

Session #16: Seven Traits of Highly Effective Disciple Makers (Part 2)

Watch!

Link to video: <https://youtu.be/ImBUblhDqqE>

Review!

Jesus calls us to make disciples of all nations. Our call is to be an authentic disciple of Jesus Christ and to be an intentional disciple maker of others. The key word here is "intentional". Disciple making is not done haphazardly. Instead, it is a way of life.

There are seven traits of highly effective disciple makers. In the previous lesson, we studied the first two: a disciple maker must be Holy Spirit-filled and live a life of holiness. In this lesson, we will study the remaining five.

Study!

Trait #3: Humble

Humility starts with self awareness. It is the ability to know our own weaknesses, shortcomings and pitfalls. It is also the ability to submit to others. Rick Warren says:

"Humility is not thinking less of yourself, it is thinking of yourself less."
– Rick Warren

When we humble ourselves, we learn to put others first:

5 Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." 6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you.
(1 Peter 5:5-6)

Notice here, the bible says that God opposes the proud. Pride causes us to be in opposition to God. John Stott notes this about pride:

"At every stage of our Christian development and in every sphere of our Christian discipleship, pride is the greatest enemy and humility our greatest friend. Pride is more than the first of the seven deadly sins; it is itself the essence of all sin."
– John Stott

Six ways we can live humbly

1. Listen more than you speak.

2. Shy away from things that will feed your ego.
3. Submit to the accountability of a mentor. Choose to obey; if not, you may become a god to yourself.
4. Do not shy away from jobs or responsibilities that you do not enjoy.
5. Serve more in secret than in public.
6. Be the first to humble yourself in a conflict and to repent of your own mistakes.

"Humility is a most strange thing. The moment that you think you have acquired it is just the moment you have lost it."
 - Bernard Meltzer

Trait #4: Happy

For many people, happiness is dependent on circumstances. If circumstances “happened to happen” in a desired way, people are happy! However, an effective disciple maker’s happiness stems from a different root and is more accurately termed as “joy”. Biblical joy is not dependent on external circumstances. Rather, it is the fruit of the Holy Spirit; an inner condition of the heart.

"A Christian owes it to the world to be supernaturally joyful."
 - A.W. Tozer

One of the marks of a disciple’s life is joy! In Acts 13, the bible specifically mentions that the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit and **joy**:

And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 13:52)

Let's look at some more verses regarding joy:

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.
 (Philippians 4:4)

Then he said to them, “Go your way. Eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions to anyone who has nothing ready, for this day is holy to our Lord. And do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.” (Nehemiah 8:10)

47 Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joyfulness and gladness of heart, because of the abundance of all things,
 48 therefore you shall serve your enemies whom the LORD will send against you, in hunger and thirst, in nakedness, and lacking everything. And he will put a yoke of iron on your neck until he has destroyed you. (Deuteronomy 28:47-48)

As well as being the fruit of the Holy Spirit, joy is a gift from God. It is also rooted in Christ and what He has done for us. Apostle Paul had unshakeable joy. Despite his own difficult

circumstances, he instructed the Philippian church to rejoice in light of the good news of what Christ had done for them.

Trait #5: Harmonious

A harmonious disciple maker is one who is able to work together with others. Even in a church, conflict is inevitable. Disagreements will arise and issues will come up. However, as believers in the body of Christ, we must learn to resolve problems in unity. Look at Paul's instruction to the church in Corinth:

10 I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. 11 For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. 12 What I mean is that each one of you says, "I follow Paul," or "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Cephas," or "I follow Christ."
(1 Corinthians 1:10-12)

Paul implored the church to have no divisions among them. In Romans and Titus, he asked his fellow believers to avoid those who cause divisions:

I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them. (Romans 16:17)

10 As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him, 11 knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned. (Titus 3:10-11)

In Ephesians 4, the instruction is for unity and peace:

1 I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, 3 eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:1-3)

Lastly, Jesus also commands us to love one another:

34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. 35 By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:34-35)

"In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things clarity."
- St Augustine

Trait #6: "Heart-Working"

The sixth trait of highly effective disciple makers is found in the way they work. No matter what they have been tasked to do, they do it unto the Lord, from their heart:

22 Bondservants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. 23 Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. (Colossians 3:22-24)

We must remember that every task is an opportunity to glorify God. Learn to go the extra mile, be a good steward of all that's been given to us, and serve the Lord with gladness of heart.

So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. (1 Corinthians 10:31)

Trait #7: Hungry

Finally, effective disciple makers are hungry for God. They have a hunger for God's presence, for His people and for His Word. Jesus said:

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied." (Matthew 5:6)

Cultivating a hunger for God leads us back to our first trait: a Holy Spirit-filled life. And as John Wesley observed, it is also an effective witness to those around us of how we live out our faith:

"Light yourself on fire with passion and people will come from miles to watch you burn."
- John Wesley

These, then, are the seven traits of a highly effective disciple maker. Learn to develop these traits in your own life and help others to do likewise.

Reflect!

What are some key insights that I can take away from today's session?

Which of the seven traits do I struggle with the most?

Discuss!

Q1: As a group, take time to summarise all seven traits of a disciple maker. Afterwards, ask each person to share their top three traits they would like to grow in and why.

Q2: Why is it important to possess humility when serving God? Why do some people struggle with this? What other character traits go together with humility?

Q3: Read John 13:1–17. When Jesus washed His disciples' feet, what are some things He understood about Himself before He assumed the role of a lowly servant?

Q4: Why is joy an important trait to being an effective disciple maker? How do you cultivate joy in your own life?

Q5: How have you seen conflict handled in the past? How can conflict potentially be an opportunity to glorify God, serve others and cultivate harmony?

Q6: What would you advise someone who is going through disagreement in church? What could that person do practically?

Q7: Why is it important for a disciple maker to carry a spirit of excellence?

Q8: How can we cultivate a hunger for God?

Q9: How would you like to be kept accountable with your learnings from this session?

Between Sessions

Challenge!

Now that we have studied the seven traits of a disciple maker, the next step would be to do as Jesus commanded and reach out to others! The simplest way to begin is to pray for opportunities to do so. Remember, effective evangelism occurs in the context of real relationships. If we don't have genuine relationships with people, we probably aren't going to be very good at sharing Jesus with them. Opening up your life to others and investing time with them is a great step towards sharing the gospel. Take time to consider all the pre-believing people in your life and ask God for wisdom in approaching them. Make it a challenge to share your faith with at least three people over the next two weeks.

Memorise!

34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. 35 By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:34–35)