

1. We began this series a couple of weeks ago by asking the question, **Why did God create me?**
2. We answered that question with three other questions.
 - a. What does God's word say?
 - b. What did Jesus do while on the earth?
 - c. How does that relate to us today?
3. According to 1 Corinthians 10:31, we are to do everything we do for the purpose of bringing glory to God.
4. We were created and we exist to lift the name of God up, not to lift ourselves up.
5. We saw from John 17:4 that was exactly what Jesus did while on the earth. **John 17:4, 6 I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. 6 "I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world.**
6. What's interesting about this passage is that Jesus says to God the father, I have finished the work you gave me to do before he died on the cross.
7. How could that be? Jesus identifies in verse 6 what his work was, to reveal God to those who were given to him, the disciples.
8. The work that Jesus is talking about is investing in 12 disciples and revealing the power of God to them, so that they too can know the father.
9. How does that relate to us? We are not the savior of the world, but we can be Jesus' disciple, and we can reveal God to others by being disciple makers.
10. Yes, dying on the cross was extremely significant to our salvation, but that was accomplished in a moment. What Jesus did day in and day out was invest in disciples.
11. Upon beginning his earthly ministry, Jesus called 12 disciples.
12. Then he invested in those disciples.
13. And then right before he left the earth, he commanded his disciples to go and make more disciples.
14. So, that brought us to our question from last week. **What is a disciple?**

15. We answered that question from Jesus' invitation to the original disciples found in **Matthew 4:19** And he saith unto them, **Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.**
16. We discussed last time three aspects of a disciples.
17. Disciples experience a head level change, a heart level change, and a hands level change.
18. Prior to our salvation, we are the head and authority in our life. But when we accept Jesus as our Lord and savior, we allow Jesus to become the head and the authority in our lives.
19. Jesus leads, and we follow. Jesus tells these 12 men; I want you to come follow me. I will be out front, and you will follow.
20. So, a disciple experiences a head level change.
21. Secondly, a disciple experiences a heart level change. "And I will Make you."
22. Jesus made it very clear from the beginning, that the result of following Him and allowing him to be the authority in their lives, that they would be changed. They would be transformed.
23. That change is best described in the pruning process that Jesus mentions in John chapter 15. Much like a plant, God prunes or cuts away that which is unproductive or not fruitful in our lives.
24. He prunes away that which hinders our growth in Him.
25. He reshapes not only the way we think, our belief system, but he also addresses and changes our attitudes, our heart and our character, so that we can be His messengers in the world.
26. I will make you, fishers of men. That is a hands level change.
27. When we accept Jesus as Lord and authority, and we allow him to change us from the inside out, the result is that we will see our purpose more clearly. Our mission, our reason for being will come into alignment with the mission of Jesus.
28. What was the mission of Jesus? The mission of Christ is people. When we spend time with Jesus, when his Holy Spirit lives in us, the result will be that we will care about what Jesus cares about.
29. And what Jesus cares about is people.
30. Our purpose is to represent Jesus to the lost of this world.
31. So, that brings us to today's question.

TITLE: How are Disciples Made?

1. In other words, how does this head change, and heart change, and hands change occur in our lives?
2. Some time back I was reading a book about this exact subject. How are disciples made.
3. This was a really good book. I agreed with every single area of growth the author mentioned in the book.
4. He touched on the head change, and the heart change, and the hands change.
5. But where I ran into difficulty was his description of how this happens.
6. Throughout the entire book, he describes this process as occurring in private, just us and God. There was no mention whatsoever about how being in relationship with other believers affected this growth process. None.
7. He mentions prayer, bible reading, meditation, application and several other things that will help in our spiritual growth of becoming a disciple of Jesus, and I agree that all of those aspects are vital. But there was not one mention of how our relationships with other believers ties into, and affects, and helps mold this process of being a disciple of Jesus.
8. And that bothered me because in the bible, **I do not see evidence that spiritual growth occurs in a vacuum**. In other words, isolated from intimate relationships with other believers.
9. In fact, I see just the opposite.
10. In the book of Acts chapter 2, we find what has been described as the birth of the church.
11. Before Jesus leaves to return to heaven, he gives his disciples the great commission, to go into all the world and make disciples.
12. He also tells them to wait for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit who will help them in being witnesses, which is a part of making disciples.

13. In acts chapter 2, the Holy Spirit comes. Thousands of people are drawn to the scene. Peter gets up and speaks, and in one single day about 3,000 people are saved.
14. Look with me how the people acted and what they did after the day of Pentecost.

TEXT: **Acts 2:42-47** They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. 44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

INTRO:

1. As you look at that passage of scripture of how the early church interacted with one another, in which part of that passage do you see the members of the early church living their lives in isolation from one another?
2. In which part of the passage do we see them getting together for an hour and a half on Sunday, and the rest of the time doing their own thing?
3. I don't know what you see, but I see the very opposite of isolation. Disciples were not made in isolation. How were they made?

Disciples are made in meaningful and safe relationships.

1. I am of the opinion that we generally act the way we do for a reason. There are past events and experiences and interactions with others that affect how we live our lives.
2. So, I asked the question. Why did the disciples establish the early church with the pattern of everyone being in close, intimate, safe relationships with others?
3. And the only answer I can come up with is that they were simply following the model they saw Jesus utilize.
4. Jesus made the original 12 disciples in the context of relationships.
5. In Matthew 15 and Mark 8, Jesus, together with the disciples fed a

crowd of thousands of people.

6. In Mark 12, Jesus pointed out the faithfulness of the widow and the giving of her mite.
7. Again, in Mark 8, Jesus gathers the disciples and tells them that to be his disciples would require denying ourselves, taking up our cross, and following him.
8. In Matthew 20, on the way to Jerusalem, Jesus pulls the disciples aside and told them he was going to die.
9. In Matthew chapter 5, Jesus removes himself from the crowds of people by going up to a mountain with his disciples.
10. In Matthew 13, Jesus gathers the disciples in a home to explain to them what a parable meant.
11. In Matthew 15, the disciples question Jesus to see if he knows that he has offended the Pharisees.
12. In Matthew 15 the disciples ask Jesus to send a woman away who won't quit asking for help.
13. In Matthew 18 Jesus taught the disciples about who would be the greatest in heaven.
14. In Matthew 17 Jesus explains to the disciples why they couldn't cast out a demon.
15. In Matthew 24 Jesus tells his disciples what things will be like before the world comes to an end.
16. In Matthew 26 Jesus rebukes the disciples for sleeping rather than praying.
17. I think by now you are probably starting to get the point. It seems to me that Jesus was with his disciples all the time.
18. They traveled together. They ate together. They prayed together. They learned lessons together.
19. And to me, that is why Acts 2:44 says the believers were together. They were just following the example of Jesus.
20. And I believe following the example of Jesus is highly important.
21. But we need to know that we live in a world, even the church world, where not much value is placed on following the example of Jesus.
22. This is not meant to be a negative bashing of anyone, it is just an

observation.

23. Over the past 30 years of ministry, I have been to countless meetings, conventions, seminars and retreats. And without exception there is a message that has been taught at almost all of them.
24. The methods may change, but the message stays the same.
25. In other words, it doesn't matter how you spread the message of Jesus, just as long as Jesus is the focus of that message.
26. To me, that explains how the author of the book how disciples are made chose to say that essentially, disciples are made in isolation.
27. He must have subscribed to the belief that the methods don't matter, just the message.
28. But a few years ago, I came across a statement made by Jim Putman in his book Real Life Discipleship that says this.
29. I believe not only is the message of Jesus sacred, but I believe the methods of Jesus are sacred as well.
30. How he did things is just as important as why he did things.
31. In the case of making disciples, which by the way is the great commission, I especially believe that is true.
32. We were not meant for isolation. Isolation is one of the tricks and traps of the enemy. He gets us alone, and then he knocks us off one at a time.
33. God's method for changing us and molding us and shaping us into his image is through relationships.
34. James 5:14 Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord.
35. James 5:16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.
36. Galatians 6:1-2 Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. 2 Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.
37. 1 Peter 4:8 Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.
38. 1 Thessalonians 5:11 Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.
39. The evidence is all through the bible. We are to serve the Lord in relationship with other believers.

40. Then why is there so much emphasis on individuality? Because...

We are not good at Godly relationships.

1. I shared with someone this week that this will be the shortest point I have ever preached.
2. How do I know that for the most part we are not good at doing relationships God's way?
3. **Matthew 18:15-17** "If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. **16** But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' **17** If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.
4. How do we know that for the most part we are not good at doing relationships God's way?
5. How many by a show of hands would say, I have no difficulty or struggle whatsoever obeying Matthew 18:15-17?
6. That's what I thought. Case closed.
7. So, because we are not good at doing relationships God's way...

We have to be intentional about relationships.

1. **Acts 2:42** They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.
2. What does intentionality look like? That's what it looks like.
3. Godly relationships were not any easier for the disciples or the early church than they are for us. How do we know that?
4. We know that because the disciples argued at times about who was going to be the greatest.
5. In Acts chapter 6 there was division because one group said they weren't getting their fair share of the support.
6. So, seven deacons were chosen to help solve the problem.
7. Deep, Godly relationships didn't just happen, they devoted themselves to godly relationships.
8. That word devote means to commit by a solemn act. Meaning to commit with others to the importance of something.
9. The early church committed themselves to one another and they

intentionally lived out that commitment each and every day through intimate relationships.

Conclusion:

1. In order for us to grow spiritually. In order for us to become the disciple that Jesus desires.
2. In order for the head change and heart change and hands change to occur, **we must devote ourselves to intentional relationships.**
3. An intentional relationship is more than a hi, how are you in the entry way, even though that is good.
4. An intentional relationship is more than greeting your neighbor after worship.
5. An intentional relationship is more than, I hope you have a good week on the way out the door.
6. An intentional relationship happens when we devote ourselves to building relationships.
7. Sometimes people will ask me. Pastor why are you always talking about connect groups.
8. You never shut up about it. Can't you talk about something else.
9. I could, but because relationships are not natural to us, I talk about connect groups so often, so we won't forget.
10. Our connect groups are intentionally designed to help build meaningful relationships, and to allow the Holy Spirit to change their lives.
11. I'm not asking you to commit to a connect group this morning. I am asking you to commit to meaningful relationships with other believers.
12. And if you have an intentional plan to build relationships that is better, by all means use it. But if not, why would you pass up the opportunity to build relationships in an environment designed just for that?
13. Stand to your feet.
14. Pray.
15. Lord God, I am not good at godly relationships.
16. I believe godly relationships are important.

17. Help me to devote myself to Godly relationships.