

To Make Disciples

"Advance: MY Joyful 'Yes' to God's Calling" Series, September 26 & 27, 2026 | Mark 1:16-18

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Jesus calls us all to be disciples.

Separating Christians into laity and clergy was wrong in the Middle Ages.

In Europe, society was divided into three groups: those who pray (priests, monks, and nuns), those who fight (the nobles), and everyone else who works. The priests, nuns, and monks prayed on behalf of everyone else. They were called. Everyone else just survived.¹ That way of thinking was wrong then, and it was challenged by the Reformation and the modern world, but it stays around in some places to this day.

Separating Christians into disciples and Christians is wrong now.

If we have come to faith in Jesus, we know that we're Christians. But when we hear the term, "disciple," some of us think of that as being like a calling to be a "super-Christian." We think that New Testament figures like Peter, James, and John were disciples. We tell ourselves that gung-ho Christians today can be disciples, that ordinary Christians aren't necessarily disciples. But that's not how Jesus thinks about us. Jesus calls everyone who comes to Him to be His disciples. Disciples are Christians. Christians are disciples.

We all share the calling to be disciples of Jesus.

In the New Testament, Jesus calls people to follow Him. It's a calling to become disciples. He doesn't call some to be disciples and others to be Christians. And when Jesus sends His disciples out after His resurrection, He commands them to go and make disciples of all nations. In **Matthew 28:19** He says,

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations ..."

Here at Valley, we cultivate disciples.

That's our mission. We cultivate disciples who advance the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That means that our job as a church is to help you discover and live out this critical calling from Jesus. And we are relentless about that purpose.

Have you thought about your calling to be a disciple of Jesus?

Last week we talked about the calling common to all human beings—the calling to come to God Himself. This week, we are starting to think about the calling that belongs to every Christian—the calling to be disciples of Jesus. Before you can understand the unique calling that belongs to you as an individual, you must understand who you are as a disciple, what you do as a disciple, and where you do it. So, have you thought about it? Jesus has called you to be His disciple. Let's look today at what disciples do.

¹ William C. Placher, ed., *Callings: Twenty Centuries of Christian Wisdom on Vocation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2005), p. 107.

Disciples are like three-legged stools.

Jesus approached two guys casting their net into the water.

In our Scripture reading today, Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Immediately, the picture is unexpected. Jesus was looking for disciples. The difference from first-century rabbis is remarkable. Most Rabbis would wait for students or disciples to find them. Here was Jesus approaching two men at work. Jesus invited them into a relationship.

He called them.

Jesus' invitation had three parts. In **Mark 1:17** Jesus said to Andrew and Simon,

... "Follow me—and I will make you—become fishers of men."

Part 1 is the command to "follow me." Part 2 is the promise that "I will make you." Part 3 is the certainty "you are become fishers of men."

This gives us a definition of a disciple with three parts.

A **disciple** is someone who has decided to follow Jesus, is being changed by Jesus, and is multiplying disciples of Jesus. Being a disciple is a head, heart, and hands transformation. Head: Disciples follow Jesus. We give Jesus our loyalty and this is a choice we make over and over again. Heart: Disciples are being changed by Jesus. This is the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives as we are being given godly character and developing the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Hands: Disciples join the mission of Jesus. God uses us to bring Him glory, build His Kingdom, and multiply disciples.

Each part is necessary, like the legs on the three-legged stool.

[Present a three-legged stool on stage.] Leg one is giving our loyalty to Jesus. Leg two is Jesus changing our hearts and character. Leg three is joining Jesus' mission and multiplying disciples. The seat represents our primary calling to relationship with God Himself. That calling holds these three activities together the way that the seat holds the legs together. And these three activities support that relationship the way the legs support the seat. This is what Jesus called Simon and Andrew to, and this is what Jesus calls us to.

They immediately left their old lives and followed Jesus.

Picture Jesus standing right in front of you. Imagine being confronted by the Son of God in the flesh. Obviously, Simon and Andrew didn't have words to explain Jesus in that moment. But they were compelled from the core of their being to immediately leave the nets they had fished with for years, their careers, and their familiar lives to follow Jesus. They said "yes" and set out! Jesus didn't invite them to a sedentary life of study. He invited them to learn on the way, absorb His life, and do what He did. And that is the shocking calling God has given you and me! We too have met the Son of God, and He has summoned us. And many of us have said "yes" to that summons. So, we are now disciples who have said "yes" to Jesus' summons. All of it.

Disciples fish for people.

As soon as we come to Jesus, we are already fishers for people.

Let's go back to Jesus' invitation to Simon, Andrew, and us. In **Mark 1:17**, Jesus says in English,

... “Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men.”

The original Greek is a bit more nuanced. “Follow me” is a command, but it is a warm command. Here it’s like being invited to join the party. “I will make you” is a promise. It’s stated as something that will happen in the future, but it is guaranteed by Jesus, so it’s certain. “Become fishers of men” is an accomplished fact. It’s an aorist middle infinitive. The aorist tense indicates things that happen at a point in time, not over time. So, when we become disciples of Jesus, we become fishers for people by God’s grace at work in us, but certainly and suddenly.

If the three-legged stool analogy is right, then you can’t take out a leg without the stool collapsing.

Think about the “legs” of being disciples of Jesus. The first is loyalty to Jesus, the decision to follow Him. You can’t take that away and still be a disciple of Jesus. The second leg is the character change. When we follow Jesus, our character begins to change and will continue to change over time. You can’t just stay the same. No one would ever suggest that disciples can just set aside loyalty to Jesus or a character change that comes out in changed behavior. Neither can we take away the leg of fishing for people. The stool will collapse.

Fishing for people is what we do as disciples.

It takes lots of forms. Sometimes fishing for people is as direct as confrontational evangelism. Sometimes fishing is as subtle as praying for lost people. I’m not trying to dictate your behavior. I’m telling you something about your nature and design.

Imagine a tool that can’t do the job it was created to do.

I think of the Hubble Space Telescope. The need for a space telescope was obvious. Light and the atmosphere mean that earth-based observations of space will always be limited. Planning for a space telescope started in 1969. There were multiple design challenges. The Challenger Shuttle disaster set the program back years. But then, in 1990, the Hubble Space Telescope was launched into space. But the images it sent back were blurry.² It was a telescope that couldn’t see clearly. I can’t imagine how frustrated the team must have been. They had a decades-long project in space that didn’t work!

It’s just as sad when we don’t do what we were created and called to do!

Being disciples is our calling. Fishing for people—making disciples—is fundamental to our identity as disciples. Our not fishing for people and making disciples is worse than the Hubble Space Telescope sending back blurry images.

Fishing for people is the way to enjoy the life Jesus offers us.

Living on mission with Jesus is the richest life possible.

We get presented with a lot of visions of the good life. The good life, we’re told, is found on a Viking River Cruise. A good vacation is really fun, but that’s not the real good life. We’re told that the good life is found in having a happy family. A happy family is just one component of the good life. Healthy living, success in business, and fun are all great. But Jesus lived the richest life possible, and His life was

² <https://science.nasa.gov/mission/hubble/overview/the-history-of-hubble/>

dedicated to God's mission. He brought glory to God, built the Kingdom of God, and made disciples. That's the life He's offering to us. That's what I want for you and I think that's what you want for yourself. Can you imagine missing out on it?

To touch another life through the Spirit of God is to touch something holy.

Every person we encounter was made by God and is called to become a son or daughter of God through Jesus. Every person we meet is crackling with life and sacredness. As disciples who are fishing for people and making disciples, we get to touch these lives. We get to be involved in what the Spirit of God is doing in and through them. We get to partner with God in pulling people in the direction of committing to Jesus, developing the character of Christ, and joining the mission of Jesus themselves. We get to touch possibility!

I think Bill Walsh would be proud if he were alive today.

Bill Walsh became the head coach of the San Francisco 49ers in 1979 and led them from a losing season to being the NFL's defining team of the 1980s. But Bill Walsh's legacy has been even more powerful. He intentionally developed assistant coaches into head coaches. And coaches who worked with Bill Walsh and the people they developed have gone on to become some of the most significant coaches of the past nearly 35 years of the game.³ Here was one attempt to draw his coaching family tree years ago; it has grown since. That's a memorable accomplishment.

God can grow a spiritual family tree through you!

You have the chance to invite people into the Kingdom of God and to help them grow as disciples of Jesus themselves. Imagine when those disciples make more disciples. It will be like having grand-disciples yourself! You'll get to enjoy everything they do for the Kingdom and God's family will continue to grow over generations until Jesus returns. Hell will be all the poorer and heaven will be all the richer!

Don't forget: someone fished for you.

When you came to faith in Jesus, someone was right there, being used by the Holy Spirit. It may have been the Gideon who placed a Bible in your hotel room so that it would be there at just the right time. It might have been that father who prayed for you for years, showed you tough love when you were wandering, but who was there for you when you needed him and told you about Jesus who had saved him too. It might have been a Navigator who knocked on your dorm room door when you were in college and asked for a few minutes of your time. Someone fished for you and aren't you glad they did! Imagine who's waiting for you to come fishing for them!

Let's make disciples who make disciples.

Are we talking about evangelism? Yes. Certainly. And no.

Making disciples who make disciples starts before evangelism and it starts with YOU. It starts with recognizing that you have been saved, that you have a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ, and with being so grateful for what has been done for you that you can't help but share it with

³ <https://stanfordmag.org/contents/the-genius>

someone else. Then, yes, making disciples who make disciples involves sharing Jesus with other people. Trust me, when you understand what God has done for you, you won't be able to wait until you've got all the details right and your facts checked. It will ooze out of you. But then, when someone comes to faith, you don't just drop them and walk away! Making disciples means investing your life in someone else's life. You show them how to follow Jesus, too, and you help them. Not just for a few days or weeks but for a lifetime. Making disciples who make disciples is a lifelong process.

Charles Granger started me off in college reluctantly praying for three lost people.

Charles was the director of the campus ministry I was involved in. Everyone called him "RG", which was short for "Reverend Granger." When I got into leadership, RG started meeting with me regularly. I didn't realize it, but he was discipling me. I could ask him any questions I had about following Jesus or theology. He would ask me about my life. I remember him challenging me to pray regularly for at least three people who didn't know Jesus. Frankly, I didn't want to. I wanted to grow. Be closer to God. Understand the Bible and my faith more. But I wasn't interested in sharing my faith. I wanted more faith myself; I didn't think I had any left over to give away. But he kept pushing me to invest my life and faith in someone else. It took me YEARS to appreciate what he was teaching me then, but I finally got it, and I am so glad I did. And I hope you will find the same joy sooner rather than later.

Your next step could be a conversation with our Adult Discipleship Team.

Our Adult Discipleship Team has lots of tools that can help you disciple other people. They have trainings, books, classes, and groups of all sizes and shapes. They can help you find the tools you need to begin discipling other people. Members of the Adult Discipleship Team will be in the Café after worship today. Stop by and ask them how to get started. But let me give you a step that is incredibly easy.

What if you just invite someone to Valley or to follow Jesus?

Our vision is to advance the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I've shared specifics with you over the past six months. Now we're in a season where we're figuring out how we can each say our joyful "yes" to all of God's callings—His callings on us individually and His call on us as a congregation. We can say "yes" to both by inviting people to join us here at Valley or to follow Jesus. An invitation powerfully opens a door that many people will choose to walk through.

This is our calling.

We're all called to God Himself. We're all called to BE disciples. We'll say more about that next week. We're all called to MAKE disciples. Isn't it amazing that God chooses to use us?