

Making disciples Who Make disciples

The mission of West Conroe Baptist Church is to “Lead People to Become Fully Devoted Followers of Christ.” In other words, our mission is to develop committed Christians who display the character of Christ in their lives as they carry out the command to make disciples who make disciples.

Introduction:

Spiritual Growth, Not an Option

I grew up in North East Texas where vegetable gardens seemed to be in every neighborhood. My home was no exception. My parents raised tomatoes, cucumbers, beans, and even some corn. My dad would whistle as he worked in the garden, enjoying every step in the process of seeing a seed become a plant, then eventually bearing fruit. I must admit, I did not enjoy the work as much as I enjoyed what the work produced, fresh vegetables from the garden!

We see in Scripture the reference of seeds and plants being used to demonstrate the process of spiritual growth. In Mark 4:1-8 you will find the parable of the four soils. When a seed landed in good soil it produced a fruit of thirty, sixty, and even a hundred fold.

Jesus shared with us that just as seeds and plants follow a natural process of development, we do also. Understanding this spiritual growth process will help us know how to take our next steps in spiritual growth, and provide the method for leading others to do the same.

I heard a story of two young parents who had two young children. Being typical of their age, they played hard and made a mess of the house with toys spread all over. After getting the children to bed, the weary parents began the process of picking up the mess. While putting the toys away, the dad said, "I finally understand what the Bible means when it says, when I became a man I put away childish things!"

That's a funny story, but of course we know that the Bible was referring to spiritual growth. Spiritual growth is not an option or even a suggestion, it's a command.

Ephesians 4:14-15

*"As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed about here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but by speaking the truth in love, we are to **GROW UP** in aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ."*

THE BIG POINT:

Once again, spiritual growth is not an option, it's an expectation. Sadly, we see people who are stuck. Not sure what to do. The great thing is, we don't have to guess. ***In Scripture we see that Jesus developed His disciples intentionally, providing us a pattern to follow for our own growth, and in turn helping and leading others to do the same.*** This process is called disciple-making and is commanded in Scripture, found in Matthew 28:18-20.

So, what does this process look like?

Stages of People's Spiritual Journey

Scripture shows us that people are in different stages of their spiritual journey. Much like the growth stages we all go through as babies, young children, teens, and adults. Each stage requires a different need to be fulfilled.

In people's spiritual journey, and in our own, it's important to see where we are. Defining this reality gives us our starting point and provides us with the necessary information to take our next step in our journey.

Here are the stages that Scripture shows us:

STAGE 1 – Those who are Non-Believers

Mark 5:36

“Do not be afraid any longer, only believe.”

I have a friend that was a very religious person. He says, “I attended church regularly, my family prayed at meals, I even helped during many of the church services. On several occasions I tried to read the Bible for myself, but I found it meaningless, just words on a page like any other book. Even with all my religious busyness I felt dead inside.” This is a good description of many people in this stage. ***Romans 6:23 says, “the wages of sin is death.”*** People in this stage are “dead” and need to discover the life that only Christ can give them.

STAGE 2 – Those who are ready to Make a Decision for Christ

John 3:4

“How can a man be born when he is old?”

People in this stage have heard the Gospel and come under conviction of the Holy Spirit. For many of them it is a very emotional time as they begin to understand the ramifications of being separated from God because of the sin in their life. They are ready to receive the life that Christ has to offer through His shed blood on the cross and the hope He gives through the resurrection. In the passage of Scripture above (John 3:4), a religious leader was deeply concerned over his spiritual welfare. He came to Jesus to get answers. That's a great start!

STAGE 3 – Those who need to Grow and be Equipped

Matthew 4: 19

“And He (Jesus) said to them, Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

The person in this stage has experienced new life in Christ and has taken several steps in their spiritual journey. They have probably volunteered to help in the local churches ministry and experienced the joys of doing so. Many display one or more of the following characteristics: **available, faithful, teachable, enthusiastic, and responsive**. Many in this stage need to realize that the Christian life is a marathon and not a sprint. There are several key principals they need to learn in order to live out a lifetime of service to Christ.

STAGE 4 – Those who are ready to Become Disciple-Makers

Luke 6:40

“A pupil is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher.”

The Greek word used for “fully trained,” *katartizo* can be translated as equipped. Jesus’ goal of developing a movement of equipped disciples who could make disciples, who in turn could make disciples, and so on, came to fruition. After equipping them to become “fishers of men,” He commanded them to “Go and make disciples of all nations.” People in this stage understand the need, and know how, to multiply their ministry efforts by making disciples who can make disciples.

How West Conroe Defines the Stages

STAGE 1 - Those who are Non-Believers = the DISCOVER stage

STAGE 2 - Those who are ready to make a Decision for Christ = the CONNECT stage

STAGE 3 - Those who need to Grow and be Equipped = the GROW stage

STAGE 4 - Those who are ready to be Disciple Makers = the MULTIPLY stage

??? PONDERINGS ???

1. According to Ephesians 4:14-15, why do we need to grow up in Christ?
2. Write out the four stages. Place an X on the stage you think you are currently in?
3. From what you know now, what stage do you need to move to next? Take a look at the resources provided and begin to take your next steps.

In the next section we will take a look at the **DISCOVER** stage and dig deeper into what this stage looks like and what resources West Conroe offers to people in this stage of their spiritual journey.

Part I.

The Discover Stage

Key Words: [Come and See](#)

The first stage we simply call the “**DISCOVER**” stage. This is where everyone begins. Everyone who is a believer, at one time or another, had to discover who the Bible said Jesus is, and what He did for us. We see an example of this in the book of John.

John 1:35-39

*“Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples, and he looked at Jesus as he walked, and said, Behold the Lamb of God! The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. And Jesus turned and saw them following, and said to them, What do you seek? They said to Him, Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), where are You staying? He said to them, **COME, AND YOU WILL SEE**. So they came and saw where He was staying; and they stayed with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour.”*

Andrew and John were intent followers of John the Baptist. John preached repentance and being ready for the Messiah. John identified Jesus as the Lamb of God, the Messiah, and they went to hear Him speak. Eventually Jesus asked them, what do you want? They asked Him, where are you staying? The question was not a matter of where Jesus physically lived, but who are you? We want to know more about you! Jesus told them, come and see. In other words, come discover who I am.

We see time and again in Scripture where Jesus would open up the Scriptures to show people what it said about Him, and then allowed the Holy Spirit to reveal that truth to them in a personal way. Today, just as in the time of Christ, there are many people in need of discovering the truth of who Jesus Christ is.

REVEAL STUDY

In 2011 there was a study conducted by evangelical churches called REVEAL. In this study 157,000 people of various backgrounds and spiritual stages were interviewed to determine where they were in their belief towards Jesus of the Bible.

One of the questions asked, “What has kept you from discovering more about Jesus of the Bible?” The two most popular answers fell into these statements:

- (1) I have doubts about what I have heard.*
- (2) I can't seem to get clear answers to my questions.*

This is an amazing survey as it truly “reveals” a lot of what we see around us today in regard to people’s spiritual conditions. The first statement above, “I have doubts about what I have heard,” requires the work of the Holy Spirit. He is the one who draws people to Christ and convicts them of sin. The second statement, “I can’t seem to get clear answers to my questions,” reflects the work of the Disciple Maker. We are called to help people discover what the Bible says about Jesus.

This is one reason we developed the Discipleship Pathway. To help people find resources for the questions they have about Jesus Christ.

THE BIG QUESTION: *What do people in the DISCOVER Stage need?*

- Disciple Maker who can clearly communicate the **GOSPEL** of **CHRIST**.
- Disciple Maker who **LIVES OUT** the Gospel in their lives – the question we have to ask ourselves is this, “Is my life in Christ so rich that I could tell others to give up their current life for the life they see me living in Christ?”

1 Peter 3:15

*“But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, **ALWAYS BEING READY** to make a defense to everyone who ask you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.”*

DISCOVER RESOURCES AT WEST CONROE

- Evangelical Worship Services
- Ministers ready to meet with people and answer their questions
- “Can We Talk” teams who meet with people to answer their questions
- Life Group Teachers who teach and are ready to share the Gospel
- Wednesday Family Night classes that help people in the Discover Stage
- Resources on the website such as “Would You Like to Know God Personally?”

Information on these resources can be found at www.wcbc.us

??? PONDERINGS ???

1. Who do you believe Jesus is?

2. What does the Bible say about who Jesus is?

- John 1:1-13

- John 5:18

- John 10:24-30

3. What does the Bible say about having eternal life?

- John 3:16

4. Do you need to talk to someone about who the Bible says Jesus is?

- Call West Conroe Baptist Church office (936) 760 – 1911 and ask to speak to a Minister

In the next section we will take a look at the **CONNECT** stage and dig deeper into what this stage looks like and what resources West Conroe offers people in this stage of their spiritual journey.

Part II.

The CONNECT Stage

Key Words: [Follow Me](#)

The first stage provides opportunities for non-believers to discover who Jesus Christ is. The second stage **CONNECT**, calls for commitment. It is not enough to know about Jesus and what He has done for us, a commitment to Him as Savior and Lord is called for.

John 10:27-28

“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they [FOLLOW ME](#); and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of my hand.”

The CONNECT stage is for people who are ready to confess Jesus as Savior and Lord. In the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20), Jesus commanded that we baptize those who commit their lives to Him. This water baptism was a public way to confess Jesus as your Savior and Lord.

Matthew 10:32

“Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will confess him before My Father who is in heaven.”

Jesus was not content to leave people in the discover stage, and neither should we. We need to make ourselves available to answer questions, point people to Jesus, and a decision to follow Him as Savior and Lord, publicly proclaiming their faith through Believer’s Baptism.

THE BIG QUESTION: *What do people in the CONNECT stage need?*

- Leadership of the Holy Spirit to draw them to a decision to [FOLLOW CHRIST](#) as Savior and Lord, and a Disciple Maker who will share the Gospel with them.
- Disciple Maker to lead them to publicly display their faith in Christ through [BELIEVER’S BAPTISM](#).

We can also see in Scripture that Jesus gathered His disciples into a community of faith where they fellowshiped, received teaching, and probably helped meet one another's needs as they were equipped to be on mission for Him.

John 3:22

*"After this Jesus and His disciples went out into the Judean countryside, where He **SPENT SOME TIME WITH THEM...**"*

Scripture teaches that the early church followed this same method, meeting together for encouragement, and equipping one another to be on mission for Christ.

Hebrews 10:23-25

*"Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own **ASSEMBLING TOGETHER**, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near."*

THE BIG QUESTION: What do people in the *CONNECT* stage need?

- Disciple Maker to share how to connect to Christ's Church through **CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**.
- Disciple Maker to share how to connect to Christ's people through **LIFE GROUP** participation.

CONNECTION RESOURCES AT WEST CONROE

- Believer's Baptism
- Church Membership Class
- Life Group's for all ages
- Volunteer opportunities

Information on these resources can be found at www.wcbc.us

PART III.

The GROW Stage

Key Words: I WILL MAKE YOU

I have a friend who was heavily recruited to play college football. He received letters from UCLA, Utah, Columbia, and several colleges from Texas as well. He eventually chose to play at Texas Christian University. I asked him why the choice of TCU. One reason was the proximity to home, he was a momma's boy, but also because of what he heard the Head Coach say on a recruiting trip. Here's the short version of the speech the coach gave to the recruits:

*"Some of you guys are wanting to come to TCU to **TRY** and be a football player. If this is your attitude, your going to fail here, because that is the wrong mentality to have. If you get the honor of coming here, we have coaches who are going to **TRAIN YOU** to be football players. They will teach you the playbook, condition you, and equip you to be the best at your position. Your going to run until your sick of it. Your going to learn to eat right and take care of your body. More importantly than any of those things, your going to learn how to be disciplined with your life."*

My friend loved hearing this. He was very disciplined with his life, especially his faith. The coach was speaking his language! My friend became a disciplined football player that led to being successful on the field. His big moment came when he scored the winning touchdown in the Rose Bowl!

THE BIG POINT:

So, why all this talk about football? Just as in football, being a disciple of Jesus requires us to live a disciplined life. **We cannot TRY to be a growing disciple of Jesus, but we must TRAIN to be a growing disciple of Jesus.** We see this truth all throughout the Gospels as Jesus trains His disciples to grow up in Him. The GROW stage has two parts: growth principals, and equip principals.

1 Corinthians 9:23-24

*"I do all things for the sake of the Gospel, so that I may be a fellow partaker of it. Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? **RUN IN SUCH A WAY THAT YOU MAY WIN.**"*

There are many people who are trying to live the Christian life instead of disciplining themselves and training for the Christian life. Learning to think and be like Jesus is not something you give your best shot. *You have to understand the **goal**, develop the **intentionality** in your life, take hold of the **means** to do so, and depend upon the **Holy Spirit**.*

Matthew 4:19

“And He said to them, follow me, and **I WILL MAKE YOU** fishers of men.”

The **GOAL** is to become like Christ and to become a Disciple Maker. This Scripture reference found in Matthew points us to the principal that there is a growing and equipping process we need to go through to be able to develop Christ-like characteristics and actions in our life.

THE BIG QUESTION: *What do people in the GROW stage need?*

Three Growth Principals:

- 1.** A Disciple Maker to teach them how to have a **TRAINING** Mentality.

Galatians 5:22-23

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control, against these things there is no law.”

We all know these godly characteristics just do not automatically happen in our lives. Even occasionally showing up to worship and Bible study do not guarantee these will be present in our life. There needs to be an **INTENTIONALITY** with the experiences and knowledge God presents us so we can put them to use under the direction of the Holy Spirit as He trains us to be like Christ.

- 2.** A Disciple Maker to teach them the principal of **REPLACEMENT**.

Ephesians 4:22-24

*“In reference to your former manner of life, you **LAY ASIDE THE OLD SELF**, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lust of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and **PUT ON THE NEW SELF**, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of truth.”*

There are many things in our lives that hinder our growth in Christ. These must be replaced with godly habits that bring us spiritual nourishment and growth. We cannot simply stop an old behavior without putting a godly behavior in its place. Otherwise a vacuum is created in which the old habit comes back as an even stronger force. We must take hold of the **MEANS** to lay aside old habits and put on new habits. Anger needs to be replaced with peace, lust needs to be replaced with self-control, coarseness needs to be replaced by gentleness, and so on.

3. A Disciple Maker to teach them how to use **SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES**.

Romans 12:1-2

*“Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be **TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWING OF YOUR MIND**, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”*

We need to learn how to:

- Study the Bible
- Memorize Scripture
- Pray
- Have a dependence on the Holy Spirit
- Share our faith
- Spiritually multiply ourselves (Become a Disciple Maker)

John 3:30

“He must increase, but I must decrease.”

Learning to put these spiritual disciplines in our lives puts us in the presence of the **HOLY SPIRIT** who uses them to shape us, prune us, and lead us into a fuller life centered on Christ. These and other spiritual disciplines are part of the means the Holy Spirit uses to transform and renew our minds.

THE BIG QUESTION: *What Do People in the GROW Stage Need?*

Three Equipping Principals:

1. To Value the MISSION.

The mission of the church is to make disciples. There are many wonderful things the church could focus on, put their resources to, and lead their congregations to participate in, but the mission Christ gave us in Matthew 28 is to make disciples. This mission must be given the highest priority and determine how we use our gifts, abilities, and resources.

Matthew 28:18-20

“And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

2. To Make Contributions Based on SPIRITUAL GIFTING.

I had an interesting conversation with a Minister of Music from another church. The church had hosted a night of music that encouraged and inspired all those who attended. One person in particular really enjoyed the night and made a quick decision to change his life based on what he had experienced. Normally, this would be something to celebrate. In this case, a little equipping needed to take place. A gentleman who attended the concert was an engineer by vocation, married, and had several dependent children. He came up to the Minister of music and said, “I’m quitting my job and I’m going to get into the music ministry.”

The wise Music Minister asked the man, “Tell me about your gifting in music.” The man had none. He didn’t sing, couldn’t play an instrument, or read music. “Do you have any experience in music production, managing music venues, or dealing with music artist?” “No” the man replied. Finally, the Music Minister ask the man, “What is your spiritual gifting?” “Giving” the man replied.

The Music Minister replied that he appreciated the mans willingness to be open to God’s leadership in his life, but it appeared that God gifted the man to help support the church through giving and not music. Otherwise, he and his family, and possibly their church’s ministries might suffer. The man went away equipped, and with a relieved wife!

3. To Accomplish the Mission TOGETHER.

We need to acknowledge that we can't do everything. We are limited in our abilities and gifting. God made it this way so that everyone could have a part in His Kingdom work. Hopefully one of your joys is participating with a team of people to accomplish the mission of making disciples.

1 Corinthians 12:4-7 & 12

“Now there are VARIETIES OF GIFTS, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, but the same Lord. There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. “For even as the body is one and yet has many members, all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ.”

Notice in this Scripture reference the Trinity is mentioned. The Trinity is one, yet each accomplishes a different purpose, yet is honored the same. The church is to reflect this. We need the diversity that each person brings so we can accomplish the mission Christ has given us.

GROW RESOURCES AT WEST CONROE

- Membership in a Life Group
- Participation in Wednesday Family Nights
- Use of web based discipleship tool “Right Now Media”
- Serve Central to help you discover your Spiritual Gifts and put them to action
- Self-Paced resources like Bible devotionals, Bible reading plans, & Prayer resources
- WCBC Worship services

More information about these resources can be found at www.wcbc.us

??? PONDERINGS ???

1. What is the difference between trying and training to be a disciple of Christ?
2. Write out the three growth principals. Which of these are you strong in? Which need work?
3. Write out the three equipping principals. Which of these are you strong in? Which need work?

In the next section we will look at the **MULTIPLY** stage and dig deeper into what it means. We will also look at the resources that West Conroe provides to people who are in this stage of spiritual growth.

Part IV.

The MULTIPLY Stage

Key Words: **BEAR FRUIT**

You might remember at the beginning of this study we shared how Jesus would often use the analogy of seeds and plants in referring to spiritual growth. In this stage we find Jesus doing the same, using the term **BEARING FRUIT** to describe obedience to His command of making disciples.

John 15:15

*“You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and **BEAR FRUIT**, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in my name He would give to you.”*

BIG POINT:

In his second letter to Timothy the Apostle Paul shared that there are people who are only concerned with learning and they give no application to their lives on what they have learned. Paul tells us that **disciples of Jesus must give application to their knowledge**. This is called obedience to the Lordship of Christ. We are given the truths of Scripture to point us to a saving knowledge of Christ, to learn how to develop His character in our life, and carry out His mission.

BIG QUESTION: In the **MULTIPLY** stage what do people need?

- Learn how to **ABIDE** in Christ.

John 15:5

*“I am the vine, you are the branches; he who **ABIDES IN ME** and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”*

To abide in Christ means to submit ourselves to His training. We cannot live according to the desires of the flesh or depend on worldly wisdom to live our life by. We rest on His sovereign work in our lives to develop us into the person He desires us to be guiding and directing us to accomplish His purposes in and through us, thus bearing fruit.

- Learn how to serve out of [WISDOM](#).

Matthew 10:16

“Behold I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be [SHREWD](#) as serpents and innocent as doves.”

We need to understand that we are involved in **spiritual warfare** when we follow Christ and His command to make disciples. We have an enemy who wants to destroy us and any ministry done in the name of Jesus. The ambition of the enemy is to steal, kill, and destroy any and all of God’s purposes.

There are also **temptations of the flesh** that must be dealt with. To often we hear of those who were accomplishing things for the glory of God only to fall by temptations that came their way. These temptations can come in many forms. We would do well to recognize our own weaknesses in these areas and prepare in advance on how we will defeat them.

Finally, we need to recognize that we live in a fallen world. There are **worldly philosophies** that are in competition with what Christ has commanded us to do. These philosophies will cause many people to spend their time and resources to go after temporary pleasures and even in extreme cases to be in opposition to Christ’s mission.

To bear fruit we must be shrewd, by understanding the opposition we face (spiritual warfare, temptations of the flesh, and worldly philosophies) in accomplishing our mission for Christ, and knowing how to deal with them.

- Learn how to [REPRODUCE](#).

2 Timothy 2:2

“These things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, [ENTRUST](#) these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”

This Scripture reference speaks to three generations of disciples. This speaks of disciples making disciples who make disciples. This last stage, MULTIPLY is critical in accomplishing Jesus’ command to make disciples. The Discipleship Pathway was designed to help you do just that. Take someone through the simple stages and then encouraging them to do the same with someone else.

Multiply Resources at West Conroe

- Church Ministry Teams
- Community Ministry Teams
- Mission Teams
- Become a Disciple Maker

More information about these resources can be found at www.wcbc.us

?? Ponderings ??

1. According to John 15:15 what has Jesus appointed us to do?
2. What is the danger to always learning but never giving application to what we learn?
3. Write out the three things people need in the Multiply stage. Which of these are you strong in? Which of these do you need to work on?
4. Do you feel you are ready to be a Disciple Maker? If not, what equipping do you need?
5. Who can you pray for, asking God to help you lead them down the Discipleship Pathway until they become a Disciple Maker?