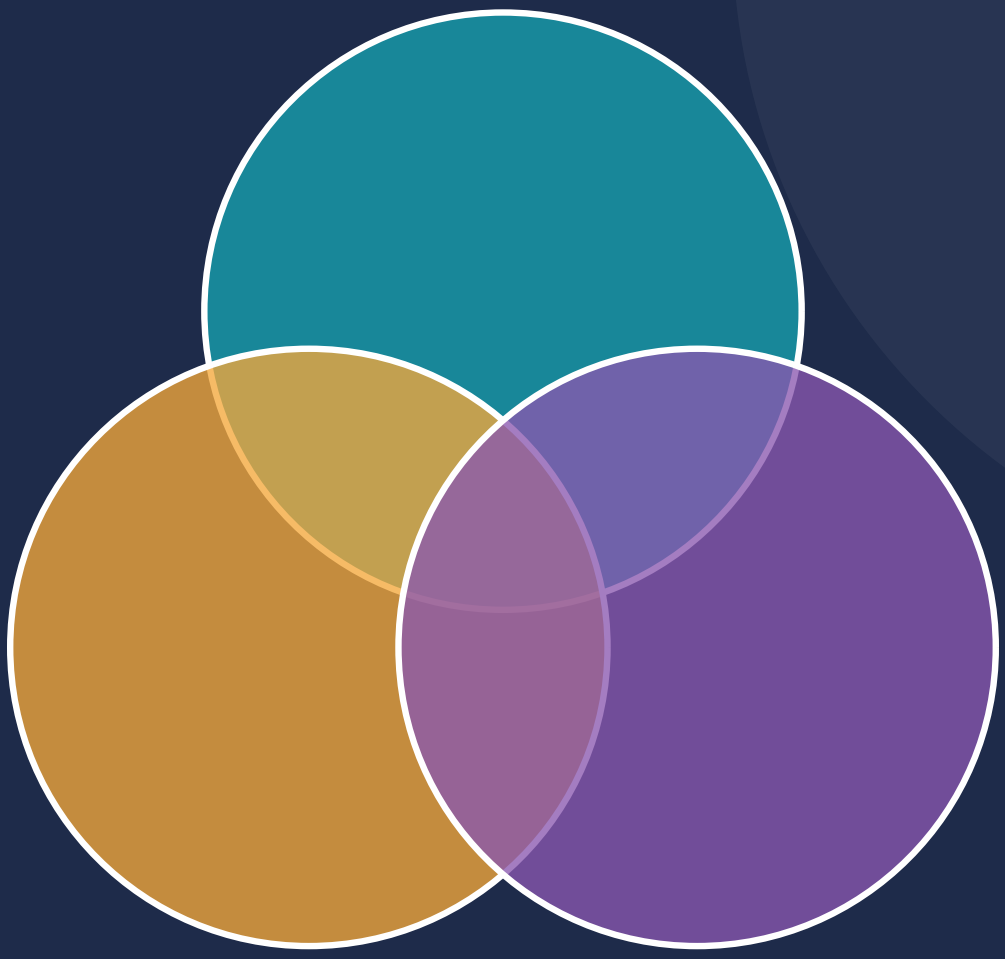


MATTHEW 28:19–20

Disciple-Making

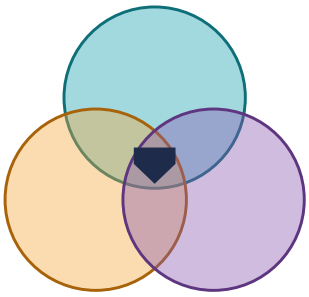
Eight lessons on Mobilization, Multiplication & Maturation

Mobilization Multiplication Maturation

Benjamin C. Cowell

Contents

Three coequal, interconnected facets of making disciples.



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- **Multiplication** — *"Baptize" — Evangelism*
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LESSON 1

The Great Clarification

FOUNDATION

LESSON OVERVIEW

During this lesson, you will take a deeper look at the Great Commission passage found in Matthew 28:16-20. Through engagement with Scripture, you will grow as a disciple through gleaning fresh insights that will bring greater clarity to Jesus's command for His disciples to be obedient disciple-makers.

1 EXPLORE

Every Major League Baseball stadium comes equipped with a diamond of bases featuring a home plate. This particular plate, measuring 17" (48.18 cm) across, is the pinnacle of much of the game's focus. Every time a professional pitcher steps onto the mound, he does so with some confidence knowing that he has spent a lot of time training to throw baseballs across that narrow threshold. Interestingly, from Little League to Major League competition, this 17" dimension does not change. It is a standard intended to establish consistency and integrity in the player's experience in the game. In the same manner, today's Scripture will showcase the reality that Jesus has provided a "home plate" for His disciples of all stages of development to aim toward, one that establishes consistency and integrity.

READ Matthew 28:16

Underline the phrase "the mountain where Jesus has directed them" in your Bible. Matthew first records Jesus's invitation to this post-resurrection meeting being given to the disciples on the Mount of Olives following their observance of the Passover (Matt 26:32). Those whom Jesus appointed to receive this Great Commission were obedient to follow His instruction faithfully amid the events culminating in His crucifixion and burial. Imagine the collective faith in each step traveled by the eleven.

READ **Matthew 28:17–18**

When the eleven disciples arrived in Galilee, the Scripture conveys that some worshiped while others were doubtful. Being confronted with Jesus, people naturally respond in different ways. But this Greek word, translated 'doubted', means "to be uncertain about taking a particular course of action." So, hesitation should be the understanding, not skepticism. Rather than split the eleven disciples into a "worshiping" or "doubting" group, it is helpful to note that people can simultaneously experience faith, hesitation, worship, and doubt when encountering Jesus. Likely sensing this, Jesus draws near and meets their uncertainty by declaring His inheritance of total cosmic authority. If they were previously uncertain about taking a particular course of action, Jesus was about to leave His followers little doubt as to what He expected of them.

READ **Matthew 28:19–20**

In your Bible, circle the phrase "make disciples" found here in Matthew 28:19. This is the task Jesus has entrusted to His disciples: make disciples of all nations until the end of the age. Now, underline "go" and "baptizing" from verse 19, and underline "teaching" from verse 20. In the original language, these three words are participles that serve as defining characteristics for the imperative verb "make disciples." Here is where the Great Clarification comes into play. Simply reading this passage in an English translation, one might be tempted to define *making disciples* as merely baptizing and teaching. However, this word 'go' not only shares the same participle principle with *baptizing* and *teaching*, but it also shares the imperatival command with *make disciples*. Why does this matter? Consider that if one of the ways by which these disciples are to make more disciples is by the means of "teaching them to obey all that Jesus has commanded," this would ultimately include the very call to *go* and *make disciples*. Where? Verse 19 gives the directive to *all nations,* which includes all nations, including the current nation in which disciples find themselves. How long? Jesus comforts His disciples in verse 20 by saying that He is *with us always,* in this assignment, *to the end of the age*. Thus, the call to be a disciple of Jesus is to make more disciples.

Over the next several weeks, we will seek to bring further clarity to this command from our Lord through close examination of each of these three participles' nuances. As for these first two weeks, let's continue looking at the big picture.

2 EXPLAIN

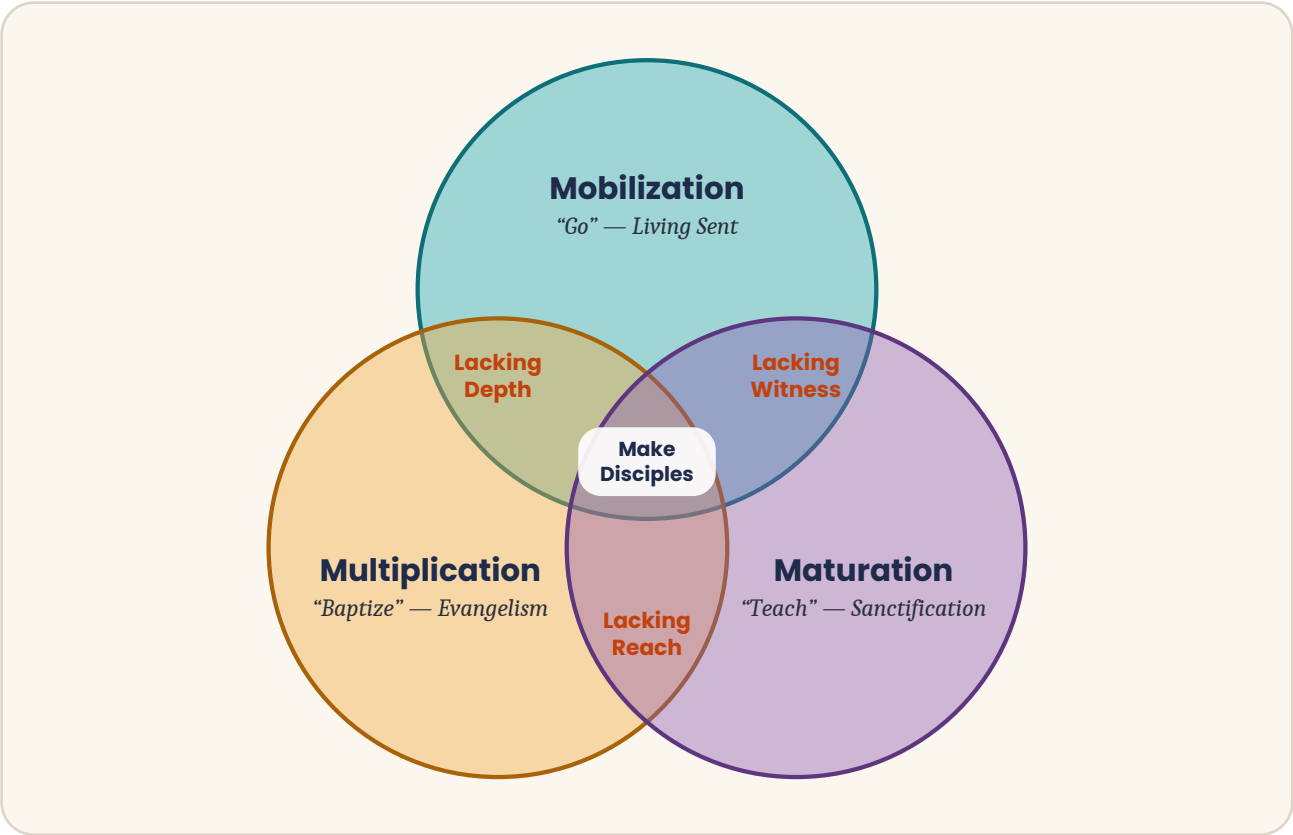


FIGURE 1 Matthew 28:19–20 disciple-making Venn diagram

The above diagram is a helpful tool that highlights the relationships between each participle as they relate to the whole process of making disciples. Notice how the diagram displays the negative impact of removing one participle from the remaining two:

1 · LACKING WITNESS

Sunday School Sam

Mobilization and Maturation without Multiplication = Lacking Witness

He loves going to national Bible conferences to learn, and he attends local Bible studies in hopes of finding more Christians to join his Sunday school class. Having only the finest commentaries at his house, he loves to teach, but sharing the gospel with lost people makes him very uncomfortable. He loves his safe bubble of Christian culture.

2 · LACKING REACH

Church Mouse Mindy

Maturation and Multiplication without Mobilization = Lacking Reach

She feels comfortable sharing the gospel with new people visiting Sunday morning services at her church, but she's uncomfortable seeking out these opportunities in public places. She loves leading weekday women's Bible studies at her church, but avoids opportunities to reach and teach overseas.

3 · LACKING DEPTH

Round 'Em Up, Randy

Multiplication and Mobilization without Maturation = Lacking Depth

He will go anywhere and do anything to share John 3:16 with anyone. He's always got gospel tracts in his pockets, and he is notorious for causing waitstaff at restaurants to neglect their other tables. Yet, he never knows what to say when he's asked deep questions about the Bible, and he has a hard time following up with people after he's handed them a tract.

As you can see, the process of disciple-making is negatively impacted when any one of these participles are neglected—producing disciples with a deficit. However, focusing on all three participles working together as a cohesive triad begins to help us define what it means to be a Great Commission disciple:

DEFINITION

Great Commission Disciple – an obedient follower of Jesus's commands, sent locally and globally, to evangelize the lost, and to teach them how to become obedient followers of Jesus's commands.

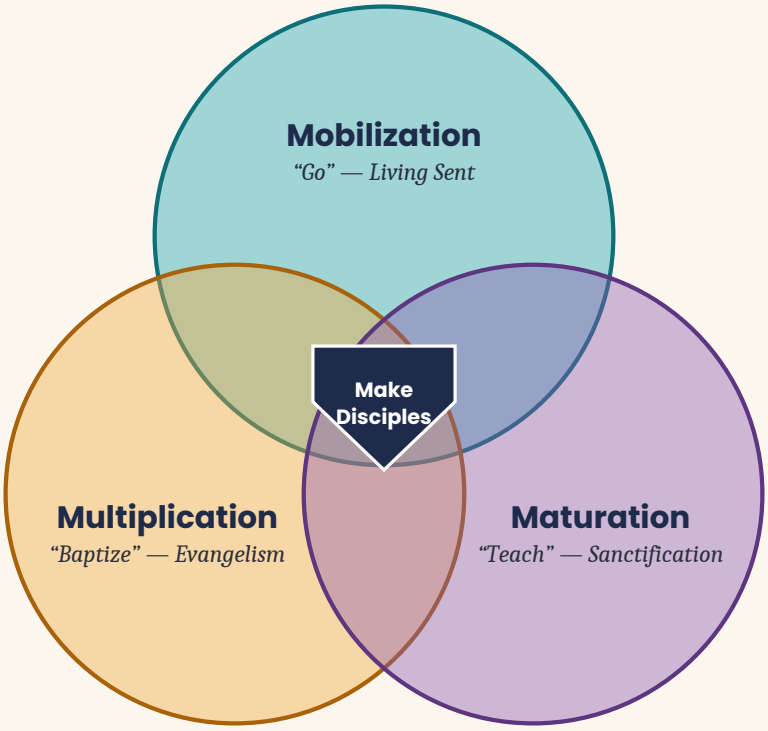


FIGURE 2 Disciple-making "home plate"

> ***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 everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*
>
> **MATTHEW 28:19–20**

A *Great Commission Disciple* has their aim set upon this target of reproducing more Great Commission Disciples who reproduce more Great Commission Disciples. This is our home plate. This has not changed over the years. This is our Great Clarification.

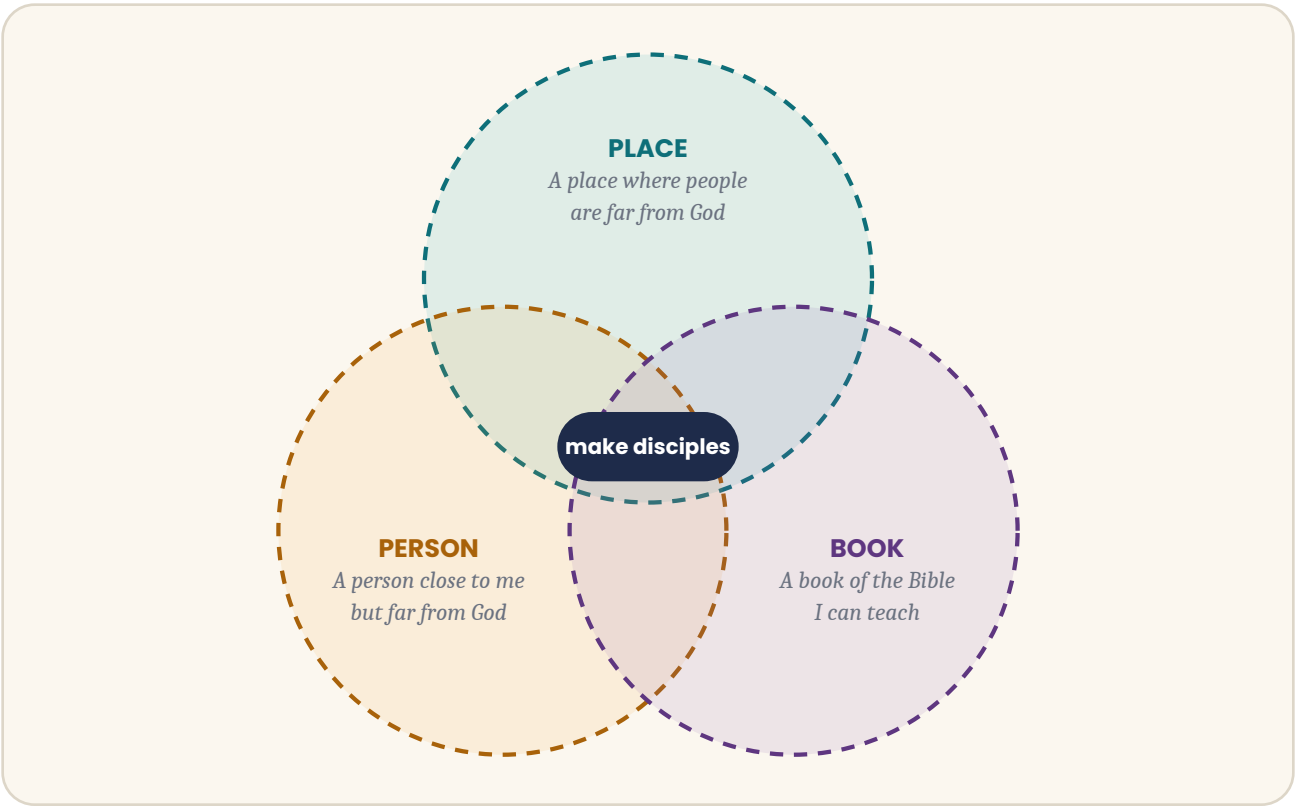
3 EXPERIENCE

ACTIVITY

Create a Disciple-Making Strategy Plan

Draw an empty three-circle Venn diagram on a sheet of paper (or use the diagram below) and write "make disciples" in the center.

- Instead of mobilization, write the name of **a place** where you know there are likely people who are far from God.
- Instead of multiplication, write the name of **a person** you know who is close to you but far from God.
- Instead of maturation, write the name of **a book of the Bible** that you are the most comfortable teaching to a prospective new disciple.



Take a moment and share your disciple-making strategy with another person. After you both share, each of you pray for the individual's name written on the other person's strategy. Keep this diagram in a visible place and pray over it as often as you see it.

LESSON 2

The Great Commission Disciple

FOUNDATION

LESSON OVERVIEW

During this lesson, you will consider passages from 2 Timothy and reflect upon the moment(s) that led to you becoming a disciple of Jesus, consider the people and methods that have grown you as a disciple, and evaluate your current status as a disciple.

1 EXPLORE

The previous lesson sought to clarify the task of disciple-making as presented in the Great Commission passage found in Matthew 28:19-20. In that passage, Jesus charged the eleven disciples to go and make more disciples. Obviously, it stands to reason that one must be a disciple in order to go and make more disciples. But what does it mean to be a disciple? In Acts 16:1, the Apostle Paul traveled to Lystra, where "there was a disciple named Timothy." It is interesting to note that this passage does not say "there was a man named Timothy." But what qualified Timothy as a disciple? In the same verse, it states that he was "the son of a believing Jewish woman," and in the following verse, it states that the "brothers and sisters at Lystra and Iconium spoke highly of him." But what do these statements imply? Open your Bible to 2 Timothy and allow this letter to help bring needed understanding.

READ **2 Timothy 1:1–8**

In Acts 16, we learn that Timothy was the son of a believing Jewish woman; however, this contrast is given: "but his father was a Greek." What cannot be determined is whether the word 'was' communicated that Timothy's father had died, or if Timothy's discipleship from his mother caused the father to abandon the family. What can be determined is that Paul was allowed to take Timothy along with him on his second missionary journey. Additionally, Acts 16:3 reveals that Paul circumcised Timothy "because of the Jews who were in those places, since they knew that his father was a Greek." This may seem odd given Paul's recent appeal to the Jerusalem council in Acts 15 for gentile believers not to be burdened by these ceremonial Jewish laws. However, given the fact that Paul was "a Hebrew of Hebrews" (Phil. 3:5), Paul could have likely used this moment to reinforce Timothy's identification with his mother's sincere faith through cauterizing what was left of his father's Greek

imprint.

Therefore, it seems more than fitting that Paul would take on a paternal role in view of the absence of Timothy's father. Notice these affectionate words: "Timothy, my dearly loved son (2 Tim 1:2)." Then, Paul draws Timothy's attention to remember "your sincere faith that first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and now, I am convinced is in you (2 Tim 1:5)." This recognition of succession is given as identification to "the gift of God (2 Tim 1:6)" that Paul is reminding Timothy to rekindle. When Paul mentions "through the laying on of my hands (2 Tim 1:6)," he is either identifying a commissioning or an ordination act; however, he is saying all of this building upon his previous statements made in verses 3-5. And it culminates with a negative/positive statement: "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but one of power, love, and sound judgment (2 Tim 1:7)." Underline in your Bible the word "sound judgment" in this verse. The NASB95 translates this Greek word as discipline. Which is fitting considering most Greek/English lexicons define this word to mean "the teaching of prudence, self-discipline." Essentially, Paul is encouraging his dearly loved son to rekindle this flame by remembering his foundational discipleship and putting it back into practice. But what does this entail? The next verse clarifies: "relying on the power of God (2 Tim 1:8)." Timothy is to share in Paul's suffering for the gospel through unashamedly proclaiming the testimony about our Lord.

READ **2 Timothy 2:1–7**

When Paul makes the statement "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus (2 Tim 2:1)," notice that he isn't telling Timothy to "pick himself up by his own bootstraps." Essentially, Paul is admonishing Timothy to be strengthened through the grace that only Jesus provides. And how is this accomplished? View verses 1 and 2 as an idea/explanation clause. The idea? Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. The explanation? Commit what Timothy has learned from Paul in the presence of many witnesses to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. Thus, one of the ways in which a disciple is strengthened by the grace found in Jesus is by actively engaging in making disciples who will be able to make more disciples. Paul then describes this grace-fueled endeavor through the illustrations of a good soldier, an athlete, and a hardworking farmer: the soldier seeks to please his commanding officer; the athlete is rewarded for his obedience to the rules; and the hardworking farmer should be the first to get a share of the crops he planted. Within this illustration, we see principles of devotion from the soldier, discipline and obedience from the athlete, and diligence toward the harvest from the farmer—Matthew 9:37-38 comes to mind. But what else is included in the rekindling of this gift of God?

READ **2 Timothy 3:14–17**

After acknowledging that hard times are sure to come, Paul tells Timothy to "continue in what you have learned and firmly believed (2 Tim 3:14)." Then, much like in 2 Tim 1:5, Paul makes mention of Timothy's foundational discipleship with the statement: "You know those who taught you (2 Tim 3:14)." Then, Paul gives clarity to the substance of this foundational discipleship: "…from infancy you have known the sacred Scriptures (2 Tim 3:15)." From the time that Paul and Barnabas made many disciples through preaching the gospel in Acts 14:21, until the time when Paul discovered Timothy in Acts 16:1, Eunice and Lois utilized the gospel that Paul and Barnabas preached (Paul was keen in utilizing the Old Testament when preaching Jesus [Acts 18:4-5]) and taught Timothy how Jesus was the focus of the Old Testament. Essentially, Eunice and Lois discipled Timothy in how to properly study and understand the Scriptures. Why? Paul gives this admonishment: "which are able to give you wisdom

for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus (2 Tim 3:15)." Thus, Timothy is being given this admonishment from Paul to look to Scripture for wise practice regarding the evangelistic/multiplying aspect of disciple-making. Additionally, Paul utilizes verses 16 and 17 to emphasize the reason for being a growing learner of the Scriptures: "All Scripture is inspired by God (God-breathed) and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness (2 Tim 3:16)." And by these Scriptures, the disciple-maker is completely "equipped for every good work (2 Tim 3:17)." Which, amid other things, Paul includes 'do the work of an evangelist' as a charge to Timothy in fulfilling his ministry (2 Tim 4:5). So, what can be learned from Paul's charge to Timothy to be a Great Commission Disciple?

Paul began by confirming Timothy's personal commitment to discipleship; a commitment Timothy learned from his mother and grandmother. Paul then displayed for Timothy the three interconnected and coequal participles of mobilization, maturation, and multiplication through a disciple-making *method*. Finally, Paul clearly provided the *means* by which this disciple-making work would be accomplished.

2 EXPLAIN

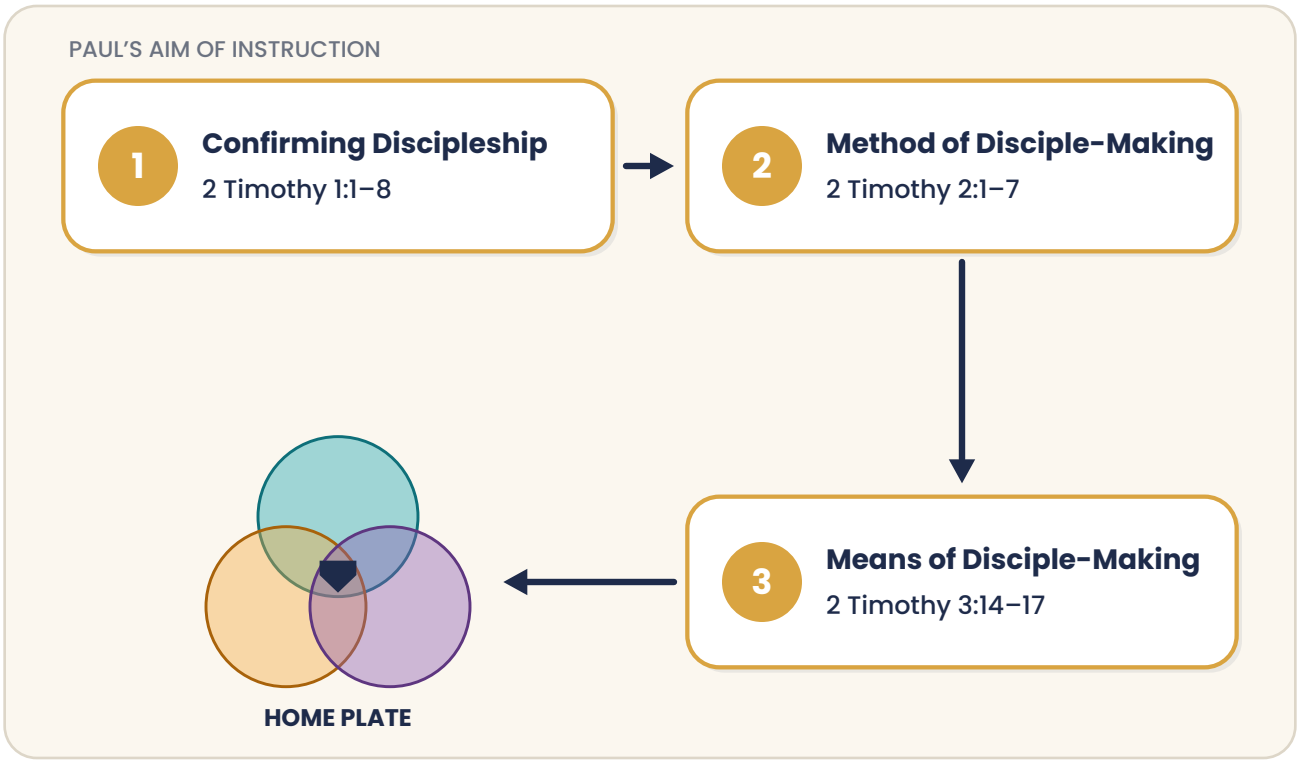


FIGURE 3 Paul's disciple-making pathway in 2 Timothy

Remember our definition of a Great Commission Disciple?

Great Commission Disciple – an obedient follower of Jesus's commands, sent locally and globally, to evangelize the lost, and to teach them how to become obedient followers of Jesus's commands. With this definition in view, consider Paul's pathway of mobilizing Timothy to engage in disciple-making.

2 TIMOTHY 1:1–8 · CONFIRMING DISCIPLESHIP

- **(v5)** "I recall your sincere faith." Paul reminded Timothy of the discipleship derived from his mother and grandmother's investment.
- **(v6)** "…rekindle the gift…" This laying on of hands likely refers to a commissioning/ordaining event. Paul was **mobilizing** Timothy to recommit his *obedience* to the work of this commissioning.
- **(v7)** "…but one (a spirit) of power, love, and sound judgment." Paul reminded Timothy of God's gifts that resource his discipline.
- **(v8)** "…share in suffering for the gospel…" Again, Paul was mobilizing Timothy to the work of the gospel through relying on the power of God.

2 TIMOTHY 2:1–7 · METHOD OF DISCIPLE-MAKING

- **(v2)** "…commit to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." Girded with strength from the grace that is in Christ Jesus, Paul put forth a succinct process of disciple-making. Then, he gave illustration to help with explanation.
- **(vv3–4) Mobilization (The Obedient Soldier):** Pleasing a commanding officer is connected intrinsically with a soldier's deployment—obedience to the mission never ends.
- **(v5) Maturation (The Diligent Athlete):** In his previous letter, Paul commended: "…train yourself in godliness (1 Tim. 4:7)." Keeping with this gymnasium motif, competing according to the rules correlates with "…observing everything I have commanded… (Matt 28:20)."
- **(v6) Multiplication (The Hardworking Farmer):** The Parable of the Sower (Luke 8) and the call to pray to the Lord of the harvest (Matt. 9:37-38), parallel given the method set forth in 2 Tim 2:2. Sowing the Word of God and being the "first to get a share of the crops" both corroborate a clear call for Timothy to "do the work of an evangelist" (2 Tim. 4:5).

2 TIMOTHY 3:14–17 · MEANS OF DISCIPLE-MAKING

- **(vv14–15) Multiplication** "…continue in what you have learned…you have known the sacred Scriptures…able to give you wisdom for salvation…" Paul reminded Timothy that the sincere/salvific faith passed down to him was foundationally delivered by means of Scripture.
- **(v16) Maturation** "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching…training in righteousness," Paul, returning to the gymnasium motif, commended all of Scripture to Timothy as the source material to "commit to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."
- **(v17) Mobilization** "so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." Finally, Paul further commended to Timothy that the Scriptures' effect of maturation inevitably brings a readiness for disciples to be mobilized toward every good work.

Paul's aim of confirming Timothy's personal foundation of discipleship, conveying to Timothy the method of disciple-making, and connecting Timothy to Scripture as the means by which disciple-making is accomplished crossed over 'home plate' with a personal charge to his dearly loved son: "But as for you, exercise self-control in everything [maturation], endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist [multiplication], fulfill your ministry

[mobilization] (2 Timothy 4:5).” Paul’s evident desire was for Timothy to fulfill his ministry as an ‘obedient follower of Jesus’ commands, sent locally and globally, to evangelize the lost, and to teach them how to become obedient followers of Jesus’ commands.

Therefore, when training a Great Commission Disciple, it is necessary to follow this Scriptural example by having them confirm their own discipleship. Who taught them? How have they previously grown? Answering these questions will establish helpful personalized patterns that instigate further growth.

3 EXPERIENCE

ACTIVITY

Great Commission Disciple’s Self-Assessment

Take a sheet of paper and write “My Discipleship Journey” at the top (or use the space below). Identify answers to the following prompts:

MY DISCIPLESHIP JOURNEY

What is the name of the parent, pastor, evangelist, or friend who helped you begin your relationship with Jesus?

From the moment you first believed until now, who are the people that have personally shaped the way you read, understand, and apply the Bible?

From the moment you first believed until now, what are the names of preachers, authors, and bible-teachers who have shaped the way you read, understand, and apply the Bible?

Take a moment and share your answers with someone. After you both share, take out another sheet of paper and write “My Discipleship Self-Assessment” at the top of the page. Then, take time to identify answers to the following prompts:

MY DISCIPLESHIP SELF-ASSESSMENT

List the books of the Old Testament in order from Genesis to Malachi.

List the books of the New Testament in order from Matthew to Revelation.

In a few sentences, briefly describe how your study of the Old Testament enhances your love and devotion to Jesus.

In a few sentences, briefly describe how your study of the New Testament enhances your love and devotion to Jesus.

In a few sentences, briefly describe your understanding of how the Old and New Testaments build upon each other.

Let's see how you did: First, take the first two prompts and tally how many (if any) of the 66 books you missed and create a percentage (example: 55 out of 66 = 83.3 percent). Then, write a percentage (0-100 percent) next to the other three prompts based upon how satisfied you are with your response (combine those three averages). Finally, combine the two percentages derived from the first two prompts and the last three prompts. Write down the final percentage on top of the form next to the heading My Discipleship Self-Assessment. What insights did this assessment draw out?

Books of the Bible **missed** (prompts 1–2)	**_____ of 66 missed = _____ %**
Satisfaction with my responses (prompts 3–5, combined)	**_____ %**
Final percentage (combine both)	**_____ %**

What insights did this assessment draw out?

LESSON 3

Living Sent

MOBILIZATION *"Go" — Living Sent*

LESSON OVERVIEW

During this lesson, you will consider the testimony of the apostle Paul (Acts 9) through the disciple-making paradigm and establish sound theological and practical principles for living sent.

1 EXPLORE

During the first lesson, you were introduced to the Matthew 28:19-20 disciple-making Venn diagram containing the three coequal and interconnected participles that define disciple-making. Keeping that diagram in view, these next two lessons are dedicated to the mobilization participle. During this lesson, you will consider the testimony of Saul of Tarsus from Acts 9. In doing so, you will be able to discern that Saul wasn't merely made a convert to Christianity—he was made into a disciple, by other disciples, and mobilized with the gospel to go and make more disciples.

READ **Acts 9:1–9**

One cannot help but marvel at the power of God. Amid Saul's breathing threats and murder against Jesus's disciples (Acts 9:1), the glory of Jesus literally stopped him in his tracks and changed the trajectory of his life. But isn't this the central theme surrounding the salvation event? Sure, not everyone confronted with the gospel of Jesus finds themselves involved in religious genocide; however, being blinded by the light of the Lord's goodness should always be a catalyst toward a new life of obedience. This was Saul's experience. After revealing his identity, Jesus told Saul, "Get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do (Acts 9:11). Imagine being Saul and realizing in that moment that you had been fighting for the wrong army. Rising from the ground, Saul lost his worldview along with his sight. And what was Saul's response? Obedience. His companions led him into the city at the Lord's directive. There, stunned and blind, Saul waited upon the Lord for three days. Additionally, he was so desperate to hear from Jesus again that he dedicated those three days to the practice of fasting from food and water.

READ **Acts 9:10–19**

Notice how this passage begins by identifying Ananias as "a disciple in Damascus (Acts 9:10)." However, Ananias' discipleship was evidenced by more than the given title. Look closely and notice a few specific details. First, Ananias recognized the voice of Jesus when He called his name. Second, notice how Jesus mobilized this disciple to make a disciple out of Saul. Jesus told Ananias: "Get up and go to the street called Straight… (Acts 9:11)." Then, again, Jesus told Ananias: "Go, for this man is… (Acts 9:15)." Both of these words translated 'go' carry the same imperative command from Jesus that He gave the eleven disciples in Matt 28:19. Third, notice the purpose of Jesus's mobilizing Ananias. It must be made clear that Jesus sent Ananias to Saul for the purpose of being a witness of Jesus's commands; to lay hands of prayer and witness the Lord remove Saul's spiritual blindness. Thus, Saul was baptized and spent some time in Damascus maturing from the other disciples' teaching. What I hope is clear so far is that Ananias' call to mobilization isn't detached from the imperative call of multiplication and maturation. Essentially, Ananias' discipleship was confirmed by his obedient disciple-making practices. And what was Jesus's expectation of Saul? Mobilization. Look again. Jesus commissioned Ananias with the knowledge of Saul's commissioning as Jesus's "chosen instrument to take my name to Gentiles, kings, and Israelites (Acts 9:15)." Once Saul was made into a disciple, he was to live sent!

READ **Acts 9:20–30**

Obedience to Jesus's commission was an immediate response from Saul. With a new family and mission, Saul took the message of the One who transformed him back to his former way of life. It is no wonder that Saul was effective at proving to the Jews in Damascus that Jesus was the Messiah. Not only did his former training as a Pharisee help him anticipate reasonable responses to their objections, but Acts 9:21 also conveys that people were astounded by his living testimony of life-change. And yet, it is helpful to point out that Saul's commission to *take Jesus's name to Gentiles, kings, and Israelites* began immediately where he found himself—Damascus. Likewise, our commission begins exactly where we live. However, various plots of murder arose due to the fervency of Saul's disciple-making efforts. In response, Saul was *mobilized* from Damascus to Jerusalem, where many disciples feared him due to the reputation he had built before his Damascus road encounter. And yet, the testimony from Barnabas regarding Saul's encounter with Christ on the road, and his Damascus preaching ministry, helped alleviate their fear. Then from Jerusalem to Caesarea and Tarsus, Saul's faithfulness to his commission continued to *mobilize* him with the gospel of Jesus. Wherever Saul ended up, he knew he had been *sent* there to speak boldly in the name of Jesus.

2 EXPLAIN

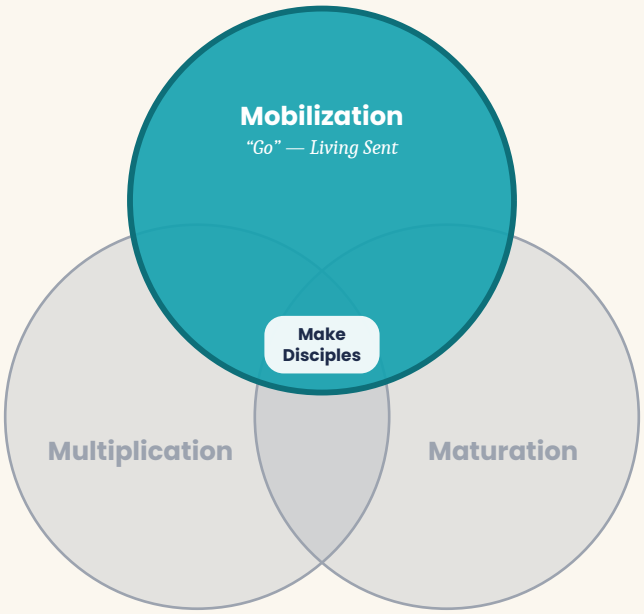


FIGURE 4 Mobilization emphasized Venn diagram

Remember "Church Mouse Mindy" from Lesson 1?

She is the byproduct of Maturation and Multiplication without Mobilization = **Lacking Reach**. She feels comfortable sharing the gospel with new people visiting Sunday morning services at her church, but she's uncomfortable seeking out these opportunities in public places. She loves leading weekday women's Bible studies at her church, but avoids opportunities to reach and teach overseas.

When mobilization becomes detached from multiplication and maturation, local church buildings become nothing more than centers of programming with the sole mission of inviting people to worship services. Sadly, many church members identify with Church Mouse Mindy more than they would like to admit. Which begs a serious question. How can someone who is trained in evangelism and dedicated to a Sunday school class become blind to the fullness of outreach? Again, when evangelism training and Sunday school are reduced to programming, information seldom leads to transformation. So, how can Church Mouse Mindy overcome her blindness to outreach? First, she needs to remember her own salvation experience. Consider these elements from Saul's conversion in Acts 9:

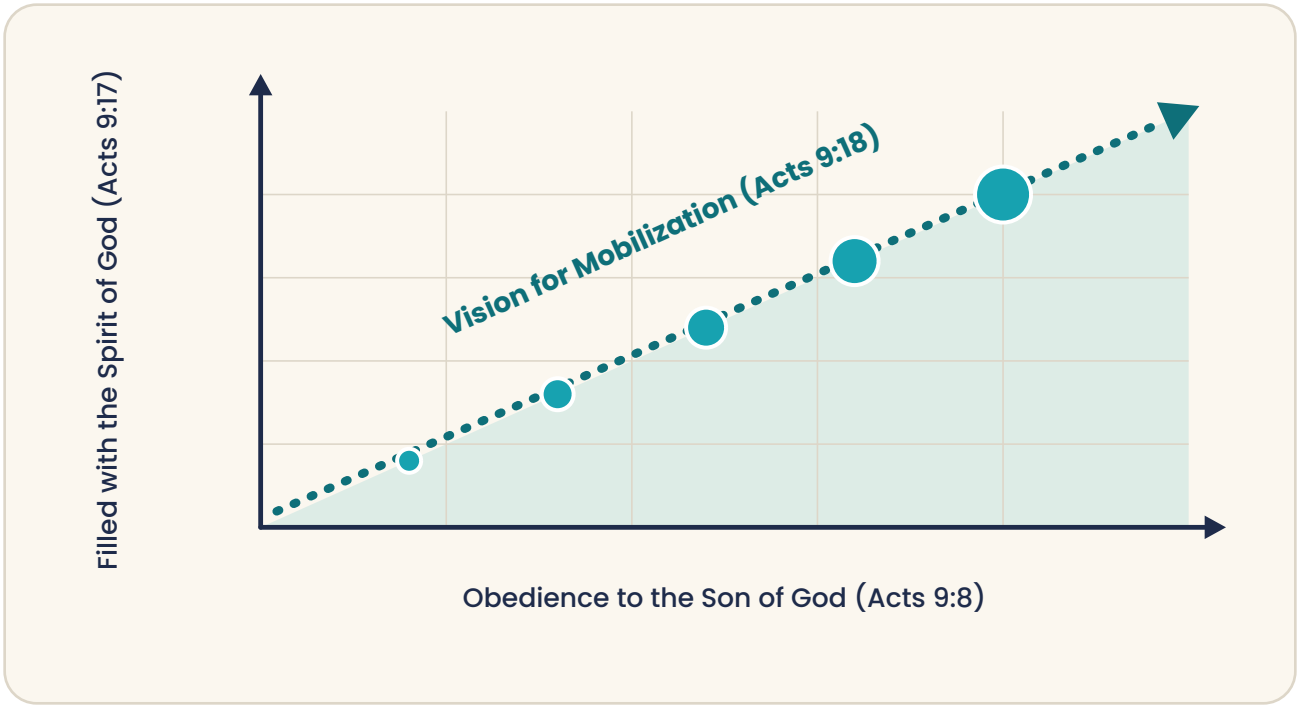


FIGURE 5 Mobilization vision diagram

- After his confrontation with Jesus on the road and aware of his blindness, Saul obeyed Jesus's command to enter Damascus and wait on the Lord (**Acts 9:8**).
- Ananias, obeying Jesus's command, prayed for Saul to regain his sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit (**Acts 9:17**).
- Saul, losing scales of blindness, gained vision with a new perspective (**Acts 9:18**).

Remember the joy you felt when you first believed the gospel in a saving way? Did you not want others to experience the same? Were your eyes not opened to see others in a whole new way? This initial display of obedience to the Lordship of Jesus, resulting in being filled with the Holy Spirit, impacted your vision to see those around you as potential disciples. However, receiving the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit and being filled with the Holy Spirit are two different matters. Consider Paul's letter to the Ephesians.

As Paul began his epistle to the Ephesian church, he makes this distinction regarding what happens at salvation: "In him you also were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation (Eph. 1:13)." However, he later made this statement: "And don't get drunk with wine, which leads to reckless living, but be filled by the Spirit (Eph. 5:18)." Which, when read in Greek, gives the meaning: "continually be filled by the Spirit." Essentially, disciples should be sealed with the Holy Spirit and are to stay filled by the Holy Spirit. But how is someone filled with the Holy Spirit? Abiding in the joy of the Lord from obedience to the word of the Lord. Consider this. After Ezra read from the word of the Lord, Nehemiah 8:10 declares that "…the joy of the Lord is your strength." Then, in Acts 13:52, after the word of the Lord spread through the whole region of Antioch, the text conveys that "…the disciples were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit."

Here's the point

The more we are filled with the Holy Spirit, coupled with our increasing joy-filled obedience to God's word, the greater our vision for mobilization increases—naturally resulting in spirit-filled disciple-making.

3 EXPERIENCE

ACTIVITY

Great Commission Disciples' Vision Development

In the previous lesson, you engaged the Great Commission Disciple's Self-Assessment. Under the "My Discipleship Self-Assessment" heading, you identified a percentage denoting the current state of your discipleship. Taking that into consideration, the purpose of this vision development is to create a Spirit-filling and obedience-driven growth strategy. Complete the worksheet below (or write the headings at the top of a sheet of paper).

GREAT COMMISSION DISCIPLES' VISION DEVELOPMENT

The Current State of My Discipleship

Percentage from Books of the Bible quiz:

Percentage from prompt 3, In a few sentences, briefly describe how your study of the Old Testament enhances your love and devotion to Jesus:

Percentage from prompt 4, In a few sentences, briefly describe how your study of the New Testament enhances your love and devotion to Jesus:

Percentage from prompt 5, In a few sentences, briefly describe your understanding of how the Old and New Testaments build upon each other:

Benefits of Growing in These Areas

Why should you memorize the books of the Bible?

Why should you be able to briefly describe how your study of the Old Testament enhances your love and devotion to Jesus?

Why should you be able to briefly describe how your study of the New Testament enhances your love and devotion to Jesus?

Why should you be able to briefly describe your understanding of how the Old and New Testaments build upon each other?

How I Plan to Grow

How can I memorize the books of the Bible in a manner that joyfully connects this act of devotion with an awareness of being in the presence of God?

What joyful habits do I need to develop to better explain how studying the Old Testament enhances my love and devotion to Jesus?

What joyful habits do I need to develop to better explain how studying the New Testament enhances my love and devotion to Jesus?

What joyful habits do I need to develop to better explain how the Old and New Testaments build upon each other?

4 Obstacles Hindering Growth

Obstacle One: Explain

Obstacle Two: Explain

Obstacle Three: Explain

Obstacle Four: Explain

4 Growth Steps to Implement This Week

Step One: When will this occur?

Step Two: When will this occur?

Step Three: When will this occur?

Step Four: When will this occur?

As you implement this Vision Development plan, pray for the Word of the Lord to connect you with the presence of the Lord. Anticipate being strengthened by the serious joy that only comes from being filled with the Holy Spirit. As your passion grows from each encounter, your eyes will be opened to see local and global disciple-making opportunities. In fact, you will naturally want to multiply and mature others because you won't be able to keep this serious joy to yourself.

LESSON 4

The Sending Church

MOBILIZATION *"Go" — Living Sent*

LESSON OVERVIEW

During this lesson, you will consider the church at Antioch (Acts 13-14) and establish the role of the local church as the natural arena for training and sending disciples to go and make disciples of all nations.

1 EXPLORE

Whenever someone mentions the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), astronauts like Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin typically become the focus of conversation. Sure, it's an amazing fact that Armstrong and Aldrin were the first documented human beings to ever walk on the moon; however, NASA is much more than an organization of astronauts. From spacecraft technicians and electrical engineers to flight directors and astrophysicists, NASA is comprised of many people with a vast array of essential giftings. Whenever they launch a rocket into space, it takes thousands of people with different skillsets working together. Similarly, the local church is made up of many people with different skill sets working together to send people on mission. Only, everyone gets launched out from the local church. NASA's missional location for mobilization is outer space. The local church's missional location for mobilization is all nations, including the nation where disciples currently live. Open your Bible to Acts 13 and let's consider the church at Antioch's example of mobilizing disciples to go out and make disciples.

READ **Acts 13:1–3**

Considering the event that transpires within this passage, it is quite significant for Luke to mention that there were prophets and teachers in the church at Antioch. One cannot help but wonder if this worship service was in Paul's mind when he wrote to the church at Ephesus: "And he (Jesus) himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ (Eph. 4:11-12)." Now, notice that Barnabas' name is mentioned first among the names of these prophets and teachers (Acts 13:1). From the previous lesson, you learned that Saul encountered Barnabas when

he arrives in Jerusalem (Acts 9:27); however, Luke's readers are first introduced to Barnabas' involvement with the Jerusalem church as "Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus by birth, the one the apostles called Barnabas [which is translated Son of Encouragement] (Acts 4:36);" a committed believer who sold a field to bring money to the apostles' cause. Why does this matter? Because in Acts 11:22 the Jerusalem church, having been told about large numbers of new Gentile believers coming to faith, sent Barnabas as far as Antioch to investigate. Notice, it was the church that sent Barnabas. Having found large numbers of people coming to faith at Antioch, Barnabas traveled just over 80 miles to Tarsus in order to recruit Saul to teach and help mature these new disciples (Acts 11:25-26). This is how Saul and Barnabas found themselves worshipping together with the church at Antioch. And during this time of corporate worship and fasting, Luke makes a very important observation: "…the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them (Acts 13:2).'" Now, whether or not this was spoken through the aforementioned prophets named in Acts 13:1 doesn't really matter. The important thing to realize is that the church, unified by the Holy Spirit during their worship, sent Saul and Barnabas out to go and make disciples. Because the church was unified in its worship, it was unified in hearing from the Holy Spirit.

READ **Acts 14:19–24**

From being sent from Antioch in Acts 13:3, to Saul (now Paul [Acts 13:9]) being stoned in Lystra in Acts 14:19, he and Barnabas found themselves in a constant cycle of preaching Christ and fleeing Jewish persecution. However, the Lord blessed their evangelism because there were disciples made from Pisidian Antioch to Derbe. And yet, in Acts 14:19, we can see that making these disciples didn't come without personal bodily injury. What is worth noticing is the language Luke used in Acts 14:21. After preaching the gospel in Derbe, Luke says that Paul and Barnabas "made many disciples." Why this is significant is that the only other place in Scripture where this Greek word 'matheteuō' (make disciples) is used, in this way, is in Matthew 28:19. Moreover, many commentators agree that Luke intentionally used this language to show continuity between the Great Commission and this display of mobilization from the church at Antioch.

However, you don't need to be a Greek scholar to see how this passage displays Matthew's Great Commission prescription for disciple-making. Look back again at Acts 14:21. Paul and Barnabas were mobilized and returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch. Then, Paul and Barnabas matured the disciples that they previously multiplied in those regions by teaching them that "It is necessary to go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God (Acts 14:22)." Certainly, Paul modeled this for everyone drawn to the Lord through his preaching; they would have only needed to see his bruises while he preached. However, more than modeling, Paul and Barnabas' *teaching* merely reinforced what Jesus taught: "Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple (Luke 14:27)." Therefore, Paul and Barnabas went back into those regions, *teaching* these disciples *to observe everything* Jesus *commanded*. But what is interesting is what happened in Acts 14:23. Paul and Barnabas appointed elders in every church that had been planted from their disciple-making efforts. Moreover, notice the continued theme of *prayer* and *fasting* from Acts 13:1 employed in Acts 14:23. When the church at Antioch gathered for worship, being filled with the Holy Spirit through prayer and fasting, they *mobilized* Paul and Barnabas to see worship occur in newly planted churches with newly made disciples through prayer and fasting.

2 EXPLAIN

Key idea

When we frame the Great Commission within the conversation of worship, fidelity to local and global disciple-making is sustained by worship-driven exaltation.

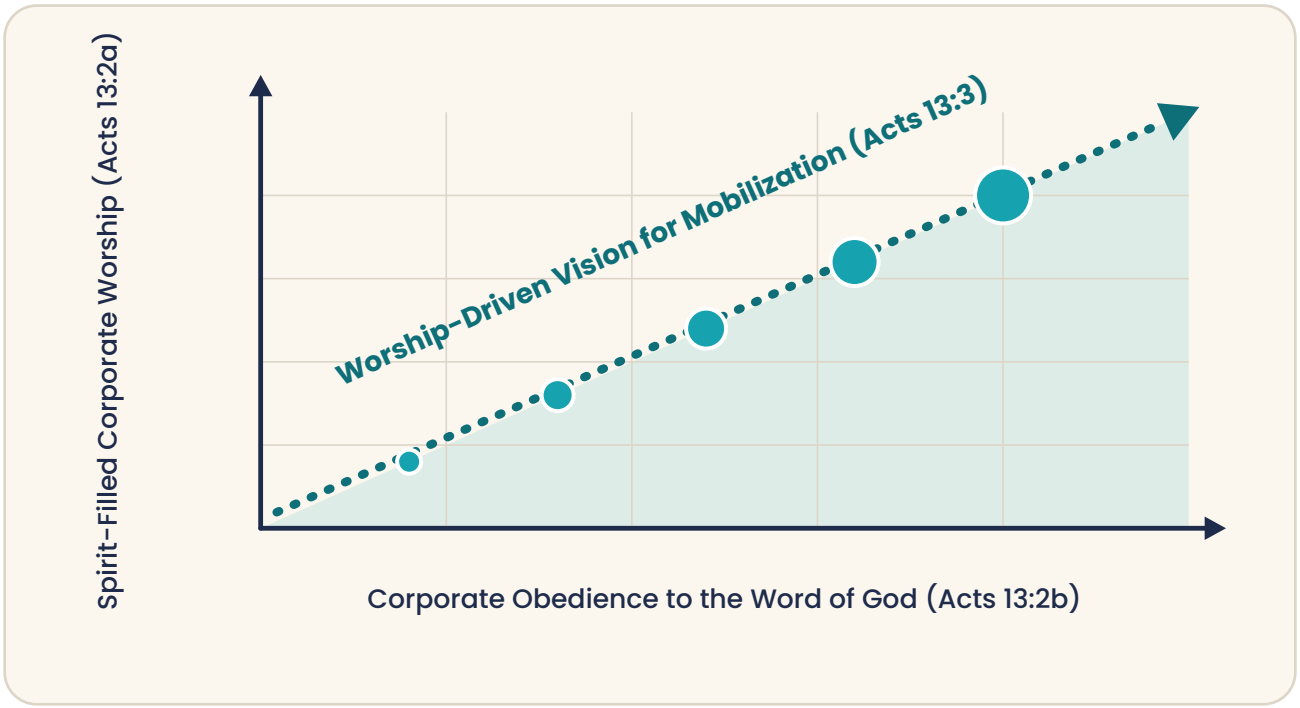


FIGURE 6 Worship-driven mobilization

Not unlike other local churches, within the church at Antioch were many different people with many different giftings and perspectives. Even though the prophets and teachers were specifically named in Acts 13:1, many other disciples gathered for the worship taking place in Acts 13:2. This worship-driven congregational confirmation not only mobilized Paul and Barnabas, but it also galvanized their disciple-making. It is worship that intrinsically connects each participle defining disciple-making.

Additionally, in Acts 9, Paul worshipped through prayer and fasting; he was filled with the Holy Spirit; he was obedient to the Word of God; and he *immediately set out* to make disciples with a worship-driven vision. Yet here we see the beauty of the local church. When disciples are filled corporately with the Holy Spirit, obedient to the Word of God, and gain a vision for corporate *mobilization*, disciple-making becomes an amalgam of corporate worship.

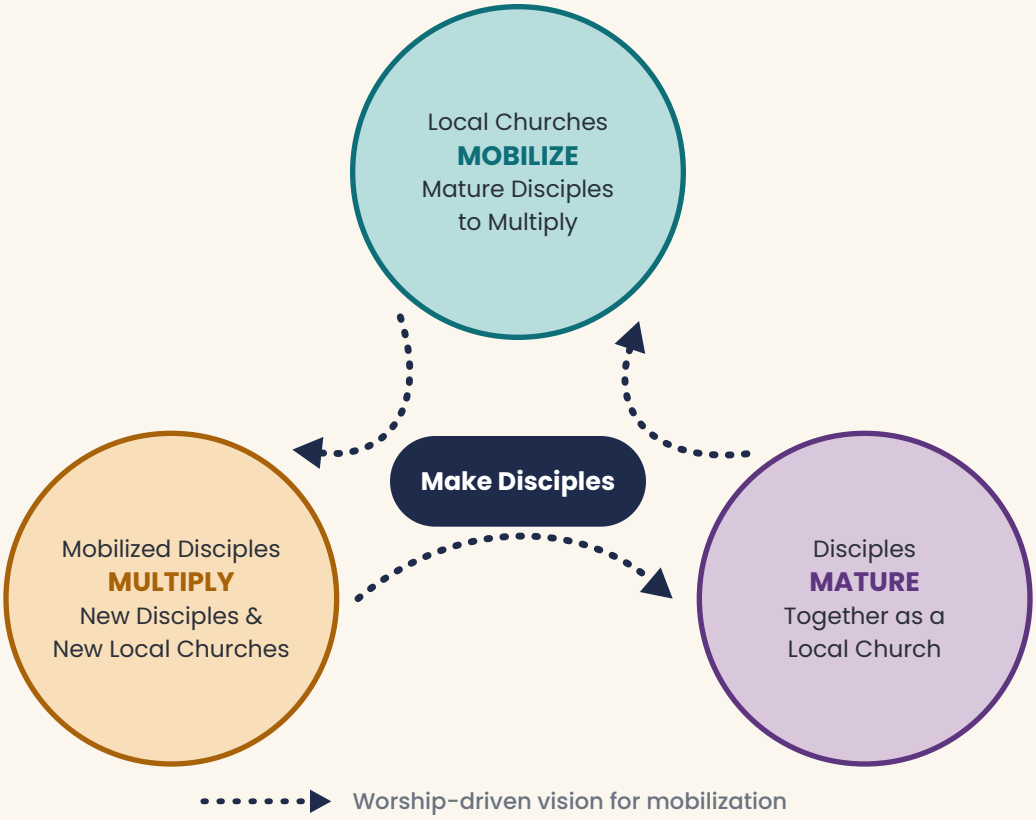


FIGURE 7 Worship-driven connection

Mobilization, Multiplication, and Maturation are best expressed as acts flowing from a disciple's genuine devotion to worship.

- When **maturing** disciples gather to worship alongside others in their local church, they "consider one another in order to provoke (mobilize) love and good works, not neglecting to gather together…but encouraging each other, and all the more as you see the day approaching (Heb 10:24-25)."
- When **mobilized** disciples are among their neighbors and the nations, their worship-driven vision illuminates their joy-filled devotion, and they **multiply** new disciples attracted from them, letting their "light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven (Matt 5:16)."
- When newly made disciples are taught how to **mature** through worship-driven spiritual disciplines, they are planted in local churches around other "true worshipers (who) worship the Father in Spirit and in truth. 'Yes, the Father wants such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24).'"

DEFINITION

Great Commission Disciple – an obedient follower of Jesus's commands, sent locally and globally, to evangelize the lost, and to teach them how to become obedient followers of Jesus's commands.

When you remove the aspect of worship, the life of a Great Commission Disciple could likely be reduced to mere duty devoid of delight. Additionally, the participles of mobilization, multiplication, and maturation are likely to be fractured apart from one another while being reduced as mere programs within a local church—programs that start strong but lose momentum over time.

3 EXPERIENCE

ACTIVITY

Grow and Go Together

Take out your Great Commission Disciple's Vision Development from Lesson 3. Pair up with someone at your table and discuss the similarities and differences between your individual vision development strategies. Talk about wins and difficulties you've experienced attempting to develop the Great Commission Vision by yourselves. Now, as a pair, create an addition to your Great Commission Disciple's Vision Development that involves your partner with others within the membership of your local church.

HOW WE PLAN TO GROW AND GO TOGETHER

How can we memorize the books of the Bible in a manner that joyfully connects this act of devotion with an awareness of being in the presence of God?

What joyful habits do we need to develop to better explain how studying the Old Testament enhances my love and devotion to Jesus?

What joyful habits do we need to develop to better explain how studying the New Testament enhances my love and devotion to Jesus?

What joyful habits do we need to develop to better explain how the Old and New Testaments build upon each other?

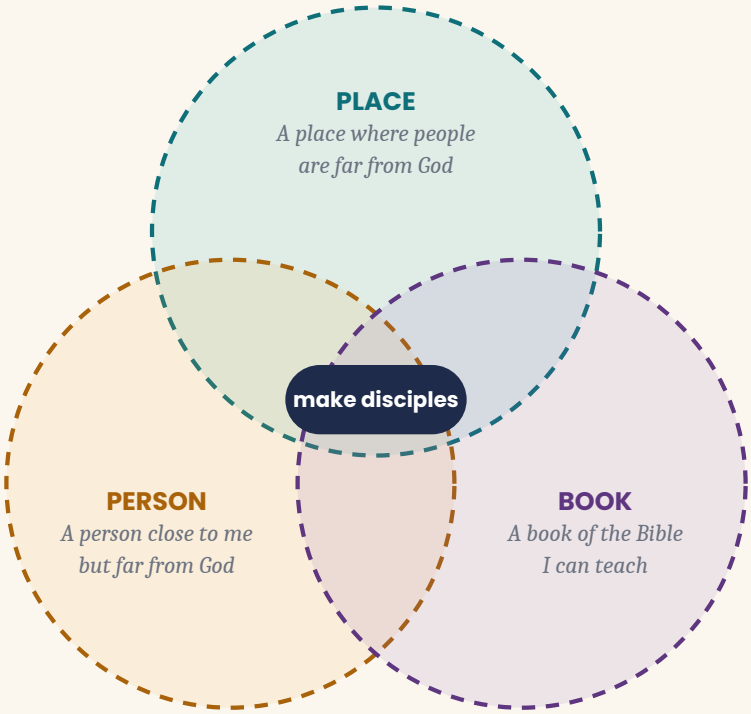
What role does worship play in collectively pursuing these goals?

ACTIVITY

Create a New Disciple-Making Strategy Plan

Just like from Lesson 1, draw an empty three-circle Venn diagram on a sheet of paper (or use the diagram below) and write "make disciples" in the center.

- Instead of mobilization, write the name of **a place** where you know there are likely people who are far from God.
- Instead of multiplication, write the name of **a person** you know who is close to you but far from God.
- Instead of maturation, write the name of **a book of the Bible** that you are the most comfortable teaching to a prospective new disciple.



Take a moment and share with your partner this new disciple-making strategy. How has your Great Commission Disciple's Vision Development changed your approach to this Disciple-Making Strategy Plan from when you first engaged it in Lesson 1? What accountability structures can form through incorporating your partner into this new Disciple-Making Strategy Plan?

How has your Vision Development changed your approach to this Strategy Plan since Lesson 1?

What accountability structures can form through incorporating your partner?

LESSON 5

Loving Sinners

MULTIPLICATION *"Baptize" — Evangelism*

LESSON OVERVIEW

During this lesson, you will consider the example of Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:26-40) and see how your own personal discipleship is used in evangelizing the lost by means of discipleship.

1 EXPLORE

In his letter to the Ephesian Church, Paul illuminated the reality that "we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do (Eph 2:10)." I cannot tell you how many times I have missed a flight. Yet, on another plane, I ended up seated next to someone with whom the Lord opened a door for a fruitful gospel conversation. I cannot tell you how many times I have gone to a coffee shop to find it closed. Yet, at another coffee shop, I ended up seated near someone with whom the Lord opened a door for a fruitful gospel conversation. Whether on a plane or at a coffee shop, I am usually catching up on devotional reading or working through various stages of sermon planning. When I work at my local coffee shop, my Bible often sits beside my computer. Inevitably, someone will notice and ask what I'm working on—opening an invitation for me to joyfully share the gospel of Jesus with this curious new friend. These divine appointments happen often. When we genuinely commit to our own discipleship, it activates our worship-driven vision for mobilization. As the Holy Spirit fills us, he guides us toward opportunities where we can help others draw closer to God. Open your Bible to Acts 8:4 and notice the connection between Philip's maturation and mobilization with the multiplication principle of disciple-making.

READ **Acts 8:4–8**

It's interesting when you compare and contrast Acts 1:8 with Acts 8:1. Before ascending, Jesus told his faithful followers that they would "receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8)." However, until Acts 8:1, all of the Holy Spirit empowered witnessing had been solely occurring in and around Jerusalem. Stephen, along with Philip, were among the first men to be set apart for the deacon ministry at the Jerusalem church (Acts 6:5); however, it was Stephen's martyrdom given as the inference for "Saul agreed with putting him to death (Acts 8:1)." Therefore, when Jesus commissioned his followers to be mobilized witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth, he knew "a severe persecution [would break] out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles [would be] scattered throughout the land of Judea and Samaria (Acts 8:1)." What is beautiful to notice is that, even in the midst of horrific affliction, God was still working through his people to bless the nations.

Now, pay close attention to the fact that "those who were scattered went on their way preaching the word (Acts 8:4)." Remember, it was because of Stephen's sermon (Acts 7:1-53) that the Sanhedrin became enraged to the point of killing him—igniting the wave of persecution that scattered (or mobilized) these nomadic preachers. Understand that the boldness for them to fearlessly go abroad preaching the Word wasn't rooted in mere bravery—this was the same supernatural boldness that Peter and John prayed: "And now, Lord, consider their threats, and grant that your servants may speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand for healing, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus (Acts 4:29-30)." So, Philip descended from the elevation of Jerusalem, or "went down," and proclaimed the Messiah to those in Samaria (Acts 8:5). Now, it is worth noting that this is the same Samaria where Jesus encountered the woman at the well (John 4:7-42). As Jesus evangelized this Samaritan woman, "many Samaritans from that town (Sychar) believed in him because of what that woman said when she testified, 'He told me everything I ever did (John 4:39).'" However, after Jesus stayed with them for two more days, these new believers "told the woman, 'We no longer believe because of what you said, since we have heard for ourselves and know that this really is the Savior of the world (John 4:42).'" Now, whether or not Philip was in the same city of Sychar isn't as important as what he was doing; Philip was being a witness in Samaria by proclaiming Jesus as the Messiah—to the extent that "there was great joy in that city (Acts 8:8)."

READ **Acts 8:26–40**

While enjoying fruitful ministry in Samaria, an angel of the Lord mobilized Philip to "Get up and go south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza (Acts 8:26)." This desert road was once a prominent passageway until Alexander the Great conquered the region, and the southwestern desert consumed the atmosphere by making it an undesirable and desolate travel route. Regardless, in an act of obedience to the Lord, Philip did as he was directed and encountered a divine appointment. It can plainly be seen that this Ethiopian man was someone of great importance. Notice the credentials listed: "high official, in charge of entire treasury (Acts 8:27)." This was someone possessing great influence; however, this was also someone who came across the teachings of Judaism and found them to be compelling enough to come "worship in Jerusalem (Acts 8:27)." Because this man was a eunuch reading Isaiah 53:7-8 aloud (Acts 8:28; 32-33), he likely had already found

Isaiah's prophetic voice intriguing: "For the Lord says this: For the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, and choose what pleases me, and hold firmly to my covenant, I will give them, in my house and within my walls, a memorial and a name better than sons and daughters. I will give each of them an everlasting name that will never be cut off (Isaiah 56:4-5)." This would've, indeed, driven him to go and worship the God of Isaiah in Jerusalem.

At this point, it is helpful to remember that the only instruction given to Philip was to get up and go to this road. The Lord had already been at work in Philip's life, and now we can see how this Ethiopian was positioned by the Lord for this evangelistic encounter. In his letter to the Galatian believers, Paul gives this exhortation: "If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit (Gal 5:25)." Notice how Philip, yet again, embodies this in Acts 8:29-30. The Spirit told Philip to go to where this Ethiopian was. And as he did, Philip recognized that the Ethiopian was reading from the book of Isaiah. What does this say about Philip's spiritual maturity? Philip was able to know exactly which book of the Bible was being read just by hearing the Ethiopian's recitation. Not only that, notice how confidently Philip asked if the Ethiopian was able to understand what he was reading (Acts 8:30). It takes a passionate person, one familiar with a given subject matter, to offer in helping others gain understanding. And notice the Ethiopian's open response to invite Philip into his chariot to sit with him (Acts 8:31).

In his letter to Roman believers, Paul gave this exhortation: "So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the message about Christ (Rom 10:17)." After the Ethiopian asked who Isaiah 53:7-8 was referring to, "Philip proceeded to tell him the good news about Jesus, beginning with that Scripture (Acts 8:35)." It is absolutely crucial to belabor the fact that Philip began with Scripture. With Romans 10:17 in view, the only reliable message about Christ comes from Scripture. Moreover, knowing how the Old and New Testaments build upon one another around the Gospel of Jesus ensures that you will never run out of source material. By connecting Jesus with the prophetic word Isaiah spoke over seven hundred years earlier, Philip opened this Ethiopian's eyes to the availability of seeing the glory of Jesus in all of Scripture. This resulted in the Ethiopian's salvation and subsequent baptism (Acts 8:38). Essentially, led by the Spirit, Philip's personal devotion to the Scriptures was used to lead this Ethiopian to be born again by the Scriptures.

READ **Acts 21:7–9**

From the time that Philip arrived in Caesarea in Acts 8:40 until this moment in Acts 21:8, many scholars believe that over 20 years had transpired. After spending time with the Ephesian elders in Miletus, Paul's company set out toward various cities to seek out disciples and pray. Of these cities, they arrived in Caesarea and "entered the house of Philip the evangelist (Acts 21:8)." If you recall from Lesson 3, learning of the Hellenistic Jews plot to murder Paul, "When the brothers found out, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus (Acts 9:30)." Because Philip had already settled in Caesarea during the time of that episode, Paul was likely blessed by the impact of Philip's Caesarean ministry some 20 years prior to this encounter.

Regardless. From being set apart among the seven to serve as a deacon in Jerusalem (Acts 6:5), until this moment, Philip's life was lived in such a way that Scripture distinguishes him as an evangelist. His devotion to Christ commissioned him to be a witness in Samaria; this devotion to Christ commissioned Philip to evangelize the Ethiopian; and this devotion to Christ commissioned Philip the evangelist to devote over 20 years to Caesarea as a gospel witness.

2 EXPLAIN

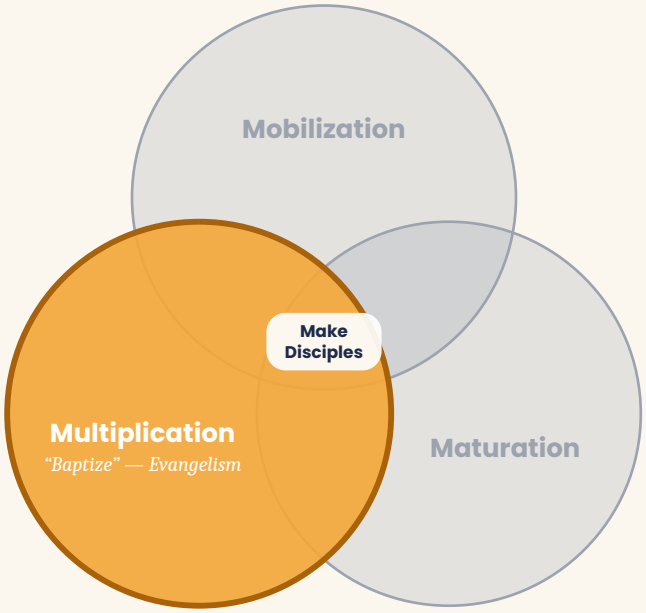


FIGURE 8 Multiplication emphasized Venn diagram

Remember "Sunday School Sam" from Lesson 1?

He is the byproduct of Mobilization and Maturation without Multiplication = **Lacking Witness**. He loves going to national Bible conferences to learn, and he attends local Bible studies in hopes of finding more Christians to join his Sunday school class. Having only the finest commentaries at his house, he loves to teach, but sharing the gospel with lost people makes him very uncomfortable. He loves his safe bubble of Christian culture.

Now, you might be tempted to shake your head and say: "How could such a person exist?" However, we must realize that this issue of a lack of *witnesses* is one of the leading contributors to the decline of membership in many local churches. Which begs a question: "How can someone love God, His people, and His Word, and at the same time, not be evangelistic? Do these things not obviously go hand-in-hand?" Consider this:

- For some, **theology** can become another product to be consumed. Whether adding books to the shelf, listening to new podcasts, or attending conferences, theological insights potentially translate as mere academic information.
- For some, **local church membership** can become another subscription to be consumed; attendance is based upon the quality of programming, and worship services become reduced to a spectator event.
- For some, **social anxiety and fear of rejection** make the thought of being a gospel witness to unbelievers seem overwhelming. They often feel unqualified by comparison to others they perceive to possess this

competency.

- For some, they believe that **evangelism is best left to 'the professionals.'** Often, this means pastors (or those who've been to seminary or bible college).

As you might imagine, there are many factors that could contribute to a person's lack of engagement with genuine evangelistic practices. For instance, I have known professing introverts who believe that evangelism is a gift that God only gives to people who are naturally extraverted. On the other hand, I have known professing extraverts who believe that evangelism is simply making an introduction between their lost friends and their pastor. Both of these misconceptions, however, are merely symptoms stemming from a deeper issue—shallow discipleship. In many cases, other ambitions, goals, and hobbies tend to create busyness within a person's weekly calendar when spiritual maturity isn't a priority.

But was this the example we've seen from Philip? Not at all. Evangelism isn't dependent upon a person possessing a particular personality type. Evangelism ought to be the natural outpouring from Christ-followers who find delight in discipleship. Like the other first-century disciples considered in previous lessons, Philip's discipleship was connected intrinsically to his bold gospel proclamation. His evangelism training was simply his devotion to Christ, his connection with the Holy Spirit's leadership, and his dedication to Scripture—Philip was a true example of a disciple-maker. Take another look at Philip's encounter with the Ethiopian.



FIGURE 9 Spirit-filled evangelism flow

- Through Philip's worship-driven gospel proclamation, bringing *great joy* to the Samaritan city (Acts 8:8), he was receptive to receiving **divine direction** from the angel and the Spirit.
- Through Philip's **obedience**, he ran up to the Ethiopian's chariot in order to survey this evangelistic opportunity.

- Through Philip's personal discipleship, he was able to discern this **divine appointment** by recognizing that the Ethiopian was reading from Isaiah 53.
- Through Philip's personal discipleship, he was able to explain to the Ethiopian Isaiah's **scriptural witness** to the good news about Jesus.
- Through Philip's witness, the Ethiopian responded with **belief** and was immediately baptized.
- After the baptism, the Ethiopian rejoiced, and Philip **continued witnessing**.

You may never be visited by an angel; however, the Holy Spirit has already given you divine direction through the witness of Scripture: "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 everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age (Matt 28:19-20)." Worship-driven obedience to this divinely directed mobilization opens our eyes to see divine appointments which God prepared for us before the foundation of the world (Eph 2:10). As you stand ready with God's Word as your Scriptural witness and testimony to the message about Christ (Rom 10:17), the multiplication of newly made disciples will stand ready to respond with belief by observing the ordinance of baptism into the membership of a local church. And through continued witness, a pathway of maturation is established from the teaching of being obedient to all of Christ's commands through the ministry of the local church.

3 EXPERIENCE

ACTIVITY

Worship-Driven Prelude to Evangelism Journal

The previous examples of Philip, Paul, Barnabas, and Ananias all convey Spirit-led encounters with divine appointments as the byproduct of their engagement with spiritual disciplines. At the end of Lesson 4, you created a new Disciple-Making Strategy Plan. Remember, this new strategy plan was developed after anticipated spiritual growth through your engagement with the Great Commission Disciples' Vision Development from Lesson 3. This week, you are going to commit your new Disciple-Making Strategy Plan to a daily hour of private worship, Scripture meditation, and prayer during a time of fasting (consult your doctor if you are considering fasting from food/water). Additionally, you will keep a journal to record insights gained.

DAILY RHYTHM · 60 MINUTES · MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY



1 Sing

Hymns or spiritual songs. How did singing the truth of these lyrics set the tone for your time alone with God?

2 Pray

Pray through the day's passage. Record significant insights, especially as they pertain to your strategy plan.

3 Meditate

Sit silently before the Lord and meditate on the passage you just prayed through. Record insights.

4 Memorize

Commit 1 Corinthians 15:3–4 to memory.

DAY	PRAY THROUGH	HYMNS & SONGS	INSIGHTS FOR MY STRATEGY PLAN
Monday	Matthew 28:16–20		
Tuesday	2 Timothy 2:1–7		
Wednesday	Acts 9:10–19		
Thursday	Acts 14:19–24		
Friday	Acts 8:26–40		

If fasting from food, consider foregoing breakfast and dedicating your lunch hour to this journaling experience—then eat an evening meal. If you are unable to fast from food, consider fasting from consuming media (television, podcasts, social media, YouTube, etc.). Finally, during each session, earnestly ask the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to see divine appointments.

LESSON 6

The Reaching Church

MULTIPLICATION *"Baptize" — Evangelism*

LESSON OVERVIEW

During this lesson, you learn from the church in Jerusalem (Acts 2:41-47) how a church's devotion to discipleship is used to reach the community around them.

1 EXPLORE

Have you ever stopped to think about the allure of a campfire? My family loved to go camping when I was growing up. I have fond memories of hiking trails, fishing, and swimming during the day; however, there was always something special in the evenings when our family gathered around a campfire. The smell of good food would permeate through the entire campground when we used the campfire flames to cook our food; we would sing songs while watching the sparks go up into the air from newly added wood; and my dad would usually lead a devotion from Scripture before we ate. Inevitably, people who were camping around us would see the glow of our campfire, smell the aroma of our dinner cooking, hear the songs that we were singing, and come over to join our family's fellowship. Without question, we would share our fire, food, and fellowship with anyone—there is just something inviting about a campfire. In many ways, there is very little difference between a local church's dedication to the Sacred Scriptures and the allure of a campfire. When saints gather around the light and warmth of God's Word, a culture of invitation is created naturally through Spirit-filled fellowship; a light and warmth they carry with them wherever they find themselves. In the book of Acts, the first church experienced a massive multiplication of newly made disciples. This growth was both numerical and in depth of maturity, as believers gathered around the light and warmth of the apostles' teaching of God's Word. The inviting glow of their fellowship and the comforting strength found in Scripture drew people together, fueling both their spiritual passion and their sense of belonging within the creation of a new community.

READ **Acts 2:14–36**

In Acts 2:1-13, the promise Jesus made to his disciples regarding their reception of power through the coming of the Holy Spirit was realized (Acts 1:8). Each of the disciples was empowered to declare the magnificent acts of God in various languages from all over the ancient world. In a way, this was an inversion of what happened at the Tower of Babylon (Gen 11:1-9). Rather than causing confusion over dividing everyone's language across the earth, God brought understanding by utilizing everyone's language from across the earth. However, this outpouring of the Holy Spirit wasn't without criticism from those wanting to explain away this miracle as drunkenness. At once, Peter addressed these critics with a prolific exegetical sermon. Much like Philip and the Ethiopian, Peter was positioned to respond to a divine appointment. After Jesus asked the disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God (Matt 16:15-16)." Then, after blessing him by stating that the Father revealed this confession to Peter (Matt 16:17), Jesus foretold what would take place on this day of Pentecost: "And I say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overpower it (Matt 16:18)."

Now, notice how Peter's sermon utilized the Old Testament books of Joel and Psalms to present the confession of Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of the living God. This was not just evident throughout the sermon, but Peter made it very clear at the conclusion by stating: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know with certainty that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah (Acts 2:36)." Indeed, this confessional rock set the foundation for the birth of Jesus's church.

READ **Acts 2:37–40**

Whether preaching a sermon or engaging in evangelism, giving an invitation is a loving gesture toward anyone hearing the gospel. This is true. Especially when there is a discernible spirit of conviction working within someone's heart. Notice the response of those who were pierced to the heart over the sermon Peter had just preached: "Brothers, what should we do (Acts 2:37)?" When the Spirit is working in someone, they instinctively understand that a response is necessary. Upon believing the confession that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the living God, Peter offered an invitation for these convicted new brothers to respond with repentance and baptism. To what end? Peter declared: "…and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38)." Like Saul in Acts 9:17-18, this gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit occurs when someone responds to the living Christ with repentance and faith—then they outwardly respond with "believer's baptism." Moreover, like it was with Saul, this indwelling gift of the Holy Spirit is intended to activate and equip Christ-followers to go and make more disciples. That is why Peter included: "For the promise is for you and for your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord will call (Acts 2:39)." This is not unlike what Moses told those about to enter the promised land: "These words that I am giving you today are to be in your heart. Repeat them to your children… (Deut 6:6-7a)." Like the Shema—a familiar declaration of faith in Judaism that calls families to love and teach God's commands—the gospel message is meant to saturate homes through disciple-making and extend its impact far beyond, reaching into the heart of communities and the public spaces. Finally, Peter concluded this invitation by strongly admonishing: "Be saved from this corrupt generation (Acts 2:40)." This is the core plea of evangelism. The life of a disciple is one set free from the cursed patterns of a fallen world. As a newly made disciple grows in community around other disciples, their eyes are opened to a new way to perceive the world

through God's Word.

READ **Acts 2:41–47**

Consider the reality that a community of around 120 people gathered in an upper room (Acts 1:15) multiplied into over 3,000 in just one day. What's even more interesting is to consider what occurred during the days following this incredible evangelistic sermon. After these 3,000 new disciples were made, they immediately immersed themselves in a brand-new community called the local church!

Now, it is worth recapping how this church in Jerusalem experienced dynamic expansion: Jesus's followers were continually united in prayer in the upper room (Acts 1:14); Peter, along with the eleven, were mobilized by the Spirit's outpouring and took to the streets to evangelize the Jews and residents of Jerusalem (Acts 2:14); Peter preached the gospel of Jesus using passages from the Old Testament, and God multiplied 3,000 new believers after the invitation was given (Acts 2:41); and these newly made disciples displayed an immediate devotion to maturation. First, notice the primary object of devotion is that of the apostles' teaching (Acts 2:42). And what was the source of their teaching? Scripture. Peter demonstrated this example of Scriptural apostolic preaching in Acts 2:14-40. Because the apostles were teaching the Word of God, the very Scriptures that provided salvation brought nourishment to these new disciples. What of this fellowship? Their mutual devotion to Scriptural teaching created closely connected relationships that promoted eating and praying together. The warmth of the Word was expressed through the warmth of this radically generous new community. Having found a genuine prize in Jesus, they sold possessions and properties so that everyone was cared for (Acts 2:44-45). With hearts filled with joy, they committed themselves sincerely to daily worship in the temple—a practice that mobilized these disciples to go and multiply more disciples every day (Acts 2:47). Incredible, right?

So, what was the impact of this church's commitment to disciple-making? While standing trial before the Sanhedrin, the high priest reprimanded Peter and the apostles: "Didn't we strictly order you not to teach in this name? Look, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man's blood (Acts 5:28)." Again, this apostolic preaching was simply revealing the gospel of Jesus through the exposition of the Old Testament. Moreover, the tangible expression of this apostolic preaching was the community it produced. The Lord filled Jerusalem with new disciples as products of this apostolic preaching through this community's daily devotional practices (mobilization, multiplication, and maturation).

It is no secret that you need to be attentive in adding wood in order to keep a campfire burning. However, not just any piece of wood will accomplish this task. In fact, the wrong kind of wood can even put your fire out (damp, rotted wood…etc). But a fire stays burning when everyone at the campsite devotes themselves to finding the right kind of wood to feed it. Additionally, a fire grows warmer and more visible when more people join in this devotional task of adding wood. In the same way, a local church's witness burns warmly and visibly when it is devoted to consistently gathering for worship. And like the quality of campfire wood, this worship must be based upon God's Word. When a local church's membership is set ablaze, their warm and visible Spirit-filled demeanor finds favor with all people (Acts 2:47)—opening doors for them to share the Scriptural reason for their joyful and sincere hearts.

2 EXPLAIN

Much like the church at Antioch (Acts 13:1-3) from Lesson 4, the church in Jerusalem enjoyed gathering together for worship. Additionally, in the same way that the Lord mobilized Paul and Barnabas to go and multiply new disciples in Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe from that Antioch worship gathering, the Lord mobilized these 3,000+ devoted disciples to go and multiply new disciples in Jerusalem. In connection with the foundation of the local church as the premier institution to facilitate worship, this passage gives unique detail that further validates the local church as the premier institution to facilitate disciple-making. Take a moment and look at this passage again as an "action/result" clause. First, isolate Acts 2:42 as the "action" clause. Next, isolate Acts 2:43-47 as the "result" clause. Now, step back and notice what becomes visible:



FIGURE 10 Devotional biblical worship

Acts 2:42

They devoted themselves to the **apostles' teaching**, to the **fellowship**, to the **breaking of bread**, and to **prayer**. This Greek word, translated "devoted," carries with it the meaning: *to persist in, hold fast to, continuing in, persevering in* something.

- **Action:** (v42) Devotion to the **apostles' teaching**. **Result:** (v43) Everyone was filled with awe at what was being done through the apostles; (46) ***Every day they devoted*** themselves to meeting together in the temple.

- **Action:** (v42) Devotion to the **fellowship**. **Result:** (v44) Now all the believers were together and held all things in common; (v46) ***Every day they devoted*** themselves to meeting together in the temple.
- **Action:** (v42) Devotion to the **breaking of bread**. **Result:** (v45) They sold their possessions and property and distributed the proceeds to all, as any had need; (v46) ***Every day they devoted*** themselves to breaking of bread from house to house. They ate their food with joyful and sincere hearts.
- **Action:** (v42) Devotion to **prayer**. **Result:** (vv46–47) ***Every day they devoted*** themselves to joyful and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people.

Notice how God used the **devotion** of the early church to inform the culture of this new community that He was growing. Essentially, these new disciples became what they believed—living gospel testimonies. The apostles' teaching of God's Word not only brought salvation to them, but it also became a source of warmth and light that they would crave on a daily basis. Moreover, **worship** around the apostles' teaching informed their fellowship, their meals, and their prayers. As they **devoted** themselves daily to **worship** together, the warmth and visibility of this new community of disciples grew. This is what Jesus taught from the Sermon on the Mount: "You are the light of the world. A city situated on a hill cannot be hidden (Matt 5:14)."

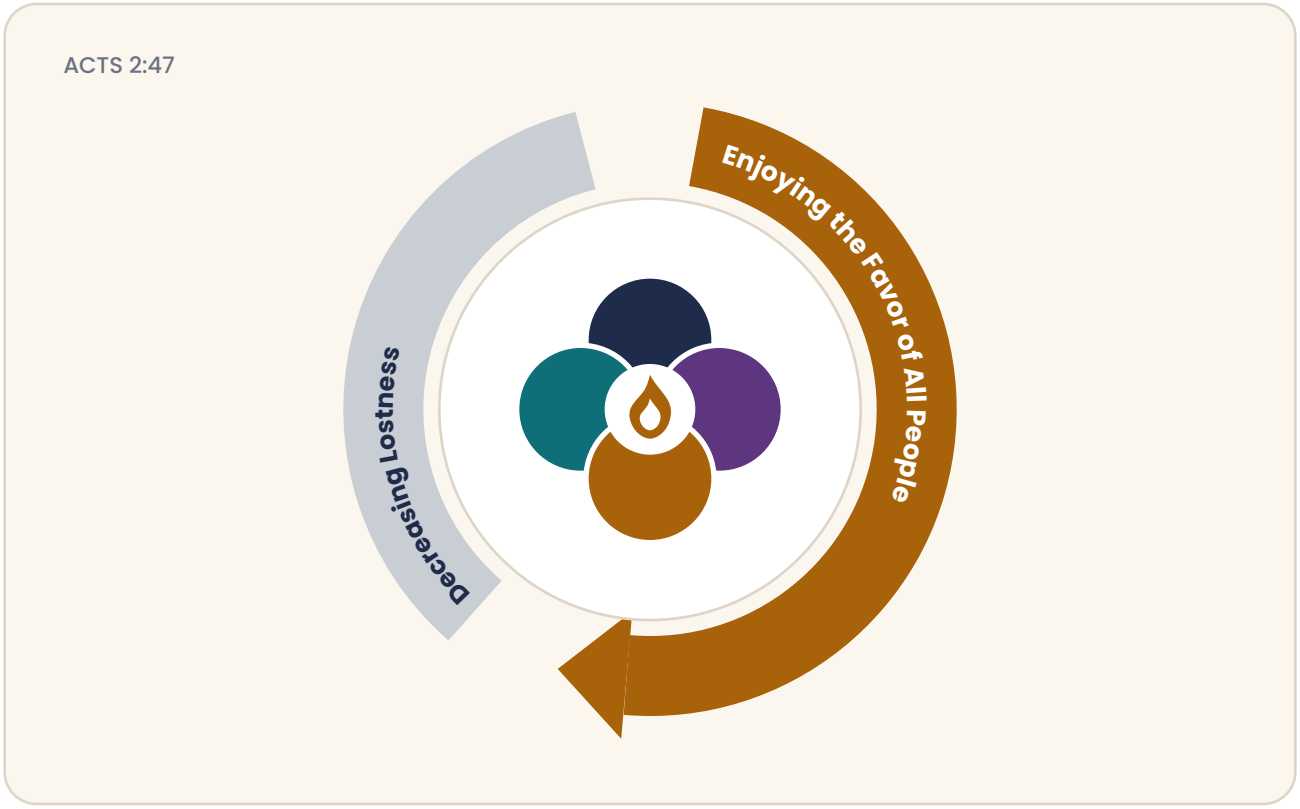


FIGURE 11 Worship-driven evangelism

What's best expressed through this passage is that the worship practices born under this New Covenant community weren't confined to the temple. These worship gatherings ignited a genuine conviction within the hearts of the disciples of compassion. Because of their sincere care for one another, the surrounding community witnessed a warm and visible expression of the same sacrificial love that exists at the very heart of the gospel message. Notice Paul's exhortation the church in Rome: "Therefore, brothers and sisters, in view of the mercies

of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your true worship (Rom 12:1)." When the local church devotes themselves to worship together, their hearts are set ablaze with a joyful sincerity that finds favor with all people. The warmth and visibility from the flames of these living sacrifices—their tangible acts of faith, devotion, and love—shine brightly, drawing others in to repent, believe, be baptized, and begin the journey of discipleship and disciple-making. As disciples follow Jesus's example daily, they also help others do the same, multiplying the impact of their faith and forming a vibrant, welcoming community that models the love and grace of Christ to the world.

3 EXPERIENCE

ACTIVITY

Experience Evangelism Journal

As you engaged with the Worship-Driven Prelude to Evangelism Journal last week, what insights gave you confidence as a disciple seeking to make new disciples? Hopefully, your time alone with the Lord and His Word filled you with appreciation and anticipation to share His good news with someone. Having committed 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 to memory, you will devote this week to seeking out divine appointments to share the love of Jesus's gospel with those you encounter in the midst of your everyday routines:

- Begin each day with devotional Scripture reading, praise and worship, reflecting on the previous Sunday's worship gathering, and prayer.
- During your time of prayer, ask the Lord to open your eyes to see opportunities for you to share the gospel.
- Under the Lord's leading, make it a point to share the joy you have in knowing Jesus personally with at least one person each day; share the joy you have in belonging to a body of believers who love one another sacrificially; warn of the danger of sin's consequence and then share about the relief that comes from having all of your sins forgiven (Rom 6:23); share 1 Corinthians 15:3 and invite them to repent, believe, and experience the love of Jesus through the fellowship of your local church.
- Gather the names and contact information of each person you encounter so that you can involve a fellow church member in helping you follow up with everyone the Lord puts in your path.

Record each day's experience in your journal. Be ready to take ownership in helping these new people assimilate into the life of your local church. Finally, pray for a way to help them take advantage of discipleship opportunities within the ministries provided by your local church.

Evangelism Journal

DAY	WHO I SHARED WITH	WHAT I SHARED & THEIR RESPONSE	FOLLOW-UP (CHURCH MEMBER HELPING)
Day 1			
Day 2			
Day 3			
Day 4			
Day 5			
Day 6			
Day 7			

LESSON 7

Leading Saints

MATURATION *"Teach" — Sanctification*

LESSON OVERVIEW

During this lesson, you will learn from the examples of Paul, Aquila, Priscilla, and Apollos from Acts 18. In doing so, you will consider what it means to foster maturity in other disciples that bolsters their faithfulness to the Great Commission.

1 EXPLORE

My parents gave me my first guitar on my 9th birthday. I'll never forget that moment. It was a short-scale nylon-stringed classical guitar. I remember examining the body, neck, headstock, bridge, and sound hole to see how the instrument functioned. As years went by, I grew in my ability to play the instrument and accumulated a steel-stringed acoustic, an electric bass, and a few electric guitars with different pickup configurations; however, the only maintenance I knew of was how to change strings, polish the body, and condition the fretboard. After serious usage, I would notice how the quality of sound from each of my instruments would diminish. When I told my dad what was happening, he said: "Oh, you need to take your guitar to Strings n' Things and have Tom Keckler do a 'set-up' on the intonation." I didn't know it at the time, but T.K. had serviced guitars for artists like B.B. King, Albert King, Jimmy Page, Jeff Beck, Elvis, Pete Townshend, and so many others; he was a well-known luthier who attracted clients to come to Memphis, TN, from all over the country.

When I brought my guitar to T.K., he asked: "What is it that you need done?" I told him exactly what my dad told me: "I need to get a 'set-up' done on my intonation." He looked at me, smiled, and said, "Is that all? How much time do you have?" I told him that I was free for the entire afternoon. Grinning even more, he said, "I tell you what, I won't charge you a penny if you let me teach you how to do it." A bit overwhelmed, I said, "Are you sure?" T.K. replied: "Don't worry, it is quite simple." And he wasn't wrong—I picked it up fairly quickly. After we were finished, he asked what I was doing for the rest of the week. I told him that I would need to check with my parents, but I was fairly certain that I was available. To which he showed me the corner of his shop lined up with guitars needing an intonation 'set-up.' He also showed me a few

expensive guitars in need of some major repairs. He said, "If you come and help me by knocking out all of those intonation 'set-ups,' then I will pay you and show you more advanced skills." Of course, my parents allowed it. T.K. was patient and thorough. We had fun, and I learned a lot. From that moment on, my instruments always sounded clear and pleasing. Additionally, I became a better musician because the consistent, pure quality of sound made me want to play my guitars more.

The beauty of the gospel of Jesus is that it's a simple message with far-reaching, intricate implications. Like learning a new instrument, someone can be shown the basics fairly easily; many children can sit at a piano and learn the melody to Mary Had a Little Lamb. However, it takes someone with experience to come alongside these new learners and help them mature into proficient musicians. Likewise, newly made disciples are able to articulate the simple gospel message that they first received and believed; however, they become empowered with supernatural passion when other mature disciples teach them how to explore and discover the never-ending glory of Jesus's gospel from all of the Bible. Open your Bible to Acts 18:1.

READ **Acts 18:1–17**

After preaching his sermon "To an Unknown God" in the middle of the Areopagus, Paul left Athens and traveled to Corinth. There, he encountered a displaced Roman couple whose friendship would be a blessing to Paul until the end of his days. As this text conveys, Aquila and Priscilla found themselves in Corinth due to Emperor Claudius's edict that exiled all Jewish people from the city of Rome. Some scholars believe this order from Claudius was the result of infighting among the Jewish people regarding the apostles' teaching displayed on the Day of Pentecost in Jerusalem (Acts 2). What's interesting to consider is that Paul wrote the book of Romans from Corinth around the same time of Claudius' death in 54 AD—urging unity between Jews and Gentiles upon the basis of the gospel. At the end of his Roman epistle, Paul writes: "Give greetings to Prisca and Aquila, my coworkers in Christ Jesus, who risked their own necks for my life. Not only do I thank them, but so do all the Gentile churches. Greet also the church that meets in their home… (Rom 16:3-5)." Having commonality in tentmaking, Paul spent significant time with Aquila and Priscilla when he wasn't in the synagogue on Saturdays, trying to make disciples. It can be assumed that Paul, while staying with them, would discuss these events with Aquila and Priscilla, teaching them what he attempted to persuade both Jews and Greeks. Regardless of the specifics about how these friends spent their time staying together, Aquila and Priscilla matured in their discipleship.

Reinforced by Silas and Timothy's arrival, Paul pressed in to preaching the Word amid Jewish opposition. However, obstinacy from the Jewish people left Paul frustrated to the point of changing his missional focus to solely reach Gentiles. But Paul's preaching wasn't wasted. As a result of Paul's investment of persuasive teaching on the Sabbath, the synagogue leader named Crispus believed the gospel and witnessed the baptisms of many Corinthians, founding the church in Corinth.

Knowing the climate of Jewish hostility, it's easy to see how Paul could become fearful after baptizing that many Corinthian believers. However, Jesus gave Paul the encouragement he needed to continue teaching the Word of God in Corinth for another year and a half. Yes, the Jews raised more opposition by attempting to have Paul silenced by the Roman proconsul Gallio; however, Jesus's promise that Paul wouldn't be harmed for teaching the Word of God came to fruition. Instead of beating Paul, they beat Sosthenes in front of the tribunal. Despite

Jewish opposition, Paul kept teaching and investing in the maturity of the Corinthian church.

READ **Acts 18:18–23**

From the time that they spent working with Paul as fellow tentmakers, you can imagine the maturity that developed between Aquila and Priscilla, leading to their accompanying Paul as he left Corinth for Syria. Moreover, consider Paul's confidence in their maturity to leave them in Ephesus while he continued on to Caesarea, Jerusalem, Antioch, and the regions of Galatia and Phrygia to strengthen and mature all the disciples. To be absolutely clear, Paul didn't leave Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus to shed "dead weight." Quite the opposite. In the same way that Paul took to the synagogue in Corinth to debate the Jews and make disciples, he followed the same pattern in Ephesus. However, Paul was at peace with leaving Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus to carry out what they had witnessed God accomplish in Corinth, hence Paul's leaving regards: "I'll come back to you again, if God wills (Acts 18:21)." Continue reading and you will see the reason for Paul's peace.

READ **Acts 18:24–28**

As a Jew from Alexandria, Apollos was someone who was well-versed in the Old Testament and Greek philosophy. Alexandria was a capital of learning and a destination for those seeking intellectual maturity in the ancient world, and this text showcases how Apollos exhibited these values. First, notice how Apollos was already "competent in the Scriptures" when he arrived in Ephesus. Not only that, but he was also "teaching accurately about Jesus" because he had been "instructed in the way of the Lord." As an "eloquent man," Apollos knew how to engage and teach in a prolific and compelling way. However, something interesting happened when he entered the synagogue to "speak boldly." While seeking to persuade the Jews with the message about Jesus, Aquila and Priscilla listened intently to Apollos' rhetoric—and what happened next gives profound insight into this study.

First, notice how Aquila and Priscilla pulled Apollos aside to "explain the way of God to him more accurately (Acts 18:26)," rather than correct him publicly. This is key. The Roman couple cared more about investing in Apollos rather than publicly displaying all that they learned from Paul. True maturity in discipleship is always marked by humility. When Jesus was with his disciples, he taught them to "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, because I am lowly and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls (Matt 11:29)." Second, Apollos received this instruction with humility. Despite all of his credentials, Apollos allowed these two lowly tentmakers to help him mature. To be sure, Aquila and Priscilla saw potential in Apollos; thus, they passed along what they had received from their time with Paul while staying together in Corinth. Knowing the stubbornness and obstinance of those Corinthian Jews who caused a scene in front of Gallio at the tribunal, I'm positive that Aquila and Priscilla could see how effective Apollos would be against the same group who frustrated Paul to the point that "he shook out his clothes (Acts 18:6)." There is no wonder why Apollos wanted to cross the Aegean Sea to Achaia and make his way to Corinth. Again, Apollos was now able to teach about Jesus more accurately because of the *maturity* he gained from Paul's investing in Aquila and Priscilla's *maturity*. Therefore, when Apollos showed up, "he was a great help to those who by grace had believed (Acts 18:27)." Specifically, "he vigorously refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating through the Scriptures that Jesus is the Messiah (Acts 18:28)."

2 EXPLAIN

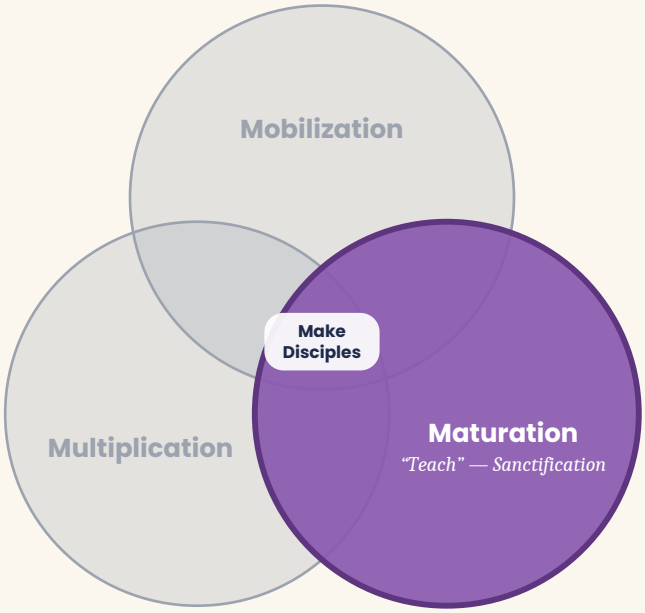


FIGURE 12 Maturation emphasized Venn diagram

Remember "Round 'Em Up Randy" from Lesson 1?

He is the byproduct of Multiplication and Mobilization without Maturation = **Lacking Depth**. He will go anywhere and do anything to share John 3:16 with anyone. He's always got gospel tracts in his pockets, and he is notorious for causing waitstaff at restaurants to neglect their other tables. Yet, he never knows what to say when he's asked deep questions about the Bible, and he has a hard time following up with people after he's handed them a tract.

In almost every aspect of our culture, there is a high value placed on education. In fact, there is a legal precedent demanding that parents enroll their children in some form of schooling from the age of five until they reach eighteen. Additionally, many employers will only consider applicants who possess certain degrees from institutions of higher learning. Therefore, many parents invest in planning for their children to pursue academics beyond the high school level.

Yet sadly, there doesn't seem to be this same value placed upon theological education within many local churches. As to the reason for this? Answers will likely vary from context to context. However, one thing is clear—biblical illiteracy among evangelicals is alarmingly high. In 2025, Ligonier Ministries partnered with Lifeway Research to conduct their annual survey called "The State of Theology." Here are some of the disappointing statistics discovered:

AGREED	THE STATEMENT	WHAT ROMANS SAYS
64%	*"Everyone is born innocent in the eyes of God."*	**ROMANS 5:12** "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, in this way death spread to all people, because all sinned."
53%	*"Everyone sins a little, but most people are good by nature."*	**ROMANS 3:10** "There is no one righteous, not even one."
53%	*"The Holy Spirit is a force but not a personal being."*	**ROMANS 8:26** "In the same way the Spirit also helps us in our weakness…the Spirit himself intercedes for us…"
47%	*"God accepts the worship of all religions, including Christianity, Judaism, and Islam."*	**ROMANS 1:25** "They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served what has been created instead of the Creator…"

What's disappointing is that these heretical statements can easily be refuted by simply having knowledge of the book of Romans, just one out of the sixty-six canonical books.

If disciples want to make genuine disciples, they need to understand God's character correctly through the means by which He has given us to rightly know Him—Scripture. Like Paul, Aquila, Priscilla, and Apollos, we should not only desire to rightly reveal Jesus as the Messiah from all of Scripture, but we should also desire to teach others how to accurately reveal Jesus as the Messiah from all of Scripture. In fact, the more we mature in the Scriptures, the more we are compelled to teach others. Moreover, without personal investment in teaching others to observe everything Jesus has commanded, young believers will stay comfortable in their immaturity. The focus should never be on the disciple doing the teaching, but on God giving the disciple growth toward Jesus through Scripture. This is one reason why Paul later wrote to the Corinthian church concerning their immaturity toward Paul and Apollos' investments of teaching (1 Cor 3:1-6). The expectation for "babies in Christ" has always been to grow from "drinking milk" to eating the "solid food" of the Word. This is the example we see in Paul's investment in Aquila and Priscilla, and Aquila and Priscilla's investment in Apollos. Additionally, we can see that this example is reproducible.

DEFINITION

Great Commission Disciple – an obedient follower of Jesus's commands, sent locally and globally, to evangelize the lost, and to teach them how to become obedient followers of Jesus's commands.

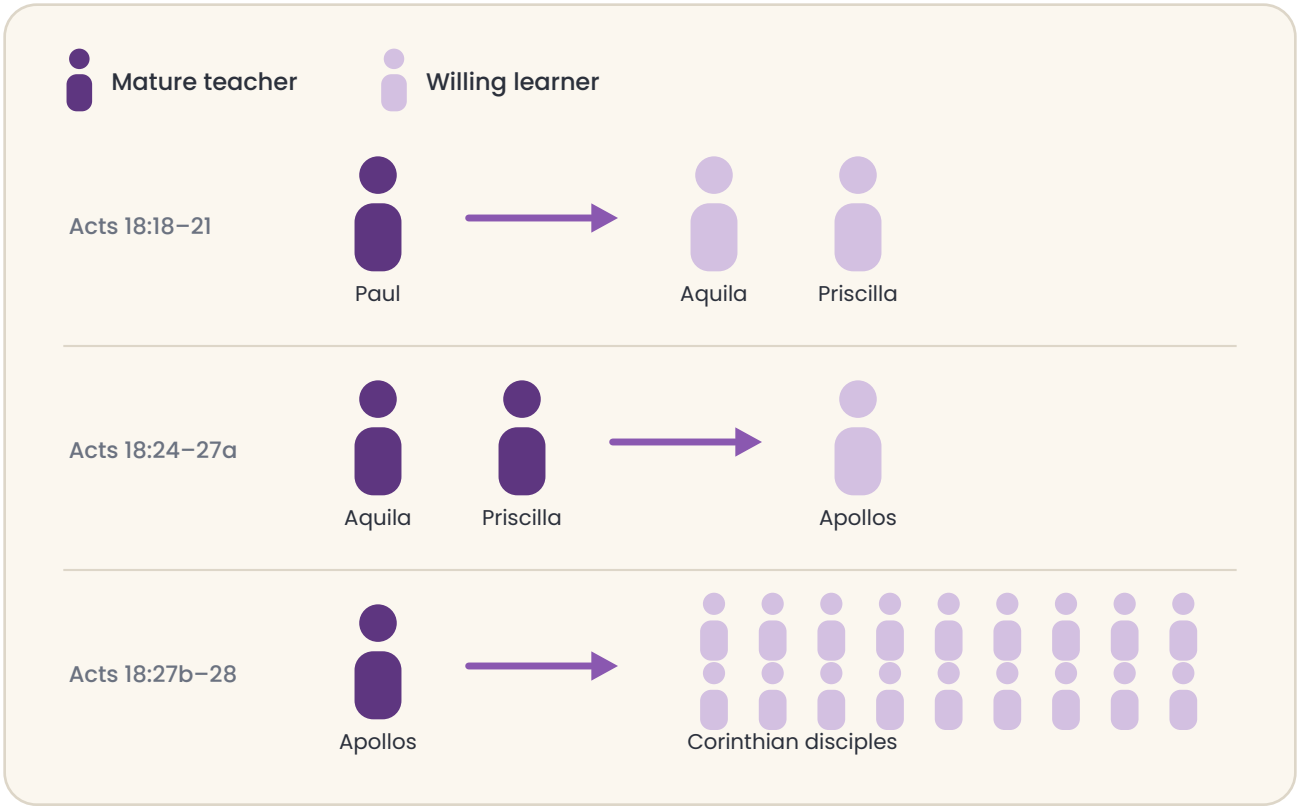


FIGURE 13 Acts 18: Mature teachers and willing learners

Disciple-making, by design, is a reproducible process; moreover, discipleship is what makes the process of disciple-making reproducible. Confused? No worries. There is great value in clarifying terms:

- ***Disciple:*** one who engages in ***learning*** through instruction from another.
- ***Discipleship:*** the act of ***learning*** through instruction from another.
- ***Disciple-making:*** the process of going to find people to baptize into ***willing learners*** and teach them how to become ***mature*** disciple-makers.

When willing learners engage in the instruction of mature teachers, they ultimately become mature teachers who are eager to seek out willing learners. Notice Figure 13 above.

- Paul found Aquila and Priscilla to be willing learners, helped them mature, and mobilized them to Ephesus (18:18-21).
- Aquila and Priscilla found Apollos to be a willing learner, helped him mature, and mobilized him to Corinth (18:24-27a).
- Apollos found willing learners in Corinth who received his instruction as he taught through the Scriptures that Jesus is the Messiah (18:27b-28).

This is the process of Maturation. What good is an army without the instruction they receive at boot camp? Bootcamp isn't casual by any means—it demands discipline in order to see new cadets mature into active-duty soldiers. As a disciple-maker, leading someone through the process of maturation, frequently checking in on

them is a natural component of their learning and growth. When you make yourself available to help them understand the depth and riches of walking closely with the Lord through Scripture, the time will come when you find them mature enough to go and make disciples. Successful disciple-making is reproducible.

3 EXPERIENCE

ACTIVITY

Help a Willing Learner Mature

In Lesson 3, you were introduced to the Great Commission Disciple's Vision Development. Based upon your answers and experience with that particular exercise, you are going to seek out a willing learner and help them mature. If you have had a successful evangelistic encounter this previous week, focus on them. Otherwise, seek out someone from your local church to come alongside you and grow. Keep in mind that this Great Commission Disciple's Vision Development is revised to employ the growth you experienced from Lesson 3 and reproduce it in the maturation of another.

DEFINITION

What is a Great Commission Disciple? – an obedient follower of Jesus's commands, sent locally and globally, to evangelize the lost, and to teach them how to become obedient followers of Jesus's commands.

GREAT COMMISSION DISCIPLE'S VISION DEVELOPMENT — HELPING ANOTHER GROW

Benefits of Growing

Why should you memorize the books of the Bible?

Why should you be able to briefly describe how your study of the Old Testament enhances your love and devotion to Jesus?

Why should you be able to briefly describe how your study of the New Testament enhances your love and devotion to Jesus?

Why should you be able to briefly describe your understanding of how the Old and New Testaments build upon each other?

How I Plan to Help You Grow

How can I help you memorize the books of the Bible in a manner that joyfully connects this act of devotion with an awareness of being in the presence of God?

What joyful habits can I help you develop to better explain how studying the Old Testament enhances my love and devotion to Jesus?

What joyful habits can I help you develop to better explain how studying the New Testament enhances my love and devotion to Jesus?

What joyful habits can I help you develop to better explain how the Old and New Testaments build upon each other?

4 Obstacles That Might Hinder Growth

Obstacle One: Explain

Obstacle Two: Explain

Obstacle Three: Explain

Obstacle Four: Explain

4 Growth Steps to Implement This Week

Step One: When will this occur?

Step Two: When will this occur?

Step Three: When will this occur?

Step Four: When will this occur?

Remember, as you implement this Vision Development plan, pray for the Word of the Lord to connect you with the presence of the Lord. Anticipate being strengthened by the serious joy that only comes from being filled with the Holy Spirit. As your passion grows from each encounter, your eyes will be opened to see local and global disciple-making opportunities. In fact, you will naturally want to multiply and mature others because you won't be able to keep this serious joy to yourself.

LESSON 8

The Growing Church

MATURATION *"Teach" — Sanctification*

LESSON OVERVIEW

During this lesson, you will learn from Paul's letter to Titus about the intrinsic connection between a local church's discipleship structures and her mission to make disciples of all nations.

1 EXPLORE

It never fails. At the beginning of every January, most local fitness facilities become flooded with people looking to begin their new year with healthy routines. In most cases, these decisions usually stem from the previous season of feasting—and as a result, there are usually nutrition goals attached to these exercise commitments. Therefore, gym memberships are purchased, and these zealous individuals hit the ground running after their resolutions. However, this motivation for diet change and exercise often tends to lose momentum after just a few months. Sure, old lazy habits can be hard to break. Sure, schedules can become unpredictable. Sure, constant fast-food advertisements can erode a person's willpower. But one of the main causes leading someone to neglect their purchased gym membership and nutritional goals is that they never formed meaningful relationships with other gym members. Connection with people who share the same health goals often adds accountability, encouragement, and helpful advice for those who are new to these lifestyle changes. In fact, over time, these connections help new members realize that they are committing to a community, rather than individual lifestyle changes.

Sadly, many people approach local church membership in the same way as these January fitness tourists. However, God has designed the local church to be the perfect agency for maturing, mobilizing, and multiplying disciples. Again, connection with people who share the same discipleship goals often adds accountability, encouragement, and helpful advice for those who are new to observing everything Christ has commanded. In Paul's letter to Titus, he wrote to remind his "true son" of the reason he was left in Crete. The Cretan church was culturally compromised by the surrounding Greek influence, which was inhibiting their ability to make disciples. Paul found Titus to be a willing learner, and as such, he mobilized him to the island of Crete in order to establish order within the church as a Great Commission community set upon making disciples.

READ **Titus 1:1–16**

To reference himself as a servant to God isn't uncommon for Paul when he brought a word of greeting to those receiving his letters. What is unique about this particular greeting to Titus can be found in the statement: "In his own time he has revealed his word in the preaching with which I was entrusted by the command of God our Savior (Titus 1:3)." As Paul establishes his servanthood purpose in writing "for the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness (Titus 1:1)," he states "the hope of eternal life that God, who cannot lie, promised before time began (Titus 1:2)," defining what he means by the truth that leads to godliness. From the beginning of this letter, Paul understands the issues occurring within the Cretan church and states the solution within his well-placed welcome. The proclamation of the gospel (from the pulpit to the dinner table, then toward marketplace conversations) will promote spiritual maturity, reclaiming a church's redemptive voice among its community.

This is initially why Paul left Titus in Crete—to appoint elders in every town. Not unlike his first letter to Timothy (1 Tim 3:1-7), Paul sets forth clear criteria for calling men to this vital role. Yet, when you compare "…able to teach (1 Tim 3:2)," with "holding to the faithful message as taught, so that he will be able both to encourage with sound teaching and refute those who contradict it. (Titus 1:9)," Paul's emphasis and clarity regarding what to look for in the elder's teaching abilities further illuminates this Cretan predicament. Again, not unlike what Timothy was dealing with in Ephesus, the Cretan church was threatened by Judaizers (the circumcision party) pushing Jewish legalism on immature disciples; however, there was another threatening factor unique to Titus' assignment—Cretan culture.

According to Greek Mythology, the god Zeus was born and then hidden in a cave on the island of Crete. There, Zeus lived until he became old enough to dethrone Cronus and seize power on the summit of Mount Olympus. As a deity who utilized lies and deception to satisfy sexual desire, personal promotion, and indulgent excess, Cretans were culturally raised to view such things as virtues. Paul validates this notion by citing the sixth-century Cretan prophet Epimenides of Knossos: "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons (Titus 1:12)." And to be clear, by "evil beasts," Epimenides meant driven by debased, carnal, and material desire. And as such, it appears that even the Judaizers couldn't escape the Cretan cultural allure by employing their legalistic teaching "in order to get money dishonestly (Titus 1:11)." Therefore, Paul's instruction for Titus to "silence them (Titus 1:11)," meant to "rebuke them sharply, so that they may be sound in the faith and not pay attention to Jewish myths and the commands of people who reject the truth (Titus 1:13-14)." By preaching the gospel message of eternal life that God, who cannot lie, promised before time began, these compromised leaders could be shown their error and find redemption through repentance.

By confronting their corruption, these compromised leaders must be made to see that "their mind and conscience are defiled (Titus 1:15)." Cultural corruption is a disease that seeks to halt the local church's mission of making disciples. When there is no distinction between the practices of a local church and the community it is trying to reach, that local church has nothing to offer. Why? Because "they claim to know God but deny him by their works…disobedient and unfit for any good work (Titus 1:16)." But how does a missionally compromised local church get back on track?

READ **Titus 2:1–15**

After addressing the problem, Paul gives Titus the solution. Consistent with the preaching referenced in his greeting, Titus was to make proclamations consistent with the sound teaching Paul committed to him—so that Titus would "be able to teach others also (2 Tim 2:2)." What must be made unequivocally clear is that this preaching wasn't meant to remain behind a pulpit. Both older men and women were to be encouraged to allow this sound teaching to bring about exemplary spiritual maturity. Why? Well, for the mature women, "so that they may encourage the young women… (Titus 2:4)." And for the mature men: "In the same way, encourage the young men… (Titus 2:6)." In contrast with the immature lying, licentious, and lazy Cretan culture, these disciples were to model what it means to be self-controlled, sensible, sound in faith, and reverent—they were to come alongside willing learners and "teach what is good (Titus 2:3)." Men teaching other men, and women teaching other women.

Additionally, Titus wasn't directed to merely go about preaching sermons for people to hear. Alongside the qualified elders he was to appoint, they were to be living sermons for people to reference: "Make yourself an example of good works with integrity and dignity in your teaching (Titus 2:7)." These sermons were meant to challenge, edify, and catalyze life-change. Paul understood the vital importance for preachers not to live at a distance from their sermons; it only takes exposing a compromised messenger to discredit a message. That is why Paul writes to Timothy: "This saying is trustworthy: 'If anyone aspires to be an overseer, he desires a noble work. An overseer, therefore, must be above reproach… (1 Tim 3:1-2).'" Knowing the need to silence the Cretan Judaizers, Titus' message must be "sound beyond reproach, so that any opponent will be ashamed, because he doesn't have anything bad to say about us (Titus 2:8)."

Paul knew the inerrant power of the message he preached because of how it transformed cities, churches, and households. From husbands to wives, parents to children, and employees to employers, whole communities can be transformed when local churches "adorn the teaching of God our Savior in everything (Titus 2:10)." When willing learners grow into mature teachers, they are mobilized to go and multiply new disciples. Paul knew God's design for the local church to be a divinely positioned community that, through the integrity and fidelity of their worship, promotes the reality that "the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people (Titus 2:11)." When local churches are gospel-centered, the purity of their worship is naturally expressed through their commitment to disciple-making. This is because at center of the gospel is the reality that Jesus "gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to cleanse for himself a people for his own possession, eager to do good works (Titus 2:14)." Because we "are saved by grace through faith…not from works, so that no one can boast (Eph 2:8)," then these "good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do (Eph 2:10)" find explanation in Jesus's final charge to his disciples—the Great Commission. Notice how Paul concludes his instruction to Titus.

READ **Titus 3:1–15**

With the gospel proclamation coming from the pulpit being reiterated by older saints to younger saints, these lowly and humble in heart (Matt 11:29) disciples were to show "gentleness to all people (Titus 3:2)." Displaying maturity to rulers and authorities, avoiding adolescent arguing by remembering "the kindness of God our Savior and his love for mankind (Titus 3:4)." When maturity in Christlikeness is prioritized within the local church, saints recognize "that, having been justified by his grace, we may become heirs with hope of eternal life (Titus 3:7)." In an often hostile and loud world, disciples who are mature in Christ become a welcomed calming presence wherever they find themselves. That is why "the saying is trustworthy. I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed God might be careful to devote themselves to good works. These are good and profitable for everyone (Titus 3:8)." Again, by not engaging in foolish debates, mature disciples can "devote themselves to good works for pressing needs (Titus 3:14)." Sure, being generous toward the desperate needs of those less fortunate within this greedy Cretan culture is a great example of showing gentleness to all people. However, benevolent acts merely open the door for evangelistic disciples to address humanity's most pressing need—salvation in Jesus. Why? "So that they will not be unfruitful (Titus 3:14)." This is why Jesus prayed for his disciples: "I have given them your word…Sanctify them by the truth, your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world…I pray not only for these, but also for those who believe in me through their word (John 17:14-20)."

2 EXPLAIN

Qualified pastors are essential when it comes to the maturation of congregations through their preaching gospel-centered expositional sermons from the Bible. Additionally, pastors are tasked with guarding doctrinal fidelity by upholding a standard of sound teaching within their local church context. So, in a sense, pastors are responsible for overseeing the maturity of those whom the Lord has entrusted to them. This is why Paul writes to the Colossian church: "We proclaim him, warning and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ (Col 1:28)." However, preaching gospel-centered expositional sermons on the Lord's Day is only the beginning of the pastor's work as it pertains to overseeing the maturation of the saints.

When considering Paul's letter to the Ephesian church, it can be understood that God gives the local church different people, with diverse giftings and roles, to be unified on mission:

> *And he himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ, until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son, growing into maturity with a stature measured by Christ's fullness.*
>
> **EPHESIANS 4:11–13**

And by defining maturity as having a "stature measured by Christ's fullness," Jesus's self-identifying words help explain the qualities and characteristics of the disciples he intends his followers to go and make:

> *Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, because I am lowly and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.*
>
> **MATTHEW 11:28–30**

Therefore, Paul's revitalization instructions to Titus' assignment in Crete become even clearer when viewed against the broader witness of Scripture. Moreover, because this letter to Titus is Sacred Scripture, it is also an instruction for any local church seeking to regain its redemptive missional voice through Great Commission disciple-making. Writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Paul intended for Titus to implement these revitalization instructions, and English translations have skillfully divided this letter into three chapters because of their natural clausal distinctions. So, imagine this letter as a three-phased strategy:

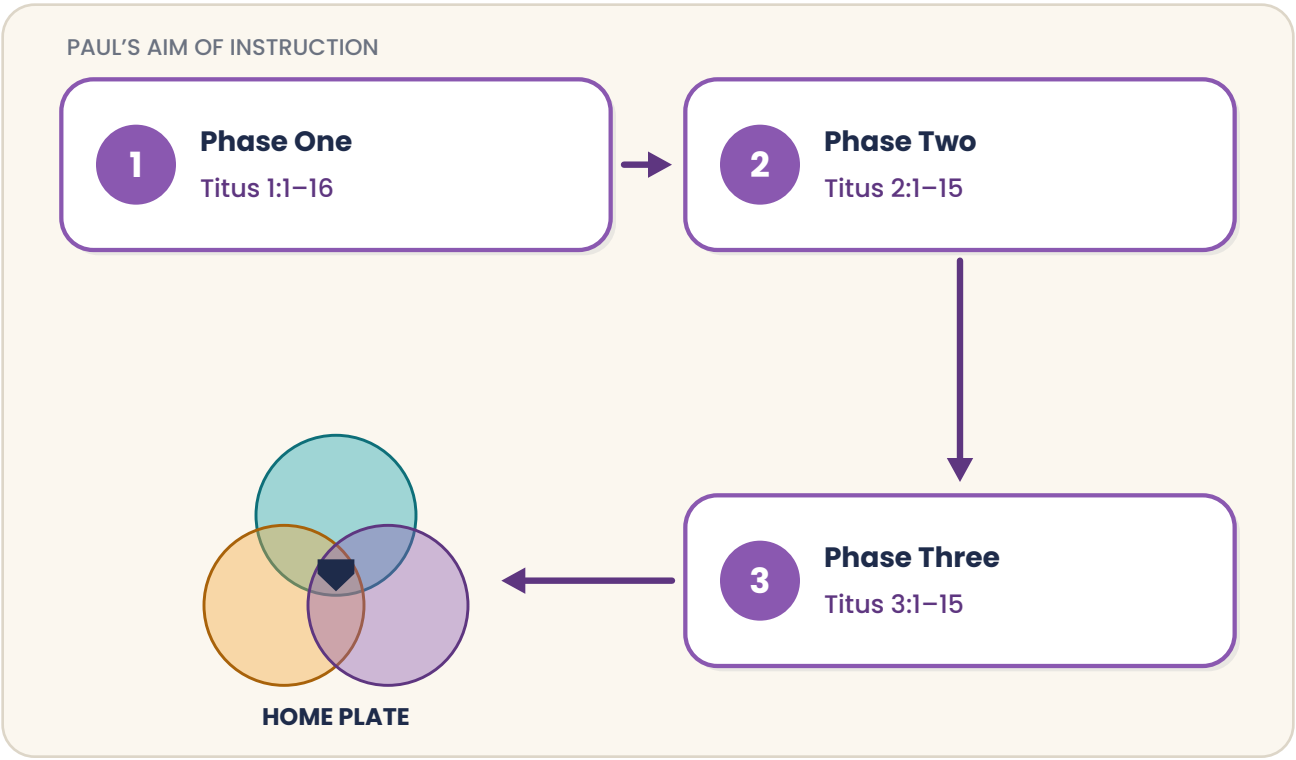


FIGURE 14 Three-phased revitalization method

Phase One	Appoint faithful men, called and qualified by Scriptural guidelines, to oversee the preaching, teaching, and defense of the local church's theological fidelity.
Phase Two	Promote faithful preaching and teaching in a manner that equips mature men to teach younger men, and mature women to teach younger women.
Phase Three	*Mobilize* these, lowly and humble in heart, *mature* saints into the community as products of gospel-transformation to seek out and *multiply* new disciples.

By this point, you can notice the similarities between Paul's instructions to Timothy and Titus. This is because the Great Commission is what drives the vitality and vibrancy of the local church. But why does Paul place importance upon teaching others to teach others (Titus 2; 2 Timothy 2)? Yes, Jesus defined disciple-making by including "*teaching* them to observe everything I have commanded you (Matt 28:20);" this is reason enough. However, consider this insight gleaned from the National Training Laboratories (NTL) regarding how our brains are designed to learn and grow.

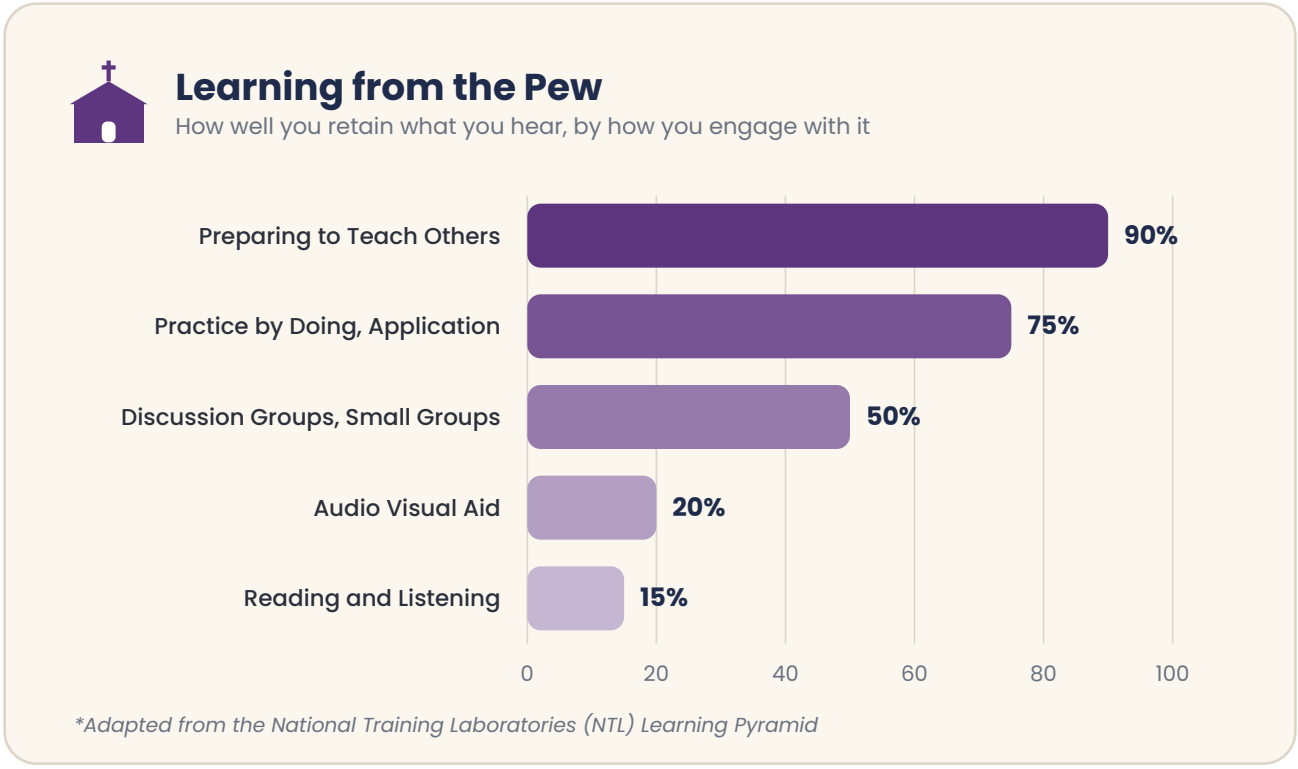


FIGURE 15 Learning from the pew

Imagine that you have gathered with your fellow church members for worship, and the pastor is getting ready to preach. You take out your Bible and are ready to follow along in hopes of learning, growing, and retaining sound teaching.

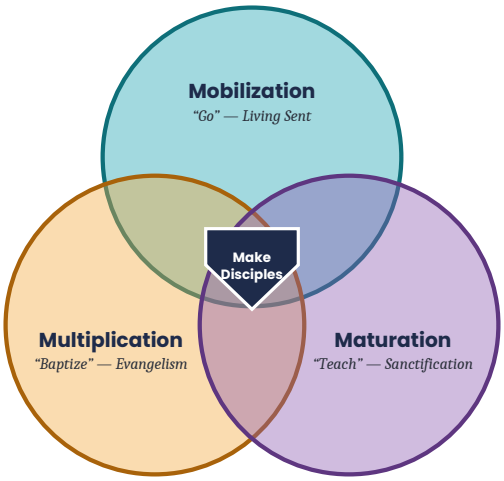
- If you only listen and read along in your Bible, your retention rate is at **15 percent**
- If sermon slides are provided on screens, your retention rate only increases to **20 percent**
- If you join a Sunday school class, small group, or a home group that discusses the sermon, your retention rate then grows to **50 percent**
- If the sermon gives direct life application, and you seek to apply these theological principles into practice, your retention rate increases to **75 percent**
- However, if you are taking advantage of all of the above in preparation to teach the sermon's content to someone else, your retention and comprehension reach **90 percent**

When a new disciple is made and baptized into the membership of a local church, they are joining a community intent on growing in spiritual maturity. They form meaningful relationships with people who are eager to help them experience transformational growth, evidenced by supernatural "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal 5:22)." And from the natural discipleship structures that exist within God's design of the local church, this new disciple is made into a Great Commission Disciple – an obedient follower of Jesus's commands, sent locally and globally, to evangelize the lost, and to teach them how to become obedient followers of Jesus's commands.

3 EXPERIENCE

As you might imagine, these eight lessons have barely scratched the surface of how the Bible instructs and displays disciple-making practices for believers living after the birth of the local church in Acts 2. However, this is where your fun really begins. You are to find another church member who hasn't yet engaged with this material; men finding other men and women finding other women. You are now going to be the teacher, and they are going to be your willing learner. And over time, disciple-makers will multiply, providing new disciples from the community to be welcomed and nurtured.

As you continue to learn and teach, you will find yourself consistently engaged in mobilization, multiplication, and maturation. And as this is the case, you will realize that you have been equipped and are actively building up the body of Christ, until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son, growing into maturity with a stature measured by Christ's fullness.



MOBILIZATION · MULTIPLICATION · MATURATION