Cornelius. You need to send for this guy named Peter who's about a 2-day ride from here. He's got something important to tell you.”



While the centurion's guys are on their way to get him. Peter gets a vision from God basically saying that it's okay to tell the hated Romans and other non-Jews about Jesus. Peter doesn't yet know about Cornelius or the fact that people are coming to fetch him.

Long story short, Peter goes to Cornelius, tells him (and all the people Cornelius had gathered) about Jesus, and they all believe and follow Him – amazing Peter and the guys he had brought along as witnesses.

Why didn't the angel just tell Cornelius about Jesus? It would have saved a lot of time and energy, after all.

Because that's **our** job, not the angel's job.

God uses people as His primary method of making disciples - through preaching, the printed word, small groups, through one-on-one interactions or whatever. Isn't that exciting? One of the greatest privileges of being a Christian is being able to tell other people about Jesus.

It is rare to hear of someone giving their life to Jesus after hearing about him through a dream or an angel or vision. It happens, sometimes, and I'm not going to tell God He can't do that. But I can probably count on one hand how many times I've heard of it happening.

ALWAYS BE READY.

Because God chooses to use people as His primary tool for spreading the gospel, disciples of Jesus and disciplemakers need to always be ready to tell someone the good news about Him.

Look at what Peter has to say about it in 1 Peter 3:15-16 –

*But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. **Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.** But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. (Emphasis mine)*

There is a lot packed into these two verses, but this isn't the space to unpack it all. The point I want to make here is that we need to be ready at all times to talk to share the gospel.

The “gospel” is the good news of Jesus – of His life, death, and resurrection to pay the price of our sins. When we “share the gospel” we are telling people how they can have their sins forgiven, be guaranteed to be in heaven when they die, and have a real, personal relationship with the God here on earth. We're telling them the lengths God went to make sure that would happen to all who would take up His offer.



The bottom line of the gospel is that Jesus saves us from the penalty we deserve for our sins. We can't save ourselves. Only Jesus' death and resurrection covers our need. All we can do is respond in faith to what Jesus did on our behalf.

LEARN A PRESENTATION OF THE GOSPEL.

When talking with people about their need for Jesus, it's best to walk through why we need to be "saved" (as defined in the last two paragraphs) and how to be saved. It's not enough to simply tell someone they need to be saved. They probably won't understand (Indeed, **no one** understands their need for Jesus unless the Holy Spirit enables them to see their need.). They need to be shown.

A good gospel presentation should contain these main parts:

- You're a sinner, just like everybody else, separated from God and deserving of hell. (I know that seems harsh – but Jesus was very blunt about it...)
- Jesus paid the penalty for your sins by dying on a cross and He rose again, physically.
- His death and resurrection make it possible for our sins to be forgiven and to be assured of heaven.
- You must accept His offer by putting your trust in Him and Him alone (not Jesus plus good works, not Jesus plus baptism, not Jesus plus church membership, not Jesus PLUS anything) to save us from the penalty we deserve.

This is very simplified, but these are the parts that form the basis of what someone needs to know about salvation.

Use diagrams, illustrations, tracts, videos, or whatever you like. If you use tracts, use tracts from such trustworthy companies as Good News Publishers and the American Bible Society. They explain the gospel with clarity, sometimes using comic-style illustrations, and show a person how to respond to God's offer of salvation through Jesus.

My absolute favorite way to share the gospel using only one verse, Romans 6:23, and a simple diagram is from *One-Verse Evangelism*, by Randy Raysbrook. This is what I use 99.9348576393% of the time. (You can get the booklet explaining the diagram in detail from NavPress, at <https://www.tyndale.com/p/one-verse-evangelism/9780972902366>.)

Your pastor may have a preferred method. You might consider asking him to teach you how he shares Christ with people one-on-one.



The point is to show someone their need for Jesus. The method isn't all that important. The message is.

Note: When talking with people, you want to make sure to not get distracted or bogged down by things that are NOT the gospel. Stay on the main things. You can have a conversation about other things another time.

“But I’m not an evangelist – I don’t have the gift of evangelism, so I can’t tell people about Jesus.”

So? I don’t have the gift of hospitality, but I’m still expected by God to be hospitable. Someone else may not have the gift of service, but we are all called to serve in some capacity. An evangelist is just someone who gets to see a lot of people give their lives to Christ after they share the gospel. All Christians are expected to share Christ.

“But that’s the pastor’s job!”

And just where did you find THAT in Scripture? (Hint: you didn’t.) It’s YOUR job, also.

Now for the “bad news:” Not everyone will respond positively when you share Jesus with them. Some will ignore you, some will react angrily, some will just blow you off. That’s part of ministry. Even Billy Graham got rejected at times, not to mention Jesus, Himself.

It’s not your job to convince someone of their need for Jesus. We want to be able to answer questions and objections, but ultimately, the Holy Spirit is the One who does the convincing. Our job is to inform, even with pleading. They must respond to God himself, not to us.

But even in the “bad news” there is “good news.” Statistics say that it takes a person hearing the gospel an average of seven times before they respond positively, if they ever do. If they do not respond positively to you, it could be that you are one of the previous “six.” You are still an important part of the process of that person coming to Jesus.

In any case, keep in mind that it is NEVER too late to share the gospel with someone. And it is NEVER too late for them to respond. So NEVER give up hope.

* On a personal note, I rarely use the word “saved” when talking with a non-believer about Jesus. I generally say, “be guaranteed forgiveness and a home in heaven.” I’ve heard enough non-believers misuse the word to see that it is wildly misunderstood and sometimes they will reject the conversation or even mock the word “saved.” If your experience is different and you feel like using “saved,” then by all means, go for it!



PASSING THE TORCH

Look at this foundational verse:

*And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses
entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.*

(2 Timothy 2:2)

The ultimate goal of this whole deal is that you are able to equip someone who can equip someone else to live for Jesus, who can then help someone else – and so on. It's a great joy to see the person you've invested in impacting other people by discipling them.

In all your interactions with the person you're discipling, you want to make sure that what you're giving them is "pass-on-able" as my Navigator friends say. Using The Great 8 will help you do that, because as you go through the materials with that person, you're showing *them* how to establish a new believer with those materials, which they can also use for someone down the road.

As you get to sessions 6 and 7 of the Foundations material, you will discuss how to share the gospel with someone else and the concept of multiplying their lives in the lives of other people. I highly suggest that you help them think of 1-2 people they would like to share Christ with someday and that they can pray for daily. As they pray, God may open opportunities for them to share Christ with them (or bring them to someone who can share Christ with them – maybe even you!!!).

You can then give them some great tools you have used over the years to share Christ with people and have them practice on you if you'd like.

As soon as they begin discipling someone, you can adjust your role to being a mentor/friend, giving guidance and instruction as they invest in the life of someone else.

When can they start discipling? Pretty much anytime. If they are interested in helping someone, and especially if they already have someone they want to help, then by all means, let them! You can guide them as they help the next person, just as you are helping the first person.

Maybe the person they are meeting with started just a week after your person. No problem! As you go through "The Great 8" materials, you can supplement your time with some guidance on how to bring that info to the person they're meeting up with.

And then you can start discipling someone else while your person is discipling their person. All of a sudden, you have doubled your impact!

That would be AWESOME!!!!



CONCLUSION

So whaddya think?

Are you ready to hop on board on the “disciple SHIP?” (I know, totally corny – but I’ve been waiting to use that for YEARS...)

Discipleship isn’t for the faint-hearted. You’re dealing with people, after all, and people are strange beings. They are wildly emotional at times, lazy, busy, stressed out, or totally chill. They are single, married, dating (with all the drama that involves – am I right?), no kids, lots of kids. Working, unemployed, overworked, underpaid, wealthy, poor, or somewhere in between.

You get the picture.

But even with all that variety, the fact remains that they are made in God’s image and Jesus died for them – just like He died for you. And you get the awesome privilege of speaking into their lives, guiding them to a deeper relationship with Jesus, and equipping them to impact others.

There have been plenty of times over my years of discipling people when I say to God, “Why do you let *me* be part of this? I love it!” Watching God work in the lives of people is indescribably wonderful. And God lets you be part of that.

Allow yourself to be continually awed and humbled by God’s working in and through you in the life of another person. Never let yourself become prideful over the fact that God is using you. Be thankful that He has allowed you to be part of HIS plan for reaching the world for Jesus.

Before we finish this section, look at these words from Jesus just before He was arrested:

“My prayer is not for them alone. ***I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message***, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.” (John 17:20-21, emphasis mine)

Pray for those you disciple. Pray for those *they* disciple. Pray that God would raise even more disciplemakers around you.

A day is coming when “every knee (will) bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2:10-11) And...“a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation,



tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb.” (Revelation 5:9)

How exciting is it to think that YOU have a part to play in that – by helping people find, love, and serve Jesus!

Pray that His will would be done – on Earth as it is in Heaven. Pray that His kingdom would come, and that in the meantime, He would mold you to be more like His Son, reflecting Jesus to the people you disciple and others around you.

May God be honored in all you do for the sake of Jesus and His kingdom. Amen.



FOUNDATIONS

MOVING FROM “DISCIPLE” TO “DISCIPLEMAKER”

Congratulations on taking an important part in ministry for God’s Kingdom!

You are choosing to become part of God’s PLAN A for reaching the world for Jesus. (BTW, there is NO PLAN B...). That’s an awesome privilege and an awesome responsibility.

You and I are followers of Jesus because men and women have been faithful to Jesus’ command for the last 2000+ years. Let’s be thankful for that! And let’s commit to doing our part for the sake of the next generations.

THE BASIS OF DISCIPLESHIP

The reason we do this is based on Jesus’ last command to His followers just before He ascended to the Father, and it is found in Matthew 28:18-20:

*Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.**”*

What is the command given in this passage? It’s “go,” right? Actually, no. The command is to “_____.” In the original language of the New Testament, you’ll find that the sentence is more along the lines of “As you are going, make disciples...”

Jesus, anticipating both evangelical _____ among His followers and the _____ about to come as they were persecuted (we see this in Acts 8), wanted them to focus on the task of helping other people become lifelong followers of Him.

SOME HELPFUL DEFINITIONS:

But just so we’re all on the same page, let’s start off by defining the important terms we’ll be using:

“Discipleship” is the process of helping _____.
That’s pretty broad, but as you look at the following definitions of other terms, hopefully it will become a bit less vague.

A “disciple” is a follower of Jesus who _____ for him above all else. A disciple is _____, and will stumble and sin sometimes, but his



or her life is marked by growing _____ to Jesus even when it is _____ and _____.

“Disciplemaking” is the _____ interaction of a more mature follower of Jesus with a new or less-mature believer in Jesus, with the goal of helping that person become a fully devoted follower of Jesus.

“Maturity” means growing in _____ to Jesus, and growing in the ability to use the Scriptures as the guide and authority for living as they also develop in _____ and _____ character.

A “disciplemaker” or “discipler” is the _____ believer who works with the new or less mature believer. The task of doing this is called “discipling.”

I’m guessing there are some really awesome dictionary definitions of all these things. But the above definitions reflect the goals and tasks involved in discipleship as envisioned in this training.

THE CONTEXT OF DISCIPLESHIP

Discipleship happens best in _____, whether it’s through one-on-one personal relationships and/or small groups of no more than four people (for new believers, that is; the group can be a bit larger for more established believers). This is just as true in a large church as it is in a small to medium one. That is why many large churches are intentionally working to get new believers as well as their regular attenders into small groups. This way the church becomes “smaller” (with people developing deep relationships in small groups) while it becomes larger in terms of total attendance and influence in the community.

Being a disciplemaker means developing a relationship with that new believer. It means getting to know them and their flaws/gifts, walking with them through the ups and downs of life, guiding, teaching, praying with and for, spending time with, and even getting in their face sometimes (graciously and in love, of course!), all the while letting them see *you* as you continue to grow in your own relationship with God.

Making disciples is an **investment** of time, effort, emotion, and everything else that goes into a relationship that’s deeper than surface level.

So if you:

- _____ Jesus,
- love _____,



- are ready to help someone become _____ in their new faith in Jesus, and
- would like to see _____ mature while doing that...
...then this is for you!

Get ready for God to work IN you and THROUGH you to fulfill Jesus' Great Commission.

THANK YOU for stepping up. God bless you.

HOW TO INDIVIDUALLY FOLLOW-UP NEW BELIEVERS

Following up people who have given their lives to Jesus is not a very complicated process. In fact, it's so simple, even a dude like me can do it – and that's saying something. My late mother-in-law would agree. And I'm not letting you get hold of my sister-in-law to see what she thinks. Let's just say she would give a hearty "Amen" and we'll leave it at that.

Don't sweat this. It's really not complicated at all.

Generally the process of discipleship starts with you _____ with a new believer to follow up their decision for Jesus. This might happen when a pastor calls to inform you of someone he thinks would be a good match-up for you, or it happens when *you* have led them to Christ – and you get the awesome opportunity to see that they are established in a solid, growing relationship with Jesus.

Below are some general guidelines of what to cover initially. There is very little black and white when it comes to how to follow up someone's decision for Christ. But I would like to suggest a few things, based on what I call "The Great 8." These are 8 essential things that every new believer should be taught. This is also covered in the Foundations group material. I would suggest printing out those materials to give you a guide on what to cover each time you get together. You can use that material almost word for word if you wish or you can modify it, so it sounds more like "you."

This will not necessarily be a step-by-step tutorial on what to say when you meet with your person; rather, it's a guide. You and I are different people, so how I do things might be different than how you would do it. Totally acceptable. The issue is making sure these things are covered. However, after the listing of essentials below, I have put a couple of sample outlines you can use, as well as some suggestions that may be helpful for you.

The Great 8 – The Essentials for New Believers (found in the Foundations class materials)

1. _____ of Salvation.
2. Introduction to the _____.



3. How to _____.
4. Importance of Being Part of a _____.
5. _____ (in and through the church).
6. _____ with Others.
7. _____ (helping others who help others while you continue to help others...).
8. Following Jesus _____

Sample outline of first time together:

(Use Session 1 of Foundations material to see what to cover.)

- Get to know each other. Take as much time for this as necessary!
- Ask how he began coming to this church, if that is how he came to Christ.
- Mention that since he had indicated that he had given his life to Christ, you'd like to review that with him.
- Share gospel with him to recap what was shared previously and make sure he understood what he responded to. As you are doing so, make sure he understands everything you're saying, and invite questions.
- After sharing gospel, ask, "Is this what you did last night (or whenever...)"
- If YES, go through rest of Session 1 material.
- If not, then invite him to do that NOW. "Well, is there any reason you wouldn't want to do that now?"
 - ✓ If NO, then help him to pray to receive Christ.
 - ✓ If YES, then ask what that is, and attempt to answer any objections he has. If you can't answer his concerns, tell him so, and that you would be willing to look for answers if he'd like to get back together sometime.
- If he gives his life to Jesus then, go through the rest of Session 1, but schedule another time to meet. At this second session, you'll want to review all of this as confirmation and assurance. You can move on to the actual session 2 materials the next time you meet.

Sample Outline of Following Sessions (Use whatever session you are on from the Foundations material to see what to cover)

- Conversation to catch up on life since last time together. If there is something significant going on, take all the time you need. If it seems to be droning along, especially about stuff that's not actually part of his own life, you may need to gently steer the conversation back to the purpose of the meeting.



- Ask what he's learned from his time in Scripture since you last met. Does he have any questions, or did he learn anything new from what he's read? Again, take all the time you need to discuss this. (If you don't get to the material, that's okay!! Go for it next time.)
- Cover session material, always making sure he is tracking along and understanding.
- Pray with him if he is comfortable. See if he has anything in particular to pray about for him, and share anything you'd like him to pray about for you.
- Set appointment for next session.

Although you do have material to cover, you want to try to avoid a _____ teaching session. Try to make your time _____. Your disciple might prefer the lecture-style (some do), but it should be more like an actual conversation as much as possible – since that's what it is.

To help with that, you might try having something like a _____ with a checklist of things you want to cover regarding whichever of the eight core areas you want to help them in. If you are new to this process, it's okay to have it out as you're talking with your person – “making sure I cover everything I want you to get about reading the Bible...” or keep it handy to review just before you meet with them. Another idea is to give them a card as well. They can use it to remind them of what you've covered with them. (And guess what? You've given them a tool they can use when THEY disciple someone!!!)

Another option is to print out the “_____” to each Foundations session and walk through that with them, each of you having a copy as you go through it.

Whatever tool works best for you is the best tool to use. Get creative! Again, the goal is to cover the material – what you use to do that is up to you.

I've mentioned a couple of times that you may need to take time to talk and listen about what's going on with the person and what they're learning before you actually get to what you want to go over in a particular session. This is so important – because this is a **person**, not a project.

When I was in college, I was discipling a fellow student I had personally led to Christ. Somewhere over time, he got the impression that all I cared about was his spiritual life and didn't care about his *life* in general. I found this out when the staff member for the student ministry I was involved with in college told me after meeting with this student. And he was right. That IS all I cared about. I was wrong. He needed me to be a FRIEND as well as a discipler. I don't know that we had a single conversation after that. Please don't make my mistake.



My tunnel vision sometimes spilled over to my pastoring. You can tell from the previous paragraph that I am not the sharpest lightbulb in the tool shed. I can't tell when people are hurting unless they actually *tell* me. I can't read body language to save my life, so I missed a lot, and it hurt people. I needed to learn to pay more attention, and I'm trying - God is still working with me on that.

So remember that this person you're investing in has a life outside of church and meeting with you. Find out about their work, family, what they like to do for fun, and all that stuff. Some won't want to share until they know you better. That's okay. Some will have deep wounds and scars you'll never be able to touch. That's okay, too. Let them give you as much as they're comfortable with. Don't pry but give them the freedom to share as they are comfortable. Don't be afraid to open up about your life as well. Give them the opportunity to ask you questions, too. Friendship is a two-way street.

Be a **friend** who cares about their spiritual maturity. Love them unconditionally. It'll bless the both of you.

Now please allow me to give you a heads-up about something: sometimes a person will not want to be established in the faith and disciplined. Some will think it is a _____, others will simply think it's not a big deal, and some might not have really come to Christ and don't want to have a relationship built on that.

What do you do when that happens? You wish them well, tell them you're available and that you are praying for them. And then you _____, keeping the door open and the friendship intact.

Being a disciplemaker is one of the greatest adventures in the Christian life. Watching God work to illuminate someone's mind and spirit to the awesomeness of following Jesus is a blast.

So buckle up, Buttercup!!

BUILDING A LONG-TERM DISCIPLING RELATIONSHIP

What happens when you've covered all the essential materials in "The Great 8?"

That depends on the two of you. I would encourage you to keep meeting regularly and frequently, praying that he or she would find someone they could disciple down the road. Then you can release them to the joy of that ministry while you pray for someone else to impact.

But it still doesn't need to end there. You can have a relationship for as long as the both of you want it to continue.



Years ago I was discipling a graduate student at a local university. We met almost weekly. One day as we were leaving the student cafeteria, a pastor friend of mine came up to us and after a brief conversation asked us how long we'd been meeting in this discipleship relationship. I said, "I don't know – two or three years?" My student replied, "Brian, it's been **five** years!" I couldn't believe it. I would have thought he'd have gotten tired of me well before then, but he didn't. He still enjoyed getting together, because we were learning together and encouraging one another. I think part of the issue was that I didn't really think of him as "my disciple," but rather as a younger friend. Our relationship had developed into a great friendship that was still spiritual in its foundation.

Understand that ideally, this is a long-term deal. Discipleship is not an 8-session class. It's helping them develop a lifestyle of living for Jesus and equipping them to help others do the same.

There are three main goals in a discipling relationship:

1. Help the other person become _____ of their new relationship with Jesus by helping them learn about prayer, how to read and apply the Bible, and getting involved with other people through the church, etc.
2. Help them continue to _____ as they learn to "walk on their own two feet" and encourage them to deepen their relationship with Jesus so they follow Him in every area of their life.
3. Help them become _____ to do the same in another person's life.

If your relationship can be maintained long enough to cover those goals, that's awesome! I wish I could promise everyone will want to do that, but I can't. The fact is, some won't want to go even past the first session. Others might get through the essentials but want to cut out after that.

But still others may want to continue for the long-term. And that's a good thing.

The good news is that it's not our job to convince people to be disciples of Jesus and be in a discipleship relationship with anybody. Just like with a person's recognition of their need for Jesus, it's the Holy Spirit's job to do the convincing. Our job is to cooperate with Him as He works in the lives of the people we come alongside.

If we make ourselves available, He will bring people to us who want the help we can offer them. But even if someone quits after the first session, you've still been able to speak something into their lives.

And that matters.



SHARING CHRIST WITH OTHERS

One of my favorite episodes in Scripture happens in Acts 10. A Roman centurion named Cornelius was - a soldier for the oppressive Romans - was a really good guy. He prayed, he helped people, and he was well respected even by the Jews - and that's saying something in that culture at that time.

One day while he's praying, an angel says, "Hey Cornelius. You need to send for this guy name Peter who's about a 2-day ride from here. He's got something important to tell you."

While the centurion's guys are on their way to get him. Peter gets a vision from God basically saying that it's okay to tell the hated Romans and other non-Jews about Jesus. Peter doesn't know about Cornelius or the fact that people are coming to fetch him.

Long story short, Peter goes to Cornelius, tells him (and all the people Cornelius had gathered) about Jesus, and they all believe and follow Him - amazing Peter and the guys he'd brought along as witnesses.

Why didn't the angel just tell Cornelius about Jesus? It would have saved a lot of time and energy, after all.

Because that's **our** job, not the angel's job.

God uses _____ as His primary method of making disciples - through preaching, the printed word, small groups, through one-on-one interactions or whatever. Isn't that exciting? One of the greatest privileges of being a Christian is being able to tell other people about Jesus.

It is rare to hear of someone giving their life to Jesus after hearing about him through a dream or an angel or vision. It happens, sometimes, and I'm not going to tell God He can't do that. But I can probably count on one hand how many times I've heard of it happening.

ALWAYS BE READY.

Because God chooses to use people as His primary tool for spreading the gospel, disciples of Jesus and disciplemakers need to always be ready to tell someone the good news about Him.

Look at what Peter has to say about it in 1 Peter 3:15-16 -

*But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. **Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.** But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so*



that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. (Emphasis mine)

There is a lot packed into these two verses, but this isn't the space to unpack it all. The point I want to make here is that we need to be ready at all times to talk to share the gospel.

The "gospel" is the _____ of Jesus – of His life, death, and resurrection to pay the price of our sins. When we " _____ " we are telling people how they can have their sins forgiven, be guaranteed to be in heaven when they die, and have a real, personal relationship with the God. We're telling them the lengths God went to make sure that would happen to all who would take up His offer.

The _____ of the gospel is that Jesus saves us from the penalty we deserve for our sins. We can't save ourselves. Only Jesus' death and resurrection covers our need. All we can do is respond in faith to what Jesus did on our behalf.

LEARN A PRESENTATION OF THE GOSPEL.

I have found that when talking with people it's best to walk through _____ we need to be "saved" (as defined in the last two paragraphs) and _____ to be saved. It's not enough to simply tell someone they need to be saved.* They probably won't understand (Indeed, **no one** understands their need for Jesus unless the Holy Spirit enables them to see their need.). They need to be shown.

A good gospel presentation should contain these main parts:

- You're a sinner, just like everybody else, separated from God and deserving of hell. (I know that seems harsh – but Jesus was very blunt about it...)
- Jesus paid the penalty for your sins by dying on a cross and He rose again, physically.
- His death and resurrection make it possible for our sins to be forgiven and to be assured of heaven.
- You must accept His offer by putting your trust in Him and Him alone (not Jesus plus good works, not Jesus plus baptism, not Jesus plus church membership, not Jesus PLUS anything) to save us from the penalty we deserve.

This is very simplified, but these are the parts that form the basis of what someone needs to know about salvation.

Use diagrams, illustrations, tracts, videos, or whatever you like. If you use tracts, use tracts from such trustworthy companies as Good News Publishers and the American Bible Society.



They explain the gospel with clarity, sometimes using comic-style illustrations, and show a person how to respond to God's offer of salvation through Jesus.

My absolute favorite way to share the gospel using only one verse, Romans 6:23, and a simple diagram is from *One-Verse Evangelism*, by Randy D. Raysbrook and Steve Walker. This is what I use 99.9348576393% of the time. (You can get the booklet explaining the diagram in detail from NavPress, at <https://www.tyndale.com/p/one-verse-evangelism/9780972902366>.)

Your pastor may have a preferred method. You might consider asking him to teach you how he shares Christ with people one-on-one.

The point is to show someone their need for Jesus. The _____ isn't all that important. The _____ is.

Note: When talking with people, you want to make sure to not get distracted or bogged down by things that are NOT the gospel. Stay on the main things. You can have a conversation about other things another time.

"But I'm not an evangelist – I don't have the gift of evangelism, so I can't tell people about Jesus."

So? I don't have the gift of hospitality, but I'm still expected by God to be hospitable. Someone else may not have the gift of service, but we are all called to serve in some capacity. An evangelist is just someone who gets to see a lot of people give their lives to Christ after they share the gospel. All Christians are expected to share Christ.

"But that's the _____!"

And just where did you find THAT in Scripture? (Hint: you didn't.) It's YOUR job, also.

Now for the "bad news:" Not everyone will respond positively when you share Jesus with them. Some will ignore you, some will react angrily, some will just blow you off. That's part of ministry. Even Billy Graham got rejected at times, not to mention Jesus, Himself.

It's not your job to convince someone of their need for Jesus. We want to be able to _____ and _____, but ultimately, the Holy Spirit is the One who does the convincing. Our job is to inform, even with pleading. They must respond to God himself, not to us.

But even in the "bad news" there is "good news." Statistics say that it takes an average person hearing the gospel around seven times before they respond positively, if they ever do. If they do not respond positively to you, it could be that you are one of the previous "six." You are still an important part of the process of that person coming to Jesus.



In any case, remember that it is NEVER _____ to share the gospel with someone. And it is NEVER _____ for them to respond. So NEVER _____.

* On a personal note, I rarely use the word “saved” when talking with a non-believer about Jesus. I generally say, “be guaranteed forgiveness and a home in heaven.” I’ve heard enough non-believers misuse “saved” to see that it is wildly misunderstood and sometimes they will reject the conversation or even mock the word “saved.” If your experience is different and you feel like using “saved,” then by all means, go for it!

PASSING THE TORCH

Look at this foundational verse:

And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.

(2 Timothy 2:2)

The ultimate goal of this whole deal is that you are able to equip someone who can equip someone else to live for Jesus, who can then help someone else – and so on. It’s a great joy to see the person you’ve invested in impacting other people by discipling them.

In all your interactions with the person you’re discipling, you want to make sure that what you’re giving them is “pass-on-able” as my Navigator friends say. Using The Great 8 will help you do that, because as you go through the materials with that person, you’re showing *them* how to establish a new believer with those materials, which they can also use for someone down the road.

As you get to sessions 6 and 7 of the Foundations material, you will discuss how to share the gospel with someone else and the concept of multiplying their lives in the lives of other people. I highly suggest that you help them think of 1-2 people they would like to share Christ with someday and that they can pray for daily. As they pray, God may open opportunities for them to share Christ with them (or bring them to someone who can share Christ with them – maybe even you!!!).

You can then give them some great tools you have used over the years to share Christ with people and have them practice on you if you’d like.

As soon as they begin discipling someone, you can adjust your role to being a mentor/friend, giving guidance and instruction as they invest in the life of someone else.

When can they start discipling? Pretty much _____. If they are interested in helping someone, and especially if they already have someone they want to help, then by all



means, let them! You can guide them as they help the next person, just as you are helping the first person.

Maybe the person they are meeting with started just a week after your person. No problem! As you go through “The Great 8” materials, you can supplement your time with some guidance on how to bring that info to the person they’re meeting up with.

And then you can start discipling someone else while your person is discipling their person. All of a sudden, you have doubled your impact!

That would be AWESOME!!!!

CONCLUSION

So whaddya think?

Are you ready to hop on board on the “disciple SHIP?” (I know, totally corny – but I’ve been waiting to use that for YEARS...)

Discipleship isn’t for the faint-hearted. You’re dealing with people, after all, and people are strange beings. They are wildly emotional at times, lazy, busy, stressed out, or totally chill. They are single, married, dating (with all the drama that involves – am I right?), no kids, lots of kids. Working, unemployed, overworked, underpaid, wealthy, poor, or somewhere in between.

You get the picture.

But even with all that variety, the fact remains that they are made in God’s image and Jesus died for them – just like He died for you. And you get the awesome privilege of speaking into their lives, guiding them to a deeper relationship with Jesus, and equipping them to impact others.

There have been plenty of times over my years of discipling people when I say to God, “Why do you let *me* be part of this? I love it!” Watching God work in the lives of people is indescribably wonderful. And God lets you be part of that.

Allow yourself to be continually awed and humbled by God’s working in and through you in the life of another person. Never let yourself become prideful over the fact that God is using you. Be thankful that He has allowed you to be part of HIS plan for reaching the world for Jesus.

Before we finish this section, look at these words from Jesus just before He was arrested:

“My prayer is not for them alone. ***I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message***, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May



they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.” (John 17:20-21, emphasis mine)

Pray for those you disciple. Pray for those *they* disciple. Pray that God would raise even more disciplemakers around you.

A day is coming when “every knee (will) bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2:10-11) And...“a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb.” (Revelation 5:9)

How exciting is it to think that YOU have a part to play in that – by helping people find, love, and serve Jesus!

Pray that His will would be done – on Earth as it is in Heaven. Pray that His kingdom would come, and that in the meantime, He would mold you to be more like His Son, reflecting Jesus to the people you disciple and others around you.

May God be honored in all you do for the sake of Jesus and His kingdom. Amen.



FOUNDATIONS MATERIAL – “THE GREAT 8”

On the following pages you will find the session guides you will use in meeting with a new believer or leading a small Foundations group.

Remember, these are GUIDES, not straight-jackets. The information is important. How you communicate the information is entirely up to you and the other person.

Feel free to modify the content, but please consult your pastor before doing so. This will give the pastor the chance to give you even more guidance as you go through these materials.

If you have questions about any of this, please email us at info@discipleshipdna.com and we'll try to get back with you within 1 business day.

Also, if you want us to pray with you about your new adventure as a disciplemaker, shoot us an email at the same address and we'll be glad to do that!

Thanks again for being part of this incredibly important ministry. You will have impact for the Kingdom of God, and that impact may be felt through generations until Jesus returns.

God bless.



FOUNDATIONS—SESSION 1 (ANSWER KEY)

KNOWING FOR SURE YOU HAVE HEAVEN (AND ALL THE OTHER STUFF!)

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE GIVE OUR LIVES TO CHRIST?

- We are **forgiven**.
- We are **adopted**.
- We become part of a bigger **family** who will love and support us (**universal** and **local** church).
- We are given the **Holy Spirit** to help us:
 - Deepen our **love** for God
 - **Understand** the Scriptures
 - Desire to **obey Him**—and actually do it
 - Serve Him in and through His Church
 - Reflect the love of God to others
 - Help others find Christ.

RECAP OF WHAT IT MEANS TO GIVE YOUR LIFE TO JESUS

- Bridge illustration (or another simple gospel presentation) (Note – this is not on the student form)
- Faith is like a parachute (Trust in Jesus)
- 1 John 5:11–13 (We know we are saved, not just hoping it works out in the end)
- John 5:24, Romans 8:1
- Invitation to follow Christ (for those who may have come to class and not come to Christ yet).

“And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.” (1 John 5:11–13, ESV)

“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.” (John 5:24, ESV)

“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 8:1)

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)



THE MAIN NEXT STEP IS BAPTISM

We believe the Bible teaches that baptism is something that occurs after a person has given his life to Christ. It's a public act symbolizing that a person has "died" to themselves and is now "living" for Jesus, just as Jesus died and rose from the grave. (Insert information about when baptisms are done at your church.)

Next session: How to read and understand the Bible. (It's not as hard as you might think!)



FOUNDATIONS—SESSION 1

KNOWING FOR SURE YOU HAVE HEAVEN (AND ALL THE OTHER STUFF!)

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE GIVE OUR LIVES TO CHRIST?

- We are _____.
- We are _____.
- We become part of a bigger _____ who will love and support us.
(_____ and _____ church)
- We are given the _____ to help us:
 - Deepen our _____ for God
 - _____ the Scriptures
 - Desire to _____ and actually do it.
 - _____ Him in and through His Church.
 - _____ the love of God to others.
 - _____ find Christ.

RECAP OF WHAT IT MEANS TO GIVE YOUR LIFE TO CHRIST

Faith is like a _____.

“And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.” (1 John 5:11–13, ESV)

“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.” (John 5:24, ESV)

“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 8:1)

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)

NEXT STEP: BAPTISM (if you haven't done so already).

Baptism is a public declaration that you have put your trust in Jesus and will live for him. Please visit with your group leader about when baptisms are scheduled at your church.



FOUNDATIONS—SESSION 2 (ANSWER KEY)

WHAT'S THIS CONFUSING BOOK ALL ABOUT ANYWAY?

LEARNING TO READ AND UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE

The Bible is the Christian collection of holy writings. It was written by God through people over a period of about 1500 years using about 40 different authors. We also call this the “Scriptures.”

Some key things to note:

The Bible isn't a **book**—it's a **library**.

The Old Testament covers God's **choosing of Israel** and **His interactions** with His people until about four hundred years before Jesus was born.

The New Testament covers **the earthly life of Jesus** through **the prophecies of his birth** through His death and resurrection, history of the **early Church**, and **letters** of apostles such as Peter, Paul, and James.

HOW TO NAVIGATE THE BIBLE: BOOK, CHAPTER, VERSE

Each book of the Bible has a title, multiple “chapters” (with rare exceptions for smaller books), and “verses.” Much like a regular book, books of the Bible are broken up by chapters, which in this case are numbered. The very small numbers are the “verses,” which are portions of chapters – sometimes just a few words, sometimes entire sentences, and sometimes more than one sentence.

These chapter and verse numbers are simply there to help people locate passages and were not there originally. They are extremely helpful, and as you gain familiarity with the Bible, you will find yourself locating various passages of Scripture quite quickly.

When first starting to read the Bible, it is best to begin with the historical biographies of Jesus that are from eyewitness accounts and interviews of eyewitnesses. These are the first four books of the New Testament, called the “**Gospels**.”

God's Holy Spirit helps us to **understand** and **apply** the Scriptures to our lives.

Most of it is pretty black and white—easy to understand. We learn to understand the rest as we mature in our relationship with God. It's like learning a foreign language. The more you are exposed to it, the more you understand it.



FIVE WAYS TO TAKE IN THE BIBLE:

- **Hear** it (sermons, etc.; but generally, people forget very quickly what they've only heard).
- **Read** it (pretty obvious, right?).
- **Study** it (small groups, personal study).
- **Memorize** it (small portions or large passages).
- **Meditate** on it (thinking deeply about how the passage applies to you personally, asking God to show you how to make it real in your own life).

The goal of reading/studying the Bible isn't just head knowledge—it's **life transformation**. To follow Jesus is to learn **about Him**, learn **His teachings**, and **apply them** in our lives so we can be more like Him and have a positive impact on the world around us.

“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.” (James 1:22-25)

HOW TO GET STARTED

1. Find a Bible in easy-to-understand **English** or your **primary language**. (Jesus didn't speak like Shakespeare!)
2. Start in the **Gospels**. (The Book of Mark is a great place to begin!)
3. Read a **chapter** or two at a time, asking God to help you learn and understand.
4. Write down any **questions** you have as you read—and **ask them** to someone who's been reading it a while longer.
5. See if there is a **command** or **principle** to obey and ask God for how to make that part of your life. Ask someone if you aren't sure how to do that or need other ideas.
6. Try to develop a **regular habit** of Bible reading and prayer. (More about prayer next session!)

Here's good news: you don't have to be a Bible scholar to hear God speaking to you through the Bible. Reading with an open mind, asking for God's help in understanding, will start you on the path of enjoyment of God's Word.

(Distribute How to Have a Quiet Time handout.)



HOW TO HAVE A QUIET TIME

HANDOUT FOR SESSION 2

A Quiet Time is a dedicated time to spend reading the Bible and praying. Others call it a Devotional Time, Time with God, or any number of other names. What it's called isn't important. Doing it is.

A regular—daily, if possible—Quiet Time is one of the best habits you can build into your life. It builds a foundation of time with God where you listen to Him through the Scriptures and talk to Him through prayer.

There are two main components:

1. Bible reading
2. Prayer

BIBLE READING

Start with the Gospels—Mark is a great one to start with. Begin by reading a chapter or two per day, working your way through the book to the end before starting another. Avoid simply opening your Bible to a random place and reading.

Begin by asking God to open your heart and mind to understand what you read.

As you are reading, write down things that seem to jump out at you, that you find interesting, or that you have questions about. You can bring these up when meeting with your discipler or class leader of the Foundations class.

Underline, highlight, circle, write notes in the margins, do whatever you like to mark something that sticks out or is particularly encouraging or whatever. What you mark, how you mark it, and why you mark it are all entirely up to you. This is your time with God.

(A note about questions: questions are good! It's perfectly normal to have questions about what you read. Don't be afraid to bring them up. Your discipler or class leader will try to answer them for you. If they don't know the answer, they will try to find one for you.)

PRAYER

Prayer is just talking to God. Pray about what you've read, asking God to help you put it into your life. Then pray for yourself, family, work, whatever you need to talk with God about. He loves to hear from you!

More on prayer in the next session!



FOUNDATIONS—SESSION 2

WHAT'S THIS CONFUSING BOOK ALL ABOUT ANYWAY?

LEARNING TO READ AND UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE

The Bible is the Christian collection of holy writings. It was written by God through people over a period of about 1500 years using about 40 different authors. We also call this the “Scriptures.”

Some key things to note:

The Bible isn't a _____—it's a _____.

The Old Testament covers God's _____ and _____ with His people until about four hundred years before Jesus was born.

The New Testament covers _____ through _____ through His death and resurrection, history of the _____, and _____ of apostles such as Peter, Paul, and James.

HOW TO NAVIGATE THE BIBLE: BOOK, CHAPTER, VERSE

Each book of the Bible has a title, multiple “chapters” (with rare exceptions for smaller books), and “verses.” Much like a regular book, books of the Bible are broken up by chapters, which in this case are numbered. The very small numbers are the “verses,” which are portions of chapters – sometimes just a few words, sometimes entire sentences, and sometimes more than one sentence.

These chapter and verse numbers are simply there to help people locate passages, and were not there originally. They are extremely helpful, and as you gain familiarity with the Bible, you will find yourself locating these quite quickly.

When first starting to read the Bible, it is best to begin with the historical biographies of Jesus that are from eyewitness accounts and interviews of eyewitnesses. These are the first four books of the New Testament, called the “_____.”

God's Holy Spirit helps us to _____ and _____ the Scriptures to our lives.

Most of it is pretty black and white—easy to understand. We learn to understand the rest as we mature in our relationship with God. It's like learning a foreign language. The more you are exposed to it, the more you understand it.



FIVE WAYS TO TAKE IN THE BIBLE:

- _____ it.
- _____ it.
- _____ it.
- _____ it.
- _____ on it.

The goal of reading and studying the Bible isn't just head knowledge—it's _____ . To follow Jesus is to learn _____ , learn _____ , and _____ in our lives so we can be more like Him and have a positive impact on the world around us.

“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.” (James 1:22-25)

HOW TO GET STARTED

1. Find a Bible in easy-to-understand _____ (or your _____).
2. Start in the _____.
3. Read a _____ or two at a time, asking God to help you learn and understand.
4. Write down any _____ you have as you read—and _____ to someone who's been reading it a while longer.
5. See if there is a _____ or _____ to obey and ask God for how to make that part of your life. Ask someone if you aren't sure how to do that or need other ideas.
6. Try to develop a _____ of Bible reading and prayer.



FOUNDATIONS—SESSION 3 (ANSWER KEY)

TALKING WITH GOD? REALLY? (THE BASICS OF PRAYER)

God speaks to us primarily through the Bible. We speak to God through prayer.

What is prayer? At its most basic level, prayer is simply talking with God.

- Prayer can be spoken.
- Prayer can be done with our minds (thinking our prayers instead of verbalizing them).
- Prayers can be written or put into song.
- Sometimes prayer is just the cry of a heart that can't be put into words.

God knows what we pray for even before we ask. (Matthew 6:7–8) So why pray?

Prayer is much more than just asking for things. It helps to develop the relationship between you and God. You are conversing, just like any people who are close to each other. It helps us to unburden ourselves with God by telling Him of our needs. It gives us a chance to verbalize our reliance, our thanks, and our recognition of who He is as God (Creator, Sustainer, Provider, Helper, etc.).

THREE WAYS GOD ANSWERS PRAYER:

1. Yes—He grants what you're requesting.
2. No—He denies your request. (He knows it would be bad for you, or hindering His plans, etc.) This is hard, but we also need to understand that HE has a greater perspective than we do. He knows everything and only wants the best for us. And the fact of the matter is that He knows better than we do what is best for us.
3. Wait—He grants your request but at a time that is better.

HINDRANCES TO “YES” ANSWERS:

- Unconfessed sin in your life.
- Unforgiveness toward others.
- Selfish motives.

There is really no “wrong” way to pray, but here are two models for prayer you can use right away:

ACTS:

Adoration (intentionally telling God how awesome and wonderful He is)



Confession (telling Him we agree with Him regarding our sinful thoughts, words, and actions and are asking for His forgiveness)

Thanksgiving (thanking Him for His blessings and provisions—it's really great to be specific about things that God has done for you, whether recently or in the distant past)

Supplication (a fancy word meaning “ask Him for something”—this is the time to ask Him for whatever it is you need Him to do in your life or in the life of someone else)

THE LORD'S PRAYER:

“Our Father in Heaven”—recognition of His place as head of our lives.

“Hallowed (honored) be Your name”—same as adoration above.

“Your will be done”—I pray for (these things, concerns, people, etc.), but want Your purposes and Your will to be done most of all.

“Give us this day our daily bread”—Please provide for our needs, specifically _____.

“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil”—Help us live for You instead of ourselves, help us to live holy lives, keep us safe as we live for You, etc.

SOME TIPS:

- Be humble—remember, God doesn't owe anything to anybody. He cannot be manipulated or ordered around.
- Ask BIG! Don't be afraid to ask for the miraculous. God is capable of doing more than you can possibly ask or imagine. (Ephesians 3:20–21)
- Pray for others as much as you pray for yourself.
- Write down what you're praying for, and as God answers (Yes, No, Wait), record that and the date He answered, and even HOW He answered.



FOUNDATIONS—SESSION 3

TALKING WITH GOD? REALLY? (THE BASICS OF PRAYER)

God speaks to us primarily through the _____. We speak to God through _____.

What is prayer? At its most basic level, prayer is simply talking with God.

- Prayer can be _____.
- Prayer can be done with our _____.
- Prayers can be _____ or _____.
- Sometimes prayer is just the _____ of a _____ that can't be put into words.

God _____ what we pray for even _____. (Matthew 6:7-8) So why pray?

Prayer is much more than just _____. It helps to develop the _____ between you and God. You are conversing, just like any people who are close to each other. It helps us to unburden ourselves with God by telling Him of our needs. It gives us a chance to verbalize our reliance, our thanks, and our recognition of who He is as God (Creator, Sustainer, Provider, Helper, etc.).

THREE WAYS GOD ANSWERS PRAYER:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

HINDRANCES TO "YES" ANSWERS:

- _____ in your life.
- _____ toward others.
- Selfish _____.

There is really no "wrong" way to pray, but here are two models for prayer you can use right away:

ACTS:

A _____



C _____

T _____

S _____

THE LORD'S PRAYER:

"Our Father in Heaven"—

"Hallowed (honored) be Your name"—

"Your will be done"—

"Give us this day our daily bread"—

"Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil"—

SOME TIPS:

- Be _____.
- Ask _____!
- Pray for _____ as much as you pray for _____.
- _____ what you're praying for, and as God answers (Yes, No, Wait), record that and the date He answered, and even **how** He answered.



FOUNDATIONS—SESSION 4 (ANSWER KEY)

A NEW FAMILY? YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING! (THE CHURCH—THE FAMILY OF GOD)

When you put your faith in Christ, you were adopted by God into His family. This makes God your Father, with Jesus as your Brother. The Holy Spirit comes to live inside you to give you understanding of the Scriptures, help you apply them, and guide you as you develop in your relationship with Jesus.

But that's not all! Because this is true of everyone who has put their faith in Jesus, you are part of a family with billions of members since Jesus walked the earth. Every fellow believer and follower of Jesus is your brother or sister.

The family of God is also called “the Church.” The Church has two main parts: the local church (an individual congregation) and the universal Church (consisting of every believer around the world through time).

MAIN BENEFITS OF BEING PART OF A LOCAL CHURCH:

- Support/encouragement from the family.
- Biblical teaching.
- Worship.
- Fellowship (Christians hanging out together to encourage each other).
- Accountability.

SOME MORE REASONS TO BE PART OF A LOCAL CHURCH (EXPANDED FROM THE LIST ABOVE):

1. Encouragement in your relationship with Jesus. It's easy to drift spiritually if we are not connected with others.
2. Support during the ups and downs of life. (Others have probably been in your situation and can walk with you through that.)
3. A place where you can ask your questions and get answers without fear of people looking down on you as you learn.
4. People who will pray with and for you.
5. We learn what the Scriptures say and how to apply them to our lives. Being part of this kind of fellowship helps us avoid error.
6. We find opportunities to serve within the church and through the church.



7. Our gifts, talents, and resources help the church **function** the way Jesus wants it to. These are given to us for the sake of **helping** the whole church, not just the individual.
8. We **need** each other. God made us to need other people. The family of God should function in many ways like a **healthy natural family**—encouraging, supporting, meeting needs, and even occasionally getting in our faces about stuff they feel is **harmful** to us in some way.
9. The mission that Jesus gave to the Church depends on the family of God **worshipping** and **working** together.
10. Worshiping with other believers is of tremendous value to us and **honors God**.
11. You can see your **giving** being used to tangibly impact the lives of others through the programs and ministries of the church.

Bottom line: God designed the Christian life to be lived in community. We need each other as we grow in our relationship with Jesus. None of us is perfect—we all have hang-ups, hurts, faults, and areas where we miss the mark in living for Jesus. But that’s the beauty of it. We can encourage each other as fellow strugglers.

“Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” (Hebrews 10:23–25)

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- Do we really need to belong to a local church if we are part of the universal Church?
Yes, for the reasons stated above (review any that are unclear)
- Can’t I worship and serve by myself? Can’t church be alone in the forest or on a hike or at a baseball game?
Yes—you can worship by yourself. In fact, private worship as you read the Scriptures and pray is wonderful—and prepares your heart for corporate worship with the rest of the congregation. However, the Christian life was never intended by Jesus to be lived alone. It was intended to be lived out in community. In Scripture, worship is almost always seen as a corporate event.
- What if I work on Sundays and can’t make it to worship at church?



We understand that. And while we wish everyone could attend every service, the fact of the matter is that that's simply not gonna happen, because, well . . . life. Make the effort to be at what services you can. Maybe your church offers Saturday night or Sunday night services, or mid-week gatherings.



FOUNDATIONS—SESSION 4

A NEW FAMILY? YOU’VE GOT TO BE KIDDING! (THE CHURCH—THE FAMILY OF GOD)

When you put your faith in Christ, you were adopted by God into His family. This makes God your Father, with Jesus as your Brother. The Holy Spirit comes to live inside you to give you understanding of the Scriptures, help you apply them, and guide you as you develop in your relationship with Jesus.

But that’s not all! Because this is true of everyone who has put their faith in Jesus, you are part of a family with billions of members since Jesus walked the earth. Every fellow believer and follower of Jesus is your brother or sister.

The family of God is also called “the Church.” The Church has two main parts: the local church (an individual congregation) and the universal Church (consisting of every believer around the world through time).

MAIN BENEFITS OF BEING PART OF A LOCAL CHURCH:

- _____ from the family.
- _____ teaching.
- _____.
- _____.
- _____.

SOME MORE REASONS TO BE PART OF A LOCAL CHURCH (EXPANDED FROM THE LIST ABOVE):

1. _____ in your relationship with Jesus. It’s easy to drift spiritually if we are not connected with others.
2. Support during the _____ of life. (Others have probably been in your situation and can walk with you through that.)
3. A place where you can ask your questions and get answers without _____ people _____.
4. People who will pray _____ and _____ you.
5. We learn what the Scriptures _____ and how to _____ to our lives. Being part of this kind of fellowship helps us _____.
6. We find opportunities to _____ within the church and through the church.



7. Our gifts, talents, and resources help the church _____ the way Jesus wants it to. These are given to us for the sake of _____ the whole church, not just the individual.
8. We _____ each other. God made us to need other people. The family of God should function in many ways like a _____—encouraging, supporting, meeting needs, and even occasionally getting in our faces about stuff they feel is _____ to us in some way.
9. The mission that Jesus gave to the Church depends on the family of God _____ and _____ together.
10. Worshiping with other believers is of tremendous value to us and _____.
11. You can see your _____ being used to tangibly impact the lives of others through the programs and ministries of the church.

“Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” (Hebrews 10:23–25)

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- Do we really need to belong to a local church if we are part of the universal Church?
- Can't I worship and serve by myself? Can't church be alone in the forest or on a hike or at a baseball game?
- What if I work on Sundays and can't make it to worship at church?



FOUNDATIONS—SESSION 5 (ANSWER KEY)

I'M SUPPOSED TO DO STUFF AS A CHRISTIAN? (SERVING IN AND THROUGH THE CHURCH)

“For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.” (Ephesians 2:10, NLT)

When we put our faith in Christ, we are given the best opportunities to use the gifts, talents, and abilities that God has given each of us in service to others around us. God expects us to use those gifts in and through the church. We want to give you every opportunity to do that.

Serving requires a major **mind-shift**, because serving, is above all, CHRIST-like. Look at Philippians 2:5-7 –

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

Servants think “**others first.**” It’s not thinking less of ourselves, but thinking of ourselves less. They see serving as an opportunity rather than an obligation.

The good news is that God, Himself, will give us that mind-shift as we allow Him to shape us to be more like Jesus. He does that as we continually submit ourselves to Him. He uses the Bible, the Holy Spirit, and others to help us become the best servants possible.

THREE MAIN AREAS OF SERVICE:

1. The **Church**

For example, the nursery, kids’/youth ministry, hospitality (such as greeting, ushering, coffee/donut ministry), AV, mentoring, music, etc. If you have an area of interest, gifting, or talent, contact one of the pastoral staff and they can discuss with you where you would enjoy serving.

2. The **Community**

As there are within the church, there are lots of opportunities in the community where your talents, gifts, and abilities can be used for the blessing of others. Look for great organizations that share your heart for people. For example: volunteering at a nursing home, volunteering at a hospital, volunteering with a youth organization, at your kids’ schools, volunteering with a police/fire dept.



3. The World

Since we are part of a universal family of believers, it is good for us to be involved in serving our brothers and sisters who are laboring for Jesus around the world. This could include reading their newsletters and praying for needs, financial support, or writing letters to encourage them.

These are just the “Big 3” areas of service. But please don’t feel limited by these. Be creative—ask God to show you if there is something you can do to bless and serve others. Feel free to contact the pastoral staff or any of the leadership team to visit about what God might be leading you to do.

And a last note: the blessings you will receive by serving others will be more than you can imagine. Knowing you are using your gifts, talents, and abilities in service to God, His people, and those around you brings joy to you and those you are serving.

Don’t hold these gifts in. Allow God to use them and you to bless others in service.



FOUNDATIONS—SESSION 5

I'M SUPPOSED TO DO STUFF AS A CHRISTIAN? (SERVING IN AND THROUGH THE CHURCH)

“For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.” (Ephesians 2:10, NLT)

When we put our faith in Christ, we are given the best opportunities to use the gifts, talents, and abilities that God has given each of us in service to others around us. God expects us to use those gifts in and through the church. We want to give you every opportunity to do that.

Serving requires a major _____, because serving, is above all, CHRIST-like. Look at Philippians 2:5-7 -

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

Servants think “_____.” It’s not thinking less of ourselves, but thinking of ourselves less. They see serving as an opportunity rather than an obligation.

The good news is that God, Himself, will give us that mind-shift as we allow Him to shape us to be more like Jesus. He does that as we continually submit ourselves to Him. He uses the Bible, the Holy Spirit, and others to help us become the best servants possible.

THREE MAIN AREAS OF SERVICE:

- 1. The _____
- 2. The _____
- 3. The _____

A last note: the blessings _____ will _____ by serving others will be more than you can imagine. Knowing you are using your gifts, talents, and abilities in service to God, His people, and those around you brings _____ to you and those you are serving.



FOUNDATIONS—SESSION 6 (ANSWER KEY)

HOW CAN I TELL OTHERS ABOUT JESUS? (SHARING THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS)

“But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.” (1 Peter 3:15–16)

When you put your trust in Christ, you received such things as forgiveness of all your sins, the guarantee of Heaven when you die, access to God through prayer, God’s Holy Spirit living in you to help you understand the Bible, and countless other blessings.

God expects His people to help other people obtain these things through Jesus as well. And He has given us tools to do just that.

The foundation from 1 Peter 3:15–16 has a few parts to it:

1. Be surrendered in your own heart and life to Jesus.

Can you say you are sold out to Jesus? If not, give your life to him completely. If you’re not sure exactly what that means, see me after the class or talk to one of the pastors. Any of us would be glad to discuss that with you.

2. Be prepared to give the reasons for your trust in Christ.

Why did you give your life to Christ? Who and what did God use to convince you of your need for Him? How has your life changed since giving your life to Jesus? How would you explain to someone that he/she can have a relationship with Jesus for themselves? (More on this in a bit . . .)

3. Be NICE about it!

There are lots of tools you can use to share the good news of Jesus with people you know and love. Here are a few:

- **Share videos** of your pastors sharing Christ during a service.
- **Invite** them to **church**.
- **Give a tract** (small booklets/pamphlets that explain the good news of Jesus)—be careful, as some are better than others.
- Learn to share a simple **diagram** like “The Bridge to Life.”
- **Introduce** them to someone who is comfortable telling others about Jesus.



Prayer is key! Pray for those you want to share Jesus with, that God would open their hearts to hear and receive the message, and that they would respond to God's offer of love and salvation. Suggestion: Pray for two or three people specifically, asking God to give you an opportunity to share Jesus with them or introduce them to church or a pastor.



FOUNDATIONS—SESSION 6

HOW CAN I TELL OTHERS ABOUT JESUS? (SHARING THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS)

“But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.” (1 Peter 3:15–16)

When you put your trust in Christ, you received such things as forgiveness of all your sins, the guarantee of Heaven when you die, access to God through prayer, God’s Holy Spirit living in you to help you understand the Bible, and countless other blessings.

God expects His people to help other people obtain these things through Jesus as well. And He has given us tools to do just that.

The foundation from 1 Peter 3:15–16 has a few parts to it:

4. Be _____ in your own heart and life to Jesus.

Can you say you are sold out to Jesus? If not, give your life to him completely. If you’re not sure exactly what that means, see me after the class or talk to one of the pastors. Any of us would be glad to discuss that with you.

5. Be _____ to give the reasons for your trust in Christ.

Why did you give your life to Christ? Who and what did God use to convince you of your need for Him? How has your life changed since giving your life to Jesus? How would you explain to someone that he/she can have a relationship with Jesus for themselves? (More on this in a bit . . .)

6. Be _____!

There are lots of tools you can use to share the good news of Jesus with people you know and love. Here are a few:

- _____ of your pastors sharing Christ during a service.
- _____ them to _____.
- _____ (small booklets/pamphlets that explain the good news of Jesus)—be careful, as some are better than others.
- Learn to share a simple _____ like “The Bridge to Life.”
- _____ them to someone who is comfortable telling others about Jesus.



_____ is key! Pray for those you want to share Jesus with, that God would open their hearts to hear and receive the message, and that they would respond to God's offer of love and salvation. Suggestion: Pray for two or three people specifically, asking God to give you an opportunity to share Jesus with them or introduce them to church or a pastor.



FOUNDATIONS—SESSION 7 (ANSWER KEY)

IMPACT BEYOND YOUR OWN SELF (MULTIPLYING YOUR LIFE IN THE LIVES OF OTHERS)

“And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.” (2 Timothy 2:2)

One of the greatest joys of the Christian life is that we get to interact with all sorts of people with all sorts of stories and backgrounds, including people who are new to the faith.

You can step into someone’s life and help them live for Jesus as they learn many of the same things you’ve been learning in these sessions. It’s a great blessing to be able to mentor someone as they grow in their relationship with Jesus. This process of coming alongside and mentoring someone in the faith is called “discipling,” because we are helping them become disciples of Jesus.

- Sometimes it starts with helping someone **come to Jesus**.

Invite someone to church, introduce them to people in your small group, or share how they can have what Jesus offers to those who put their faith in him—and rejoice when they respond by giving their lives to Jesus.

- Other times it might be someone who is **still new** to the faith and needs **guidance** in the basics (The Great 8).

They have given their lives to Jesus previously—or recently—and need someone to come alongside them, even if you weren’t the one to lead that person to Jesus.

- Investing in someone’s life is a **blessing** to both of you.

The disciple gains essential grounding in the faith; you get the blessing of seeing someone grow and flourish in it.

- You do not need to be **an expert** in anything.

You just need a heart for people and a willingness to take time to be with someone who wants to follow Jesus. If you get a question you don’t know the answer to, you say, “I don’t know! Let me find an answer for you!”

- There are people ready to **come alongside** you as you **come alongside** someone else.

It’s a team effort! Pray that God would bring you someone you can disciple!



FOUNDATIONS—SESSION 7

IMPACT BEYOND YOUR OWN SELF (MULTIPLYING YOUR LIFE IN THE LIVES OF OTHERS)

“And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.” (2 Timothy 2:2)

One of the greatest joys of the Christian life is that we get to interact with all sorts of people with all sorts of stories and backgrounds, including people who are new to the faith.

You can step into someone’s life and help them live for Jesus as they learn many of the same things you’ve been learning in these sessions. It’s a great blessing to be able to mentor someone as they grow in their relationship with Jesus. This process of coming alongside and mentoring someone in the faith is called “discipling,” because we are helping them become disciples of Jesus.

- Sometimes it starts with helping someone _____.

Invite someone to church, introduce them to people in your small group, or share how they can have what Jesus offers to those who put their faith in him—and rejoice when they respond by giving their lives to Jesus.

- Other times it might be someone who is _____ to the faith and needs _____ in the basics (The Great 8).

They have given their lives to Jesus previously—or recently—and need someone to come alongside them, even if you weren’t the one to lead that person to Jesus.

- Investing in someone’s life is a _____ to both of you.

The disciple gains essential grounding in the faith; you get the blessing of seeing someone grow and flourish in it.

- You do not need to be _____ in anything.

You just need a heart for people and a willingness to take time to be with someone who wants to follow Jesus. If you get a question you don’t know the answer to, you say, “I don’t know! Let me find an answer for you!”

- There are people ready to _____ you as you _____ someone else.

It’s a team effort! Pray that God would bring you someone you can disciple!



FOUNDATIONS—SESSION 8 (ANSWER KEY)

“YOU CAN HAVE IT ALL, LORD . . .” (LIVING FOR JESUS WITH YOUR WHOLE LIFE)

The Christian life is more than a one-time decision putting your faith in Jesus for forgiveness and a home in Heaven. It’s a lifestyle of following Jesus as we listen and obey him. Jesus wants your whole life, not just an hour on Sundays or a few hours in church and small groups. Let’s look at a few passages from the Bible that outline this for us.

“Then he said to them all: ‘Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.’” (Luke 9:23)

1. Following Jesus means saying “Yes” to him and “No” to ourselves when our desires conflict with him

and his teachings. Jesus wants to be LORD of your life. This means he is the boss over every area, such as:

- Time
- Relationships
- Finances
- Leisure
- Work

Scripture is the final authority for life. Culture, society, and opinion polls don’t count! So even if “everybody else” is doing it, supporting it, or condoning it, if Scripture (God’s Word) says it’s wrong, it’s wrong. We need to obey God instead of people, even if it makes us unpopular with friends and family.

“Peter and the other apostles replied: ‘We must obey God rather than human beings!’” (Acts 5:29)

2. Following Jesus means understanding that it will be hard at times as we love and obey Jesus.

For instance, sometimes friends and family won’t understand your decision to live for Jesus above all else. It may mean taking a stand at work regarding unfair practices or bad treatment of employees, customers, vendors, etc. It might mean saying no to a family activity that includes things the Bible says are wrong. It might mean befriending someone who has been mistreated by others, or who is “unlovely” in some way. It might even mean forfeiting money because it would have been through dishonest gain.



“Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.” (John 14:21)

3. Jesus expects full obedience. “Warm fuzzies” for Jesus don’t cut it. He says we show our love through our obedience.

4. Our loving obedience brings a deeper relationship and knowledge of God. What happens if we don’t obey Jesus perfectly? We come to him for forgiveness!

“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.” (1 John 1:8–10)

“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” (John 10:10)

5. The great news is that Jesus wants you to have a great and full life!

6. Living for Jesus doesn’t mean losing all enjoyment in life. In fact, it opens you up to a whole new level of awesomeness as you receive the blessings God has for His children.

7. We’ve been lied to by Satan into believing that living for Jesus means no fun or enjoyment. But Jesus promised just the opposite. And He died to bring it to us.

Bottom line: listen and obey—this is what it means to love and follow Jesus (John 14:21), and He promises to bless us abundantly as we do this, with the help of the Holy Spirit.



FOUNDATIONS—SESSION 8

“YOU CAN HAVE IT ALL, LORD . . .” (LIVING FOR JESUS WITH YOUR WHOLE LIFE)

The Christian life is more than a one-time decision putting your faith in Jesus for forgiveness and a home in Heaven. It’s a lifestyle of following Jesus as we listen and obey him. Jesus wants your whole life, not just an hour on Sundays or a few hours in church and small groups. Let’s look at a few passages from the Bible that outline this for us.

“Then he said to them all: ‘Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.’” (Luke 9:23)

1. Following Jesus means saying “_____” to him and “_____” to ourselves when our desires conflict with him and his teachings. Jesus wants to be LORD of your life. This means he is the boss over every area, such as:

- T _____
- R _____
- F _____
- L _____
- W _____

_____ is the final authority for life. Culture, society, and opinion polls don’t count! So even if “everybody else” is doing it, supporting it, or condoning it, if Scripture (God’s Word) says it’s wrong, it’s wrong. We need to obey God instead of people, even if it makes us unpopular with friends and family.

“Peter and the other apostles replied: ‘We must obey God rather than human beings!’” (Acts 5:29)

2. Following Jesus means understanding that it will be _____ at times as we love and obey Jesus. For instance, sometimes friends and family won’t understand your decision to live for Jesus above all else. It may mean taking a stand at work regarding unfair practices or bad treatment of employees, customers, vendors, etc. It might mean saying no to a family activity that includes things the Bible says are wrong. It might mean befriending someone who has been mistreated by others, or who is “unlovely” in some way. It might even mean forfeiting money because it would have been through dishonest gain.



“Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.” (John 14:21)

3. Jesus expects _____. “Warm fuzzies” for Jesus don’t cut it. He says we show our love through our obedience.

4. Our loving obedience brings a deeper _____ and _____ of God. What happens if we don’t obey Jesus perfectly? We come to him for forgiveness!

“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.” (1 John 1:8–10)

“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” (John 10:10)

5. The great news is that Jesus _____ you to have a _____ and _____ life!

6. Living for Jesus doesn’t mean _____ all _____ in life. In fact, it opens you up to a whole new level of awesomeness as you receive the blessings God has for His children.

7. We’ve been _____ to by Satan into believing that living for Jesus means no _____ or _____. But Jesus promised just the opposite. And He died to bring it to us.

Bottom line: listen and obey—this is what it means to love and follow Jesus (John 14:21), and He promises to bless us abundantly as we do this, with the help of the Holy Spirit.



THE KICKSTARTER EVENT AND TRAINING COORDINATOR HANDBOOK

Note: A more detailed discussion of the actual Kickstarter Event service is found in Session 4. You will want to review that material and have it with you move through this section. This section gives you some specific tasks with suggested time frames to help you set up this service. If you purchased the coaching option, a separate coaching session with the Coordinator is included with this program. This session will walk you step-by-step through setting up your Kickstarter event. Contact your pastor to get the contact information from Discipleship DNA for you to set up your coaching session.

The Kickstarter Event is the main way you will publicly invite your congregation to get involved in the all-important ministry of disciple-making as part of the Kickstart process.

This service will include a special message from one of your own pastors that lays out the call to obedience to Jesus' Great Commission to make disciples. This also includes a call to action to sign up for training to establish new believers in the faith and get into long-term discipling relationships.

While you can have the Kickstarter Event at any time, I suggest you time it to compliment any upcoming outreach events you have or services where you anticipate a higher than normal attendance at which an evangelistic message is preached.

In the weeks and months before this Kickstarter Event, there are a few tasks that need to be done to ensure the event runs smoothly. It's important to note that **all** aspects of the Kickstarter Event and Training need to be **completed** at least one to two weeks **before your outreach service** so disciplers will be ready to begin following up with new believers gained!

Your Kickstart coaching package purchase includes a live video meeting where we walk you through the scheduling using your own calendar of events. This will help you navigate around any particular issues with your unique situation, as well as help you with any questions that arise with the scheduling.

The Recommended Task List in Order

- Along with the church leadership, decide what special calendar event you wish to focus on for the outreach event. For example, Christmas or Easter.

Working *backward* from there . . .

- Schedule the **last date** of Discippler Training. This should be **at least one or two weeks** before special calendar event (Christmas, Easter).



- Decide format of training (e.g., one session per week for the four sessions, two weeks of two sessions each, one big day of training, etc. This is up to you!)
- Schedule **start date** of Discipled Training (approximately one or two weeks after Kickstarter Event).
- Decide date of Kickstarter Event based on format, length, and last date of training.
- Download promo files for bulletin inserts, banners, etc., and order appropriate signage to arrive four weeks prior to Kickstarter Event through your local printer or other source. Make sure to track progress on this so you don't have any unpleasant surprises regarding arrival and quality.

*In an effort to keep your costs down, Discipleship DNA does not sell any signage. We encourage churches to do business locally whenever possible, so feel free to utilize your local printer for the signage. The downloadable promo files are found in the client-only portion of the Discipleship DNA website.

- Four weeks prior to Kickstarter Event: do bulletin inserts, get signage out, make specific announcements from platform.
- Ensure Kickstarter Event is promoted from the platform during all services prior to the Event. You can make teaser announcements (mentioned in Session 4) and then get more specific beginning four weeks prior to the Event.
- Make yourself available for questions from congregation regarding what it's about, why you and the leadership are so excited, and what you think God is going to do through this new emphasis on discipling.
- Oh, yeah—pray! A lot!
- Anticipate God doing something huge even in the preparations.

At the Kickstarter Event

- Make sure there are plenty of sign-up sheets, tables, pens, brochures, etc.
- Be around to answer questions about the training. The info will be in the other printed materials you have, but someone may have misplaced their bulletin insert, given it to a child to color, used it for a napkin—whatever. One question you'll probably get is, "What is the deadline to sign up for the training?" That is up to you. We encourage people to sign up the day of the Kickstarter Event, but there are good reasons people have to wait, like talking to a spouse, seeing if they can arrange for a babysitter, or working around their dog's pedicure appointment.



- Be enthusiastic before, during, and after the service. When talking with people who sign up, tell them how excited you are about their stepping up for this. Don't be afraid to approach people about signing up. They might have been hesitant, but a personal word from you might make all the difference.
- Pray during the service that God would open hearts to become part of this new culture.
- Anticipate God doing something huge during the service.

Coordinating the Training

- Collect all contact info of people who sign up for the training.
- Schedule training sessions around the dates/times determined between you and leadership.
- Confirm location of training. Make sure equipment is available and working.
- If you are providing childcare, confirm those details.
- Download and print training materials from the client-only portion of the Discipleship DNA website or print out the necessary pages from the file containing this book.
- Arrange for food/drinks as necessary.
- Contact all who signed up to remind them of the training. Add how glad you are that they have committed to learning how to more fully obey Jesus' Great Commission to make disciples.
- Pray for all those involved—the trainer (if in-person or live video), the people coming, those working behind the scenes to make sure the training happens smoothly, the daycare people, and, of course, YOU!
- Anticipate God doing something huge during the training.

After the Outreach Event

After whatever event you use to invite people to give their lives to Jesus, you will need to follow up with the people who respond. Within twenty-four to forty-eight hours after that event, you will want your new disciplers to be contacting any new believers. (This is discussed a bit more in Session 4 in the section entitled, *Putting This Together with Your Outreach Event*).

Here are some suggestions for what to say in the follow-up call. (There is no need to follow this exactly. Make it from **you/the caller**, not from the book. Just use this to help you come up with your own approach.)

For individual follow-up by discipler assigned to new believer:



“Hello, Fred. This is Barney Rubble from _____ Church. How are you today?”

“Did I catch you at a good time?”

“I’m calling because you filled out a card at our service on Sunday, indicating that you have given your life to Jesus. I’m wondering if we could grab a cup of coffee sometime this week and visit about that. Is there a day of the week that works best for you? (Set up date/time/place.)”

If the person can’t meet that week, set something up for early the next week. Tell them you’d love to meet them at church this coming Sunday so they can put a face to the voice on the phone.

For person calling to inform new believer of upcoming call from discipler:

“Hello, Betty. This is Wilma Flintstone from _____ Church. How are you today?”

“Did I catch you at a good time?”

“I’m calling because you filled out a card at our service on Sunday, indicating that you have given your life to Jesus. That’s awesome!”

“One of the things we like to do when that happens is to connect you with someone who can meet with you and help you get started in this new relationship with God, so I wanted to let you know that _____ [or “someone”] will be calling you in the next day or two to see about getting together. Today I just wanted to say thanks for coming to church on Sunday, and we’re excited for the decision you made on Sunday.

“We hope to see you again this Sunday. If there is anything we can do for you in the meantime, please call or shoot us an email or contact us through the church website or send a carrier pigeon or use the Pony Express or Mr. McFeely from the post office.”

If a person is not interested in the individual follow-up/discipling process, thank them for their time, and invite them to continue to attend your church. Tell them you’d love to introduce yourself to them at church (if you haven’t already). Continue to be friendly with them. Invite them to be part of your own small group if they’d like to learn more about what it means to believe in Jesus, pray, understand the Bible, etc.

If there are more responses than people able to handle them in one-on-one follow-up/discipleship relationships, starting Foundations groups of three or four people would be appropriate. Those materials are found in Part IV.

Note: While Foundation groups can be “co-ed,” individual follow-up and discipling must be done by people of the same gender. Also, when working with children and underage teens who respond to the gospel, give these contacts to the children/youth workers to follow up.



Follow-up for situations where there are more responses than disciplers can individually handle:

“Hello, Peter. This is Nick Barton from _____ Church. How are you today?”

“Did I catch you at a good time?”

“I’m calling because you filled out a card at our service on Sunday, indicating that you have given your life to Jesus. That’s awesome!”

“I’m also calling to tell you that someone will be contacting you in the next day or two about what we call our ‘Foundations’ groups which are just for folks who have given their lives to Jesus like you did. They meet at different times during the week, so chances are there will be one that fits your schedule. We invite everyone who gives their lives to Jesus to be in of these groups, because they are designed to help you get started really well in your new relationship with God. Right now we have groups that meet on _____ [list available days/times].

“Do any of those sound like they would work for you? . . . Awesome. The host for that group is _____ who will be getting back to you soon with the location.”

[If none of those work, or the person is not ready to choose, say:]

“No problem—we’re looking to add additional groups to accommodate everyone but wanted to make sure we got hold of you to let you know about the groups. Is there a day of the week that would work well for you to be part of a small group like this?”

“We hope to see you again this Sunday!”

A designated person will make the second phone call if necessary to help them choose an appropriate Foundations group.

If you have **any** questions about any part of the Kickstarter Event or how to follow up with new believers following an outreach event, **please** email info@DiscipleshipDNA.com. Leave all your contact info and someone will respond by phone or email as quickly as possible. We want you to have all the information you need to have a successful start to this awesome new culture!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Brian La Croix is an ordained minister (The Wesleyan Church) and former second-career, bi-vocational pastor. He was active in local church ministry, including personal discipleship relationships before becoming a pastor from 2000 to 2012. He has continued to be active as a layman at the church he currently attends and discipling new believers. Brian also serves as a Police Chaplain and Reserve Police Officer.

He married Debra in February 1988, and they have twelve children, seven of whom were adopted from foster care. He and his family make their home in Aberdeen, SD. The air hurts their faces during the winter, but they don't have 347-foot snakes trying to eat them in their sleep or spiders the size of tractors.



Our Mission

We want to help you establish a culture where establishing new believers, maintaining long-term discipleship relationships, and reproducing disciples is part of the fabric of your church. It becomes part of who you ARE as a church, not just something you DO as a church. We want discipleship to be part of your church's DNA. And it's because the people in the seats are at the heart of it.

11 SE 8th Ave

Aberdeen, SD 57401

(605) 824-2340