

2021-2022

vision

study guide



parkviewchurch
whole church. whole disciples.



WE EXIST TO...

Glorify God

**BY MAKING
DISCIPLES OF**

Jesus Christ.



Acknowledgments

Content written by: Thomas Hoak, Pastor of Community Groups & Equipping
Edited by: Kacey Ginn and Emily Kacmarynski, Church Admins
Formatted and designed by: Devon Neese, Creative Arts Coordinator

We want to give a special acknowledgement to Craig Glassock and our new friends at Matthias Media. These core convictions and several elements of this booklet are adapted with permission from The Vine Project, a book that has been immensely helpful to us as we seek to solidify our convictions about disciple-making.

We also want to thank the other leaders and elders that contributed to the creation of this study guide. Their experience and wisdom has been invaluable to us as we move forward together under this new vision and mission.

Introduction

to Parkview's Vision and Mission


Nearly 90 years ago, the nucleus of what would later become Parkview Church formed around a singular purpose: to ensure that the children of Coralville had an opportunity to hear God's Word. As we approach the 90th anniversary of gospel ministry in Johnson County, we are entering what we sincerely pray will be an especially fruitful season as we move forward together.

In the Spring of 2020, it became clear to the Elders and staff of Parkview that we were in need of a special season of renewal. And so, as leaders, this year has been a season of reflection and repentance, of seeking the Lord and seeking to understand how exactly we had arrived at such a strange season. It was a time to make things right and to try to understand our past before we tried to chart a path toward our future. It was a season of soul searching: Who are we as leaders? Who are we as a church?

At this time last year, you might remember us asking you to complete an extensive online survey, one part of a comprehensive assessment we conducted to help us gain deeper insight. You might remember forums and phone calls and invitations to workshops and focus groups for individual ministry areas as we sought out every available opportunity to listen to you, the precious people that God has given to comprise this church.

After many months of prayer, Bible reflection, and discussion, and with all of your words in our minds and new insight in hand, we began to arrange some simple statements to encapsulate the direction in which we feel God is leading Parkview Church in this season.

It's important to note that our hope in formulating these statements is not to use marketing finesse to 'rebrand' Parkview into something that it has never been before. Our church is our people, under God. So in forming these statements, our first hope is to be true to God's simple commands to His church from the Bible, and second to be true to the values Parkview has claimed since the beginning.



With that in mind, we feel called to lead you toward this vision, an encapsulation of all that we hope for Parkview to be:

Parkview Church exists to glorify God by making disciples of Jesus Christ.

And we are compelled to achieve this vision by calling you to faithfully fulfill this mission statement:

To glorify God through the whole church forming whole disciples of Jesus, for the good of all people.

We are convinced that God's fundamental call for His church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ. But what does that mean? And what does it look like? Through this booklet we hope to guide you to see how we arrived at the statements you read above as well as to embrace them as your own. We will do this by forming five core convictions about making disciples by answering five simple questions:

1. **Why** make disciples?
2. **What** is a disciple?
3. **How** are disciples made?
4. **Who** makes disciples?
5. **Where** are disciples made?



We ask you to make three commitments for the duration of the sermon series that follows this booklet:

1. Prepare for each week's Sunday worship service by completing the accompanying study in this booklet. Each study should take about 30 minutes to complete.
2. Attend with Bible and booklet in hand at each Sunday worship service.
3. Discuss the content of this booklet in some way with others. For many of you, that will happen through your Community Group.

If we take these convictions to heart, we believe that God will bless our efforts to glorify Him by making disciples of Jesus Christ, through the whole church forming whole disciples of Jesus, for the good of all people.

Doug Fern

Interim Lead Pastor

Why make disciples?

Imagine you are at work one day this week and someone approaches you—a total stranger; it could be a client, a customer, a coworker, you don't know. They simply ask, "Why are you here?" Depending on how you interpret the question (and the strangeness of the situation), there are many ways you might respond.

"I work until 6," you might say, assuming they are asking why you haven't left for home yet. "I started a few weeks ago," you might respond, assuming they are surprised to see a new worker. But what if they pressed you? Why do you work here? At this point they're clearly asking something deeper. Maybe they're asking about your qualifications. Maybe they're asking about your experience or expertise. But maybe this stranger wants to jump all the way to the bottom of your heart—the ultimate "Why?"—what is it, exactly, that makes you want to spend your strength and time and mental effort on this? What has drawn you to serve this company, offer this service, produce these goods? What has captured your imagination and affection?

A complete stranger may not deserve your answers to those questions, but you'd better have them for yourself. And if that's true about your work life, how much more true is it about the way we answer the ultimate questions: "Why are you here?" "Why did God make you?" and "What does he want you to do with the time, energy, and gifts he has given you?"

At Parkview Church, we want every member to see that the Bible has an unfuzzy and uncomplicated answer to the most important question over your life. In fact, we aren't trying to "rebrand" or force a new identity onto the historic gospel movement that we call Parkview—we are plainly summarizing the Bible's simple call to every faithful believer when we say that Parkview Church exists to glorify God by making disciples. In this study, we will consider the first and most significant question we might ask in response to that call:

Why make disciples?

“... the Church exists for nothing else but to draw men into Christ, to make them little Christs. If they are not doing that, all the cathedrals, clergy, missions, sermons, even the Bible itself, are simply a waste of time.”

- C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity

LEARNING GOAL

The reason we want to make more and more disciples of Jesus Christ is this: *because God’s goal for the whole world and the whole of human history is to glorify His beloved Son in the midst of the people He has rescued and transformed.*

God is now putting this plan into effect, by rescuing people out of “this present darkness” into the kingdom of His son by His death and resurrection—people who are being transformed to be like Jesus, and who now have a sure and certain place around Christ’s throne in a new creation where evil and death are no more.

This is the zoomed-out picture that explains why making more disciples is so important and so urgent a task:

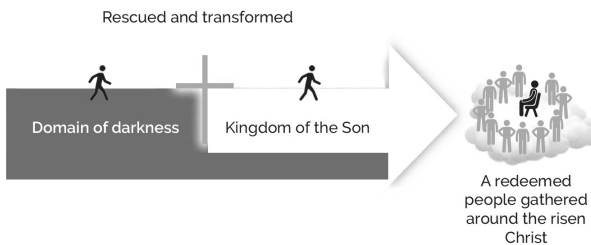


Image: The Vine Project

Leader Thoughts

WHY MAKE DISCIPLES?

Our mission of Glorifying God by Making Disciples of Jesus Christ is vital to what God has called His people and His church to do. Discipleship is necessary for each Christian to grow and mature in their faith, but it is also something each Christian is commanded to do. Jesus' purpose in having disciples was so that they could first know Him and then go and make more disciples to follow Him. As Christ-followers, we must also follow Jesus' example and make disciples who follow Him.

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Matthew 28:18–20



Dave Asprey, Elder

He chose us, weak, fallen humans to take His message to all people. In Romans, Paul talks about the great need for discipleship among unreached groups of people. Jesus sent out His disciples to go into all the ends of the earth to spread the good news (Romans 10:14–17).

Parkview's people must remain obedient to that commandment by finding people whom we can disciple in our daily lives. Whether that is within our own family, our friends, people in the church, or globally, we are all called to make disciples who love and follow Jesus.



STARTING AT THE END

A lot of time and energy goes into each Sunday worship service, both in the things you see and the things you don't. Dozens of musicians, gracious greeters, and skilled tech workers along with hours of sermon preparation lead to an event that we pray will help us learn Christ together. It's an endless quest to evaluate and grow and ensure that we are honoring God's intentions for His church's gatherings. But we don't despair, because the Bible gives us a glimpse of a perfect worship service—and it's simultaneously inspiring and humanly unachievable. Take a look:

⁹After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, ¹⁰and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"¹¹

¹¹And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ¹²saying, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen."

¹³Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?"¹⁴ I said to him, "Sir, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

¹⁵"Therefore they are before the throne of God,
and serve him day and night in his temple;
and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with
his presence.

¹⁶They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore;
the sun shall not strike them,
nor any scorching heat.

¹⁷For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd,
and he will guide them to springs of living water,
and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

Revelation 7:9-17 (ESV)

¹ Throughout this passage, the character called "the lamb" is Jesus Christ, whom the book of revelation often characterizes as a sacrificial lamb who has achieved universal victory through His bloodshed on the cross. See Revelation 5 for more.



What characters are present in this scene? What is each doing? (*Hint: this is not a trick question. There are really only two possible answers to write in the right-hand column for each row.*)

Character(s)	Activity
God	
The Lamb	
Angels	
Multitude from every nation	
Elders	
Four living creatures	

In verses 13–14, the author gives us some insight into the source of this great mass of worshipers. Who are they and how did they gain admittance to this incredible event?²

If you have trusted Christ, take a moment to rejoice that this passage describes a scene in which you will one day take part. Wow. Can you imagine? Ask God to fill you with the joy that this thought should inspire.

In verses 15–17, the author tells us the destiny of this scene. How would you describe it in your own words?³

What does this passage teach us about the destiny of the whole world and human history? What are we heading toward?

15 ² If the language of white robes and washing in blood confuses you, it might be helpful to know that a white garment was a rarity and throughout the Bible it is a symbol of moral perfection. It may seem contradictory, but the author of this passage indicates that the way to achieve the moral perfection which is the prerequisite for heavenly belonging is by washing in the blood of Christ. ³ Curious about this “shepherd” metaphor? Read Psalm 23 to see the way the Bible typically uses this image to describe God’s tender care for His people.



HOW DID WE GET HERE?

That scene is gorgeous and awe-inspiring, but it raises more questions. Why do these people need washing in the first place? To find the answer, we must turn to a passage that is absolutely fundamental to our understanding of our identity as believers and as a collective people—the church.

¹⁶Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. ¹⁸And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Matthew 28:16-20 (ESV)⁴

⁴ If you are unfamiliar with this passage, it would be helpful to review Matthew 26–28 to get familiar with the events that preceded this passage, which comprises the final 5 verses of the gospel of Matthew.



What does Jesus say about Himself in this passage? Make as many observations as you can.

Let's break down the all-important *commission* that Jesus hands off to the disciples in this passage. What activities comprise our task as individuals and as a church?⁵

verse 19	verse 20

What is the word "therefore" referring to in this passage? What is the connection between what comes before and after that word?

17 ⁵ It's important to remember that when we read the word "church" anywhere in the Bible, we can generally transpose "me." After all, the Bible would never have connected the word "church" with a mere building or with the kind of institutional character that we often encounter today. Rather, a church is simply a gathering of individual disciples of Christ, and so God's expectations and promises for His church are no more and no less than His expectations and promises for each individual believer.




HOW DO WE GET THERE?

This week (August 29), we will hear Titus 2:11–14 preached to us at each campus worship service. It may be the closest thing to a succinct answer to the big question over this whole week of study, worship, prayer, and discussion: “Why make disciples?”

¹¹For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, ¹²training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, ¹³waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

Titus 2:11-14 (ESV)

What does this passage teach us about the answer to our big question, “Why make disciples?”



Having studied these three passages, let's return to our opening illustration. What if someone were to come up to you, not at work but on a Sunday morning, and ask, "Why are you here?" What would you say? Try to come up with as many answers as possible.

As you consider playing your role in the call to glorify God by making disciples, what do you think is your greatest personal need? What strength, conviction, comfort, courage, etc. do you need the Lord to provide so that you can wholeheartedly embrace God's call on your life?

Spend a moment praying through Ephesians 3:14–21, noticing the kinds of things that the author, the Apostle Paul, asks God to do for his church. Pray those things for Parkview also:

¹⁴For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, ¹⁶that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

²⁰Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, ²¹to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever.

Amen.

Ephesians 3:14-21 (ESV)

2

What is a disciple?

Every summer a similar scene plays out across Iowa. As the weather warms up and the ground thaws, road workers swarm the highways and streets to fix the damage of winter and start new projects. As of this writing, crews have been at work for years on a plan to reconfigure the I-80/I-380 interchange. The project is massive, starting in 2019 and not scheduled to be completed until 2024, costing \$387 million. It really is an administrative and logistical marvel.

Every day workers head to huge machines across a project site that stretches for miles. The day's goal? Dig a hole. Move some dirt. Pour some concrete. But where? And how much? And what shape? And what is this thing going to look like when we're done? To answer all of those questions, they must look at the master plans. They must zoom out, take in the whole scope of the project, and consider: "What, exactly, are we making?"

Last week we covered the goal of the church and therefore of every person who has received salvation through the finished work of Jesus: to glorify God by making disciples. It's a construction project that makes the I-80 interchange look like a few toddlers playing in the sand. God's goal for the whole world and the whole of human history is to glorify His beloved Son in the midst of the people he has rescued and transformed. But if disciples are what we are building, we have to make something totally clear: What is a disciple? What, exactly, are we making?

Imagine that I-80 interchange project again. But instead of consulting the master plans, each of the hundreds of workers goes about his or her work each day making holes, grading slopes, and laying concrete. They each have a similar idea of what the project should produce—a ramp here, a road there. But they're iffy about the specifics. In the short run, the project might appear successful, but as overpasses are raised to meet on ramps, it will be clear that we have a big problem.

Clearly, one of the convictions that must be rock-solid in our minds is the end goal of our mission: What are we making? To be specific,

What is a disciple?

LEARNING GOAL

In this study we will clarify exactly what a disciple is: a forgiven sinner who is learning Christ in repentance and faith.

We will see in the Gospels that a “learner” (or “disciple”) of Christ is someone who has recognized the dark and lost state they were living in under God’s judgment, and who has turned to Christ in repentance and faith as Master, Savior, and Teacher to commit themselves totally to obeying Him, learning to keep all His commandments, and living out that repentance and faith daily for the rest of their lives. This kind of “transformational learning” is really another way of describing the totality of the Christian life.

We will see how this same framework of thinking carries into the rest of the New Testament, where “learning Christ” means hearing the word of the gospel (Christ’s saving rule), responding to that word in faith, and thereby passing from death to life in Christ—with a resulting urgency to kill off the sinful worldly behavior that remains from their former life, and to put on instead the new clothes of Christ.

To become a “Christ-learner,” then, is both a decisive and gigantic step of repentance in accepting the salvation that God has won for us through Christ (symbolized by baptism), and an ongoing daily commitment to living out the implications and consequences of this massive salvation that God has won for us (symbolized by the the yoke).

We could add one small detail to our diagram to represent this, namely an “L” (learner) sign above the person who has been transferred out of darkness and into the kingdom of the Son, and who now continues that transformational learning in every sphere of life, especially in the “transformational learning community” that we call *church*.

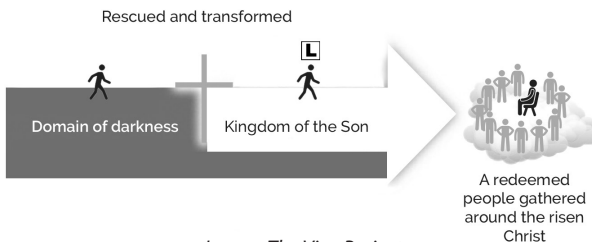


Image: The Vine Project

Leader Thoughts

WHAT IS A DISCIPLE?

Jesus Himself gave the Great Commission—the Church’s basic mission statement—in Matthew 28:19–20:

*“Go, therefore, and **make disciples** of all nations, **baptizing** them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **teaching** them to observe all that I have commanded you.”*

Jesus commands us to “make disciples” through “baptism” and “teaching.” Baptism is the act of publicly identifying with the Triune God and the universal family of believers that has done the same. Baptism is the first step of our enfolding into our new spiritual family. Throughout our remaining lives, our relationship with the Body of Christ is then deepened and strengthened as we invest time in sharing spiritual fellowship with one another.

Jesus’ command to teach the disciples assumes an equal responsibility in the disciples to learn. As disciples, our lives are to be characterized by learning and teaching others the reality of God, man, and the world, and how to live out our lives in this world in light of that reality. Seeking to live this truth in loving fellowship with other believers is the hallmark of a disciple of Christ.



Jamie Schroeder, Elder



Without thinking about it too much, what would you assume someone means if they say that they are committed to *making disciples*?

What would that response indicate about what they believe is needed in order to be a disciple?

Let's return to one of the core passages that outline our mission: Matthew 28:18–20.

¹⁸And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Matthew 28:18–20 (ESV)

This passage tells us not only what our mission is; it also tells us much about what defines a disciple. It's important to be clear about the syntax of verses 19–20. There is one command (go and make disciples) and then two participles that give definition to that command (baptizing; teaching).



So the process of making disciples is marked by these two actions, baptizing and teaching. So from there we can simply look at it from the opposite perspective—that of the disciple being made—and discern the two basic phases in the life of a disciple. What are they?

Give a simple one-sentence definition for each of those phases, according to your understanding of the Bible's use of those words.

Clearly, the essence of discipleship cannot be reduced to one or the other of these phases. Return to the response that you gave to the first question of this study. Do you think that the answer you gave would fit with this two-phase understanding of discipleship in Matthew 28:18–20? Why or why not?

Why is it important to hold both of these two phases together, not overemphasizing one or the other? What would a church look like that emphasized only baptism? Only deep learning?



On Sunday we will learn together from one of Jesus' key teachings on what it means to be a disciple:

²⁷"All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. ²⁸Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Matthew 11:27–30 (ESV)

The key metaphor that Jesus uses in this passage is the yoke. What is a yoke used for? (If you don't know, use a dictionary or search engine to find a good definition.)

Read the passage again carefully and pay attention to the way Jesus uses the image of the yoke. In what sense is discipleship similar to bearing a yoke?

Having read these key passages, try writing your own definition of a disciple. Imagine that you are explaining to someone who is not familiar with Christian jargon.



Matthew 11:27–30 is not just instructive about the nature of discipleship—it also tells us about the character of our great master and teacher, Jesus. Jesus offers us freedom by offering us His yoke. It’s not that we can either choose to be free agents in the world, living however we want or we can be disciples. Everyone bears a yoke of some kind. We are all seeking satisfaction and meaning somewhere, laboring to achieve real rest for our souls, offering our lives to masters who are demanding and deceitful at heart. But Jesus is the only master who is gentle and lowly in heart, from whom you can find rest for your soul, whose yoke is easy, whose burden is light. Spend a few moments thanking God that at the heart of reality is Christ, gentle and lowly, beckoning you to learn from Him under His kind yoke of obedience.

3

How are disciples made?

In the past two weeks, we have considered two fundamental convictions about the disciple-making mission that God has handed to His church. First, we answered the question, 'why make disciples?' by saying that we make disciples because God's goal for the whole world and the whole of human history is to glorify His beloved Son in the midst of the people He has rescued and transformed.

Last week, we answered the question 'What is a disciple?' by saying that a disciple is a forgiven sinner who is learning Christ in repentance and faith. For the practically minded, this week could not come soon enough. 'So what do I do?'; you might be asking yourself.

LEARNING GOAL

The making of disciples is *God's work*, achieved as His Word and Spirit work through the activity of Christian disciples and in the hearts of those they speak to. We can summarize that activity as *the persevering proclamation of the Word of God by the people of God in prayerful dependence on the Spirit of God*. We can summarize how disciples are made through the four Ps:

- P**roclamation of the word of God (in a multitude of ways)
- P**rayerful dependence on the Spirit of God
- P**eople acting as God's fellow workers
- P**erseverance, step by step

The goal of any form of ministry could therefore be summarized as simply seeking to help each person, wherever they happen to be in relationship to Christ, to take 'one step toward Christ' through these four Ps—that is, to hear the gospel and be transferred out of the domain of darkness into the kingdom, and then press forward towards maturity in Christ in every aspect of life, by the constant, persevering, prayerful proclamation of God's Word by people in multiple ways. Our diagram would now look like this:

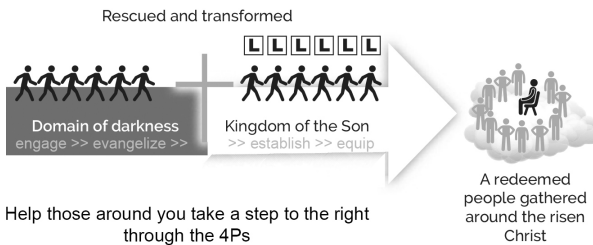


Image: The Vine Project

To think more clearly about the different ‘places’ people occupy on this spectrum of moving toward Christ, we can identify four broad stages that people pass through on their road ‘toward Christ’:

- Some people are very ‘far away’ from Christ and his kingdom; they may not have ever met or spoken with a Christian person. Very often the first thing they need in order to take a step to the right is to meet and engage with a Christian.
- Others have met and engaged with Christians or Christianity in some way. The next step for them is to hear the gospel; that is, to be evangelized.
- For those who have responded to the gospel in faith and repentance, their next step is to be established as a Christian, to send down roots, and to begin to grow in godliness and Christlikeness (a ‘walk’ that will continue for the rest of their lives).

As Christians are established, and grow in love and knowledge, they will become increasingly concerned not only to step toward Christ themselves, but to help others to do so in whatever way they can. They will benefit from being equipped to do so through teaching, encouragement, coaching, and prayer.

While every spiritual journey is not as neat and tidy as this summary presents it, we could use these four Es as handy signposts for different stages of the journey: Engage, Evangelize, Establish, and Equip. We could then update our diagram like this:

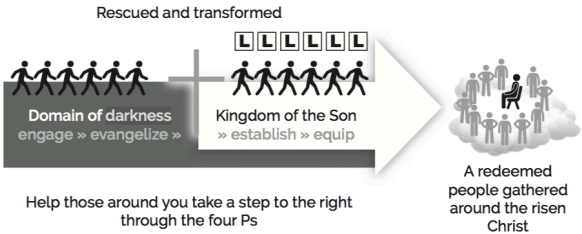


Image: The Vine Project



Clearly, this week's study focuses on the heart of how we actually do what God has called us to do. It's crucial that we understand and live in a way that illustrates our commitment to this fundamental conviction. This is what it means to be a church! Without this conviction, we might have all of the right doctrines and build all of the right programs, but it will all be meaningless unless each of us commit ourselves to this simple set of convictions about how a human being actually grows and changes! This is where the rubber meets the road!

Because this conviction is at the heart of what it means to do what God calls us to do, we have planned four special training nights this Fall to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to learn what it means to take part in God's plan to redeem His creation through Jesus. We ask you to commit to joining us for each of those evenings so that we can learn together. If you're a part of a Community Group, your group will be there together to bring these truths home together. Mark your calendar now:

Sunday, September 12

Sunday, October 10

Sunday, November 14

Sunday, December 12

You will hear more details as those nights come closer.

Leader Thoughts

HOW ARE DISCIPLES MADE?

BY GOD'S WORD

"Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day." (Psalm 119:97) Several times I have been asked "Who discipled you?" First and foremost, I've been discipled by God's Word, the Bible: Through pastors preaching, reading, studying, meditating, and memorizing the Bible. Also through studying the Bible with others, through teaching it, and through others whose lives have been an example to me of what the Bible teaches. I have been blessed! "All scripture is breathed by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16)

BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

"Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God" (1 Cor. 2:12). The Holy Spirit teaches us how to be like Christ and intercedes with us in prayer to the Father. Romans 8:26 says, "Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words."

BY BEING THIRSTY

"As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God." (Psalm 42:1) We are life-long learners. My mother lived to be 92 and we would read and discuss the Bible until she went home to heaven.

BY COMING TO JESUS

"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn



Teri Greiner, Parkview Member

from me, for I am gentle and lowly of heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matt. 11:28-30) "I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing." (John 15:5) Jesus is calling us to come to Him to find rest and learn from Him.

BY SHARING CHRIST WITH OTHERS

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16) "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns:"" (Isaiah 52:7) God wants us to share the Good News about Christ with others. Many people do not realize that when they die they are facing God's judgment...eternal life in hell, or that through Christ, we can have eternal life in heaven. That for me is one of the reasons for discipleship. We are the Light of Jesus in the world.



We'll focus on the first of the 4 Ps described above: **Proclamation**. How are disciples made? Answer:

¹⁶All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (ESV)

What difference does it make that the passage says that “all scripture is breathed out...”? What would be different if it said “Most” or “Several scriptures”?

The passage tells us that one of the Bible's characteristics is that through the ministry of the Bible, “the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” What does this teach us about the sufficiency of the Bible?

Having considered this, what role does the Bible play in fulfilling our mission to make disciples?



The simple fact is this: the actual effectiveness of our church will be measured by the degree to which we commit to love those around us—believer and unbeliever alike—by prioritizing their spiritual health. Mark Dever says in his book *Discipling* that “Churches don’t need programs so much as they need cultures of discipling, cultures where each member prioritizes the spiritual health of others.” One of the main ways we do that is by proclaiming God’s words to one another.

For many people, “Proclaiming God’s word” is an activity that is performed only by highly qualified people at prescribed times—namely, the pastor preaching from the stage for 35 minutes on Sunday mornings. But there are plenty of other ways that God calls His people to proclaim His words in a variety of circumstances. Try to think of at least 3 contexts where you or someone you know has proclaimed God’s words to you or to someone else.

Having trouble? Think about the different ways that Jesus interacted with people in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John




Let's look at a few examples of proclamation of the Word in the Bible to see a few of the circumstances where we can proclaim God's Word to others.

Passage	Who proclaimed (or was called to proclaim)?	To whom?	What is the content of their proclamation?
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18			
Acts 18:24-26			
Acts 8:26-40			

What similarities do you see in each column? What differences?

How can the ideas that you have learned in this study give you confidence that God wants to use you to accomplish His purposes by making disciples?



This week we will hear 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10 proclaimed to us during our Sunday morning worship gathering. Take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with this passage and then consider two questions:

1. How does this answer the question, "how are disciples made?"
2. What do I see in this passage that reminds me of God's goodness?

²We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, ³remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, ⁵because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. ⁶And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, ⁷so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. ⁸For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything. ⁹For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, ¹⁰and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

1 Thessalonians 1:2-10 (ESV)

Spend a few minutes praying for a heart like that of the Thessalonians as the Apostle Paul describes them above.

4

Who makes disciples?

In last week's study, we considered the question "how are disciples made?" We got into the nuts and bolts of making disciples, concluding that believers and unbelievers alike take steps toward Christ through the persevering proclamation of the word of God by the people of God in prayerful dependence on the Spirit of God. Hopefully you came through last week feeling more capable and confident in your ability to affect serious change through the simple means that God has provided for the extraordinary task in front of us: the Holy Spirit, the Holy Bible, and plenty of time.

It's clear from the Bible's answer to our last question that God's people are the ones who make disciples, but it might not be clear exactly how God has organized His church to accomplish His mission. Let's revisit the road construction illustration we considered in week 2 (what is a disciple?).

Since the purpose of the whole crew is to build an interstate, there is a sense in which every construction worker is 'building an interstate.' But that doesn't mean every member of the crew plays the exact same role. Some workers have special training to use heavy equipment to dig holes of an exact dimension in a precise location. Others work deftly with their hands on the ground, preparing a steel rebar course to receive the poured concrete. Still others have management skills and are tasked as foremen, making sure every member of his team knows what to do and that they do it with excellence.

Each member of the team is necessary. But it would be counterproductive chaos to simply show up at the job site and let everyone do whatever job felt interesting that day, regardless of their abilities. So also God has organized His church so that there is not confusion but unity amidst the diversity of our abilities as we labor together toward the shared purpose of glorifying God by making disciples of Jesus Christ. Let's consider together this question:

Who makes disciples?

LEARNING GOALS

In this conviction, we will dig deeper into the idea that it is the joy and privilege of all God's people to be involved in making disciples. Indeed, we have enshrined in our church mission statement that Parkview will only achieve its vision to glorify God by making disciples of Jesus Christ through the whole church making whole disciples of Jesus. This is no half-hearted endeavor—but our God is unlike any other!

In this study we will look at the biblical teaching of how God by His Spirit opens the mouths of all disciples to speak the one word of Christ, in a richly varied way. We concluded that speaking the word of God to others for their salvation and encouragement is an expected and necessary component of the normal Christian life. And correspondingly, a healthy church culture is one in which a wide variety of word-based ministries are exercised by a constantly growing proportion of the membership.

In other words, we could answer the question 'Who makes disciples?' as follows: *By their preaching, training and example, pastors and other leaders equip every Christian to be a Christ-learner who helps others to learn Christ.* Accordingly, we could change the summary statement at the bottom of our diagram to reflect this integrated picture of a church centered on the proclamation of the word for the purpose of helping others take the next step toward Christ:

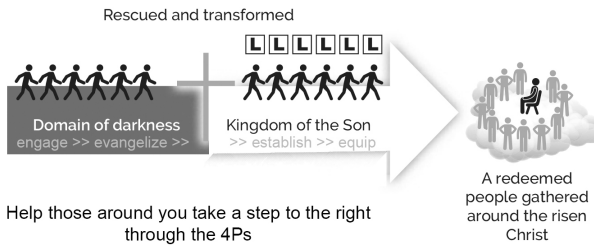


Image: The Vine Project

Leader Thoughts


WHO MAKES DISCIPLES?

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Acts (Matt 28:16–20, Mark 16:14–18, Luke 24:44–49, John 20:19–23, Acts 1:4–8) speak to the commissioning of the saints to spread the Gospel to all peoples through the power of the Holy Spirit. This is a common power from the Holy Spirit in all followers of Jesus. Saints will be at different levels of maturity and have differing levels of fruit developed in their lives. At any level of maturity, the Holy Spirit can use each of us to help expand the kingdom of God to His glory. Let us pray to be used in this way.

Discipleship is about love. Love God by listening to Him during preaching, teaching and reading of His Word, and speaking to Him in prayers of adoration, confession, thanksgiving and supplication. Love your neighbors by knowing their names, serving them, supporting them, and sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with them. We are the Saints in Christ; let us serve Jesus Christ by making disciples.



Scott Eberly, Elder



This week's study will focus on the passage that we will learn from during our Sunday worship gathering, which is Ephesians 4:7–16. This passage basically lays out Jesus' entire plan for the structure and activity of His church. Let's dig in!

⁷But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. ⁸Therefore it says,

“When he ascended on high he led a host of captives,
and he gave gifts to men.”¹

⁹(In saying, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? ¹⁰He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)² ¹¹And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹²to equip the saints³ for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, ¹⁴so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. ¹⁵Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Ephesians 4:7-16 (ESV)

¹ It's important to note that the author is using the word 'men' in a gender-inclusive sense in this verse.

² This reference to 'descending' is referring to Jesus in His transition from heaven to earth in His birth and subsequent earthly life; 'ascending' refers to Jesus' ascent into heaven, from which He is currently actively leading His church through the empowerment and guidance of His Spirit. You can read about this in Acts 1:6-11 and John 14:15-31.

³ "Saints" for the author, Paul, is not a title reserved for the most faithful in the church; it is the everyday designation for anyone who has received forgiveness and freedom from sin through Jesus. In 1 Corinthians 1:2, Paul calls the Corinthian church "saints" even though it is the worst church we see described in the New Testament. Because of the gospel, when God sees us, He doesn't see our huge mess but the perfection of His son. Saints indeed.



The point of this passage is to teach us how the church can be unified in its structure and purpose. Let's start at the end. What do verses 15-16 teach us about *how* we make disciples?¹

What do verses 15-16 teach us about what a disciple is?

What do verses 15-16 teach us about the core character trait or motivation that is needed to accomplish this vision?

What a helpful and concise definition of the goal of everything that we are trying to accomplish as a church! The earlier verses in this passage tell us how about the gifts God has given us to actually pull this off. Let's read those now.

Verses 7-10 teach us about the abilities (gifts) that God gives each disciple so that they can participate in God's mission to make disciples. How are those abilities given? Who, specifically, receives them?


43 | ¹ Note that one of the author's favorite metaphors for the church is that the church is a new human community, represented as a human body, with Jesus as the head, with all of His disciples together being analogous to the rest of the body which is submissive to and nourished by Jesus, the head.



Verses 11-13 get us right to the heart of this study's big question. What does this passage tell us about who makes disciples?

What do verses 11-12 teach us about the role of gifted leaders in the church's mission to make disciples? Apart from getting their own hands dirty in God's mission to make disciples, how do gifted leaders help move God's mission forward?

In many churches there is a top-down understanding of God's mission: the pastors and other mature leaders do the work of ministry while the ordinary Christians support them through prayer, giving, and occasional service. According to this passage, what's wrong with that understanding?



If we were to give a simple summary to the teaching of this passage, in response to the big question of this study, 'who makes disciples?' We might say, *By their preaching, training and example, pastors and other leaders equip every Christian to be a Christ-learner who helps others to learn Christ.* To put it in our own language here at Parkview—the *whole church makes whole disciples of Jesus.*

How will this happen? We saw it in verses 15-16: love. There is no division between growing deep in learning Christ and growing out in service to help others learn Christ, because learning Christ means doing what Christ did. Love is the essence of the Christian life. Love for God will lead us to dedicate ourselves to knowing God and His Word, and it will inevitably lead us to love His people toward greater faithfulness to Christ. To be blunt: spiritual depth that doesn't produce love and service for others isn't just inconsistent; it's a sham. (1 Jn 4:21)

Last week we studied *how* disciples are made— through the 4 Ps: **P**roclamation of the word of God (in a multitude of ways), **P**rayerful dependence on the Spirit of God, **P**eople acting as God's fellow workers with **P**erseverance, step by step. **What do you think are the main reasons that many people in church are not actively engaged in speaking the word to others?**


Do you feel that you have fully embraced God's call from this passage, living out the command to take spiritual responsibility for others by loving your believing and unbelieving family members, coworkers, and friends enough to proclaim God's words to them in some fashion on a regular basis? If not, what is the main reason that you haven't?



What is one topic from God's Word that you feel comfortable and confident in discussing? What is one way that you could grow in your knowledge of and dynamic application of the Bible in an area you feel less confident?

Could this happen in the current relational contexts you are involved in at Parkview? If so, how will you make sure that happens? If not, consider whether God may be calling you to grow through a new commitment to a Community Group, Men's or Women's fellowship group, or asking a Pastor or leader for help finding a place to grow.

What is one relational context where you feel comfortable and confident encouraging others with the truths of God's Word? What is one way that you could grow in a relational context where you are not yet confident?



God's call for the whole church to make whole disciples of Jesus is not for the fainthearted! But God's promises are sure. Receive these words of encouragement from 1 Peter 2:9–10:

⁹But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

1 Peter 2:9-10 (ESV)

Spend a few minutes in prayer:

1. Praising God for the reminders of His faithfulness to you personally from this passage.
2. Asking God to fill you with confidence to obey Him through the encouragement of this passage.
3. Asking God to give you spiritual eyesight to see opportunities all around you to share God's Word with those He sends your way.

Where are disciples made?

This week is the final week of this booklet and of our series working through our core convictions about who we are and what we do as God's church. We have already considered the **why**, **what**, **how**, and **who** of making disciples. In this last week, we will clarify our convictions about the place disciples are made by answering the question, "Where are disciples made?"

At first thought, the response to this final question might seem obvious. In answering *how* disciples are made, we clarified that it is through God's **people**, **proclaiming** God's words **prayerfully** and **patiently** (the 4 Ps) that disciples are made. In answering *who* makes disciples, we learned that making disciples is the joy and privilege of every Christian. So why should we take another week to further answer *where* disciples are made? Because as we'll learn, the answer is more complex than you might think.

In this study, we want to consider *where* disciples are made— not necessarily in terms of physical location but in terms of ministry activities. In other words, 'Which activities or programs constitute or contribute to disciple making?' In essence, we're considering how *you* might respond if someone approached you on a Sunday morning and asked you to point them to the disciple-making ministry.

LEARNING GOALS

Our final conviction clarifies that making and growing 'Christ learners' is not just something that only happens with new Christians or in small groups, or in one-to-one counseling. It is the basic activity that should be at the center of everything we do as a church—that is, as a transformational learning community including and especially our Sunday gatherings. One way of describing our Sunday worship gathering is as a 'theatre for disciple-making, in which we seek to help everyone present to 'take a step toward Christ through the prayerful proclamation and explanation of the Word of God.'

We also clarified that the evangelistic aspect of making Christ-learners is not something that only happens overseas in traditional 'mission work'. The *where* of making more learners of Christ is all around us—in our families and streets and communities, in every corner of this present darkness in which people are so desperately in need of the saving Gospel of Christ.

Where, then, does learning Christ take place? *It happens in every facet and activity of the transformative learning community we call Parkview Church, and through our church, it also happens in every corner of our world.*

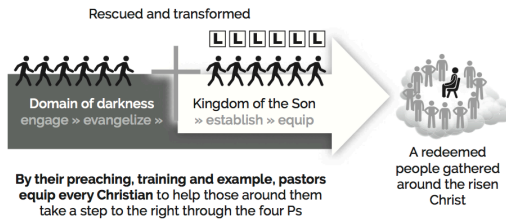


Image: *The Vine Project*

Leader Thoughts

WHERE ARE DISCIPLES MADE?

Honestly, an easier question to answer would be “where AREN’T disciples made”! Making disciples starts on Sunday morning from the pulpit, where teaching from the Word of God leads the congregation toward Christ. This is continued in community groups, one-on-ones, and personal time in the word. Following Christ is part of daily life, so being a disciple should take place in each aspect as well.

If we, as fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, aren’t on the same page about where disciples are made, then we can’t make being MADE into a disciple a priority.



Gabi Houk, Parkview College Ministry
Women’s Coordinator




If someone approached you today to ask you to help them lead a disciple-making ministry, what kind of activities would you assume they are inviting you to do?

If someone told you that their church is particularly committed to discipleship, what would you assume they meant by that?

For many Christians, the default view is that activities we file under “discipleship” tend to be private. Discipleship is understood as a process that happens between one Christian and another, with the ‘discipler’ having a much higher degree of Christian maturity than their ‘disciple.’

You might be ‘discipled’ for a period of time after becoming a Christian so that you become established in the faith before moving on to more serious growth. The unintended consequence of this understanding is that it confines disciple-making in a way that is foreign to the Bible.




Let's return to the passage that launched us into this series: Matthew 28:18-20. This is the passage from which we will learn together this Sunday.

¹⁸And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Matthew 28:18-20 (ESV)

As we concluded in our first study and throughout this booklet, God's purpose for the whole world and the whole of human history is to glorify His beloved Son in the midst of the people He has rescued and transformed. This mission consists of two processes that must always be ongoing in the life of God's people. First, we must be baptizing new believers; calling our children, friends, roommates, co-workers—indeed, all people among all nations—to respond with faith to God's offer of salvation through His son Jesus. Second, we must be teaching disciples to observe all Jesus has commanded. But where do these two processes happen?

If we want to learn how the disciples who heard Jesus' words in Matthew 28 interpreted and applied them in the life of their community, the book of Acts is the place to go. In reading it, we see the fledgling church organizing their life around disciple-making. Where does it happen? What kind of activities are involved?



The first scene of the disciples' attempt to live out the great commission comes in Acts 2. Open your Bible to Acts 2 to read the whole chapter. Especially take note of verse 42-47:

⁴²And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ⁴³And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. ⁴⁴And all who believed were together and had all things in common. ⁴⁵And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.


Acts 2:42-47(ESV)

To summarize: having received the gift of the Holy Spirit in fulfillment of Christ's promise of His perpetual presence among them, Peter launches the church's disciple-making ministry by delivering a powerful public message to an onlooking crowd of thousands of people. Peter proclaims the Word of God to this crowd, whom the author tells us have come to Jerusalem from "every nation under heaven" (Acts 2:5), calling them to repentance and faith, and as God softens their hearts, Peter tells them to be baptized, and about 3000 of his hearers do just that. Then in verses 42-47, we see that those who were baptized immediately enter the community of believers and devote themselves to learning Christ in a variety of different contexts.



While Acts 2 is often noted for its picture of the evangelistic component of making disciples, it also tells us something about where disciples are made. In verses 42-47, we learn about the activities that the church used to help these young disciples to fulfill Jesus' command to learn all that Christ had commanded. What kinds of things do they do in order to learn Christ?


Zoom out further at the whole of Acts 2. What other activities does the church do in order to fulfill Jesus' call to make disciples?



Clearly, the kinds of activities that comprise making disciples in Acts 2 are not just private or only for new believers, nor should 'disciple-making' only describe one type of ministry at our church. Rather, every single thing that we do as a church ought to be accomplishing or helping accomplish the core mission that God has given us. We make disciples when we gather in our homes for Community Groups, devoting ourselves to learn Christ together. We make disciples when we read the Bible and pray with our children before bedtime. We make disciples on Sunday mornings, when we learn from the Bible together. We make disciples when we volunteer to help our young people learn Christ in student and kids ministries. We make disciples as we faithfully engage and evangelize those who don't know Christ outside of Parkview Church! Simply put, there should be no part of our organization that does not directly contribute to the goal of helping every person take the next step toward Christ.

So where are disciples made? Disciple-making happens in every facet and activity of the transformative learning community we call Parkview Church, and through our church, it also happens in every corner of our world.

One of the simplest ways that you can live out this conviction is by changing the manner in which you attend the weekly worship gatherings at Parkview. Sunday morning worship is the heart—but not the whole!—of how we make disciples as a community. It makes an incredible difference if a large proportion of those in attendance are there with the explicit goal of learning Christ and helping others learn Christ as well.



This directly confronts a common consumer mentality that the Sunday worship service is an ‘experience’ to be consumed; where I arrive late if I arrive at all, sing along with the songs I like—if I’m feeling up to it today—and leave as quickly as possible. If we exist to glorify God by making disciples of Jesus Christ, a heart of love will permeate every aspect of Sunday worship. Here are a few suggestions:

- Bring your Bible! If we are truly convinced that we learn Christ by receiving the Word proclaimed, we will be zealous to understand it deeply by examining it for ourselves even as the preacher proclaims it to us.
- Take notes! It is all too easy to forget what we have heard before we get into our cars to head home. Writing things down does wonders for our ability to learn and be transformed by the Word of God.
- Be generous with your time by arriving early and staying late. Who knows what opportunities God may have for you to make disciples through conversations with newcomers, unbelievers or an old Christian friend and fellow disciple-maker. Those opportunities pass us by when we’re in a hurry.
- Arrive with a mindset to bless at least one person by discussing the passage or the content of the sermon or another part of the worship service with them. If we truly believe that what everyone needs most is to learn Christ, we will make every effort to leverage the words we have learned to love our fellow attenders toward Christ. The simplest way to do that is by greeting someone and simply sharing what impacted you from the service. You might ask them, “what did you learn today?” If you are there with your children, make disciples among them by asking what they learned in their lesson.
- Volunteer. We have plenty of need for more people to heed the call to make disciples through all of the various avenues in which we do that at Parkview.

Following through with one or more of these simple steps will honor God, lead to a fulfilling life as you follow the example of Christ, and help move the world toward the end for which God created it—*God’s purpose for the whole world and the whole of human history is to glorify His beloved Son in the midst of the people*

whole

**To glorify God
through the whole
church forming
whole disciples of
Jesus, for the good
of all people.**

disciples.

WE EXIST TO...
Glorify God
**BY MAKING
DISCIPLES OF**
Jesus Christ.

