



Sent by God: His People on His Mission

LESSON 4: Sent Forth to Grow

What does God send us forth to do?

Five concepts emerged from our initial discussions. They are briefly summarized below. This week we explore what it means to be sent forth with the challenging of maturing as disciples, growing up in the Lord.

Worship. When we exalt God, we declare not only his majesty, excellence, and splendor, but that He is the focus of all we are and do.

Grow. The disciple seeks to be like the master; the student seeks to be like the teacher. This is the essence of what it means to be a disciple. God sends forth his people to learn and live out faith applications and spiritual realities.

Connect. Genuine fellowship demands meaningful connections that bind together the people of God and attract other believers to the body of Christ.

Proclaim. This church has a history of and a heart for evangelism and mission work. This occurs as we live in the story of God. When people see the story of Christ demonstrated in life, they want to hear the story. We want to share the story—in our lives and in our words.

Serve. God wants this church to reach out and serve its community and the world. God empowers us as we respond to human needs and problems.

Discipleship

What comes to your mind when you think of discipleship? How likely are you to use the word 'disciple' to describe yourself? The word disciple appears in the New Testament 97 times as a description of a follower of Jesus. The word Christian appears only three times. Isn't it interesting that we are much more likely to use the less frequently occurring word?

We don't use the word disciple very often. One reason for this may be that a religious group that shares our Restoration heritage calls themselves "Disciples." Certainly, there are other, more modern, words that communicate the concept more clearly.

Spiritual Maturity

Paul uses the word 'spiritual' in 1 Corinthians as the opposite of childish. Ephesians 4:11-16 is a favorite text concerning maturity. Christ gave gifts to the church so that we might grow up into the fullness of Christ. God placed leaders in the church so the members could learn to minister. Such spiritual maturity blesses the church, stabilizes the church, and empowers the church in its message, its relationships and its body life. Such maturity helps the church grow.

We are told to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord (2 Pet. 3:18).

What other 'grow' passages can you find or think of?

Discussion Questions

What comes to mind when you hear someone use the word 'disciples'?

When you think of disciple, are you more likely to think New Testament times than modern times?

What synonyms of 'disciple' come to mind?

What comes to mind when you hear the word 'discipleship'?

Is discipleship more a first century word or a 20th century word (in your opinion)?

What synonyms do you think of when you hear the word 'discipleship'?

What evidence would you cite to convince people that you are a Christian?

How would you convince people that you are a disciple?

Are your answers the same or different?

Why?

What differences do you see between Christian and disciple?

When other people observe your life, how would they know that you are a Christian?

Would it be primarily by what you do on Sunday?

How important is your spiritual growth in your life during the week?

What are some actions you believe would be helpful, or actions you have found helpful, in your efforts toward spiritual growth?

What kind of things do you consistently do to help build your spiritual life during the week?

How do you think we as a church are doing on being known in our community as spiritually mature people who live consistent Christian lives (matching the walk and the talk)?

How do you think we as a church are doing on being known in our community as a place where other people can find meaningful opportunities for spiritual growth and development?

One of our goals during this series is to identify "mission words" to remind us of God's purpose as we go forth into our community and world.

In your opinion, which of the following words are most memorable or best communicate our commitment and desire to grow and mature in Christ?

- _____ DISCIPLESHIP
- _____ GROW or GROWING
- _____ NURTURE
- _____ ENCOURAGE
- _____ MATURING
- _____ FAITH

Notes

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