

1. A few weeks ago, we asked the question, **why did God create me?**
2. We find in 1 Corinthians 10:31 that we exist to bring God glory.
3. Then we discovered that Jesus modeled this truth in bringing God glory by investing in 12 disciples.
4. How does that apply to us?
5. 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.
6. Two weeks ago, we asked the question, **What is a disciple?**
1. We answered that question from Jesus' invitation to the original 12 disciples. **Matthew 4:19** And he saith unto them, **Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.**
7. Jesus initiated a head level change in them. He would lead and they would follow. Jesus was now to become the authority in their lives.
8. Jesus initiated a heart level change. And I will make you. Jesus made it clear that being his disciple meant that he was going to change and mold our character and our attitudes (heart).
9. Then Jesus initiated a hands level change. What was he going to make them into? Fishers of men.
10. The disciples were now to take on the mission of Jesus as their mission and be constantly involved in making disciples by seeing the lost saved, helping the saved grow spiritually, and releasing those growing disciples to go and make more disciples.
11. 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.
12. And what Jesus cares about is people.
13. Then last week, we asked the question, **How are disciples made?**
14. Disciples are made in deep meaningful relationships, not only with God, but with other followers of Christ.
15. Spiritual growth doesn't occur in our lives just between us and God, spiritual growth also occurs when we love one another enough to dedicate ourselves to deep meaningful relationships.
16. The early church modeled this truth for us by continually doing life together, and they were simply following the model that Jesus established when he did life together with the twelve.

17. Disciples of Jesus are designed for deep meaningful relationships with other disciples.
18. But there's a problem. For the most part we are not very good at doing relationships God's way.
19. From the very beginning of creation, we have this tendency inside us to want to blame everybody else for our lack of Godly relationships.
20. Adam & Eve were in the garden. The serpent deceived Eve into eating of the forbidden fruit, and then Eve gave Adam some of the fruit and he also ate.
21. But when God arrived and asked them what was going on, everyone started playing the blame game.
22. Eve said, he serpent deceived me. It's his fault.
23. Adam replied, the woman you gave me told me to eat the fruit and so I did. It's her fault.
24. Nobody was willing to take responsibility for their own actions, and the result was broken relationships. Not only with God, but with one another.
25. Tens of thousands of years later we haven't changed much. Let some kind of conflict arise and very quickly one person is going to start blaming the other person, and at the same time they will insist they have done nothing wrong. They are innocent.
26. Relationships can become weakened, damaged, and if not fixed become broken, which in turn hinders our spiritual growth.
27. So, the first way disciples are made is through relationships.
28. This morning we are going to ask the question again, but we are going to look at another aspect of the answer.

TITLE: How are disciples made? Part 2.

TEXT: Ephesians 4:11-15 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, **12** to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up **13** 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. **14** Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. **15** Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. (NIV)

1. Again, the question before us is, how are disciples made?
2. Said another way, how do disciples grow spiritually to a place of maturity?
3. Please, no hands and certainly no names.
4. Have you ever met an adult, and the more you got to know them the more you realized they were not very mature? They were kind of childish.
5. Have you ever met a believer in Jesus, who the more you listened to them, the more you realized, they are not very spiritually mature. They are still a baby in their faith.
6. Have you ever thought something or acted a certain way, only to realize you were not as spiritually mature as you thought you were?
7. How many understand that people of all ages can throw fits and tantrums like a two-year-old?
8. Spiritual maturity doesn't normally happen accidentally. It happens when the relationships we are in are intentional about spiritual maturity.
9. That is the essence of what Paul is saying to the Ephesian church.
10. Paul says, Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and the teachers for a purpose.
11. To equip God's people for works of service so that the body of Christ might be built up.
12. So, spiritual maturity begins to happen when everyone understands that it's everyone's responsibility to serve and build up the whole.
13. Everyone who considers themselves a part of a church should be serving somewhere in the church.
14. Going to church isn't like going to a restaurant to eat. You walk in, sit down, and someone waits on you or serves you.
15. Going to church is meant to be a place where everyone serves so that everyone can enjoy the benefits of the family of God.
16. And why is serving so important? It is through service that...Ephesians 4:13 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.
17. Please know that I say this with a great amount of love. But the only people that should be coming to church and having a bottle put in their

mouths are the physical babies in the nursery.

18. Adults don't look good with bottles or pacifiers.

19. Ephesians 4:14 Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming.

20. I have to tell you I love babies. Babies, especially newborn babies are a physical miracle that we can see and hold and touch.

21. We have a new grandson and I think he is the greatest.

22. But babies are helpless and defenseless and fragile little people who are an accident waiting to happen.

23. Without constant, around the clock care, that baby will not survive.

24. The same is true for us when we don't mature spiritually. When we don't grow up spiritually.

25. We may be cute for a while, but before long the cute is going to wear off and we will be sitting ducks to get snatched by the enemy.

26. Disciples of Jesus are continually growing in Jesus. And how does that happen?

27. Ephesians 4:15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.

28. I'd like us to focus on one phrase in this verse, Speaking the Truth in Love. Repeat that with me...

29. We said last week that disciples are made in relationship.

30. If we look at that phrase, the relational part can be seen in the words speaking...and in love.

31. Speaking is a part of communication that every relationship needs, and love is a gift that every relationship needs.

32. But sandwiched in between those are the words, **the truth.**

33. What is the basis, what is the foundation, what is the stabilizing factor in any relationship? The truth.

34. A relationship that isn't founded and sustained on the truth will eventually fall apart.

35. Our relationship with God.

36. Our relationship with others. And even...

37. Our relationship with ourselves.

38. All healthy relationships require truth.
39. In the same way spiritual growth from Christ, in the context of meaningful relationships with others must be founded upon the truth.
40. Before I make this next statement, let me be clear that I am talking to and about myself first.
41. News flash. For the most part, we don't like the truth unless the truth makes us feel good. We have the tendency to reject truth that doesn't make us all warm and fuzzy on the inside.
42. Let's go all the way back to the story of Adam and Even in the garden.
43. Yes, the serpent did deceive Eve. Yes, Eve did give Adam some of the fruit.
44. But the truth is, nobody forced the fruit down anybody's throat.
45. Eve chose to eat the fruit and Adam chose to eat the fruit.
46. But remember from earlier, rather than facing the truth they resorted to blaming someone else. And WE are not much better.
47. And so, because we often shy away from the truth, it is very easy for us to fall into one extreme or the other.
48. The first extreme is what I call...love without the truth.
49. We desperately want to receive and give love to another, but we are afraid if we speak the truth about how we feel we will lose the love. So, we just focus on love, love, love.
50. And love is a wonderful thing. But guess what? Love without truth leads to license. You say, what do you mean by that Pastor?
51. When all we do is try and love, love, love, but we are unwilling to speak or receive truth, it gives the other person license to walk on us, offend us, or hurt us.
52. So, in the context of close relationships with other believers, which is necessary for spiritual growth, if the relationship isn't based on truth, then even the attempts to love, love, love will suffer.
53. One person will eventually hurt the other, most of the time without even knowing it.
54. Love without truth leads to license.
55. The other extreme is what I call truth without love.

56. When one person in the relationship is so focused on telling you what they think is the truth that they tell you what the truth is continually, the other person begins to feel like they are not good enough and will never measure up.
57. The truth teller becomes a tyrant. A dictator. Or a bully to be ignored. How many are still with me this morning.
58. But Paul tells the Ephesians that what will cause growth and maturity to flourish is the truth spoken in love.
59. Truth and love. Love and truth. Never one without the other.
60. Besides what Paul says to the Ephesians what other proof is there that both truth and love are required for spiritual growth and maturity?
61. We see both truth and love present in every single relationship Jesus had with people while here on the earth. Especially with his disciples.
62. For the next few moments, I want us to dissect John chapter 14 verses 1-7.
63. John 14:1 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me."
64. What I see in this verse is love. It's ok guys. There is no need to worry. You believe in God, and you believe in me. When you believe in me you have nothing to fear.
65. John 14:2 My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?
66. Here I see the truth. Jesus makes a statement of fact. My father's house has plenty of room for you. And even though I am going to leave you soon, be assured that I am going to get your room ready.
67. John 14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.
68. Love. Guys, I'm not abandoning you. I'm coming back for you. And when I come back for you, we are going to be together in my father's house.
69. John 14:4 You know the way to the place where I am going."
70. Truth. You already know how to get there. I have told you already.
71. John 14:6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

72. Love. I'm it. You know me so you know the way. And because you know me you can have life. So, don't be afraid of the unknown. I am with you.

73. John 14:7 *If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."*

74. Truth. Come on guys. You should be getting this already. You know me and because you know me you know my father.

75. I have told you all this before. Believe me and trust me.

76. One of the things I love about the bible is that from cover to cover, God is demonstrating how to relate to him, how to relate to others, and how to relate to ourselves.

Conclusion:

1. Over and over and over again he tells us, and he shows us. This is how life works. This is how relationships work. This is how loving yourself works.
2. So, what that means is...if it seems like God's ways aren't working, the problem is generally that I'm not working it God's way. I'm leaving a part out.
3. I'm trying to have all the love without truth, or I'm stuck on truth without God's love.
4. As we get ready to close today, I believe the Holy Spirit is asking us to embrace spiritual maturity and spiritual growth by being committed not only to love, but to truth.

5. God.

- Allow the Holy Spirit to speak to you and show you areas where you need to grow. And recognize that everything God does is for our good, and because he loves us.
- Love God, but also be truthful with him about how you feel.
- I love you God, but I'm confused, I'm tired, I'm worried, I'm angry.
- God can handle our true emotions.

6. Others.

- Love others but be truthful with them. I love you, and because our relationship means so much to me, I need to let you know that you hurt me.
- Be willing to receive the truth from others without being defensive

or shifting blame. Tell me how I hurt you so I can make it better. I love you and I don't want there to be distance between us.

7. Ourselves.

- Mark 12:30-31 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' 31 The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.
- Jesus has commanded you to love you. Not to hate you. Be patient with yourself. Don't be critical of yourself. Stop thinking the worst of yourself. Love doesn't operate that way.
- Be truthful with yourself. When you fail, own up to it. When you are hurting don't ignore it, find out the truth of why.
- Quit trying to be perfect. Only God is perfect, and you are not him.

8. Have people stand and pray.

9. Ask people to make a commitment to love and truth.