



SESSION 2 - LOVING GOD & LOVING OTHERS

Who will open our time with prayer?

Know that we'll be discussing your 'Quiet Time' assignment a little later this afternoon. So for now please just set those sheets aside.

I want to first respond to a question that Max (I was) raised last week. He asked me to define the word 'disciple'. I have a hand out that I would like us to look at. I offer it, in part, because I want us to all have a clear and common meaning in mind when one of us uses the terms, disciple, disciple maker and discipleship. If we are not being specific and in agreement as to these definitions, how can we expect those we disciple to be specific and in agreement?

DISTRIBUTE HAND OUT THE D3 SHEET GO THROUGH IT LINE BY LINE WITH HELP.

Let's review the 'Defining the D3 Culture' sheet. Do you see any problems? WAIT
What do perceive as being obstacles in communicating the different words? WAIT
Before we move forward, what questions still linger in your mind regarding these distinctions? WAIT Are there any more? WAIT Are there any others? WAIT

Today we're looking at the first part of The Greatest Commandment. (ASK A PERSON TO READ THE ADDRESS AND VERSES ALOUD AND CLOSE BY REPEATING THE ADDRESS.)

Matthew 22: 37 - 40 This message is repeated at Mark 12: 29 - 31

And He (Jesus) said to him, " 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' "On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."

The "Great Commission" was communicated by Jesus to His disciples within the context and environment of their living out this "Greatest Commandment" and it is for us too. Discipleship deepens one's walk of love with God so that we can exchange our purposes for His. Through His transforming power we can go through the sanctifying process of becoming more into the image of Jesus. It's this power that moves our relationship with God forward. It allows us to have a very special privilege. Would someone turn to and read John 15: 14 for us?

We touched on this last week. I just want to reiterate some of the dynamics involved in being someone's friend. I don't know about you, but that's a pretty big deal to me.

If someone told you that she was a close friend of the Queen of England, you might be taken askance. If someone told you that he was a close friend of Bill Gates, you might wonder what he does. Well, I can go one better.

We have the privilege to become a friend of the very God of all creation and time. It's not an automatic thing, but it is one that you are eligible to become. If one's salvation is perceived as being like a savings' account, you still have to put money into it if you want it to grow. You are set to enjoy eternity with the One who paid the entry price for you, but what are you going to do to enhance it?

So, I ask you 'What do friends do?; WAIT LISTEN FOR ISSUES LIKE

Want to get to know each other

Want to spend time with each other

Want to listen to each other

Want to tell others about our friend

? What else?

? What else?

Sounds like much of this relates right back to our having quiet times doesn't it? But before we view it in those personal terms, we need to recognize the caveat that Jesus put with enjoying such a status. I frame it as a bonus question.

Would you define this statement of our friendship as a promise of God to us? WAIT (Yes, but...)

Yes, it is, but remember, there are two kinds of promises God makes: One is called unilateral because there is nothing required on our part that impact it happening. The other is bilateral; it is conditional. Our receipt of the promise is based upon our doing something before it will happen or doing something later in order to keep it.

Which kind of promise is this? WAIT Yes, it is conditional.

What does Jesus say is our responsibility in its receipt? WAIT (our obedience)

Yes, the issue is obedience. But in the following verse, Jesus defines something extra as it relates to our conditional response. He defines it in terms of slavery. At that time there were two types of slaves; one was based upon either the legal aspects of ownership or based upon one's serving a term of indebtedness. The other was a person who served a master in a non-mandatory way. He may have previously been under that circumstance but was now free. Yet, out of personal choice, the former slave continues to stay on in service to a master. It was a decision not made out of duress, but by making a free-will choice to do so. Jesus shows us that our conditional response is not mandated by someone who has no choice in the matter. Rather, it's by our free-will choice to obey what he commanded of us, and in our doing so, we become Jesus' friend. Pretty incredible stuff, huh?

Once again, I remind you, this may seem elementary, and perhaps so elementary that you might assume everyone, and especially the person you will someday disciple, already knows all of this. You assume he or she completely understands the motive behind obedience to the Lord Jesus. The Spanish word I offer is this: "Cuidado", which means 'watch out', 'take caution'. You see that word on those little yellow cones in a store to make you aware that the area's floor is wet; the management is drawing your attention to that fact. It's the right word for all of us.

When we looked at what Christians refer to "The Great Commission", we rightly identified it is a directive. It was a directive for all disciples of Jesus Christ to make other disciples. It applied to the disciples 2,000 years ago, and it has applied to all of them ever since. The underlying issue is one of motive. Consider the following:

Some of you may remember that before the 'i-pod' generation, music used to be recorded on records. One was a small disc-shape vinyl called a 45. The record held two songs. The main song was recorded on one side, while the second song was recorded on the other side. After hearing one song, you flipped the record over to listen to the second one.

Well, today we're going to focus on one part of what I call 'the flip' side of that Great Commission. It's what these same Christians refer to as 'The Greatest Commandment.' You can decide for yourself which side is the main song. Without doubt, the two are linked. One tells us what to do; the other tells us why we are to do it.

This is how we can link our carrying out the Great Commission to our carrying out this Greatest Commandment. It is a matter of making the free-will choice to surrender ourselves to Jesus, then do it, and then staying committed to continuing to do it. And the choices continue day by day.

It is receiving God's unconditional love for us and responding in kind. It is out of our love for Him that we choose, that we act, that we celebrate. It is our free-will decision to love God because He first loved us. Love is meant to be the motive behind all we can be and all we can do. We are simply responding to what we have already come to enjoy. And it is Jesus who models just how we are to respond by the way He goes about living the life He led on this earth.

Yes, it is a privilege to be a friend of Jesus because, if I am His friend, I am also a friend of His Father. I shared with you the puppy love response that adolescents most go through. First, they spend time learning everything that he or she can learn about the other person, and then they go and share that information to anyone who will listen, which hopefully includes Mom and Dad as well as their other friends.

It is this intense desire to share with others the love we have discovered that takes us to the second focus for today. It's all about loving others. This brings us to the next focus today - showing our love for our friend.

The desire to help others grow in their relationship with Christ and be conformed to His image is an outgrowth of our Love for God and the things God loves. We desire to co-laborer with Him in building His kingdom and we desire the joy of seeing God use our lives in the lives of others. God uses our labor on both a one-to-one or personal level and at a community level

(Pass Out 'Love One Another' Handout)

The Scriptural basis for what we do to encourage is found within the Scriptures under a heading of "One Another" actions. Our role is to help them move forward in hearing "What God is saying", "How does this fit within my current life", and "What am I going to do or what is my next step".

We help them discover this path of discovery and application by asking questions.

Have someone read James 1:19-25

Break into 2 to 3 groups and develop 3 questions which could be used to ask:

- What is God saying?
- How could this help me with something going on in my life now?
- What action can I take to make this a part of how I live life?

<<< Come back and have each group present their questions and facilitate the larger group.>>>

Let's move along to discussing the materials you filled out this past week on spending time alone with God, or as we labeled it, having a 'Quiet Time'.

From the assignment this week on 'Quiet Times' what impressed you most? WAIT

How does the word 'essential' relate to the idea of having qt's? WAIT

Prior to this week who among you referred to having daily private times with God as 'devotionals' versus 'quiet times'? WAIT Now that you've been considering the subject, do you see any significant issues between those two descriptors, or do you see them as being interchangeable? (May I simply suggest that there is one difference; the word 'devotionals' can at times infer multiple people whereas qt's are always singular. It's not a hard and fast distinction; just one worth noting.)

What did these references show to be the reasons to have quiet times? WAIT

What are some of the attitudes we might have regarding having qt's? WAIT

What are some of the things we can ask God to give us when having them? WAIT

As to the people examples listed, who did you personally relate to and why? WAIT

What are some of the results we might expect from having qt's? WAIT

What if any personal benefit did you glean by completing this assignment? WAIT

How do you think the person(s) that you will be discipling someday would answer that same question? WAIT

What does that distinction tell you at this point in time? WAIT

Let's consider this rhetorical scenario: You are asked by someone, "Do you routinely have quiet times?" If you answered the question 'No', what kind of message do you think it would convey to the other person? WAIT

(Don't forget: Just as Jesus did for his disciples, we are to model what a mature disciple looks like through our actions, not just our words to the one we're assisting in his or her spiritual growth.)

Some of you may not have had a qt every day last week. If you did not, perhaps you're willing to accept the challenge to increase the number you did have by one this upcoming week? And know, that although this challenge is being voiced by me, the One who desires your affirmative answer is much greater than me.

You may very well know how to read and record what the Bible has to show us, but, again, the person you will disciple may not. To help them understand a viable way to do so, I'll offer you some methods during the next few weeks.

BREAK If time allows...

There is a survey that I discussed with Pastor Wes. It's called 'Reveal'. One key take-away from results determined by Reveal is that "reflection on scripture" is the greatest factor to improving a person's spiritual growth. Why? It spurs growth regardless of our maturity level. Upcoming we're going to look at the specific method to enhance that reflecting. For now I want to provide it as a handout.

This side of heaven we'll never become a completed spiritual being, but having routine quiet times will help us grow in that direction. Two verses stand out:

John 17:3 And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent. AND

James 4:8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you...

These two verses remind us that Christianity is not a religion but a relationship. It is not a legal relationship like an indentured slave but a love relationship between God and a person who has made the free-will choice to come up close to Him. When you look at the verbs know and draw, you see that they describe a process that happens over time; these are not single event matters.

A 'Quiet Time' is supposed to be a regular time of fellowship with God, marked by communication and closeness, where a person learns to listen and respond to God for daily insight and direction in His Word. Here are some qualifiers to recall:

DISTRIBUTE HAND OUT ON QUIET TIMES

(Discuss these as time allows, then have them reviewed as an assignment to carefully review at home this week.)

Hand out remaining sheets for 'at home' review.

Next session we will begin with sharing how consistent we were in having our Quiet Times and what God spoke to us about.

For now, who will close our time with prayer? Thank you.