



THE PATH

fellowship bible church

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BEFORE YOU BEGIN

How to Use This Book

This book is written to be worked through by two people together — a disciple-maker and the person they are walking with. Read Part One together, then Part Two together. It is also useful on your own, and the sections marked For the Disciple-Maker will tell whoever is leading what to watch for.

If you are walking The Path yourself, read Part One and Part Two straight through, then take The Path Inventory when Part Two tells you to. The stage guides are separate documents — pick up the ones that match your result rather than reading all seven.

If you are walking someone else through it, read it the same way first, then use the sections marked For the Disciple-Maker. Those are written to you rather than to the person you are walking with. They tell you what this stage looks like from the outside, what people at it usually need, and the one conversation worth having.

If you are teaching the framework, Part I is your material. The four chapters build the definition Fellowship works from, in the order it is meant to be built.

Start with the Inventory

Toward the end of Part Two you will take The Path Inventory at fellowshipproswell.org/pathway/ — the same page you downloaded this book from. It returns a profile: a Home Stage, a Growth Edge, and a Regression Tendency, along with a reading across the five domains and the balance between your being, feeling, and doing.

You do not need those three markers to begin. Part One builds the framework the Inventory measures, and Part Two teaches you how to read a result before you have one. Work through them in order and take the Inventory when you get there.

The Inventory is not a personality test and the result is not a score. It is a starting place for a conversation, and it can be wrong. Part Two tells you how to read one honestly, including what it cannot see.

A word about the marked sections

Throughout this book you will find bordered sections marked For the Disciple-Maker. They step out of the flow to speak to whoever is leading. If you are reading alone, you can skip them without losing the thread — though you may find them useful anyway, since most of us are being disciplined and discipling someone else at the same time.

About the resource lists

Every chapter ends with a list of resources. They are a menu, not a syllabus.

There is no single book that fits every person at a given stage, and no reading list that substitutes for the relationship. A disciple-maker who actually knows someone — their history, their capacity, what

they are carrying this year — is in a position to choose well. A list printed in a book is not. The resource is chosen out of relationship, by the two people in it, and what serves the disciple may not be what served the disciple-maker.

So treat the lists as a starting place for that decision rather than a replacement for it. What each stage guide does commit to is the stage's great need — the thing a person at that stage requires most. Start there, then choose together.

There is no schedule here

Nothing in this book comes with a timeline. There is no stage you should have reached by a certain age, and no pace you are behind. The Path describes a journey people actually walk — which includes seasons of regression, long plateaus, and years that look like nothing is happening. That is not failure. It is formation.

The Path asks one question, and it is the same question at every stage: what is your next step toward Jesus?

Foreword

This resource is not the product of my own intellect nor is much of it original to me. I've had the wonderful privilege of having three incredible reading partners that the following resources have been adapted from. Chief among them are Robert Guelich and Janet Hagberg's seminal work *The Critical Journey: Stages in the Life of Faith*. Their lifelong exploration of the stages of Christian Formation have been foundational for the conception of the Christian Life that results in holistic formation. Next, Nancy Kane's *Stages Of The Soul* was particularly helpful in teasing out how the exemplary reality of Christian love is lived out across a lifetime. Her treatment of love, and particularly her discussion of later stage living, was thoroughly helpful and devotional for me. Finally, Dr. Robert Mulholland's *Invitation To A Journey* helped me to understand the role that personality and temperament play into how each of us takes our next steps towards Jesus. To these reading partners I owe much gratitude.

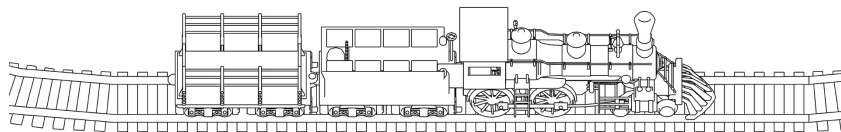
It must be stated up front that I created this resource for Fellowship Bible Church — Roswell and all who would desire to hop onto the train of the Christian Life within her walls. Should others outside find value in this resource it would be a measure of God's grace beyond its initial intent. As a pastor, my deepest desire and heartfelt prayer is that those at Fellowship would grow in the image and likeness of Jesus. So much so that believers and non-believers alike would experience Jesus through their words and lives. This is, perhaps, my most pastoral and personal offering to our church. An offering that I have been so honored to undertake.

Finally, to the elders at Fellowship who have so graciously given me extended time away to write I — thank you, brothers. Your love of our Savior, service to our church, and care for my soul has enriched my life beyond measure. To our staff team, particularly the ELT and LT (iykyk) thank you for your patience and companionship along this journey. To Nicole, thank you for your tireless efforts to ensure I had time away to write and guarding my schedule. And to my wife, Courtney. Your constant presence, encouragement, and sacrifices are responsible for much of this. To you I owe much more than I could ever repay.

Part I — The Foundation



Having a relationship with God is a journey. One similar to a cross-country train ride. The conductor is Jesus, the power that drives it is the Holy Spirit and the direction of the journey should be the pursuit of earthly and eternal life with God. When we place our faith in the finished work of Jesus and trust him for our salvation we begin a life of following Jesus. In essence, we step into a boxcar that rides upon two rails: Spiritual Formation and Discipleship. Both of these rails are necessary for holistic maturity because they describe the ways God is changing us from the inside out.



Write the name of the rail and the boxcar, which is your name.

The first rail is Spiritual Formation. Spiritual Formation is the process by which the follower of Jesus takes on the character of Christ — both inwardly and outwardly— until Jesus returns or calls us home. Spiritual formation refers to the internal change of the heart and will so that we are ever inching closer to the image of Jesus Christ in the world.

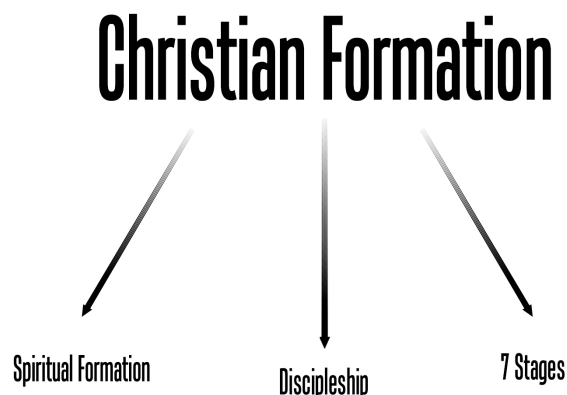
The other rail is discipleship. Discipleship is the process by which a follower of Jesus will learn and obey his teachings, imitate his life and ministry (doing), and make disciples who make disciples.

Discipleship centers on the scriptures and the person and work of Jesus Christ for the purpose of obeying Jesus, imitating his life, and making disciples who make disciples. Jesus' plan for global blessing was raising up people who would essentially do what he did. It was through discipleship that the world might know and experience Jesus.

Christian community forms the railroad ties that bind discipleship and spiritual formation. Without Christian community our journey of faith would derail. Christian community supports Spiritual Formation — with other believers becoming guides along the stages of the journey. Christian community supports Discipleship — with a community of believers making disciples who make disciples and strengthening the local church. Christian community within the local church has four primary aspects: Corporate Worship, Meaningful Group Life, Close Spiritual Friendships, and Intentional Discipleship relationships. Without community both Spiritual Formation and Discipleship fail. Without community we cannot be fully formed into the image of Jesus.

Along our faith journey we travel through times and seasons that form and shape us. Think of this as the changing scenery as the rain rolls along. Not only does the journey have a vehicle (You!) but it also has different types of terrain it travels through. Were we to start our journey in lowland South Carolina and journey to Seattle, Washington think of the different types of terrain we would cover. We encounter beaches, deciduous southern forests, desert climate, and snow-capped peaks until we arrive in the evergreen forests of the pacific northwest. Each terrain mirrors the different stages we grow through as followers of Jesus.

When you combine the rails of Discipleship and Spiritual formation with the ties of Community against the backdrop of various spiritual terrain, you get Christian Formation. Christian Formation is the alignment of our being, feeling, and doing with the will of Christ through intentional spiritual formation and discipleship over Seven Stages. Christian Formation is how we would characterize the ways that we are formed and shaped into Jesus throughout our lives in every season of our faith journey. Christian Formation — being changed in our being, feeling, and doing like Jesus — is our life-long goal. Christian formation is the journey and the destination.



In the following Chapters we will explore the interconnectedness of Spiritual Formation and Discipleship throughout our Christian Formation journey. We call this journey "The Path". It is our 7-Stage Christian Formation wayfinding tool that helps us identify our spiritual next steps toward Jesus.

The Path will help us understand where we are spiritually and help us to go deeper with God. Christian maturity at Fellowship is a three-part destination: being transformed internally and externally into the likeness of Jesus, doing as Jesus did by making disciples, and feeling like Jesus to the world around us. So climb aboard and get cozy because we have a long and fulfilling journey ahead of us!

Discussion Questions

1. What has formed and shaped your Christian formation the most up until this point?

-
2. Why are healthy relationships so important for our spiritual growth?

-
3. Explain why Spiritual Formation is essential for Discipleship.

-
4. Explain why Discipleship is essential for Spiritual Formation.
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Resources

- The Critical Journey: Stages in the Life of Faith - Janet Hagberg, Robert Guelich
- Stages Of The Soul: God's Invitation To Greater Love - Nancy Kane
- An Invitation To A Journey - Dr. Robert Mullholland

CHAPTER 1

Getting Clear on Christian Formation

Christian Formation is the alignment of our being, feeling, and doing with the will of Christ through intentional spiritual formation and discipleship over Seven Stages.

“Why are Christians so mean?” That was how the conversation with one of my non-believing friends began. Both in his own family and online he saw people with crosses in their profile being nasty. He watched as people with scripture in their bios cursed and insulted those who disagreed with them. We both lamented that far too often the angriest, nastiest, and most rude people were those who publicly professed to follow Jesus. From my friend’s perspective it was Christians who were responsible for the rise in anger and fear that led not to more civil discourse around realities that matter. Instead it led to spiritual cloistering, us vs. them mentality, and writing off those with whom we disagree.

There is a buzzword that gets tossed around when pastors and church leaders encounter a decline in Christian virtue. It is said there has been a “failure of discipleship.” The phrase has become a blanket statement to refer to any significant trend away from the holiness of God that reveals a deficiency in how followers of Jesus are taught to love God and engage the world around them. When it came to pastors assessing spiritual maturity among their congregants, parachurch leaders intaking freshmen, or non-profits encountering seething Christians it was said there had been a failure of discipleship.

When a follower of Jesus acts in ways that are not in line with the person and work of Christ Jesus, it is a clear area where they must grow as disciples. Further, when churches and church leaders willingly and unwillingly neglect the full development of the souls of their parishioners it is clear there has been a gap — or failure — of how a follower of Jesus is formed and shaped. If we’re honest, each of us has gaps in our discipleship. We have areas of our hearts and lives that the light of Christ has not fully shined upon. There are ways in which we are still growing up into the faith that we received from Jesus himself.

Jesus’ church in the United States has revealed significant failure of discipleship between 2020 and 2025 through emotional immaturity and disorder of an internal world. We see Christians speaking foul and unkind words on social media, breaking fellowship over non-eternal issues, and families split and broken apart by personalities, policies, and pulpits. These are but symptoms of a deeper crisis of discipleship: too many Christians have majored in intellectual mastery and have neglected the spiritual and emotional health of their inner world. Many followers of Jesus have been told that Christian maturity is biblical literacy, theological astuteness, and fervent prayerfulness. This is not incorrect but it is incomplete. We must also bring our emotions under the subjection of Christ Jesus and letting the peace of Christ rule in our hearts (Colossians 3:15). The real failure of discipleship is that too much of discipleship has been externally focused on doing and not also internally focused on being and feeling. What we believe matters. How we live and preserve our witness matters as well. As the age old adage says: People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.

A Heart-Centered Approach to Christian Formation

In 1 Samuel 16, the prophet Samuel becomes fixated on the outward qualities of David's older brother Eliab. Samuel is searching for Israel's next king, and Eliab looks the part: tall, handsome, and commanding—the very picture of a king. But as Samuel begins to equate outward appearance with divine calling, God interrupts and corrects his perception: “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.”

How do we as a church engage our intellect and our hearts? We pursue a holistic Christian Formation that centers on the heart.

What Is A Heart?

Anyone looking to buy a car will take several factors into account. Year, make, model, price, fuel economy, and condition are all part of the equation. Engine type is also a consideration because if the engine is in bad condition, the lifespan of the car is in jeopardy. The human heart is the engine of the human life. When we say heart we are referring to the central hub of choice, initiation, creativity, and eternality inside of every human being. The choices we make, the actions we initiate, and the creativity we possess are all driven by what is in our hearts. And our hearts are eternal. Within your heart lies your motivations and the “true you” — the you without a mask. It is precisely this “you” that Jesus wants to not only confront but to conform.

The Bible has a lot to say about the human heart:

Jeremiah 17:9 - "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?"

Ecclesiastes 9:3 - "This is the evil in everything that happens under the sun: The same destiny overtakes all. The hearts of people, moreover, are full of evil and there is madness in their hearts while they live, and afterward they join the dead."

Psalms 139:23-24 - "Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

Ezekiel 36:26 - "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh."

Matthew 22:37 - "Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'"

A fundamental culprit of discipleship failure is a heart that is not in alignment with the will of Jesus.

Think about it: When have you experienced the most pain in your life? It has likely been the result of your heart or someone else's that has been disordered — not in alignment with the choices, actions, and motivations of Jesus. When we approach Christian Formation from the heart, not exclusively actions, we are closer to knowing what our next step towards Jesus is. We are closer to becoming like Jesus. Christian Formation is following Jesus so that our life, especially our hearts, come into alignment with the will of Jesus. Again, here is our definition of Christian Formation:

Christian Formation is the alignment of our being, feeling, and doing with the will of Christ through intentional spiritual formation and discipleship over Seven Stages.

Seven Stages of Christian Formation

A vision of faithfulness for every follower of Jesus includes a reformation of being (our heart) that produces good external work (doing) so that others experience Jesus through our lives (feeling). Christian Formation also accounts for the various stages of our faith journey. Each follower of Jesus is invited to journey along a 7-stage path. These Seven Stages give shape to our spiritual lives but also allow us to clearly see our next step toward Jesus.

- Stage 1: **Awareness of God** - Awakening to the existence of a higher power that leads to faith in Jesus Christ.
- Stage 2: **The Life of Discipleship** - Learning what it means to be a follower of Jesus that results in a distinct life.
- Stage 3: **The Productive Life**- Working for God from love within the local church for the sake of others.
- Stage 4: **The Inward Journey**- Courageous introspection within community that leads to internal transformation.
- Stage 5: **The Wall** - An existential crisis that produces conflict between the will of God and our own life plans. The other side leads to either greater trust or lowered trust in God.
- Stage 6: **The Life of Love**- The abundant life that reflects Jesus to others clearly and consistently.
- Stage 7: **Legacy Living**- Setting a life in order and leaving behind blessing.

Discussion Questions

1. How do you tend to think about a professing Christian acting in a way that Jesus didn't?

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2. Of the 3 marks of Christian Formation success, which one should you take a next step towards Jesus?
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3. Without fully understanding each of the Seven Stages, which Stage would you say you tend to spend most of your spiritual life in?
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4. How do you assess the condition of your heart?
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Resources

- Renovation of The Heart - Dallas Willard
- Abba's Child - Brennan Manning
- The Way Of The Heart - Henri Nouwen
- The Ruthless Elimination Of Hurry - John Mark Comer

CHAPTER 2

Being Like Jesus: 5 Domains

Each of us starts on The Path in different places and we move at various speeds along our spiritual journey. Instead of focusing on speed, we need to keep our eyes fixed on the destination. What does success in Christian Formation look like? Last chapter we discussed the life-long goal of Christian maturity. Christian maturity at Fellowship is a three-part destination: being transformed internally and externally into the likeness of Jesus, doing as Jesus did by making disciples, and feeling like Jesus to the world around us. This is the bullseye of Christian Formation. Success looks like making disciples, being conformed into his image, and feeling like Jesus to friends and foes alike. Now, let's put a finer point on that "being" sphere by looking at our 5 domains.

Five Domains of Humanity

Here are the 5 domains that God created us with.

- Spiritual - Consistently being present with Jesus and serving Him out of an overflow of intimacy with God¹.
- Relational - A life characterized by a sense of belonging and deep connection with others — leading to meaningful friendships and abundant joy.
- Emotional - Awareness, accountability, and management of one's inner world.
- Intellectual/Mental - The humble pursuit of knowledge for the purpose of transformation, self-assessment, and worship.
- Physical - Taking ownership of and cultivating gratitude for our present bodies.

In order for us to be whole disciples of Jesus, he must speak into and transform our entire lives. That means Jesus has the final word in how we think about and feel our emotions. Jesus has the final word in how we think about our relationships. He also has the final word in how we are to use our minds and our bodies to glorify him. If we are to keep the end in mind, and consider who we are becoming, then it's important to think about our *entire* being. You have been fearfully and wonderfully made to display God's beautiful character and nature with your *entire* life. We do that faithfully when our *entire* lives come under subjection of God.

We call this Spiritual Formation. Spiritual Formation is the process by which the follower of Jesus takes on the character of Christ — both inwardly and outwardly— until Jesus returns or calls us home. This "being" transformation happens when Jesus is Lord of our entire lives — not just our minds. Jesus' light should shine in every place of our lives. Understanding spiritual formation through 5 domains helps us identify the areas of our lives where Jesus is still working and take our next steps towards him.

¹See John 15:1-7

5 Domain Transformation

Transformation looks like a renewed and conformed follower of Jesus (Romans 8:29, 12:1-2) who is growing in maturity in Christ Jesus (Colossians 1:28). This occurs across the 5 Domains of a human life.

- **Spiritual** - A humble and compassionate child of God who prioritizes Jesus above all else and willingly accepts any discomfort that may follow.
- **Relational** - A brave and selfless learner who fosters safe and supportive relationships.
- **Emotional** - A transparent and inquisitive follower of Jesus with emotional maturity who understands their boundaries.
- **Intellectual/Mental** - Humble: Self-effacing and counting others better than themselves.
- **Physical** - An active temple of God who expresses gratitude for and treats their present body with kindness.

Spiritual Formation, “Being”, takes the whole human into account. If we are to be those who are known by our love, service, and charity as true followers of Jesus, then we must become like him.

A Renovation of The Heart

Last chapter we talked a bit about our heart and why it is central in Christian Formation. **Read these verses and write how they invite you to align your heart with the will of Jesus Christ:**

- **Luke 6:45** “The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.”
- **Proverbs 4:23** “Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life”
- **Proverbs 14:30** “A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.”
- **Matthew 5:8** “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”
- **Proverbs 27:19** “As in water face reflects face, so the heart of man reflects the man.”
- **Proverbs 4:23** “Keep (Guard) your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.”
- **Jeremiah 17:9–10** “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? “I the Lord search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.”
- **1 Samuel 16:7** “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.”

FOR THE DISCIPLE-MAKER

Widening What Counts as Formation

The person you are walking with has almost certainly spent their whole Christian life in one domain – usually Spiritual, sometimes Intellectual. This chapter is not asking them to take on four more obligations. It is widening what they are allowed to count as formation.

Ask them to name the domain they attend to least. Do not ask them to fix it, and do not offer to help them fix it yet. Naming it is most of the work, and people usually go quiet for a moment when they say it out loud – that pause is the chapter landing.

Be ready for the objection that Physical and Emotional are not spiritual concerns. Jesus ate, slept, wept, withdrew, and grieved. To imitate him is to imitate a whole life, not a devotional practice. If someone resists this, it is usually because a domain they have neglected is one they feel ashamed of – go slowly there.

Discussion Questions

1. Of the 5 domains, which do you naturally gravitate most toward?

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2. Of the 5 domains, which ones do not come naturally to you?

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3. What makes someone a mature Christian?

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4. Why is the spiritual heart so central to Christian Formation?

5. Is Christian Formation finished if someone is a moral person?

Resources

- Renovation of The Heart - Dallas Willard
- Emotionally Healthy Spirituality - Pete Scazzero
- Counterfeit Gods - Tim Keller
- The Heart Of The Problem - Henry Brandt and Kerry Skinner

CHAPTER 3

Feeling Like Jesus: Theological Vision

What We Are Being Formed Toward

We have said that Christian Formation is the alignment of our being, feeling, and doing with the will of Christ. We have just looked at being — the five domains through which God renovates a whole person rather than a compartment of one. Before we turn to doing, we have to account for the part that is easiest to skip and hardest to fake.

Feeling is not emotion and it is not sentiment. It is the taste and texture of a life that has been formed — what it is actually like to be near someone in whom Christ is at work. A person can believe correctly, serve tirelessly, and still be someone others would rather not be around. That gap is what this chapter is about.

Our neighbors and coworkers who do not follow Jesus are not evaluating our doctrine or our service record. They are experiencing us. Whether they encounter anything of Christ in that experience is not finally a question of what we know or what we do. It is a question of what we have become.

What Does Jesus feel Like?

Think back to the 5 domains in Chapter 2. These God-designed human aspects represent a whole person — mind, body, and soul. Christian Formation involves the whole person — mind, body, and soul. Discipleship and Spiritual Formation shape each aspect of us, and others should experience Jesus through us as whole people. When believers and non-believers encounter a disciple of Jesus they should get a foretaste of what Jesus and his kingdom are like.

Do you like ice cream? Of course you like ice cream. There are hundreds of brands of ice cream. One brand that has long been a favorite of many is Baskin Robbins. When you go to Baskin Robbins and see that delicious lineup of ice cream it can be hard to decide what you'll have. Luckily, they have small pink spoons available in order for you to taste test your choice before you go all in on a triple scoop waffle cone with sprinkles and syrup. That little spoon offers you a preview of the tasty treat you will soon enjoy. When it comes to experiencing Jesus his followers are the little pink spoon. We are the ones that others get a little preview of what it will be like to spend eternity with Jesus. And if we are the little spoon, then what are others tasting?

A True Foretaste: Theological Vision

God's heart for you is to image Jesus in the world in such a way that your life is the aroma of life to those whom God has or will save and the aroma of death to those who are perishing (2 Corinthians 2:15). Woe be unto us if we encounter believers and non-believers who effectively declare to us what the evil spirits declared to the sons of Sceva in Acts 19:14; "Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?"

We are the pink spoons of God's kingdom. How we live matters. How we image Jesus in the world matters. How you live out the 4 Passions matters. When faithfully lived out we allow others to

experience Jesus and his kingdom. Not only do we feel like Jesus but others will feel/experience Jesus through our service. Here is our assertion: If you embark on The Path faithfully and commit to Jesus along the way we have detailed what you will become. We call this our Theological Vision: Our end goal of Christian Formation. In other words, this is what a successful Christian life looks like.



Grace-Driven and Truthfully Sharp — We neither blunt the gospel nor soften its exclusive demands upon our lives. We proclaim it with grace and compel Christ-followers to live under, in, and by grace because God's kindness leads us to repentance (Romans 2:4)

Kingdom-Minded and Counter-Cultural — God's Kingdom shalom (wholeness) shapes our worldview and we engage the cultures around us in a way that faithfully displays a kingdom alternative to the cultures of the world. (Ephesians 2:14-22)

Humble and Wise - We celebrate and learn from different generations in a humble way while using wisdom to discern which spaces are generation specific. We live with each generation without the chauvinism of youth or the arrogance of age. We mutually submit to generations that are not our own knowing they are integral in our spiritual growth and development. (Titus 2:1-8; Galatians 6:10;

Lovingly Missional - We are steadily learning to act like Jesus with lives branded by love for all people — including our enemies. This love compels us to live missional lives in our families, vocations, through mercy and justice ministries, and in our respective 'mission fields' as agents of God's shalom. We live as holistic disciples who make holistic disciples for the good of the church and the glory of God.

The End Game

Suspense movies make their money by intentionally inducing anxiety and hiding details that create a more compelling narrative. Whether through situational irony or a big twist, there are details withheld from the viewer to keep them guessing until the end. I don't enjoy the feeling suspense movies give me. It makes me anxious. So, it is common for me to fast forward to the end of a movie or series to see how the end plays itself out. Only after knowing how it ends do I return to the beginning and watch the movie in peace.

Every good follower of Jesus must begin each new endeavor with the end in mind. The same is true for The Path. Right here at the beginning it is important for us to understand what type of people we are becoming and what type of disciples are we setting out to make. Rather than waiting until the end, we want you to know what The Path will transform you into. Put briefly, we are becoming the pink spoon for God's Kingdom. So, with all of the pre-game pep talk I can muster: Be The Spoon!

Discussion Questions

1. How would you define spiritual success?

2. What are the three parts of the successful Christian Life?

3. What are ways that you have experienced Jesus through a church?

4. How do people experience Jesus through you most consistently?

5. Take some time and write out how "successful" your wholistic spiritual journey has been thus far.

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6. Give your synopsis to a trusted friend and have them tell you the truth of how they see your 5 domains and alignment to Theological Vision.

Resources

- Center Church - Tim Keller
- The Elder-Led Church - Murray Capill
- Good Faith - David Kinnaman
- The Jesus I Never Knew - Phillip Yancey
- The 3D Gospel - Jason Georges
- Misreading Scripture With Western Eyes - E. Randolph Richards, Brandon O'Brien
- Gaining By Losing - J.D. Greear
- Embrace: God's Radical Shalom For A Divided World - Leroy Barber
- The Gospel For Life: Racial Reconciliation - Dr. Russell Moore, Andrew Walker
- Divided By Faith - Dr. Michael Emerson

CHAPTER 4

Doing Like Jesus: Discipleship

It is said that a man in Chicago in the late 1800's showed interest at a evangelistic meeting preached by the legendary Dwight L. Moody. D. L. Moody went to see him and was immediately ushered into a comfortable room in front of a blazing fire. After some gracious initial conversation the man began to explain how he could have a personal, private relationship with God without participating in the life of the church. As he made his eloquent and impassioned argument, Pastor Moody leaned forward in his chair and taking hold of the fire poker he very carefully he removed one hot coal from the fire and placed in on the stone floor. Without word or commentary, both men sat there and watched the coal until it quickly expired. D.L. Moody turned to look at the gentleman without saying a word. After a long pause, the man said, "Mr. Moody, you have made your point!"

What D.L. so powerfully and briefly demonstrated is the simple assertion that we need each other to grow. Left to our own devices we are no more than a once-lit coal whose light has been extinguished due to isolation. Life within a local church affords Christ-followers a great opportunity to keep the light burning. We have a great gift given by Jesus himself that promotes our coals never growing dim. That gift is discipleship. Before we jump into The Path we must bear in mind that Discipleship is central to our spiritual Journey. Each of us must be disciplined and should aspire to disciple others.

What Is Discipleship?

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Mt 28:19-20) This call to make disciples has been a distinctive feature of the Christian church since Jesus spoke them. But what does it mean?

Matthew's final words recorded in his gospel are the words belonging to the Great Commission. It is here we find what a disciple is. A disciple of Jesus is a follower of Jesus. A follower of Jesus will learn and obey his teachings, imitate his life and ministry, and replicate the process for others. These are the four main aspects of Christian discipleship: learn his teachings, obey his teachings, imitate his life and ministry, and make disciples who make disciples. When Jesus invited women and men to follow him we was inviting them into the process of becoming a reflection of him in the world. He was also inviting them into a way of life. Now stop and think about this: Jesus staked the salvation of humanity on 12 young men and a wider circle of 70. Jesus determined that the world would come to know God because his disciples would follow him and teach others to do the same.

The call to discipleship is a call to become like Jesus and represent him in the world. God has a mission to redeem all of creation and the primary vehicle by which he will accomplish that is through discipleship and the local church. Within the local church we could say that Christian discipleship is primarily concerned with three primary goals: Teach and obey what Jesus taught, imitate his life and ministry, and multiply yourself — make disciples who make other disciples. **Discipleship at Fellowship centers on the scriptures and the person and work of Jesus Christ for the purpose of obeying Jesus, imitating his life, and making disciples who make disciples (multiply).** So, what does this look like?

One way to think about discipleship is to think about it through the lens of the three commands Jesus issues to each of his followers: 1. Listen and Obey to my teaching. 2. Imitate my life and ministry. 3. Multiply — Make disciples who will make disciples in every ethnic group. Let's take a closer look at each of these.

Learning and Obeying

When we use the word *heart* in a spiritual sense, we refer to the deepest areas of feeling, emotion, volition, and will inside of us. These deep areas that hold our attitudes, feelings, and idea of virtue and goodness change as we choose to follow Jesus by faith and walk alongside a guide or disciple-maker. Over time how we feel, think, and believe in the inner most parts of us is transformed to more accurately reflect the mind and life of Christ. **So, to speak of internal transformation is to speak of us being changed from the inside out so that the deepest parts of us sync up with the way of life that Jesus teaches.** In essence, we become scalding hot...not unlike apple Pie. God has purposed the life and teaching of Jesus to be the primary avenue of internal transformation. When we learn from Jesus and obey him something happens inside of us: Our heart changes and is transformed to *feel* as Jesus does. Let's turn our attention to practices and habits that change our hearts over time.

As we are faithful and consistent in listening to and obeying Jesus' teachings and imitating his life and ministry, over time, we are transformed into the image and likeness of Jesus (2 Cor. 3:18). We are changed internally by the word of God, through the power of God, for the glory of God to the point where this transformation becomes evident and obvious for others to see.

Imitating Jesus' Life

One of my favorite games to play as a kid was Simon Says and I loved being the leader. As the leader makes a motion those playing the game must also make the same motion but only when "Simon" says. My secret weapon was moving at blistering speed so that people get caught in the rhythm of the game without actually listening. It is only after they make a mistake that they realize that Simon didn't say scratch your nose. That action was self-permissive.

To follow Jesus means that whatever he tells us to do, we do it. This is the Christian life. It's so easy, right! Something so simple should be easy but it takes a lifetime of mistakes, repentance, and faith to inch closer to the image of Christ. If we are to be disciples of Jesus we must be quick to obey Jesus in every area of our lives.

Every human being is a beautiful tapestry that weaves together 5 domains that makes us "us". Last Chapter we discussed the 5 domains and talked about how consideration of each domain is essential to being transformed into the image of Jesus. Throughout Jesus' ministry we see him walking, healing, weeping, debating, eating, talking, suffering, teaching, listening to the Father, spending time with God, and making disciples. His life covers all 5 human domains. Jesus' humanity serves as a living object lesson of what a faithful follower of Jesus looks like. They will make disciples, yes. More importantly they will make *holistic* disciples.

There exists a necessary and natural inclusion of all 5 domains of the human life in discipleship. Our entire lives come under the subjection of Jesus' lordship and should be conformed into his image. How we speak, think, act, and behave — in addition to how we spend money, raise our families, and

treat our bodies are aspects of holistic discipleship. To imitate Jesus is to imitate his entire life: All 5 domains.

A healthy disciple and disciple-maker at Fellowship will understand that all of life is under the sovereign reign of Jesus Christ. They will graciously and patiently lead others to that same conclusion. When faithfully practiced it results in us becoming holistic followers of Jesus.

Multiplying

You remember this old math problem. Would you rather have \$1,000,000 now or a penny doubled every day for 30 days? This is a lesson in instant gratification, compound interest, and the power of multiplication. You could have a million dollars today or you could have \$5,368,709.12 at the end of the month.

Similarly, How long would it take to evangelize the entire earth? If there are 8 billion people on planet earth, how long do you think it would take to reach everyone? Global Frontier Missions has done the math for us. There are two approaches in light here. We could attempt to have massive evangelistic gatherings of 100,000 people every day of the year or we could use a discipleship model.

Suppose you had an evangelistic event of 100,000 people and 20% of the people who showed up came to faith. That's 20,000 people. I believe we would all rejoice at that number! That would be over 7 million people coming to faith each year. At a rate of 7 million Christians a year, how many years would it take to reach 8 billion people? It would take 1,095 years! Let that sink in: Billy Graham could have organized a rally every day of his life and would not have even come close to 8 Billion.

Now, Let's imagine that you decided you were going to disciple one person for a year. At the end of the year you would have 2 disciples. The next year you both repeat that process for a year. Now you have 4 disciples. The next year the 4 of you repeat that process. Now you have 8! If you continue at this rate, it would take 34 years to reach 8 Billion people. 34 years! This is the power of multiplication. Now, none of us will bat .1000 in discipleship. Not even all of Jesus' own disciples were faithful to him. Nonetheless, the effectiveness of Jesus' model of global blessing is compelling and still applicable today.

Our end goal in discipleship is holistic multiplication — making whole disciples who make whole disciples. We do not want to lead people into cul-de-sac's of learning who never dare to make disciples. This is of little value in the Kingdom of God. Community is so important to the Christian life but Discipleship is mission critical for God's Kingdom. We must disciple others then unleash them to make disciples of their own.

Paul shows this clearly in his second letter to Timothy: "what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also"². Multiplication was Jesus' ministry and his intent for his church. He went so far as to tell the disciples in John 14:12 that they would do greater works than he would after he left earth. His point? The sum total of your kingdom ministry will be greater in number than my physical earthly ministry because there is only one of me and so many of you. Wild! The fulcrum upon which the method of ministry in the local

²2 Timothy 2:2

church hangs is on teaching, imitation, and multiplication. God's plan A for the world coming to a saving knowledge of his son by faith is through discipleship in the local church. This is crucial to the kingdom. And essential for your life.

Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever been discipled? Why or why not?

2. Have you ever discipled another person? Why or why not?

3. What are some connections between imitating Jesus' life with our life and Christian witness outside of the church?

4. Of the list of means that the Holy Spirit uses to change us, which ones are you currently engaged in?

5. What does it mean for discipleship to be centered on the person and work of Jesus Christ through the Scriptures?

Resources

- Discipling - Mark Dever
- Multiply - David Cook and Francis Chan
- Transformational Discipleship - Eric Geiger, Michael Kelley, and Philip Nation
- The Cost of Discipleship - Dietrich Bonhoeffer
- Discipleship Essentials - Greg Ogden
- The Great Omission - Dallas Willard

