



Disciple -ship

Movement

A GUIDE TO LOVE-MOTIVATED,
OBEDIENCE-DRIVEN DISCIPLE MAKING



I. Introduction

Jesus said, "Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

MATTHEW 28:19-20

Obedience to Jesus and His teachings is often overlooked when it comes to fulfilling his great commission. Not only are his disciples to make more disciples and baptize them, but Jesus tells us to also "teach new disciples to obey all he's commanded" (Matt. 28:19-20). Jesus expects disciples to be teaching disciples to obey all his teachings. Jesus is the greatest disciple-maker to have ever lived, and he expected obedience from those he was discipling. He also expected his disciples to teach new disciples to obey his teachings. We should as well.

Teaching new disciples to obey Jesus is what Jesus has told His made disciples to do. If our disciple-making doesn't teach toward or expect obedience, or helping disciples obey Jesus, then we're not discipling the way Jesus did or has told us.

As we study what Jesus says in this Great Commission, it seems Jesus defines disciple-making as making another disciple, baptizing them, AND teaching them to OBEY him.



QUESTION TO THINK ABOUT:

What would it look like if obedience to Jesus became the priority for making disciples, and living as one?

Recently church leaders from around the world were discussing how obedience to Jesus is often not mentioned or talked about. One of the leaders commented, "the emphasis of obedience has gotten lost in our message of grace." So true. But why? Why should we obey Jesus? Let's explore what the Bible says about WHY we should obey Jesus and expect obedience from disciples of Jesus.

II. Why obey? *Part One*

Jesus said to his disciples, "If you love me, you will keep (obey) my commandments...whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me."

JOHN 14:15,21

Jesus plainly says obedience is not only about doing what He says, obedience is about loving Him.

We can't forget also how Jesus in his letter to the church at Ephesus in the book of Revelation said, *"Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and DO the things you did at first"* (**REVELATION 2:4-5**). Jesus links loving him with doing, with obeying him. We are loving him as we obey him.

Jesus describes that one of the greatest expressions of love a disciple can give him is moment by moment, everyday obedience. Those who love Jesus obey Jesus. That's what Jesus said. The test then if someone truly loves Jesus is seen in their desire to obey Him, even when it's hard.

Obeying Jesus is an expression of love and gratitude to Jesus for what He's done for us. For the disciple of Jesus, we don't obey to earn His acceptance, but to express our love to Him for already accepting us by what He did for us on the cross! Obedience is our way of saying, "Thank You! We love you, Jesus!"

WHY EXPECT OBEDIENCE TO JESUS FROM THOSE WE DISCIPLE?

Because obedience to Jesus **EXPRESSES** a disciple's love for Jesus (**JOHN 14:15, 21, REVELATION 2:4-5**).

III. Why obey? Part Two

"Be careful then, dear brothers and sisters. Make sure that your own hearts are not evil and unbelieving, turning you away from the living God. You must warn each other every day, while it is still 'today,' so that none of you will be deceived by sin and hardened against God. For if we are faithful to the end, trusting God just as firmly as when we first believed, we will share in all that belongs to Christ. Remember what it says: 'Today when you hear his voice, don't harden your hearts as Israel did when they rebelled.' And who was it who rebelled against God, even though they heard his voice? Wasn't it the people Moses led out of Egypt? And who made God angry for forty years? Wasn't it the people who sinned, whose corpses lay in the wilderness? And to whom was God speaking when he took an oath that they would never enter his rest? Wasn't it the people who disobeyed him?' So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief"

HEBREWS 3:12-19

The reason God's people rebelled against him, turned away from him leading to their disobedience and God's discipline of them through their 40 years in the wilderness was "because of unbelief". The writer links the disobedience of God's people with their unbelief.

James, the half-brother of Jesus, understood this and wrote of it to the churches in the first century when he said, *"What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead"* (JAMES 2:15,26).

James links a disciple's deeds of obedience to Jesus as evidence of one's believing in him. Just as there is no life to the body without the spirit, James says there has been no new life in Jesus if there is no evidence of obedience to him.

Obedience is the fruit that comes out of the seed of believing Jesus is who he says is, did what he said he did, and will do what he said he will do. Obedience proves a disciple believes him. Obedience proves the faith in Jesus is genuine.

WHY EXPECT OBEDIENCE TO JESUS FROM THOSE WE DISCIPLE?

Because obedience to Jesus is **EVIDENCE** a disciple believes Jesus, and is still believing Him.

IV. Why obey? *Part Three*

"By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."

I JOHN 5:2-3

John also wrote,

"And we can be sure that we know him if we obey his commandments. If someone claims, 'I know God,' but doesn't obey God's commandments, that person is a liar and is not living in the truth. But those who obey God's word truly show how completely they love him. That is how we know we are living in him."

I JOHN 2:3-5

John, one of Jesus' closest friends and followers says that those who know Jesus obey Jesus. In fact, obedience to him is evidence one belongs to him. It's as if John is saying if you want to know if you love and belong to Jesus, then look at your obedience to him. If you are obeying him then you for sure know him, you for sure belong to him.

Obedience is not a dirty word. But I wonder why we don't talk about it more or expect it? Jesus says obeying him is how we express our love to him. He says it's how we live out our belief in him. He says it reveals we know and belong to him.

WHY EXPECT OBEDIENCE TO JESUS FROM THOSE WE DISCIPLE?

Because obedience to Jesus is **EVIDENCE** a disciple knows and belongs to Jesus.

V. The Holy Spirit

Our Powersource for Love-Motivated, Obedience-Driven Disciple Making

The Apostle Paul wrote, “*because if you live according to the flesh, you are going to die. But if **by the Spirit** you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live* (ROMANS 8:13).” Paul is teaching that the Source for obedience is the Holy Spirit living inside each follower of Jesus. The Spirit living inside each disciple of Jesus is the One giving the disciple the power to say no to sinful desires and say yes to living for Jesus.

The Apostle Peter in his home Bible study with Cornelius and his friends said, “... *how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how he went about doing good and healing all who were under the tyranny of the devil, **because God (the Holy Spirit) was with Him*** (ACTS 10:38)”. Peter is teaching how even Jesus’ obedience to the Father through healing and doing good was done through the power of the Holy Spirit, who had descended upon him at his baptism (MATTHEW 3:13-7).

In the Old Testament, in the book of Ezekiel, God also makes it clear how obedience to Him will be through the power and presence of His Spirit living inside His people. He said, “*And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules* (EZEKIEL 36:27).” God is very specific. He says obeying Him is caused by the Spirit He has placed inside His people. A disciple’s power for obedience to Jesus comes from and through the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Like the energy or electricity that turns on the light in a darkened room, the Spirit is the One turning the heart of a disciple on to obey. A lamp can be in a room, but without it plugged into the electricity it will not light up. The ability for the lamp to lighten up the room comes from the electricity its connected to. In a similar way, the Holy Spirit is the energy and power giving the disciple the ability to be a light to obey Jesus.

Do you long to experience God's power and presence in your life? Do you long to see the Spirit at work in you? Obey Jesus. Obedience to Jesus is a display of the Spirit's power and presence because it is only through the Spirit a disciple can truly obey.

WHY EXPECT OBEDIENCE TO JESUS FROM THOSE WE DISCIPLE?

To **EXPERIENCE** the power and presence of the Holy Spirit in your life as you obey Jesus.

VI. What does Making Disciples who Obey Jesus Involve?

It involves elevating obeying Jesus in our discipleship relationships and church community.

We must remind one another that our obedience is not out of obligation but out of love for Jesus.

It involves intentional conversations with other disciples of Jesus sharing areas where we're struggling to obey Jesus and His teachings.

This won't happen without being intentional.

It involves being actively involved in one another's lives, truly sharing life together asking vulnerable, honest questions that help each other obey Jesus.

This means not only showing up to a church service but sharing life beyond that time, walking alongside one another outside the walls of the church building or house engaging in conversation together.

It involves repentance of sin.

As disciples become aware of their disobedience they must repent and confess their sin of disobedience, believing His grace he will graciously forgive them and cleanse them by the blood he poured out for them on the cross (1 JOHN 1:9).

It involves time and patience.

Seeds take time to grow then mature to where they begin producing and reproducing fruit. Similarly, disciple-making takes walking with someone long enough to teach the teachings of Jesus til those seeds of truth grow and are put into practice.

VII. Is this “kind” of Disciple-Making Possible?

YES! BECAUSE...

1. **Jesus personally lived it, demonstrating it's possible.** He said “I have come down from heaven to do the will of my Father (John 6:38)”. Paul tells us Jesus was obedient, even obedient to death on a cross (PHILIPPIANS 2:8). The Hebrews writer described how Jesus learned obedience through his suffering (Hebrews 5:7-8). Jesus obeyed the Father because He loved His Father.

Jesus shows us love-motivated, obedience-based disciple-making is possible because he first lived it in obeying His Father, and we are told that whoever wants to follow Jesus must walk as He walked (1 JOHN 2:6). Jesus showed us how to walk this earth as a love-motivated, obedience-based disciple-maker.

2. **Because Jesus has given his Holy Spirit to live inside his disciples for the purpose to help them love him and obey His teachings (JOHN 14:25-26).** Obeying Jesus as a disciple of Jesus is possible because Jesus has given us the Holy Spirit who helps us obey.

VIII. Definitions for Love-motivated, Obedience-driven Disciple Making

DEFINITIONS

DISCIPLE

A Disciple is believing Jesus and His sacrifice of blood on the cross and His defeat of sin and death at His resurrection for their personal sins against God, and in response of gratitude and love the disciple is living to obey Jesus and His teachings.

DISCIPLEMAKER

A Disciplemaker is a disciple of Jesus helping others believe Jesus and obey and live out His teachings.

DISCIPLESHIP

Discipleship is helping people believe and follow Jesus, and obey and live out His teachings.



QUESTION TO THINK ABOUT:

• *Who can you begin discipling to obey Jesus out of love and gratitude for what He's done for them? Share names of people who come to mind.*

IX. What now?

ACTIVITY: Pair up with another disciple of Jesus. Take turns asking and answering these love motivated, obedience driven disciple making questions.

ASK & ANSWER

Here are 4 Love Motivated, Obedience Driven Discipleship Questions to ask and answer in your disciple making relationships.

1. What's one area in your life right now where you're struggling to obey Jesus?
2. Why is this an obedience issue for you? What's something you need to confess to Jesus, or start believing about Jesus to move toward obedience in this area?
3. What might a step of obedience in this area look like for you?
4. How can I/we walk alongside you in your desire to love & obey Jesus in this area?

X. Closing Remarks

Teaching new disciples to obey Jesus is what Jesus has told His made disciples to do (MATTHEW 28:19-20). If our disciple-making doesn't teach toward or expect obedience, or helping disciples obey Jesus, then we're not discipling the way Jesus did or has told us. Even more, we're failing to express our love to Jesus as his disciples because it is through our obedience to him we express our love for him.

Jesus said, *"If you love me, obey my commandments (JOHN 14:15)."* Imagine the love and worship Jesus will receive as his disciples learn and live to obey him! To Him be the glory!