

PATTERNS OF DISCIPLESHIP

with Mike Breen

Dietrich Bonhoeffer famously said, "Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ." According to Jesus' own words before he ascended to the Father, the central task of the church throughout the ages is to make disciples in the pattern of Jesus. Somewhere along the road, the church got distracted by other programs and agendas. Much of the western decline, both as a culture and in the church, has its roots in this failure to follow through on the basic premise and promise of the gospel. The remedy for this malady is to recapture the transforming grace of the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit, and to make this an integral part of the life of the church.

BEFORE WATCHING

- + How do you define *discipleship*? Do you disciple anyone in a particular trade, hobby, or other life skill?
- + Can you compare and contrast the life of Jesus' disciples before and after the Resurrection and Pentecost?
- + View some sample Bible passages related to discipleship:
Matthew 7:21; 28:18-20; Luke 9:23-25; 1 Corinthians 4:16-17; 11:1; Galatians 5:22-23; 1 John 3:24

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- + What surprised you the most about this video? Do you have any lingering questions?
- + When you present the gospel to someone for the first time, or afresh in your community of faith, what do you say? Where do you think you learned to say it this way? Do you include anything about discipleship or life transformation in your presentation?
- + Scripture presents life-modeling as an integral part of the process for discipleship. Can you think of examples of disciple-making in the Old Testament (see Exodus 24:13; 2 Kings 4:38; Isaiah 8:6)? Are you comfortable telling others to imitate, or model, your spiritual and moral life? Why or why not?
- + The presenter in the video explains three aspects of discipleship: *information*, *imitation*, and *innovation*. What are some unique challenges to our 21st century where the church has to *innovate* in its discipleship? What do you predict will happen if the church fails or succeeds in these areas?
- + Consult Luke 9:23-25. What does it mean to take up your cross? Provide 2-3 concrete examples of you having to do this in everyday life. Discuss 2-3 additional areas where you are not having much success in taking up your cross. Is there anyone in your life that you can invite to help you with this?
- + Are you generally optimistic about the transforming power of grace in the life of a Christian? Why or why not? Do you tend to allow your experience to shape your interpretation of Scripture on this topic, or let Scripture shape your experience? See Romans 6:14; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 1 John 3:8-9. Ask God to make you open to the transforming power of the gospel through a simple prayer.

MY TAKE-AWAYS

SEVEN MINUTE SEMINARY DISCUSSION GUIDES FOR SMALL GROUPS

Mike Breen is an author, speaker, and leader in the global missional and discipleship movement.

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