

# Family Discipleship - Modeling

REVIEW: Last week we began a look at discipleship. A couple of main things came out of that. First and foremost: Every disciple is a Christian. That is not the part we have as difficult a time with. Of course, Pastor, disciples or followers of Christ would have to be Christians. It's almost written into the definition!

We get that one. The one we struggle with is this: every Christian is a disciple. We talked at length about that. The Bible does not let us get away with this little switch-a-roo. If you claim the name of Christ, you are a disciple.

We also talked about the ways the Bible characterizes disciples. Disciples hold to the teachings of Jesus. Disciples are known for their love of one another. Disciples also bear fruit for God's glory.

INTRO: Today we will look at the primary passage that tells us the discipling relationships. The focus will be on family discipleship. How can parents disciple their kids; how can grandma and grandpa disciple their grandkids.

- I. To start with, I want to do a quick survey
  - A. Parents, how many of you have at some point in your lifetime with your children just lost your mind with one or all of your kids? (Raise your hand)
    1. Look around
    2. Do you see that you are in good company - you are not the only one
  - B. Parents, how many of you, in a desire to discipline your child well, have perhaps been overly aggressive or gone farther than you should have?
    1. Again, good company
  - C. Here is what I want parents to understand at the outset
    1. I am not attempting to make you feel guilty
    2. You all have admitted that you are in good company - you have all lost it on occasion
      - a) I have as well with YG kids in years past
      - b) This is not designed to make you feel guilty as we talk over these topics and ideas for discipleship
      - c) It is designed to encourage you
    3. Repeat after me parents - "I don't have to be a perfect parent!"
      - a) God never asked you to be perfect
      - b) In fact, if you could be, you would not have need of Him
      - c) Any time any of us fail, in any way, all we are doing is proving how much we need to depend on God
- II. Turn to Deuteronomy 6:4-9
  - A. We are going over what is known as the Shema
    1. It is for the Jewish people how education in the faith was to work
    2. Basically it is family discipleship

# Family Discipleship - Modeling

3. It has three circles working their ways from in to out - so be on the lookout for those circles
  - B. Note that these ideas have come from sermons from Matt Chandler and other speakers and authors and studying I have done
  - C. As we begin, please note that the inner ring or circle is where it all begins
    1. You cannot start at either of the other two circles
    2. The center must be established or the rest falls apart
  - D. The start of the Shema is about the unity of God
    1. We are not spending much time here
    2. All I will say is that God is the subject for discipleship of all the levels or circles we will talk about
- III. Circle one - pick it up in verse 5
- A. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength."
  - B. This first circle is you and I
    1. We are to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul and strength
    2. At this first level, and for our discipleship notice what it does not say
      - a) It does not say, follow the Ten Commandments (See Exodus 20)
      - b) He does not give them some special code to pass on, or list of what to do
    3. God says love
      - a) The reason is because love will always kick knowing's butt when it comes to motivation
      - b) We don't do things because we know they are right and wrong
      - c) We do things because of love
        - (1) Example: when you are at the restaurant you know what is good for you - the giant salad with light dressing, and it might even look good to some of you weirdos out there
        - (2) But when they walk by with that fresh baked giant chocolate chip cookie covered with ice cream and whipped cream - that's what you really want - be honest
        - (3) What you love motivates you
    4. That is why God starts the Shema out with loving rather than a list of dos and don'ts
      - a) Love the Lord your God with all of your heart, soul and strength
    5. So the question becomes, how do we love, or show that love
      - a) There is freedom in this, but one of the obvious things would be to understand what God values - to do that we need God's Word
      - b) We need to marinate in God's Word

# Family Discipleship - Modeling

- (1) To make a good tasting steak or chicken on the grill, you let it sit in the marinade for a good while
  - (2) You don't swirl it around once or twice and pull the meat back out - let it take its time to really flavor the meat
  - (3) That is what we need to do with God's Word - sit in God's Word so long that it begins to flavor us
    - (a) Things like meditation (just thinking for a longer period of time)
    - (b) Quieting our hearts before God are needed
  - c) If we gain knowledge of God's Word without seeing how it connects to our hearts and lives, we do a disservice to ourselves and we don't get where God would have us be
- C. Please keep this in mind, that circle one is essential to the rest of these circles
1. If you do not start with loving the Lord your God, your are kicking against what God designed
  2. You can have the sweetest, most respectful children in the world, and that does not equal the full life God designed for you
    - a) What that is called is moralistic therapeutic deism - where you have great morals, and have some respect for Jesus
    - b) Moralistic therapeutic deism is a far cry from loving the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and strength
    - c) If that is what we are relying on, moral, respectful kids, you have not cultivated a heart for Jesus in them
      - (1) Jesus said He came to give us life and life to the fullest
      - (2) If you want the fullest life possible for you, and for your family, that life is only found in one place - Jesus Christ
- D. Why is your heart so important as a parent?
1. The reality is you are discipling your children right now
    - a) You disciple your kids
    - b) Grandparents, you disciple your grandkids
  2. The question is, "what are you discipling them in?"
    - a) So for example: husbands/fathers, how you treat your wife, will be passed on to the next generation
      - (1) Sons will think what you do is normal, and will behave the same way
      - (2) Daughters will often, unknowingly, seek a man just like you, and allow themselves to be treated how you treated her mom
    - b) Wives/mothers, if you are constantly nagging
      - (1) First off, I have never met a man that was changed by nagging

# Family Discipleship - Modeling

- (2) Second, you are training your sons in a way that emasculates them as you emasculate their father
- (3) And you are training your daughters that nagging is the way to get what they want, and to be an expert in their husband's weakness
  - (a) You should be an expert in his strengths - encouraging, loving
  - (b) Even if your husband barely knows his left from his right, he is still the man you married - and to disciple your children well, you need to speak life into your husband - in front of the children
    - i) Deal with the negatives in private
    - ii) And deal with them gently and lovingly
    - iii) But speak life into your husband - especially in front of the children
3. This is why God starts with us as adults and you as parents at the center of this, that you love the Lord your God
  - a) That is where discipleship begins in the home
- E. Let me encourage you dad, mom, grandparents, do the things that bring you back to your first love, Jesus
  1. The times I feel closer to God - being in His creation
    - a) Riding my bike with some worship tunes blasting away in my ears
    - b) Taking a walk in nature, praying
  2. Are my things commanded in Scripture - do you have to love God doing my things? Nope
  3. Am I any closer to God than I am at this moment? Nope
  4. God gives us freedom to experience Him in a variety of ways, so do the things that help you feel closer to Jesus - whatever those are for you
- IV. Our second circle - Impress them on your children
  - A. Look at verse 6-7
    1. "The words that I command you shall be on your heart" - circle one
    2. That is continuing to return to the deep well of affection for Christ
  - B. Then we get to "impress them on your children"
    1. Some versions say, "diligently teach them"
    2. Sounds like this could be time consuming
      - a) As if you parents did not have enough to do, now Pastor is heaping on the guilt about discipling our kids
      - b) What? Maybe another Bible study?
  - C. Relax, God took care of the time frame for us
    1. "Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home..."
      - a) How many of you sit at your house? You got this one nailed!

# Family Discipleship - Modeling

2. Do you walk along the road? Or maybe in modern terms, do you drive your kids places? There's two down!
    - a) In fact, you probably know this, but the car is the best places to trap your kid!
    - b) They have nowhere to run
    - c) Please don't give that time over to devices. Best time to have conversations about Jesus and the gospel
  3. Do you go to sleep at night? How about wake up in the morning? You got them all!
- D. But what do you teach???
1. Back to the center
  2. If you do circle one, you will eventually do all three, and probably not even realize what circle you are in
  3. You teach your children to love the Lord with all their heart, soul and strength
- E. When do you do it?
1. When sitting around the house
    - a) Like at the dinner table
    - b) The loss of the family meal is one of the biggest losses in American history - please revive that
      - (1) You will have fast food kind of nights
      - (2) But take the time for family dinner as consistently as you can
  2. So you teach them to love the Lord around the house, in the car, going to bed, waking up
    - a) And I may be single, but I'm not stupid enough to think that everyone is perfect and peachy in the morning and you have an abundance of time
    - b) I have been with many of your children on trips to various parts of the state, country, or world - I know they are not always delights in the morning
- F. Take a look at verse 8 for a minute, "Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads."
1. The Pharisees of Jesus day took this literally
  2. They were called phylacteries and they literally tied a small box to their heads or hands with these verses in it
    - a) In fact, tradition has it that the bigger your phylactery the more spiritual you were
    - b) Talk about missing the point entirely!

# Family Discipleship - Modeling

3. God's point was simple: to love the Lord with all your heart, soul and strength was to become your means of looking at everything in the world
  - a) It doesn't matter how the Jones's do things down the street
  - b) This house is going to love the Lord our God
    - (1) We will talk about it around the house, in the car
    - (2) As we go to bed, as we get up - all the time we will talk about God's love, and our loving Him in return
    - (3) That is what I meant by marinating in God's truth
      - (a) It is always on our minds, we are looking for ways that life teaches us more about God
      - (b) It is ever before us
4. Let me lay some reality on you
  - a) Just because a prayer was prayed when someone was in VBS at age 7 or 8
  - b) Just because someone was baptized does not make them a Christian
  - c) So moms and dads, you will not, by your parenting, make your children Christians
    - (1) The only thing that makes one a Christian in Christ
    - (2) And the proof of a Christian life is in circle one - can your love for the Lord be seen by those around you?
- V. The third circle - the community - v. 9 "Write them on the doorframe of your houses and on your gates."
  - A. Interesting to me that I have never heard of the Pharisees writing these on their doorframe or gates, but they will wear boxes on their head
  - B. So what is happening in this passage is an outward motion, like ripples on a pond
    1. It starts in the middle with dad and mom loving the Lord, and wanting that to be the focal point of their lives
    2. Dad and Mom so love Jesus that they talk about Him as often as possible
      - a) In the car, before bed, at the dinner table
      - b) They don't dream of perfect children, they know their kids need Jesus too, so that is why they talk about Jesus so often
    3. As this happens, as the love of the Lord becomes their lens to see the world by, the family unit becomes a light to the community
      - a) The community sees God's great design (we talked about that at length a year ago)
      - b) Again, this is not the place to start
        - (1) Starting with the community is living for the community
          - (a) It is putting on masks because that is not who you really are

# Family Discipleship - Modeling

- (b) It is a living a lie
- (2) You have to start with that center circle, and love the Lord your God with ALL your heart, soul and strength
- (3) Do you remember the requirements for an elder - he has to love his wife and children well
  - (a) Why - why make that a requirement?
  - (b) Because to have an outward ministry to the community, you must have a heart that has overflowed into loving your family
    - i) Your heart is so full of love for Jesus
    - ii) It spills into your family
    - iii) Then, it can spill into the world
- 4. So think about this: people that are in a dark place in marriage, if they run anywhere, they will run to someone that has a healthy marriage
  - a) Because of the light of Christ shining in that family, people are drawn in
  - b) They desire something stable - that is one of the results, and one of the ways this plays itself out in life
- C. Then from here, you can have several families of like mind - they love the Lord with all their heart, soul and strength
  - 1. Do you know what that is called?
  - 2. Church!
  - 3. And when these families that love the Lord come together, they can affect their town, their nation, and the world for the light that shines from them
- VI. So the next three weeks we will focus on family discipleship
  - A. This series is borrowed from a church in Texas that is allowing other churches to use their material as long as we do not change their material
    - 1. So when it comes to the handout, we will use it as is
      - a) So you will note some things in the handout that are not quite what we do at this church
      - b) The handout is packed with practical ideas and supplemental information for you
      - c) The handout would cost a fortune to print (about 45 pages)
      - d) To get it, send an email to the office and Debbie can send you the file
    - 2. The sermons are tailored to for our church
  - B. So next week we will talk about family discipleship time
    - 1. Here is what I mean:
    - 2. Creating intentional time in your family's rhythm of life for thinking, talking and living out the gospel
  - C. The following week we will talk about family discipleship moments

# Family Discipleship - Modeling

1. This is more about the moments of life to talk about the Lord
  2. The drives in the car, the meals at home or scarfing Subway on the way to the game
  3. There can be thousands of opportunities to talk about the gospel and how it affects and plays out in our lives
- D. The third week we will talk about milestones
1. In other words, marking significant spiritual milestones in the life of your children
- E. All of this is designed to be a “as you live” situation
1. In other words, we are not trying to overburden you with 10 more things to squeeze onto an overflowing plate
  2. The hope is to re-shape your thinking into, “how can I maximize my time with my kids to talk about the gospel more”
- VII. One word to the singles, or those with grown children
- A. For those with grown children, think wider than just your kids
1. You can certainly use some of this info with your kids
  2. Think also about your grandkids
  3. Think also about other people’s kids
- B. Singles
1. Think about how you can use this info with other people’s kids - or for that matter with other people
  2. I know that parents in this church appreciate loving adults that seek to build into their children’s lives
    - a) In taking the kids on one trip, I had one of the parents comment to me that they appreciated my being there as another “father figure” for the kids
      - (1) That is in part my job
      - (2) But it was recognized by the parents
    - b) You will never know what kind of influence you can have on a kid until you engage them in a loving, gospel centered manner
- C. I am looking forward to this focus on discipleship
1. Particularly on family discipleship
  2. Test after test confirm over and over again that the single biggest influence in a child’s life is their family
  3. God knew that, and that is why He put parents in charge of training their kids in the faith
  4. It all starts with loving the Lord with ALL your heart, soul and strength