

The Why of Discipleship

In *Discipleship by Design*, Harv Herman asks a very important question: Who will win the world faster, the super evangelist or the faithful disciple maker?

Based on that question alone you really cannot answer. There are no details. Allow me to illuminate their profiles.

The super evangelist is a world renown speaker. They are a talented preacher with podcasts of every sermon preached. They have written book after book and spoken at conference after conference.

Furthermore, every time this anointed preacher speaks, 1,000 people give their lives to the Lord. If the super evangelist preaches a sermon every night, that's 1,000 souls a night, 365 nights a year, for a total of 365,000 souls a year giving their lives to Jesus.

The faithful disciple maker, however, is not world renown. In fact, very few people know this person at all. But this person goes out every year and finds 1 person to invest in, disciple, and mentor for an entire year.

After one year of discipleship is done, they advocate for the person they disciplined to go out and find another person to disciple. They do the same, and the whole process repeats itself into a new generation. One faithful disciple maker has now become two, with both faithful disciple makers going out to find another person to disciple.

With today's population, how long will it take the super evangelist to reach the entire world? In comparison, how long will it take the faithful disciple maker to reach the entire world for Jesus?

If the world population remains static, in 5 years the super evangelist will reach 1,825,000 while the faithful disciple maker saves 32 people. At this point, the strategies seem one sided.

In 9 years, the super evangelist will reach 3,285,000 while the faithful disciple maker has saved 512 people through discipling individuals who turn around and disciple individuals. The faithful disciple maker's strategy is gaining ground, but the comparison still appears lopsided.

However, by year 25, the super evangelist's method has now saved 9,125,000 people. While the faithful disciple maker, committed to discipling people who go disciple people who go disciple more people, has now saved 33,554,432 people.

Long story short, it will take the super evangelist over 10,000 years to reach the entire world through sermons that save 365,000 souls a year. The faithful disciple will reach the entire world in 32 years though the strategy of discipleship that disciplines a person

to disciple a person while they do the same. Truly, the method of multiplication will win the world faster than the method of addition.

We see this in the life of Jesus. When Jesus came to earth, He knew He would only be here for a while, so He invested his time accordingly.

He did teach and preach to the multitudes corporately, but Jesus also knew as one man He could not reach the entire multitude personally. With this understanding, Jesus invested Himself into 12 people. He would teach these 12 everything He knows about the Father and how to love. He would invest all of his strength and none of His weaknesses into these 12. Then, he would tell these people to go out and disciple more people. They would help other people discover God who would then go out and help more new people discover God, and so on and so forth.

We see this strategy of multiplication by discipleship articulated by the Apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 2:2. The Apostle Paul knew He could only invest himself into the few, that is why we read his letter to Timothy where Paul who was disciplined by the apostles (1st generation) is advocating for the things He has taught Timothy (2nd generation) to be entrusted to faithful people (3rd generation) who will be able to teach others also (4th generation).

Multiplication through discipleship is the plan of Jesus to save the world. By investing in the few we can reach the many.

It was the lesser known Andrew who introduced his brother Peter to Jesus. This Peter would heal people, lead people, and preach to thousands. But there is no Apostle Peter without Andrew introducing him to Jesus.

It was Eli the priest who taught Samuel the kid to hear from God in a way that he could grow up and become Samuel the prophet.

Furthermore, because this method of discipleship requires people interacting with people, I imagine there is no such thing as standing before the judgment seat of Jesus, when our lives are said and done, without hearing "well done" more than once.

One day I am going to stand before the judgment seat of Jesus.

And when I hear "well done", Jesus will have to tell the person who disciplined me, "well done".

And then He will be delighted to look at the person who disciplined them to say, "well done".

And He will have to behold the person who disciplined them to also say, "well done". Surely this is what makes Heaven a celebration!

Sometimes a person finds themselves in Chi Alpha because of extravagant worship or a profound sermon, but this is rare. More often than not, people come because a finite person showed them a picture of the Infinite Person they have never seen before, and they have been more hungry to see since. People lead people to Jesus.

As Robert E. Coleman once wrote, the method of Jesus is people, "One must decide where they want their ministry to count, in the momentary applause of popular recognition or in the reproduction of one's life in a few chosen people who will carry on the work after they have gone. Really it is a question of which generation are we living for?"

Matthew 28: 19-20

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age"