



**GA10**  
**MAKING**  
DISCIPLE-MAKING  
**DISCIPLES**



A six-part study for small groups

# Welcome

I am glad you have chosen to have a look at these studies. I hope that it is a very rewarding experience for you.

I believe this is a vital topic – central to who we are as Christians. And yet I also have a fear that we have lost sight of it. My hope is that there will be many insights for you as you think and pray about this material, and that God will help us see something of God's heart for making disciples.

Can I make some suggestions?

1. That, if you are doing these studies as a group, each person works through the study during the week prior to the group meeting and that you share your insights and questions at the meeting. There is much greater value for everyone when we have given the material some prior thought. As with all Bible study, we will get more out of it, the more we put into it.
2. There is, intentionally, quite a lot of material. It is designed as a resource for those who are keen to dig and explore. However, there might be too much material in some studies to be covered in one meeting. You could:
  - a. Choose to spread it over more than one meeting,
  - b. Identify ahead of time what questions people are going to answer and leave the rest. (This might require the group leader to go through the study a week ahead of the others so as to select the key questions. I've tried to help by identifying five key questions in each study with an arrow, ➡)
  - c. Encourage people to take time to do all of the homework but discuss just the highlights (or things that were puzzling) when you meet.
3. Some of the questions don't suggest a Bible passage to study. They ask you for passages you think are relevant. Depending on your Bible knowledge, that might be more difficult but it is also an opportunity to benefit from the combined knowledge of your group members. If we share suggestions on the web site (see next page) then we can make use of a much wider pool of insights and learn from each other.

4. Please surround the study with prayer. The desire is that we hear God speak and we receive greater understanding. Worldly wisdom is of little value. We want that wisdom that comes from God. It is the Holy Spirit who is our teacher and who leads us into understanding. Ask for help and listen for the Holy Spirit's voice.
5. Please also give focused thought to how you can implement what you are learning. The whole point is that we become doers. That is often easier with the support of a group. A group can:
  - a. Do things together, drawing on the various gifts within the group, rather than expecting each individual to apply the learning separately.
  - b. Pray for each other.
  - c. Keep each other accountable, asking periodically how it is going and giving support and suggestions.

Please don't finish any study without thinking through what God is asking of you.

We are, of course, part of a wider group – the whole Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand and, indeed, the whole, worldwide Church. There are many resources available and we can help each other locate them and assess their worth. A section of the web site ([www.presbyterian.org.nz/making-disciples](http://www.presbyterian.org.nz/making-disciples)) has been set aside for this. Watch out for the Moderator's blog. You will find more resources and information plus the opportunity to see what other people think, or to comment on how useful you have found particular resources.

Let's help each other and serve Jesus together.

If I can be of any help, please contact me at [peter@calvin.org.nz](mailto:peter@calvin.org.nz).

I hope that the time you put into these studies is both stimulating and fun.

May God bless you,



The Rev Peter Cheyne  
Moderator Designate

## Study 1: What are we here for?



At the end of his time on earth, Jesus spent a lot of time preparing the disciples to continue his ministry without him. Part of that was to make sure they knew what their mission was. Each Gospel ends with a statement of the disciples' mission. Acts starts by repeating that same commissioning and then describes the Church doing it.

1. ➡ Read the five versions of the Great Commission found in:
  - Matthew 28:18-20
  - Mark 16:15-18
  - Luke 24:46-49
  - John 20:21-23
  - Acts 1:8

Taking all of those versions together, what do you think are the key features of the Great Commission?

2. The Great Commission was spoken to the Twelve. Do you think it is also a commission to the 21<sup>st</sup> century Church? Why or why not?
3. How well do you think it is being carried out in your context?
4. ➡ Matthew's version of the Great Commission is best known.
 

*"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising 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." (Matthew 28:18-20)*

There are four verbs (things to do) in that passage. They are underlined. In the grammar of the Greek, one is the main verb and the other three are participles (supporting verbs). Which do you think is the main verb?

It is common for people to say that they think the main verb is “go”. That is often the verb that receives emphasis when we hear preaching on this passage and often that is in the context of overseas mission. In fact, the main verb is “make disciples”. Making disciples is the task we have been given.

5. What do you understand “make disciples” to mean?
6. The three participles explain how to make disciples. What do you think is the significance of each one?

**Go**

**Baptise**

**Teach to obey**

7. 🔄 Looking at the last two (baptise and teach to obey), it has been said that making disciples means a) bringing people to faith in Jesus and b) bringing people to maturity in Jesus. What do you think of that?
8. Which do you think receives the most attention and resources in your church?

If new disciples are to be taught to obey everything Jesus commanded, that will include this command to make disciples. In other words, the whole process is cyclic and disciples become disciple-makers.

9. If someone isn't part of the process of making new disciples, is he/she really a disciple?

**Did the disciples make disciples?**

In other words, did Jesus make disciple-making disciples?

10. ➡ Refresh your memory on Acts 2. Do you see people being brought a) to faith in Jesus and b) to maturity in Jesus? What indicates that?
11. When the people called out “what must we do to be saved?”, how did the disciples know how to reply?
12. When the disciples were faced with 3000 new converts, how did they know what to do next? How did they know how to make disciples?
13. ➡ When you consider Jesus’ commission and see the life of the early Church, would you say that our “core business” is making disciples? Why or why not?
14. What are the main questions this raises for you?

Discuss people’s questions in your group

**Summary**

15. How would you define what a disciple is?
16. What have you learnt about making disciples?
17. What is the relevance of the Great Commission to you personally?

## Study 2: What does a disciple look like?





1. What do you understand the word “disciple” to mean?
2. The English word “disciple” is derived from the Latin “discipulus” meaning a pupil or student. What does that tell you about what a disciple is?

John the Baptist had disciples. So did the Pharisees . See Mark 2:18. Someone could be said to be a disciple of Karl Marx or Jung. It simply means someone who is in training, learning from a teacher to whom he/she has committed him/herself.

3. In your view, does the Bible distinguish between a disciple and a Christian?
4. ➡ If you think there is a difference, write a definition of “Christian” and a definition of “disciple” that show the difference. What passages support that understanding? (You might like to include Acts 11:26)
5. Do you think there is a difference in the Church’s understanding today between Christians and disciples?

In each of the following passages, Jesus talks about things that are essential for disciples. If they aren’t part of our lives, we cannot be disciples, he says.

Discipleship is about learning and growing so don’t be discouraged if some of these characteristics are not strong in your life. On the other hand, don’t simply excuse yourself either. Are you growing in each area?

6. 🔄 For each passage, say what you believe Jesus to mean and how it applies in your life.

**Matthew 16:24**

Jesus is saying...

In my life...

**Mark 8:34**

Jesus is saying...

In my life...

**Luke 9:62**

Jesus is saying...

In my life...

**Luke 14:25-27**

Jesus is saying...

In my life...

**John 8:31-32**

Jesus is saying...

In my life...

**John 13:34-35**

Jesus is saying...

In my life...

**John 15:8**

Jesus is saying...

In my life...

7. What do you think about the standard that Jesus sets?
8. Do you feel convicted about any aspect of your discipleship?  
What, and what should you do about it?
9. ➡ How do these standards compare with the requirements for

membership in your church? If there is a difference, should that concern us?

10. Given what Jesus has said about discipleship, what thoughts do you have about how we can best make disciples?

### **Maturity**

11. How important is Christian maturity, in God's opinion? (You might consider 1 Corinthians 3:1-3; Hebrews 5:11-6:3)
12. Do you agree that the short answer to what Christian maturity looks like is "Jesus"? (You might consider 2 Cor 3:18; Eph 4:13, 15; Col 3:9-10). How is your church intentionally bringing people to Christlikeness?
13. ➡ Maturity can be described in terms of head, heart and hands. List some of the things that constitute Christian maturity (or qualities of Jesus) under each of those headings?

**Head.** Knowledge and thinking.

**Heart.** Character and emotions.

**Hands.** Skills and actions

14. When you became a Christian, did someone (or some people) take an interest in your growth and “teach you to obey everything Jesus commanded”? Who was involved and what methods did he/she/they use to help you learn and grow?
15. In your own life as a follower of Jesus, what things have been the most effective catalysts for your growth in your faith?
16. ➡ Which of the following do you think are the most compelling reasons for being intentional about making disciples? You could rank them with a number in the box. Within your group, defend your choices.
- ☐ Jesus did it
  - ☐ Jesus told us to do it
  - ☐ The early Church did it
  - ☐ To reduce the infant mortality of new converts and bring a greater percentage to maturity
  - ☐ People are looking for something worth committing their lives to
  - ☐ So that every member can bear fruit
  - ☐ So that the church has a continuous supply of trained leaders
  - ☐ It is futile urging people to do things (for example, pray or witness) if we haven't shown them HOW to do them.

## Study 3: The master's methods



Warning: Jesus' method might raise a lot of uncomfortable questions. Our lifestyle might mean that we would prefer to find another method. At the end of this study you will consider whether we have developed a better method or if Jesus actually models "best practice".

But, if you don't want to consider this seriously, you might want to skip this study. I have found these things to be quite controversial!

1. ➡ Off the top of your head, what would you say were the key elements of Jesus' method for making disciples? Do this for the two components of disciple-making...
  - a) Evangelism. Bringing people to faith in Jesus

b) Training. Bringing people to maturity in Jesus

2. ➡ For each of the following suggestions, rate its importance for Jesus and for yourself, using the following scale

- 1 – Avoid at all costs
- 2 – Avoid if you can
- 3 – Up to you
- 4 – Important
- 5 – Hugely important

After each item, list some examples from Jesus' ministry that illustrate it.

*Relational rather than programmatic*

Importance for Jesus				
1	2	3	4	5

Importance for me				
1	2	3	4	5

*Intentional. Very deliberate*

Importance for Jesus				
1	2	3	4	5

Importance for me				
1	2	3	4	5

*Focus on a small group*

Importance for Jesus				
1	2	3	4	5

Importance for me				
1	2	3	4	5

*Conscious of their current growth stage*

Importance for Jesus				
1	2	3	4	5

Importance for me				
1	2	3	4	5

*Investing time in people*

Importance for Jesus				
1	2	3	4	5

Importance for me				
1	2	3	4	5

*Personal example. Modelling*

Importance for Jesus				
1	2	3	4	5

Importance for me				
1	2	3	4	5

*Teaching*

Importance for Jesus				
1	2	3	4	5

Importance for me				
1	2	3	4	5

*Asking questions*

Importance for Jesus				
1	2	3	4	5

Importance for me				
1	2	3	4	5



*Equipping (enabling for ministry)*

Importance for Jesus				
1	2	3	4	5

Importance for me				
1	2	3	4	5

*Practical ministry opportunities*

Importance for Jesus				
1	2	3	4	5

Importance for me				
1	2	3	4	5

*Accountability, tests of progress*

Importance for Jesus				
1	2	3	4	5

Importance for me				
1	2	3	4	5

*Prayer*

Importance for Jesus				
1	2	3	4	5

Importance for me				
1	2	3	4	5

*The Holy Spirit*

Importance for Jesus				
1	2	3	4	5

Importance for me				
1	2	3	4	5

3. What do you think of Jesus' methods?

4. In what ways have we improved on his methods (that is, we have found or developed more effective ways of making disciples)?
5. If we have not improved significantly on Jesus' methods, should we adopt his? How realistic is that?
6. Pick four of the methods that you have rated as of highest importance for Jesus. For each one, state how it could be applied in our culture and situation. (When you share your answers in your group, you might want to brainstorm to get a list of as many ideas for implementation as possible.)

Method 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Can be implemented in our society by...

Method 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Can be implemented in our society by...

Method 3 \_\_\_\_\_

Can be implemented in our society by...

Method 4 \_\_\_\_\_

Can be implemented in our society by...

7. 🔄 Take some time in silence to ask which one or two of Jesus' methods God wants you to embrace in your own growth as a disciple or in your own disciple-making. Write them down and write what your response is.

**Note:** although there are many aspects to Jesus' strategy for making disciples, we are going to focus on only two in the next two studies.

- Study 4 will explore the relationship (particularly a mentoring-type relationship)
- Study 5 will look at intentionality

## Study 4: The apprentice



As I understand it, in days gone by (for example, when the great cathedrals were being built) an apprentice would attach himself to a master craftsperson. The apprentice would work alongside the master, learning by watching and listening and doing. In some instances, the apprentice might even live with the master or travel to different places. The apprentice would learn not only the craft but a great deal more. Just by spending so much time with the master and observing all that was done, the apprentice would learn how to run a business, how to deal with people, how to stay healthy, and character qualities such as patience, integrity, and compassion.

At the appropriate point, the apprentice would make a “masterpiece”. If it was assessed to be of suitable quality, the apprentice would become a master craftsperson and so be qualified to train further apprentices.

1. Have you known people who, in a similar way, have intentionally opened their lives to others so as to pass on their faith or life skills? How did they go about it?
2. What impact did it have?

Some people do do this. However, if you haven’t observed it or experienced it yourself, that probably is an indication that it is not common among Christians. Yet it was modelled by Jesus! The more general term for a relationship in which one person, who is more advanced, nurtures growth in another person is “mentoring.”

3. ➡ What other types of mentoring relationship can you think of? Write in the missing label for each pair below and add others.

Mentor	Mentoree/Mentee
Parent	Child
Teacher	
Rabbi	

Master craftsman	
Coach	
	Trainee

Note that each of these has the potential for the trainee to grow to the point where he/she becomes the trainer, as we saw with the apprentice. Children grow to become parents. As we have already seen, it was certainly Jesus' intention that disciples become disciple-makers.

4. What are the lessons of Luke 6:39-40 in this context?
5. Are you comfortable with Jesus' method being likened to a master craftsperson training apprentices? What do you think are the strengths and weaknesses of that comparison?
6. ☞ Jesus emphasised spending time together. He called people to follow him. He chose the Twelve to "be with him" so that he might later send them out. What would they have learnt from being with Jesus, watching him, listening to him, eating with him, ministering with him...?
7. What are the strengths of spending time with a teacher like that as compared with simply having classroom instruction?
8. Do you see the same model being employed by the early church, in Acts or the Epistles? (for example, consider Paul's fellow workers.) Give some examples.

9. How many “generations” do you see in 2 Timothy 2:2?
10. What else about this verse interests you?
11. ☞ Consider the following suggested stages in training an apprentice (or even in training a child to swim or read or drive a car)
- I. I’ll do it. You watch
  - II. You do it with me.
  - III. You do it and I’ll watch
  - IV. You do it without me.
  - V. You teach someone else to do it

Did Jesus use that method? Give examples.

12. ☞ Jesus emphasised imitating him (e.g. John 13:14-15; Luke 6:40). So did Paul (e.g. 1 Corinthians 4:6; Philippians 4:9; 1 Thessalonians 1:6; 2 Thessalonians 3:7, 9). Have you had the opportunity to observe and imitate a more mature Christian? If so, how valuable was that for you? If not, would you have liked it?
13. Have you had the opportunity to practice Christian living and ministry supervised by someone who cared about your growth as a Christian? If so, what was that like? If not, would you have liked it?
14. What makes these relationships difficult in our setting? Are those reasons sufficient to not having them?

15. ☹ People are often scared of relationships – especially relationships in which we are asked to be honest about our faith and life. There can also be the fear that the mentor might take a heavy-handed approach. We will look at this more in Study 6 but, for the moment, list some words that you think describe Jesus' relationship with the disciples.

### **An additional thought**

It might seem that “apprenticing” applies only to working with Christians, that is to only half of the Great Commission; but consider Jesus’ “come and see” approach to evangelism apparent particularly in John 1. Would inviting people to “come and see” be an effective way to show non-Christians what our faith means?

### **The miracle of multiplication**

When disciples make disciples, the numbers multiply exponentially. If they don't, we are restricted to simply adding disciples as we can. To see the wisdom of God's approach, do the following maths. The current world population is about 6,850,000,000.

#### Method 1: Addition.

Suppose you were an exceptionally gifted evangelist and God used you to convert 1000 people per day every day of the year. How long would it take you to convert the whole world?

You would convert 365,000 people per year so you simply need to divide 6,850,000,000 by 365,000 to get the number of years. If your calculator won't cope, dividing 6,850,000 by 365 is the same thing.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_ years

#### Method 2: Multiplication

Suppose it took you a year to train one disciple to the point where he/she could then start making a disciple. In other words, after one



year there would be two of you. After two years, each of you would have made one more so there would be four disciples. How long would it take you to convert the whole world?

You might need to get a piece of paper and write out a table like the following, doubling the number in the right hand column each time until it exceeds 6,850,000,000.

Year	Disciples
1	2
2	4
3	8
4	16
5	32

For the more mathematically inclined, the answer is, of course  $\log_2 6,850,000,000$ . In Excel simply enter the formula "`=LOG(6850000000,2)`"

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_ years

(Don't give up without trying but the answers are at the end of Study 6)

## Study 5: Clear about the goal



Jesus was very intentional about making disciples. While he maintained a ministry to the crowds, he increasingly focused on the Twelve. In the end, he didn't have crowds of followers but he did have the Twelve (and a relatively few others). His strategy of focusing on a small group worked. That small group was the beginnings of a movement that swept the known world.

1. ➡ Why do you think Jesus did focus on a small group rather than trying to leave a large numbers of followers?
  
2. ➡ Read Mark 1:17. Right at the beginning of the process, Jesus knew exactly what he wanted the end result to be. How did he describe what he intended to make?
  - a. What are some other ways of describing the goal Jesus had? What sort of person did he want the disciples to become?
  
  - b. According to this verse, what was the means of achieving that goal?
  
3. Read Mark 3:14-15. Again, Jesus was very clear, at the beginning of the process, about what result he wanted. How did he describe his goal for the apostles?
  - a. Again, paraphrase what Jesus wanted from this process.

- b. According to this verse, what was the means of achieving this goal?
4. We could describe Jesus' strategy as "withness for witness", that is the means was "being with him" (relationship) with the goal of creating missionaries. What do you think of this summary?
5. ➡ Should that also be our strategy and goal? When people join our churches, should we say something like, "We are really delighted to know you and to have you as part of this church. As a Christian, you will want to serve Jesus. We want to help you. Following Jesus' example, we want to share our lives with you so as to enable you to be a missionary for him"?
6. ➡ Read Colossians 1:28-29. What does that passage say about Paul's focus?
7. If you think making missionaries is not our goal, what would you suggest is our primary goal and what Scriptures determine that for you?
8. If you don't think the primary means of making disciples is through relationships, what do you think is a better method?
9. How could your church be more effective at making disciples? What suggestions would you make to your leaders?

10. ➡ What do you see as your personal role in making disciples? Describe what you are doing and how that helps people grow to maturity, or describe what you would like to do.
11. ➡ If you believe that Jesus has commissioned us to make disciples, what is the next step you believe God is calling you to take? (You might want to spend some time in silent prayer before answering this question. Try to hear God's voice and then write down what you hear.)
12. Are you willing to make yourself accountable for your own growth as a disciple and a disciple-maker? Could your group regularly review the decisions each person made and ask about progress? Is there someone you could talk to about your next step, giving him/her permission to ask you about it periodically?

## Study 6: The disciple-maker's heart



Some people find the word “mentor” a little intimidating. Likewise, you might find both the idea of being a mentor or of having a mentor quite frightening.

The word “mentor” is common in business, sport, education and even in everyday language. It is, however, a word that has come into greater use only in recent years and so is unfamiliar to many.

A mentoring relationship describes any relationship in which a person with greater knowledge or skills or experience helps another person to grow. In Study 4, we saw several examples of mentoring relationships: the master craftsperson with an apprentice, the rabbi with disciples, parents with children. People who want to grow and develop will often seek out a mentor – someone who can inspire and teach and challenge and question. Disciple-making is one type of mentoring relationship.

But there clearly is potential for relationships to be misused or simply to not reach their potential.

1. What frightens you most about the idea of having a mentor to nurture your growth in faith?
2. What frightens you most about being a mentor to help nurture growth in faith in another person?
3. ➡ If you were looking for a mentor, what would you want that person to be like?
4. How does that list compare with the list you wrote at the end of Study 4 (the characteristics of Jesus’ relationship with the disciples). Would you now want to modify either list? What would you change?

5. ➡ Consider the following list of qualities. Edit this list to make it say what you would want in a mentor.
- I. Someone who is warm, supportive and trustworthy.  
Someone who cares about me.
  - II. Someone committed to my growth who will intentionally give rather than just want to receive.
  - III. Someone who has time – preferably time for us to meet regularly.
  - IV. Someone who will listen carefully to understand my situation.
  - V. Someone who knows more than I do. Otherwise, what am I going to learn? Someone who is living what I want to learn and is willing to show me how to go about it. He or she should be able to demonstrate what I want to learn and be willing to let me watch.
  - VI. Although he/she is further ahead than I, someone who respects me so that
    - a) he/she makes me feel like an equal and
    - b) he/she is willing to learn from me too.
  - VII. Someone who will let me have a go but be there to support me and to help me reflect on it.
  - VIII. Someone who will hold me accountable, challenge me if necessary and ask me questions to help me think things through.
  - IX. Someone who doesn't always tell me the answer but guides me to discover things myself. In fact, someone who, when he/she doesn't know, will point me to other people or other resources.
  - X. Someone who will pray for me.



6. Is there someone like this whom you could ask to be your mentor? (NB it is not necessary to have only one mentor. Most of us are nurtured and encouraged by a wide variety of people. However, there is also value in one person who takes a particular interest in you and with whom you meet reasonably regularly. Would you benefit from that? Who might that person be?)
7. ➡ If you know what sort of mentor you would want, can you also be that sort of mentor? Go through your list again and tick those qualities that you could be to someone else.
8. ➡ What do you believe is the next step that God wants you to take? Again, spend some time in silent prayer, seeking to hear God's voice and then write about what you believe God is saying.
9. To whom could you be accountable for this next step?

### **Further learning**

If you want to think about this further, read 1 Thessalonians. Write down all that you see in that letter that reflects Paul's heart as he mentors the Thessalonian Christians. Look for:

- a) Indicators of the type of relationship he had with them
- b) Indicators of his intentionality in making disciples.
- c) Clues as to what he taught them and what he wanted them to become.

### **The miracle of multiplication (see Study 4)**

To convert the whole world by adding 365,000 converts per year, it would take over 18,767 years.

To convert the whole world by multiplication (that is, making one disciple per year but each disciple then repeating that process) it would take less than 33 years!

# What now?

I do hope that these studies have been valuable to you. I pray that God has spoken and revealed new insights and that you have a plan now for building those insights into your life as a disciple of Jesus.

Studies are of little value if we do them without putting even greater effort into applying them, or if we do them then simply move on to the next thing.

You will remember that the Great Commission says that disciple-making involves “teaching them to obey all that I have commended you”. We are not making disciples if we simply increase people’s knowledge without a commensurate increase in obedience.

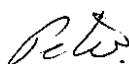
James says, “do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.” (James 1:22)

Can I suggest that you intentionally apply what God has said to you? Work with your group. Keep each other accountable. Discuss how best to put these lessons into practice. Make an effort to be doers of the Word.

If I can be of any help, I would gladly do that. Or if you have some feedback, email me at [peter@calvin.org.nz](mailto:peter@calvin.org.nz).

What are other people saying about these studies? There are many resources available and we can help each other discover those that will be most suitable and effective for us. Go to [www.presbyterian.org.nz/making-disciples](http://www.presbyterian.org.nz/making-disciples) for further discussion or help with resources. Via the web site we can build community and mentor each other.

May God bless you and help you as you follow Jesus,



The Rev Peter Cheyne  
Moderator Designate

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