

MBBC
Mission Boulevard Baptist Church



**Discipleship
Ministry**

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What is Discipleship?

Discipleship is the ministry of training people to follow Jesus Christ. Jesus, the master discipler, invited everyone to follow Him and selected twelve men for leadership training. As He ministered, His disciples watched Him and learned. They learned from His example and from His teaching, and they became like Him as they adopted His doctrine, His lifestyle, His values, and His goals. Jesus wants you to be His disciple too. He wants you to follow Him and to be like Him.

A study of Jesus' life shows, above all else, that He passed on to His disciples a relationship with Himself and with His Father in heaven. In order to be a disciple, you must know Jesus Christ and love Him. This is why Jesus asked Peter in John 21:15-17, "lovest thou me more than these?" The qualification for training others to follow Christ is that you love Him. You cannot teach someone else to love God if you do not love Him yourself. You follow Christ when you love Christ.

Jesus did more than teach Sunday school and preach three sermons a week. Seven days a week, at all hours of each day, He showed people how to live. He often referred to His works as proof that His witness was true. He healed, comforted, and cried over those who were hurt and ill. He lived a public life of giving and caring. He spent time with people, touched them, talked with them, and mingled with them. There could be no doubt that Jesus was the Way, the Truth, and the Life. What an example to learn from!

Jesus personally tutored His disciples. Can you think of a better way to receive quality, custom tailored instruction? I think not. Even today, in all walks of life, people who are serious about being trained well in a skill will pay the price for personal instruction. It is the proven way to receive the best training. It was said of the disciples by their enemies that they were astonished by the knowledge of these "unlearned and ignorant men" who had been with Jesus (Acts 4:13). At another time, they were credited with having turned the world upside down (Acts 17:6). These men were well trained.

Jesus has, since then, ascended to the Father in heaven, but discipleship continues throughout the world. Paul, the apostle, exhorted the Corinthians to follow him even as he followed Christ (First Corinthians 11:1). He exhorted Timothy in Second Timothy 2:2 to commit to faithful men the things he learned from Paul. Likewise, every disciple is expected to pass on the lifestyle of following Christ to others. With help from the Spirit of God, training in a local New Testament church, and instruction from the Word of God, you can be involved in the ministry of discipleship too. In Matthew 28: 17-20, Jesus proclaimed the Great Commission to *go, make disciples* in all nations, *baptize* them, and *teach* them to do everything He commanded the disciples to do. It is God's desire that you be a part of the Great Commission.

Discipleship is important

World cultures are becoming increasingly controlled by non-Christians. Consequently, laws are increasingly favorable toward ungodly values, and increasingly oppressive to Christian values. Because laws generally reflect the values of the people in a society, it is necessary that people be won to Christ and that governments be controlled by Christian people. If the trend of cultures toward ungodliness continues, Christians will suffer persecution of injustice and immoral offense. The Bible foretells of the last days becoming increasingly evil, however, this does not mean that we as Christians should stop our ministries and hasten in the evil. Instead, we are exhorted to fight for Christ and fervently reach into cultures to make disciples for Christ.

In order to increase the influence of Christianity, it is imperative to increase the numbers of Christians. Presently, the world's population growth, most of which is non-Christian, is out-pacing that of the Christian population. Christ's plan for discipleship is and always has been the solution to maintaining a strong Christian influence in every culture.

Though many emphasize evangelism to reach and change the world, discipleship is Christ's emphasis. Discipleship involves evangelism but includes much more. Discipleship trains new converts to be soul winners as they learn to follow Christ. Also, though discipleship begins slowly with only a few followers initially, it results in reaching far more people than evangelism alone. Consider the following table.

Chart one. Comparing evangelism and discipleship.

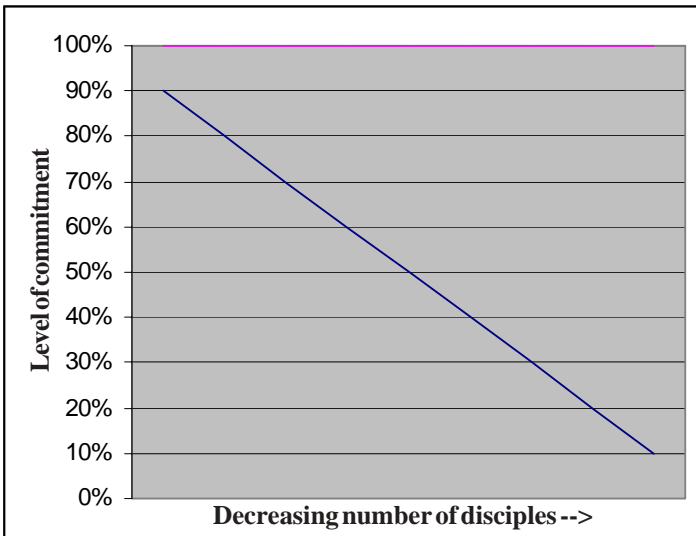
Years	Win onesoul/day	Win 20,000 Souls/Year	Train One Disciple/Year
<i>1</i>	<i>365</i>	<i>20,000</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>2</i>	<i>730</i>	<i>40,000</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>3</i>	<i>1,095</i>	<i>60,000</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>4</i>	<i>1,460</i>	<i>80,000</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>5</i>	<i>1,825</i>	<i>100,000</i>	<i>32</i>
<i>6</i>	<i>2,190</i>	<i>120,000</i>	<i>64</i>
<i>7</i>	<i>2,555</i>	<i>140,000</i>	<i>128</i>
<i>8</i>	<i>2,920</i>	<i>160,000</i>	<i>256</i>
<i>9</i>	<i>3,285</i>	<i>180,000</i>	<i>512</i>
<i>10</i>	<i>3,650</i>	<i>200,000</i>	<i>1,024</i>
<i>15</i>	<i>5,475</i>	<i>300,000</i>	<i>32,768</i>
<i>20</i>	<i>7,300</i>	<i>400,000</i>	<i>1,048,576</i>
<i>25</i>	<i>9,125</i>	<i>500,000</i>	<i>33,554,432</i>
<i>32</i>	<i>11,680</i>	<i>640,000</i>	<i>4,295,000,000</i>

If you were to disciple one person for a year, the following year there would be two disciples, you and your disciple. By the end of the second year, there would be four disciples ready to disciple. Notice that each year, the number of disciples doubles. This is because you are training another disciple to train disciples. By this means, within twenty-five years, you could reach over thirty-three million people for the Lord. In thirty-two years, over four billion people could be saved and discipled. By training one person a year (a reasonable goal for yourself), millions can be reached. By comparison, winning a soul everyday or even twenty thousand souls a year, besides being unrealistic, does not have the potential to reach the world as does discipleship. Of course, every possible means to win souls should be employed, but discipleship must be a part of every ministry's effort to reach the world for Christ.

Obviously, in order for a discipleship ministry to reach its potential, one hundred percent participation is required. Every participant must disciple one person a year. Unfortunately, this does not occur. As Jesus said, "Many are called, but few are chosen." Most people reject the invitation of Christ to be saved. Of those who are saved, most

live a carnal life rather than pursue a Spirit-filled life as a disciple. Of those who are disciples, few become leaders capable of training others to be disciples. And of those who do become leaders, still fewer become leaders of leaders. This law of diminishing returns is typical throughout society and not only among Christian circles. Knowing this helps to keep the response to discipleship in perspective and elevates the importance of those who continue to grow as disciples. It also shows the importance of having a plan to train disciples because by providing a ministry and plan for discipleship, disciples will not fail due to a lack of opportunity.

Charttwo. As the level of commitment increases, the number of participants decreases.



Discipleship begins in the home

The Spirit of God places in the heart of every born again believer a desire to reach the world for Christ. Some become pastors, some are sent to establish missions and churches, but most are called to reach their families and neighbors. By employing Jesus' plan of discipleship, everyone can be a vital part to reaching the world for Him. Jesus' plan includes the participation of men, women, and children, singles, couples, and families.

God's plan to reach the world begins with the family. The family is God's primary social unit for winning souls. Children are very impressionable and moldable, and most professions of faith are made at an early age. A strong influence in the home to live for Christ will more likely result in children becoming disciples for Christ. Of course, this works the other way as well. Children raised in a home that is indifferent or hostile to Christ will more likely be indifferent or hostile to Christ. Parents thinking that children should not be told what to think about religion are telling their children that what you believe about Christ is not important. There is no way to escape the fact that every home molds a child to the way of the parents' thinking. Children should be taught the Gospel, about its importance, and raised to believe in Jesus Christ and to live for Him. God commended Abraham for being a man who would "command his children and his household after him" (Genesis 18:19). This fundamental principle is still God's plan for all families (Malachi 2:15 and Ephesians 5:23-25 & 6:1-3). It is obvious then, that the Christian home is the beginning place for effective discipleship.

God's plan to reach the world is discipleship in our homes and in other homes. We must teach others to follow Christ, passing on the faith diligently and thoroughly. Churches must equip members with skills of home ministry and discipleship. You may feel inadequate to do such an important job. Moses felt the same way when God called him to deliver his people out of Egypt. But, God helped him and gave him resource. God is calling you now to deliver your people out of Egypt, out of sin, and out of bondage. Will you follow Him?

Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it. Proverbs 22:6

The MBBC Discipleship Program

In order to make your discipleship ministry efficient and effective, you need a plan. The discipleship program at MBBC was developed out of the need for clear direction, specific goals, and a tangible description of what to do. The following diagram depicts a seven level program designed to meet the needs of people at differing levels of commitment to Christ.

Chart 3. Seven steps of church training.

Commission	Ministry	Steps	Goal
		Preacher	Church builder
		Multiplier	Multiply
		Discipler	Serve
Teach	Leadership	Disciple	Equip
Baptize	Church	New member	Bond
Teach	Follow-up	Babe	Establish
Go	Evangelism	Lost	Salvation

The seven levels of ministry show how a lost person can be trained to become a preacher. With this approach, regardless of the level of development, everyone can be trained. Though not everyone will be or can be a preacher, there is no reason why everyone cannot aspire to being a team leader. In fact, this would be the natural result discipling others.

The first four levels of ministry are basic training for developing a multiplying ministry of discipleship. For example, by applying the ministry of evangelism, a soul will be saved. This new born babe in Christ will then learn about God's plan for his life in immediate follow-up lessons. Subsequently, as a new member of the church, he will be encouraged by the ministry of new member orientation to participate in the church's ministry. Finally, as he trains in Christian Leadership studies, he will learn how to apply the ministry of evangelism and lead someone to the Lord. This will, in turn, lead to a ministry of immediate

follow-up, then new member orientation, and Christian growth so that the entire cycle of ministry will repeat itself over and over again. It would be wonderful if every Christian was trained in all four ministries of the Great Commission. To begin your training in discipleship, contact your ministry team leader or a discipler in the church. Your training will begin with immediate follow-up regardless of your spiritual age in Christ so that you will experience the complete ministry process beginning with orientation into God's plan for your life. This experience is part of your training that will be passed onto others. The study guide *Pursuit of Spiritual Growth* and the book *Multiply! Your Life for Christ* will help you develop discipleship skills such as evangelism, immediate follow-up, church member training, and Christian leadership skills. The *Bible Concepts* book is good for doctrine training in the Gospel doctrines. Also, *Biblical Character Studies* is a series of lessons on Christian character. For a listing of audio cassettes, videos, and other materials, contact the MBBC tape booth. Visit our web site (www.mbbc.us/) for a listing of materials and answers to many Bible questions. Begin now, and start your personal ministry of multiplying today!

*If any man serve me, let him follow me;
and where I am, there shall also my
servant be: if any man serve me, him
will my Father honour. —John 12:26*

Notes

Ministry Team Leader

Discipler

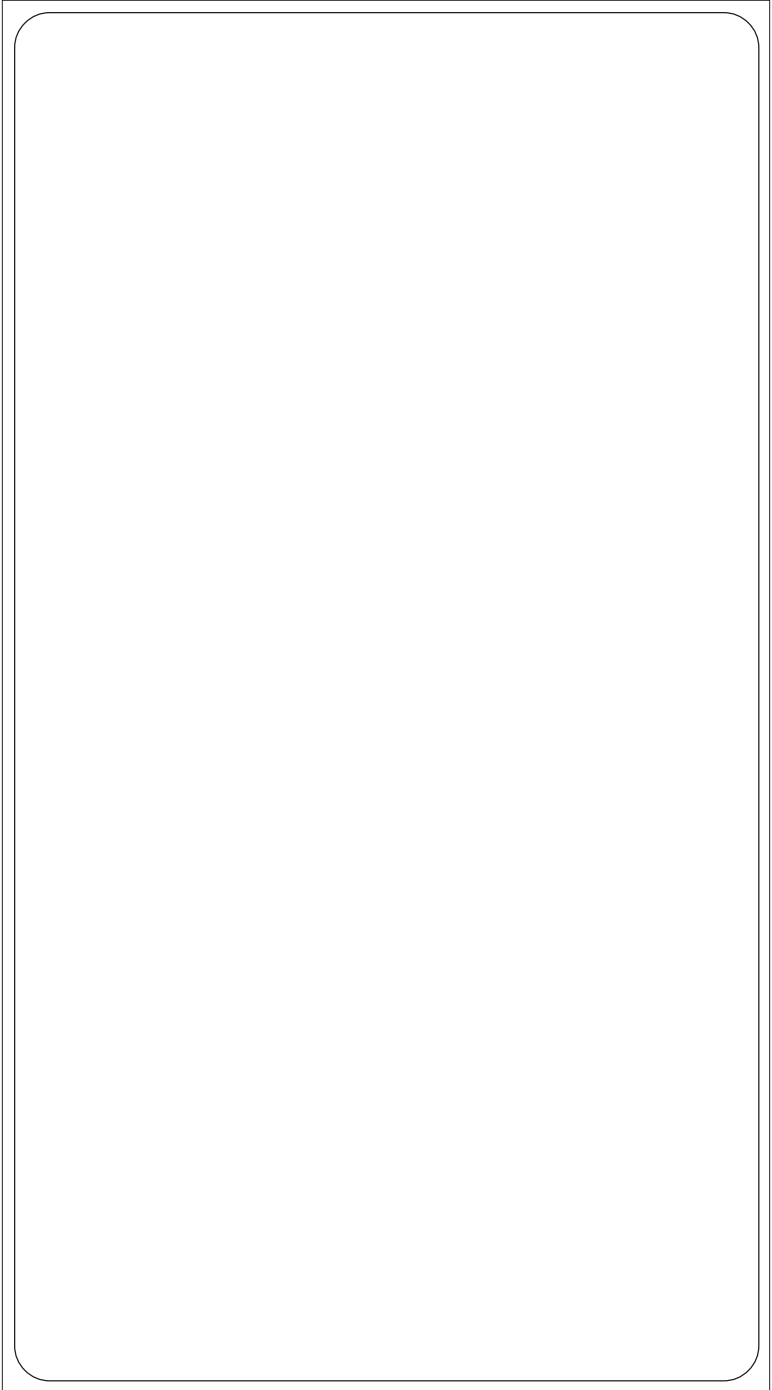
Bible studies

Topic Time Place _____

Topic Time Place _____

Topic Time Place _____

Spiritual Goals



Other books published by the Mission Blvd. Baptist Church.

(Also on the web at www.mbbc.us)

Apologetics

1. *Answers for Skeptics*
2. *Bible Answers to Questions* (Over 450 questions)
3. *Salvation by Grace*
4. *Convincing the Gainsayers: Deity of Jesus Christ*
5. *Convincing the Gainsayers: Save by Grace*
6. *Tongues from Heaven*
7. *Biblical Predestination: A Critique of Calvinism*
8. *Crucifixion Wednesday*

Evangelism (Bible Concepts Series)

Use in homes, Sunday school, or for correspondence

1. *Knowing God Personally*
2. *Designed to be Spiritual*
3. *The Reason for Human Suffering*
4. *God is the Answer*
5. *You Can be Saved*
6. *The Born Again Experience*

Follow-up

1. *Facts for New Christians*
2. *Follow-up Lessons for Spiritual Growth*

Church

1. *MBBC Church Member Orientation Book*
2. *The Local, Visible Nature of the Church*
3. *Understanding the New Testament Church*
4. *Finding the Right Church*
5. *MBBC Discipleship*

Christian Growth

1. *Bible Concepts* (Christian Growth series)
2. *Pursuit of Spiritual Growth*
3. *Knowing God's Will*
4. *The Tabernacle Testimony of Jesus Christ*
5. *Revival and the Pastor's Dream Congregation*
6. *Bible Study Method*
7. *Multiply! Your Life for Christ* (220 page training manual)