



Evangelism and Discipleship: A Journey of Faith and Growth

The Great Commission is not an option to be considered, but a commandment to be obeyed. This comprehensive guide explores the essential principles of evangelism and discipleship, drawing from the timeless wisdom of biblical teaching and the strategic methods demonstrated by Jesus Christ. Through eight foundational principles, we will discover how to effectively reach the lost and nurture believers into mature disciples who can reproduce themselves in others.

Why Evangelism Matters

The Lost Need Salvation

Every person without Christ is eternally lost. No religion, creed, or human works can reconcile man to God. From the religious to the atheist, all have sinned and fallen short of God's glory. Only Jesus provides the way to eternal life.

The Gospel is Good News

Unlike all other religions that teach man must work his way to heaven, Christianity proclaims salvation as God's gift of grace. The Gospel centers not on what we do for God, but on what Christ accomplished for us on the cross.

Christ's Express Command

Evangelism is an imperative, non-transferable, and urgent work. Jesus died, rose again, and commissioned the Church to go into all the world with the Gospel. We must proclaim Christ as the Bread for our hunger and Water for our thirst.



God is Glorified in Salvation

The ultimate purpose of evangelism is not merely to rescue people from hell, though that is crucial. The primary goal is that all peoples would glorify God and exalt His name. The center of the Church's evangelistic work is not man, but God Himself.

There is rejoicing in the presence of God's angels in heaven over one sinner who repents. The saved will be eternal trophies of God's grace, and through them, God will be glorified forever and ever. This divine perspective transforms our understanding of evangelism from a human-centered activity to a God-centered mission.

Essential Tips for Personal Evangelism

1 Pray for Divine Words

Continually pray for opportunities and ask God to give you the right words. As Colossians 4:2-4 reminds us, we should pray for open doors and clarity in our message about Christ's mystery.

2 Show Genuine Love

When you speak, let love be your motivation. As 1 Corinthians 13:1 teaches, without love, our words become nothing but noise. Authentic love opens hearts to receive the Gospel message.

3 Be Sensitive and Authentic

Follow Paul's example in 1 Thessalonians 2:8 - share not only the Gospel but your very life. People respond to genuine care and authentic relationships more than perfect presentations.

4 Memorize Key Verses

Prepare yourself by memorizing essential Scripture passages. As 2 Timothy 2:15 encourages, be a workman who correctly handles the word of truth.



Make Simple Presentations

Keep your Gospel presentation clear and simple. As 2 Corinthians 11:3 warns, we should avoid complicating the pure devotion to Christ. Simplicity often has the greatest impact.

Trust God's Power

Remember that God will use your words through His Spirit. According to 1 Thessalonians 1:5, the Gospel comes not only in words but with power and the Holy Spirit's conviction.

Seize Every Opportunity

Colossians 4:5 instructs us to be wise in our conduct toward outsiders and make the best use of our time with them. Every interaction is a potential Gospel opportunity.

"Speak with conviction and in an agreeable manner. As Proverbs 16:21 teaches: 'The wise in heart are called discerning, and gracious words promote instruction.'"

The key to effective personal evangelism lies not in perfecting techniques but in maintaining a heart surrendered to God's purposes. When we genuinely love people and depend on the Holy Spirit, our words carry divine power to transform lives.

Recruitme nt

"And he chose twelve of them" - Luke 6:13



Jesus' Method: Focus on People

Everything began when Jesus called a few men and invited them to follow Him. This simple act revealed the direction His evangelistic strategy would take. Rather than organizing special programs to reach large crowds, Jesus focused on people whom the multitudes would eventually follow.

Interestingly, Jesus began gathering these men before organizing evangelistic campaigns or even preaching publicly. People formed the foundation of His method for winning the world to God.





People Eager to Learn

The most revealing aspect of these men was that initially, none of them impressed anyone. No one held a prominent position in the synagogue, and none belonged to the Levitical priesthood. Most were common workers with probably no qualifications beyond basic knowledge needed for their trades.

Under any standard of cultural sophistication, then or now, the apostles could be considered a rough collection of souls. Yet Jesus saw in these simple men the potential for Kingdom leadership. They were "unschooled, ordinary men" by worldly standards, but they had the capacity to learn and possessed honest hearts eager for God.

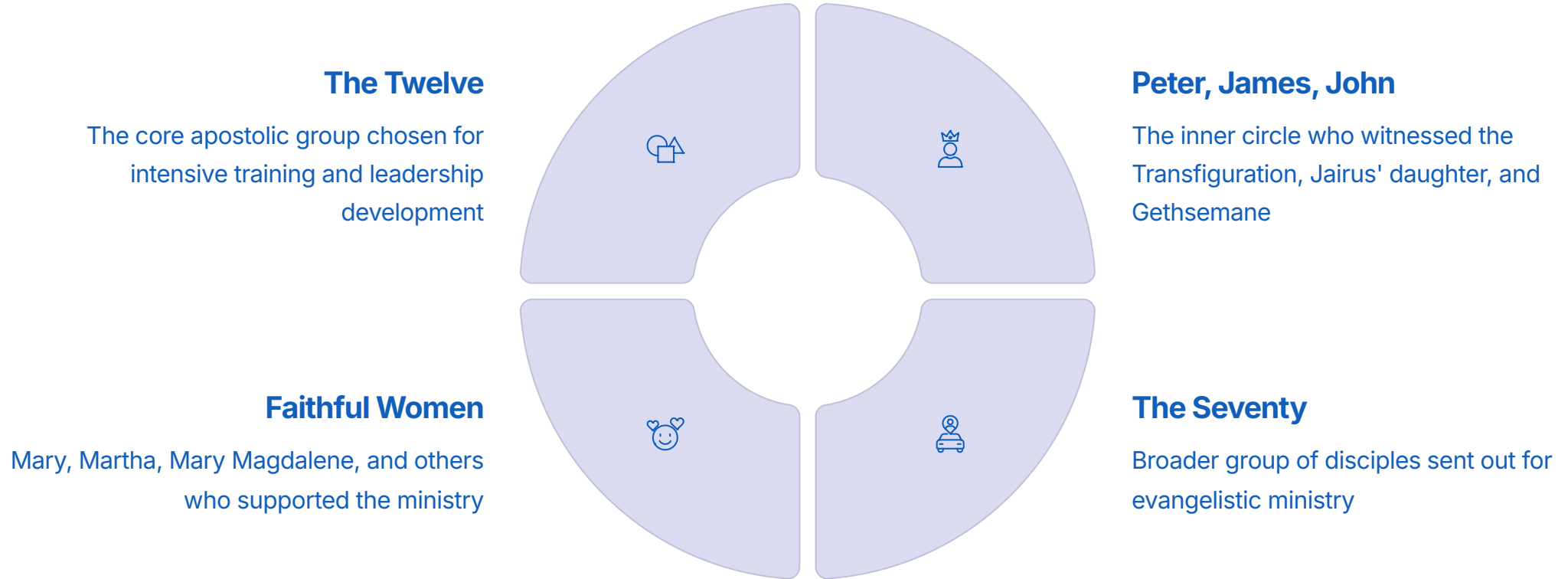
Clear Focus: Concentrating on a Few

"The world cannot be transformed unless the people living in it are transformed; and people cannot change unless Jesus molds their lives."

Here lies the wisdom of Jesus' method. By the middle of His second year of ministry, it became necessary to reduce the larger company of followers to a more manageable number. Thus, Jesus "called his disciples and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles."

This doesn't mean Jesus excluded others from His circle of followers. There were many more disciples, including the Seventy, Mark, Luke, and James the brother of the Lord. However, the Twelve began to stand out in terms of priority.

The Inner Circle Principle



The fact that there were no recorded complaints about Jesus' preference for the three proves that showing preference need not necessarily be offensive, provided it occurs within proper context and for just reasons.



Application of the Principle

The spontaneous way Jesus dedicated His life to those He wanted to train was impressive. It illustrates a fundamental teaching principle: under equal conditions, the more concentrated and compact the group being guided, the greater the potential for effective instruction.

Jesus dedicated considerable time on earth to those few disciples. He invested His entire ministry in them. The world might show indifference to the Master, but His strategy would still succeed.

This is why Jesus wasn't overly concerned when many followers abandoned Him at crucial moments. But He couldn't bear the thought of His closest disciples straying from the greater purpose. Everything depended on the faithfulness of that small group.

Valuing the Masses

It would be wrong to assume that Jesus gave less importance to the masses. He did everything anyone could do, and more, to reach the crowds. Jesus manifested great concern for the masses - they were the people He came to save. He loved them, wept with them, and ultimately died to save them from their sin.



Feeding the Multitudes

Jesus provided food when people were hungry, demonstrating His compassion for their physical needs



Healing the Sick

He healed the sick and cast out demons, addressing their spiritual and physical suffering



Teaching the Crowds

He taught them extensively, spending entire days caring for people's needs without time to eat

Crowds Awakened

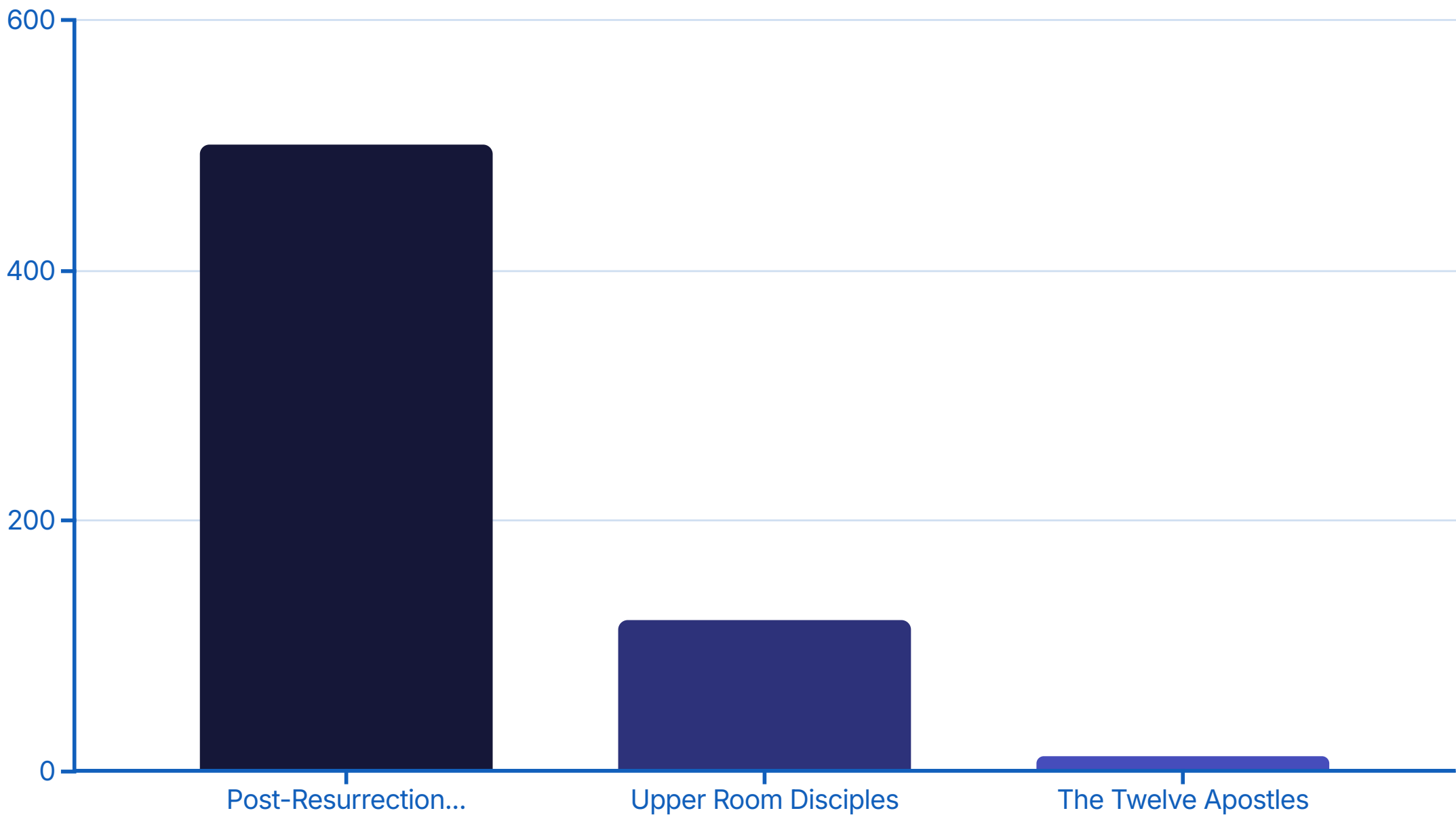
Jesus' ability to captivate crowds created a serious problem in His ministry. He was so successful in expressing His compassion and power that people at one point "intended to come and make him king by force" (John 6:15).

The popularity was undeniable. A follower of John the Baptist reported that "everyone" was clamoring for Jesus' attention. Even the Pharisees admitted among themselves that "the whole world" was following Christ. For the chief priests, they had to acknowledge this bitter reality.

If Jesus had encouraged this popular sentiment, He could have had all the kingdoms of this world at His feet with ease. But Jesus wasn't there to show off before an audience. On multiple occasions, He deliberately avoided superficial popular support from crowds drawn only by His extraordinary power.

Difficulty in Understanding

Given this posture, it's not surprising that so few people were genuinely converted during Christ's ministry - at least those who showed clear signs of conversion. Many crowds believed in Jesus in the sense that they accepted His divine ministry, but comparatively few seemed to grasp the Gospel's meaning.



Perhaps the total number of Jesus' loyal followers at the end of His earthly ministry was little more than the 500 to whom He appeared after resurrection, with only 120 remaining in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit's baptism.

The Strategy Revealed

"Jesus wasn't trying to impress the crowd, but to inaugurate a Kingdom. This required people capable of leading multitudes."

What would be the point of awakening people to follow Him if they had no supervision or instruction about the Way afterward? This was demonstrated repeatedly when crowds became easy victims of false gods when left to their own devices.

The masses were like helpless sheep wandering aimlessly without a shepherd. They yearned to follow anyone who appeared with promises of welfare and prosperity, whether friend or enemy. This was the tragedy of the time.



The Principle Applied Today

This principle isn't well understood today. Many evangelistic efforts start with crowds to later reach individuals, assuming the Church is qualified to preserve the good it accomplishes. The result is extraordinary emphasis on conversion numbers, baptismal candidates, and membership increases, while showing little genuine interest in deepening these souls in God's love and power.

If Jesus' pattern means anything, it teaches that a pastor's first obligation, like an evangelist's first concern, is ensuring from the beginning that there's a foundation upon which an effective and continuous evangelistic ministry can be built to reach the multitudes.

❏ Victory is never achieved by multitudes. A handful of dedicated people is sufficient to mobilize the world for God.



A Contemporary Demonstration

This principle of selection and concentration of efforts is rooted in the universe and produces tangible results, regardless of who practices it or whether the church believes in its effectiveness.

The communists, always alert to methods that actually work, adopted Jesus' same method on a large scale to expand their ideology. Using it to achieve their goals, they multiplied from a handful of zealots to a vast network that once dominated nearly half the world's population.

They proved in recent history what Jesus demonstrated so clearly in His time: that multitudes can be easily conquered if they have good leaders to follow.

Time to Act

It's time for the Church to confront the situation realistically. The days of superficiality are over. The Church's evangelistic program has failed on practically every front. Worse yet, the great missionary impulse of Gospel expansion through new frontiers has lost its force.

In many countries, the weakened Church can barely keep up with population explosion. Meanwhile, the satanic forces of this world are becoming even more relentless and bold in their attacks.

The irony is that in an era when resources for rapid Gospel dissemination are available to the Church like never before, we're actually achieving fewer results in our goal of winning the world for God than before the automobile's invention.



Association

"And behold, I am with you always" - Matthew 28:20

Jesus Stayed with the Disciples

Having called His disciples, Jesus established the practice of being with them. This was the essence of His training program - He let His disciples follow Him. When we meditate on this, we see an incredibly simple way to put this principle into practice.

Jesus had no formal education, seminaries, preset courses of study, or periodic classes to enroll His followers. None of these highly organized provisions, considered so necessary today, played any role in His ministry.

Jesus Was His Own School

He was His own school and curriculum.
Everything He did to teach those men His way was simply to draw them to walk close to Him.

Natural Teaching Method

His natural, informal teaching method contrasted violently with the formal, almost scholastic approach of the scribes.

Living Personality

Knowledge wasn't communicated through laws and dogmas, but in the living personality of Someone who walked among them.

Wisdom Through Jesus' Presence

It was through this fellowship with Christ that the disciples could "know the mysteries of the kingdom of God" (Luke 8:10). Knowledge was obtained through association before being understood through explanation.

This was never better expressed than when one of the disciples asked: "How can we know the way?" reflecting his frustration with thoughts of the Trinity. Jesus replied: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (John 14:5-6), essentially declaring the point had already been answered, provided the disciples opened their eyes to the spiritual reality embodied among them.

This simple methodology revealed itself from the beginning through Jesus' invitation to those men He wanted to guide. John and Andrew were invited to "Come and see" (John 1:39) regarding where Jesus lived. Nothing more needed to be said - in Jesus' house they could learn more, seeing intimately and privately His nature and work.

The Principle Observed

Consider the tremendous strategy in all this. By responding affirmatively to His initial call, believers essentially enrolled in the Master's school, where their understanding would be expanded and their faith confirmed.

Certainly there were many things those men didn't understand - things they themselves openly acknowledged while conversing with Him. But all these problems could be addressed while they followed Jesus. In His presence, they could learn everything they needed to know.

This principle, implied from the beginning, received articulated expression later when Jesus selected twelve men from the larger circle of His followers "to be with him and to send them out to preach" (Mark 3:14).

Jesus made clear that before those men could "preach" or "cast out demons," they must first "be with him." This personal appointment for constant association with Christ was part of their ordination commission as much as the authority to evangelize.

More Intimate as Training Progressed

Jesus' determination to fulfill His mission became evident in subsequent Gospel narratives. Contrary to what might be expected, when Christ's ministry entered its second and third years, He devoted increasingly more time and attention to His chosen disciples, not less.



Mountain Retreats

Frequent journeys to mountainous interior regions where He was relatively unknown



Extended Travels

Trips to Tyre, Sidon, Decapolis, and Caesarea Philippi for intensive discipleship



Final Months

Months in Perea and Ephraim, withdrawing from public ministry for focused training

These journeys were chosen partly because of Herod's hostility, but primarily because Jesus felt the need to be alone with His disciples.

The Final Week

During Passion Week, Jesus hardly allowed the disciples out of His sight. Even when He prayed alone in Gethsemane, His disciples were only a stone's throw away (Luke 22:41).

Isn't this how it happens in all families when separation time approaches? Every minute is treasured because of growing awareness that this intimate association in the flesh will soon end. Words spoken under these circumstances are always the most precious.

Indeed, it wasn't until time began running short that Christ's disciples were prepared to learn much of the deeper significance of His presence among them. This explains why Gospel writers devoted so much attention to those final days - half of everything recorded about Jesus happened in His final months.

Post-Resurrection Appearances

Jesus' pattern throughout His earthly life was supremely portrayed in the days following His resurrection. What's particularly interesting is that each of the ten appearances of Christ after resurrection was to His followers, particularly the chosen apostles.

As far as Scripture shows, not a single unbeliever had the right to see the glorified Lord. This isn't strange when we realize there was no need to excite the crowds, but the disciples who had fled in despair after the crucifixion needed their faith revitalized and their mission to the world confirmed.

10

Post-Resurrection Appearances

All to His followers and chosen disciples

3

Years of Ministry

Intensive training period with the Twelve

0

Unbeliever Appearances

No resurrection appearances to non-followers

Ministry to Masses While Training Disciples

We mustn't forget that even while ministering to others, Jesus was always accompanied by His disciples. Whether He addressed crowds, conversed with scribes and Pharisees, or spoke to a lonely beggar by the roadside, the disciples were always nearby, watching and listening.

This way, Jesus' time paid double dividends. Without neglecting His regular ministry to those in need, He maintained constant ministry to the disciples who remained by His side. They benefited from everything He said and did to others, plus the personal explanations and counsel He gave them.

This intimate, constant association naturally meant that Jesus, for all practical purposes, had no time for personal family life. Like small children needing permanent parental care, the disciples were always at the Master's feet.

This Requires Time

Even the periods Jesus chose for private devotions were subject to interruptions due to disciples' needs (Mark 6:46-48; Luke 11:1). But Jesus didn't want it any different. He genuinely wanted to be with them. They were His spiritual children, and the only way a father properly raises his children is by being with them.

- The foundation of "follow-up" - the care we must have for new converts to evangelical faith - finds its basis in Jesus' method of constant association with His disciples.

Nothing is more obvious than applying this principle, yet nothing is so completely neglected. By its very nature, this stage of evangelistic work doesn't call attention to itself, which is why we tend to forget it entirely.

Our Problem Today

When will the Church learn this lesson? Preaching to multitudes, though necessary, will never suffice for preparing evangelistic leaders. Similarly, prayer meetings and training classes for evangelical workers have never been able to accomplish this task.

Building someone in faith isn't an easy task. It requires constant personal attention, like what a father gives his own children. This is something no organization or classroom can achieve. Children cannot be raised by proxy.

Traditional Approach

Brief confirmation classes, occasional meetings, minimal personal contact with new converts

Jesus' Method

Constant association, personal mentoring, life-on-life discipleship investment

The Result

Half of those making professions eventually stray or lose their Christian experience's fervor

The Solution

Personal guardianship system where each convert has a mature believer to follow until they can guide others



Consecration

"He demanded obedience from those who followed Him"

Jesus Demanded Obedience

Jesus expected the men who accompanied Him to be obedient. He didn't require them to be clever, but they had to be loyal. This became the distinctive sign of disciples, by which they could be known. They were called "disciples," meaning they were "learners" or "students" of the Master.

The simplicity of this approach is wonderful, if not stunning. None of the disciples was initially asked to make any declaration of faith or accept any well-defined creed, though they undoubtedly already recognized Jesus as the promised Messiah. For now, all they were asked was to follow Jesus.

Naturally, this initial invitation implied a call to trust in Christ's person and obedience to His Word. Though this might not have been understood initially, it certainly became clear as they continued following the Master.

The Way of the Cross

Following Jesus may have seemed easy initially, but that's because they hadn't followed Him for very long. Soon it became clear that being a disciple of Christ involved much more than joyfully accepting messianic promises - it meant surrendering one's entire life to the Master in absolute submission to His lordship.

There could be no other commitment. "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth" (Luke 16:13).

01

Complete Abandonment of Sin

Old ways of thinking, habits, and worldly pleasures had to conform to new Kingdom disciplines

02

Perfection of Love

Love became the only standard of conduct, expressed through obedience to Christ

03

Cross-Bearing

Voluntary self-denial for others' sake - the true mark of discipleship

Severe Training

It was severe training. Not many were capable of enduring it. The crowds liked being considered Jesus' followers when He filled their stomachs with bread and fish, but when Jesus began speaking about the true spiritual qualities of God's kingdom and the sacrifice necessary to achieve them, many of His own disciples "turned away and no longer walked with Him" (John 6:66).

According to their own declaration: "This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?" (John 6:60).

Most surprising of all is that Jesus didn't run after them trying to bring them back to His followers' roll. Jesus was training leaders for the kingdom, and if they were to be useful vessels for service, they had to pay the price.

Few Want to Pay the Price

Indeed, when the opportunists stopped following Him in Capernaum because He wouldn't satisfy popular expectations, Jesus was left with only a small handful of followers. Turning to the twelve, He asked: "Do you want to go away as well?" (John 6:67).

It was a crucial question. If those last men stopped following Him, what would remain of Jesus' ministry?

But Simon Peter replied: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know that you are the Holy One of God" (John 6:68-69).

Truly, these words from the apostle Peter must have been great comfort to the Master, for from then on Jesus began speaking to His disciples more openly about His sufferings and death, with much greater frankness than before.

Obeying is Learning

This doesn't mean the disciples immediately understood everything the Lord told them. Far from it. Their ability to grasp the deeper truths of the Lord's vicarious ministry was clouded by all the limitations of human weakness.

When, after Peter's great declaration at Caesarea Philippi, Jesus told the disciples He would be killed by Jerusalem's religious leaders, Peter actually rebuked Jesus, saying: "Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you" (Matthew 16:22).

The Struggle to Understand

The disciples repeatedly stumbled over Jesus' teachings about His death and the cross. They argued about who would be greatest in the kingdom and misunderstood the meaning of humble service.

Patient Teaching

Jesus patiently endured all these human failures from His chosen disciples because, despite all deficiencies, they were willing to follow Him. Their willingness to obey was their pathway to understanding.

The Test of Love

Supremely, obedience was interpreted by Jesus as the great expression of love. This lesson was underlined most emphatically on the eve of His death. When the disciples gathered around Him in the upper room after the Passover meal, Jesus declared:

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments... Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me; and he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him... If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him" (John 14:15, 21, 23).

This was the principle that guided Jesus' entire life, demonstrated through His continuous surrender to the Father's will. As He said in Gethsemane: "Not my will, but yours, be done" (Luke 22:42).

The Principle Applied Today

Today we must learn this lesson anew. There can be no negligent procrastination regarding Christ's orders. We're engaged in warfare whose results are life or death, and every day we show indifference to our responsibilities is a day lost for Christ's cause.

If we've learned even the most elementary truth of Christian discipleship, we've understood we're called to be our Lord's servants to obey His Word. It's not our duty to reason why He speaks this way or that, but only to fulfill His commandments.

Unless there's this dedication to everything we know about what He wants us to do now, even if our understanding is quite immature, it's doubtful we'll progress much in His life and mission. In God's kingdom, there's no place for the careless, because this attitude not only excludes development in grace and knowledge but equally destroys any usefulness in this world's evangelistic battlefield.



Transmission

"He gave of Himself to them"

Jesus Gave of Himself

Jesus wanted His followers to be obedient. But He also realized that as they learned this truth, His disciples would discover the deepest experience with His Spirit. And then, receiving His Spirit, they would know God's love for a lost world.

This is why His demands for discipline were accepted without argument. The disciples understood they weren't merely observing law but responding to One who loved them and was willing to give His life for them.

His Peace

He gave them His peace, through which He maintained Himself amid tribulation (John 16:33)

His Joy

He gave them His joy, with which He labored amid sufferings and sorrows surrounding Him (John 15:11)

His Kingdom

He gave them the keys to His kingdom, which hell's powers could never obstruct (Matthew 16:19)

His Glory

He gave them His own glory, which belonged to Him before worlds were created (John 17:22)

Conclusion: The Master and Your Life Plan

What is Your Life's Plan?

Everyone must live according to some plan. The plan is the organizing principle around which life's purpose is realized. Though we may not be conscious of our life's plan in every act, all our actions invariably unfold some kind of pattern at the center of everything we do.

If the principles outlined here have any value, they must be understood as guidelines for all action. Only as these principles are applied to daily activities will they have any authentic significance for our lives.

"The victory is never achieved by multitudes. A handful of people capable of dedicating themselves in this way is sufficient to mobilize the world for God."

The test of any evangelistic work is not what can be seen at the moment or read in numerical reports, but the effectiveness with which the work continues in the next generation. Where are our trained disciples? What are our lives and ministries accomplishing for God? The time has come to apply Jesus' strategy: starting with few, staying together, giving them time, expecting something from them, and helping them reproduce in others. This is how the world will be won for Christ.