

## Missions & the Mission of the Church

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 Title: 2 Timothy 2:2, Discipleship, and the Mission of the Church  
 Text: 2 Timothy 1:13- 2:7  
 Theme: Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ.

The purpose of this paragraph is . . .

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- Intellect – to help you *understand* the importance of discipleship in the mission of God.
- Volition – to help you *choose* to disciple those within your circle of influence.
- Emotion – to help you *love* the mission of Christ and His people who are yet to be disciplined.

The command in Matthew 28:19 is to “make disciples.” Our targeted audience is “all the nations.” In light of this we must ask ourselves the question, “Why is Discipleship Important to the Mission of Waukesha Bible Church?”

Why is this action important to us as a fellowship and to the mission of Christ?  
 In the absence of discipleship newborn Christians are handicapped through ignorance and will struggle unnecessarily. Discipleship is the link between generations. It is the essence of all biblical relationships.

The question is legitimate, “Why should we be investing ourselves in the lives of other people?” The idea of investing in others is present across any context. The trades call it an apprenticeship. Teachers have students, parents have children, and the church has disciples. In attempting to explain the concept of discipleship one writer provides us with the following thought.

*Discipline* is derived from a Latin word which meant *to learn*. Hence also the origin of the English word *disciple* which meant *one who learns*.

Today, “discipline, or disciplinary action,” is very often defined as “an act of punishment,” and as such it very often has a negative connotation. But originally “a discipline” meant *a branch of knowledge*, and from that, a system of conduct.

It is in light of this that the leadership of WBC believes every believer is a disciple. As such every disciple finds themselves in various relationships and within various roles. When examining God’s design for His church the intent is not implosion. The promise is for Him to “build” His church. The church of Jesus Christ is an organism that is alive and growing. His church is an

exploding entity. It is always to be engaged in the reproduction of itself in the lives of others and in various cultures. The culture can be defined geographically or generational.

Because this is true, the leadership of local churches is to be actively and intentionally engaged in the role of mentor/protégé, teacher/student, and pastor/intern.

Not only is the pattern of duplication biblical, it is equally the quickest way to see people reached for Christ. **No one can reach everyone, but many have the greater chance of reaching more.** This is our goal and our passion.

Matthew 28:18-20 speaks of discipleship. What this means is defined for us by Matthew in 16:21-28.

<sup>21</sup> “From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day. <sup>22</sup> Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, ‘God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You.’ <sup>23</sup> But He turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's.’ <sup>24</sup> Then Jesus said to His disciples, **‘If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.** <sup>25</sup> For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. <sup>26</sup> For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? <sup>27</sup> For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and WILL THEN REPAY EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS. <sup>28</sup> Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom” (Matt. 16:21-18).

The general command to disciple is in Matthew 28:18-20. The specific command to disciple is in 2 Timothy 2:2.

What is of interest is that the word “disciple” as a verb is only used four times in the Gospels and Acts and is not used in any of the letters. The noun is used hundreds of times in the Gospels and Acts and never in any of the letters. Although the words are never used, the idea is captured in 2 Timothy 2.

It is my desire is to use 2 Timothy 2:2 as our primary text. This is what biblical Christianity looks like in real life. Discipleship is neither convenient nor comfortable. Yet we have made it both. Discipleship is defined by a controlling identity. Discipleship says, “I am a Christian.” It is defined by who Christ is.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer (February 4, 1906 – April 9, 1945) was a German Lutheran pastor, theologian and participant in the German resistance movement against

Nazism. He was arrested in March 1943, imprisoned and eventually hanged [as a martyr], just before the end of the Second World War in Europe. His book entitled The Cost of Discipleship is considered a classic within Christianity. Listen carefully to what he says as one who affirmed his love for God with his life blood.

**Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ.** It remains an abstract idea, a myth which has a place for the Fatherhood of God, but omits Christ as the living Son. ... There is trust in God, but no following of Christ. (The Cost of Discipleship by Dietrich Bonhoeffer 64)

Just as every Christian who reads their Bible is an interpreter and just as every Christian is a theologian so also is every Christian a disciple. The issue before us is not am I an interpreter or a theologian or a disciple, but rather am I a good one or a bad one. What is a disciple?

**discipleship** : a disciple is one who undertakes the discipline of his/her teacher. Thus, discipleship is about learning what that discipline is, learning how to follow, to listen to the story. It's part education, part mentoring, part apprenticeship, but it goes a step beyond all of those. Disciples not only take in what they are taught and what they learn from being with the teacher, they take it into their core identity, so that it defines who they are. The Church has a duty before God, a call to "make disciples of all nations". Evangelism is the beckoning, the calling in, and the opened door. Discipleship is the hallways inside. <http://www.spirithome.com/definit.html>

Everything we do as a fellowship is with the intent that we will advance in our expression of biblical Christianity and thus Christ Himself. Everyone who knows Jesus as their Savior is a disciple of Him. How can we move forward in our pursuit of Him?

I would like to consider the mandate itself as it is found in 2 Timothy 2:2 and then what we as a fellowship will actively pursue in response to this idea. For Christianity to continue each generation must pass on its mantle to the next generation.

So let us turn to 2 Timothy 2 and note Paul's exhortation to Timothy. Paul begins his exhortation to Timothy with an appeal to be strong.

#### I. Biblical discipleship exists in a context of grace (v.1)

The verb "be strong" is a present passive imperative. The statement of being strong in grace is probably a preposition of instrumentality, "by means of" or "in the power of." He is not asking Timothy to be this in himself, but to be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

Why grace? Let me suggest two thoughts as to why biblical discipleship exists in a context of grace.

A. Because grace sustains (2 Cor. 12:9)

“And he said unto me, *My grace is sufficient* for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me” (2 Cor. 12:9).

B. Because grace instructs (Titus 2:11,12)

<sup>11</sup> “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, <sup>12</sup> *Teaching us that*, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” (Titus 2:11, 12).

There is something powerful in the idea of grace. Grace, like love, is more than a mere idea or word. It is packed with power and energy.

Paul’s appeal to be strong is for the multiplication of ministry. We are to have a strong grace as we seek to multiply ourselves in the lives of others. Verse 2 answers the question, “What am I to be doing?”

In chapter 1 Paul is faced with much opposition. In light of this Timothy has been exhorted to hold the faith and guard the deposit (1:13, 14). But the faith we have was never meant to be a museum piece. Faith, both subjectively and objectively, is to be passed on to the next generation.

II. Biblical discipleship exists as a stewardship (v.2)

A. We are to keep what we have learned

Paul uses an Aorist Active Indicative for “heard.” We have received it among faithful witnesses. The gospel Paul preached and that we preach is not an invention of man but a deposit from God. We do not create truth. Truth is eternal and unchanging. Notice the language of 2 Timothy 1:13, 14.

<sup>13</sup> “*Retain the standard of sound words* which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. <sup>14</sup> *Guard*, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, *the treasure which has been entrusted to you*” (2 Tim. 1:13, 14).

You and I have been entrusted with the truth. We are to retain its purity and guard it against violation. Yet the best way to retain and guard is not by burying it in the ground but by investing it in the life of others.

## B. We are to communicate what we have learned

We are to communicate it to faithful witnesses. The word “commit” (paratithami) means “to place to another’s trust, to entrust, to deposit, to commit for safe keeping.”(Rogers and Rogers) The same idea is referenced in 1:12-14. It is against this backdrop that we find 2:2.

<sup>12</sup> “For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day. <sup>13</sup> Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. <sup>14</sup> Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you” (2 Tim. 1:12-14).

The word “able” (ikanos) means “that which reaches or arrives at a certain standard, sufficient, capable.”

I am to be looking for those to whom I can entrust the truth. They are to become the next generation of servant-leaders. It is not simply passing it on, but rather to train the next generation to be able to train the next generation. It is this particular cycle that needs to be perpetuated. As a fellowship we are to be empowering one another for the task of mentoring the next generation.

This disciple process is going on between . . .

- Spouse with spouse
- Parent with children
- Older siblings with younger siblings
- Friends with friends and
- Pastors with congregants.

Whatever the relationship, the idea of discipleship is to be taking place.

In the midst of the process I am to be keeping my focus on grace. Why? Because grace is what enables me to faithfully keep that which has been entrusted to me. Because grace is what will enable me to communicate the truth to the next generation.

### ILLUSTRATION:

Think of the biblical pattern.

- Moses had Joshua
- Elijah had Elisha
- Barnabas had Paul and John Mark
- Paul had Timothy and Titus
- Priscilla and Aquilla had Apollos

### III. Biblical discipleship demands hard work (vv. 3-6)

- A. Like a soldier biblical discipleship does not “entangle [itself] in the affairs of everyday life (vv.3-4)

“The Roman soldier — always ready to faithfully obey his commander without grumbling and complaining; constantly in training whatever hardships must be endured; fighting bravely, never leaving his post even if it meant death; working with his company as a unit, carrying out his specific task. This emphasizes the total commitment required of a follower.” (Rogers and Rogers)

“The soldier does not let himself get involved in the preoccupations of civil life. As applied to ministers this command requires wholehearted devotion to their work.” (Rogers and Rogers).

#### ILLUSTRATION:

My wife grew up on a farm where things were grown and some cattle existed for personal use. Once my father-in-law invited me to plow a row in a field. While attempting to plow I looked back. As soon as I did that the tractor began to jump and squirt off to the side. My problem was I took my eyes off the marker in the distance. "When you plow a row you must fix your eyes on an object at the far end of the field and never look back. You can't plow looking back." (Calvin T. Partain, {Proclaim,} Oct-Dec 1995, 11)

As difficult as this idea appears to be there are those of us who have abandoned ourselves to this task. Your involvement in the life of this church allows me to stay focused on this task. You believe my ability to reduplicate myself is worthy of your sacrificial giving.

My involvement does not negate your responsibility to disciple, but discipleship has been and continues to be my life long ministry.

- B. Like an athlete biblical discipleship “competes according to the rules” (v.5)

There are no formulas for instant disciples. Discipleship is a life long process whereby you are always pouring yourself into someone else. There are no short cuts. A quick fix approach to discipleship will end in shipwreck.

- C. Like a farmer biblical discipleship “receives his share of the crop” (v.6)

I have never ever met a lazy farmer. “Toiling lies in the very nature of his occupation.” (D. Edmond Hiebert, Second Timothy, 57). A farmer who does

not harvest a crop will soon be out of business. Yet what he harvests blesses more than just him. There is nothing as gratifying as seeing someone you have invested in continue in the faith and in turn pass it on to the next generation. We all benefit from the hard working farmer.

APPLICATION: (Where do we go from here?)

The appeal in verse 7 is for us to understand the indispensability of being engaged in discipleship. Discipleship is essential to the Christian faith.

1. Discipleship is legacy building.
2. Discipleship is faith transmission.
3. Who are you mentoring?
  - Your mentoring might be working through a reigning grace booklet or some past sermon series.
  - Your mentoring might be attending one of the ministries of WBC and inviting someone along and becoming their accountability partner.
    - This could be men's ministry, pre-school moms, a home bible study, children's ministry, youth ministry, the various church wide ministries, GLORIA, or an ABF study.
  - Every one of us should be involved in a mentoring relationship.
4. Are you willing and ready to become a mentor? There is a cost. Some of you have already checked out of active service in the local church and either stopped mentoring or never started. Now is the time to start pouring yourself out into the lives of these younger believers.

ILLUSTRATION:

In the movie Karate Kid, young Daniel asks Mister Miagi to teach him karate. Miagi agrees under one condition: Daniel must submit totally to his instruction and never question his methods. Daniel shows up the next day eager to learn. To his chagrin, Mister Miagi has him paint a fence. Miagi demonstrates the precise motion for the job: up and down, up and down. Daniel takes days to finish the job. Next, Miagi has him scrub the deck using a prescribed stroke. Again the job takes days. Daniel wonders, What does this have to do with karate? but he says nothing. Next, Miagi tells Daniel to wash and wax three weather-beaten cars and again prescribes the motion. Finally, Daniel reaches his limit: "I thought you were going to teach me karate, but all you have done is have me do your unwanted chores!" Daniel has broken Miagi's one condition, and the old man's face pulses with anger. "I have been teaching you karate! Defend yourself!" Miagi thrusts his arm at Daniel, who instinctively defends himself with an arm motion exactly like that used in one of his chores. Miagi unleashes a vicious kick, and again Daniel averts the blow with a motion used in his chores. After Daniel successfully defends himself from several more blows, Miagi simply walks away, leaving Daniel to discover what the master had known all along: skill comes from repeating the correct but seemingly mundane actions. The same is true of godliness.

5. To become a mentor you must first be someone's protégé. You must first be the student before you can become the teacher.
6. Who are you being mentored by?
7. Will you prayerfully consider being mentored and becoming a mentor? You and I are always in a dual role. Let's make it intentional.
8. If you are willing to be a mentor, please fill in the card. If you want to be mentored, please fill in the card. We will seek you out and see how we can help in the process.
9. If you desire prayer, we are here to help.