

Bible Study, Evangelism and Church Planting

Just before the Lord Jesus Christ went back to heaven, He commanded His disciples saying: *“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and **make disciples** of all the nations, **baptizing them** in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **teaching them** to observe **all things** that I have commanded you; and lo, I am **with you** always, even to the end of the age.”* Amen (Mat 28:18-20).

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Making Disciples

This is called the ‘**Great Commission**’. The book of Acts records that Peter, John, Stephen, Philip, Barnabas, Paul and many others preached and told others about the Lord. Many were converted and new churches planted. This should be the pattern for us to follow today.

Making disciples means teaching the new believers **by word** and **by example** the ‘**all things**’ found in God’s Word. A disciple is a ‘**disciplined one**’ who learns to follow the Lord, and follows Him to learn.

A disciple has **conviction** about the true teaching of God’s Word, and will not depart from it. A disciple has **commitment** to the Lord and His ways as revealed in God’s word and also commitment to the local church and its activities.

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First, we need to live a sanctified life

If the Lord is to use us, we must live sanctified lives. The word ‘sanctified’ means ‘set apart for God’s use’. Set apart from sin and self serving.

1. Make it a daily practice of **reading** and **meditating** on the word of God. Take time to think about each verse and apply it to your life.
2. Remember your **position** in Christ. *“For you **died**, and **your life is hidden with Christ in God**. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory”* (Col 3:3-4). When Christ died, you died in Him, then rose in Him. *“I have been **crucified with Christ**; it is no longer I who live, but **Christ lives in me**; and the life which I now live in the flesh **I live by faith in the Son of God**, who loved me and gave Himself for me”* (Gal 2:20). *“For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin”* (Rom 6:5-6).

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Walking in the light and teaching this to the disciples

1. What is your condition before Christ? When you sin, read 1 John Chapter 1. *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”* (1 John 1:9). The blood of Jesus Christ God’s Son cleanses us (keeps on cleansing us) from all sin. So once you confess any sin, get up from your knees and go on to serve God for He has forgiven and forgotten.

2. All Christians sin at times. We are not perfect. But do not let **an accusing conscience** trouble you. You are forgiven. The devil wants to keep you down with you face in the mud with his foot on your neck! Ask the Lord for grace to walk humbly before Him and to overcome each temptation.

3. Learn to walk by faith, not by feelings. Walking in the light means there is no known sin between you and the Lord. *“If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin”* (1 John 1:6-7). If you stand under a light, you cast no shadows. If we all walk **in Christ’s light**, which is **walking in love and righteousness**, we have fellowship with Him and with each other. If we walk away from His light, we cause problems.

Learn to witness

We need to learn how to witness to non-Christians and be able to tell them about Jesus, and how He can save us from our sins. **Learn to tell how you became a Christian – your testimony!** *“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defence to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear”* (1 Peter 3:15).

We need to so know the Word so that we are *“holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict”* (Titus 1:9).

All Christians have a responsibility to live lives that commend the Gospel, and to look for opportunities to tell others about the salvation that is in our Lord Jesus Christ. And this is what the believers at Thessalonica did: *“For from you the word of the Lord sounded forth...”* They *“turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven”* (See 1 Thess. 1:8-10).

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Teaching Baptism

The Lord Jesus commanded that the disciples were to be **baptised**. The word means to '**dip**' or '**immerse**' and much water is needed for this (John 3:23; Acts 8:36-39), because in baptism we identify with Christ in His death, burial and our resurrection with Him into a new life (Romans Ch. 6). So baptism means to **totally immerse**. Sprinkling water on babies or older folk is not found in the Bible.

As we read the book of Acts, we will see that **all believers** were baptised on their confession of faith: *“Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, “See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized? Then Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God”* (Acts 8:36-37).

Note that we baptise in the **one name**, of the **Father, Son and Holy Spirit**, teaching us the truth of the trinity. We read *‘In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth’* (Genesis 1:1). The trinity is latent in the word **‘God’** from the Hebrew **‘elohim’**. This word is a **uni-plural** word, again referring to this same truth. We see this again in these words: *“Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness”* (Genesis 1:26). Jesus said, *“He who has seen me has seen the Father”*.

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Teaching them all things

We are to teach what the apostles taught the new converts: This is now found in our Bibles, *“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers”* (Acts 2:42). So we teach this:

- a. To follow on in the apostles doctrine or teaching.
- b. In fellowship with other believers.
- c. In the keeping Lord’s Supper or Communion.
- d. In prayer. Meeting with fellow believers in church prayer meetings.

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Church Planting

The Lord planned the church (Matthew chapters 16 & 18). He wants His people to meet together each Lord’s Day (Sunday, the first day of the week) to carry out this teaching. So when we lead people to Christ, we need to gather them together in the Lord’s name (Matthew 18:20), and instruct them in all the teachings contained in our Bibles.

Remember, Jesus has said, *“...and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”* He will always be with you, and as you look to Him in prayer, He will open the way ahead for the path you are to follow.

May the Lord help you and bless you as you walk in the light of His word.