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Discipleship in the Great Commission

You know the feeling when you hear something over and over again; so much that it becomes cliché and, in a way, loses meaning to you? In some cases, the meaning may no longer even be grasped or understood the way it was intended. Do you ever get de-sensitized to the message being communicated?

Matthew 28 contains two of the most well-known and often cited verses in Scripture, known together collectively as “The Great Commission”.

Many Christian churches and other ministries base their vision and/or mission statements upon them, especially verse 19 with the words “go”, “make”, and “disciples”.

We wonder though, how many of them have lost sight of the true message Messiah was communicating here? The common understanding is that we are to go out and spread the gospel, the good news of Messiah’s death and resurrection. And we should!

Some teach that a person simply needs to ask Jesus (His Hebrew/Aramaic name being Yeshua) into their heart so that they can receive salvation. Once they’ve done that, all that’s left is to lead a good moral life as outlined in the 10 Commandments, with the primary focus being on love.

And voila, that’s it! They’re done! Once they get someone to do that they’re done and can move on to “save” the next soul.

We certainly agree that the whole gospel needs to be taught to the nations; that is of paramount importance.

In fact, we recommend our teachings: “[What is the Gospel?](#)”, “[The Lost Sheep](#)”, and “[Believing](#)” as good tools to help you do just that.

However, we believe there is more to the great commission than teaching someone to ask Messiah into their heart and to live a good, moral life.

But before we get into that, let’s take a moment to look at Matthew 28:19-20.

Matthew 28:19-20 (ESV)

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.”

In Matthew 28:19, Yeshua tells us to go out into the world and make disciples of all nations, but what does it mean to make disciples?

The operative word, or action of verse 19 is “make” in the Greek. (G3100 – mathēteuō)

According to blueletterbible.org, the word actually means to be a disciple of one, to follow his precepts and instructions, to make a disciple, to teach or instruct.

But...what does that mean?

WHAT IS DISCIPLESHIP?

Remember how we said that the operative verb in the statement “go and make disciples”, is actually the word for “make”, not “go”? That’s very important and sometimes overlooked when examining these verses.

So, what is the significance of this?

Well, it changes the focus from the “going out” to the “making” of disciples. The “what” as it relates to “making disciples” is found at the end of the sentence, at the beginning of verse 20, but we’ll get to that in a few minutes.

Let’s look at verse 19 again.

Matthew 28:19 (ESV)

Go therefore and **make disciples** of all nations, baptizing them in[a] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

This is the Greek word used for the phrase “make disciples”, and it carries a couple of different meanings.

The word as found in Strong’s G3100 means:

to be a disciple of one, to follow his precepts and instructions; to make a disciple, to teach or instruct

It’s based off of this word, μαθητής (mathētēs) Strong’s G3101 which means:

intransitively, to become a pupil; transitively, to disciple, i.e. enroll as scholar:—be disciple, instruct, teach.

In order to make a disciple, we have to teach someone to follow the precepts and instructions (or in Hebrew, torah) of a single individual. In this case, it is teaching them all that Messiah taught, which is to follow the Torah in its true form, spirit, and intent.

The purpose of the command from Yeshua is to teach others to live and follow the Word; living and walking out the Word in our lives just as Messiah lived and walked out the Word when He was here in the flesh.

Our mission is not to convince people to follow a set of man-made rules and doctrines.

Unfortunately, to many, this is exactly what discipleship means in their own denominations.

To them it means they need to get someone to come to their church, or join their religion, and then tell them how to act and live.

Others believe that discipling someone is being a mentor to them. In truth, there is an aspect of mentoring in discipleship.

However, even when mentoring, we need to remember that we are not to be making disciples of men, but only pointing them to the Word and the example of the Messiah.

There are others that, like the Pharisees of old, love the acclaim or esteem of having their own disciples. Just as in Paul's day people loved to claim they had X amount of followers, or that they were baptized and discipled by Paul, mankind is still the same today.

Paul did not want that notoriety, nor should we seek after it. We are not to follow men, we are only to point others back to the Word exemplified by Messiah who taught and lived only the will of the Father.

Our focus should be to direct people back to the Word of YHWH, and nowhere else. The Word is the only authority we have, and it is not our own.

In truth, discipling someone is coming alongside them and helping them learn and grow in the Torah, the Word of YHWH.

It is pointing them back to the Word in all things, and never to a man or a doctrine of man. If they are in sin, tell them with love; and help to hold them accountable to the Word.

If they ask a question, guide them back to Scripture as much as possible.

Be a living example for them of what it looks like to walk out the Torah in your own life. We should always strive to be following Messiah's example; in that way those around us may see Him in us. Look at what Paul said to the Corinthians; who is he ultimately pointing them to follow?

1 Corinthians 4:16-17 (ESV)

I urge you, then, be imitators of me. That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ,

And

1 Corinthians 11:1 (ESV)

Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.

Discipling others should never be about us, but should only have us pointing to Him and His Word.

HOW DO WE DISCIPLE OTHERS?

Now that we have a better understanding of what it means to make a disciple, let's look back to the Messiah's words to see *how* we are to do this.

Again, Matthew 28:19-20.

Matthew 28:19-20 (ESV)

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."

In verse 19, Yeshua tells us to go into the world and make disciples of all nations, but what does it mean to make disciples?

The operative word, or action of verse 19 was "make" in the Greek. (show G3100 – mathēteuō) just as we discussed earlier. But now in verse 20 Yeshua continues on explaining this; we are to teach the nations, all that He commanded!

So then, the question becomes just what did He command? Well, let's have a look.

Matthew 5:17-19

"Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. **Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.**

Matthew 5:19 shows Yeshua saying how we need to obey the commandments and teach others to do the same as those who do not will be least in the kingdom.

Matthew 7:21-23

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, **but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter**. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' ²³ And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'

Matthew 7:21 has Yeshua telling us that we need to do the will of the Father, which we know to be the Torah.

Mark 7:8-9

Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men." He was also saying to them, **"You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition.**

Here in Mark 7:8-9 shows Yeshua explaining the importance of the commandments of God to the Pharisees because they have been putting their own traditions above the law of God (see Mark 7:1-13).

Mark 10:17-22

As He was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to Him and knelt before Him, and asked Him, **“Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”** And Jesus (Yeshua) said to him, **“Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments, ‘Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.’”** And he said to Him, **“Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up.”** Looking at him, Jesus (Yeshua) felt a love for him and said to him, **“One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”** But at these words he was saddened, and he went away grieving, for he was one who owned much property.

The story in Mark 10 is of a young man asking Yeshua what it takes to inherit eternal life. Yeshua responds by first referencing the commandments of God. When the young man says he does follow the law of God, Yeshua then tells him that all that is left then is to sell his things in order to gain heavenly riches and to follow him.

So, His answer appears to be to obey the law of God and follow Yeshua. This is echoed by Revelation 12:17 where those who follow the commandments of God and have the testimony of Yeshua are the ones the Adversary goes after! Coincidence?

Luke 17:10

So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, ‘We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done.’”

In Luke 17 Yeshua says that just as a slave does all he is commanded, we are to obey that which is commanded; in doing what we’re commanded we would only be doing what we should have done.

What was commanded? The Torah.

John 14:15

“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

Finally, Yeshua is making a simple statement. If you love him, then you will keep his commandments.

So, what did Yeshua command? Everything the Father commanded as he only said what the Father said according to John 5:19, John 8:28, and John 12:49.

So what we have here then, is Yeshua telling us with the “Great Commission” to go out and teach the world to obey the Father.

In fact, we just read that obeying God shows love for Yeshua because His commandments were those of the Father!

The apostle John also described obedience to God as showing love for God (1 John 5:3). It should also be noted that many say everything changed when Yeshua died, that with Him ended the application of the law for us today.

However, the “Great Commission” was given after He was resurrected!

Unless what He commanded us to teach was only what He said after He rose (which we have no confirmed record of), then it can only be the Torah that we are to teach to the nations. It was the Torah that He taught before He died, not some other gospel or commandments unique to Him.

Hopefully you have at least a little better understanding of what the Messiah was instructing us to do when he gave us “The Great Commission”. It’s not just about introducing someone to the Messiah, getting them to say a few words, and then move on to the next soul that needs saved.

If we do it that way, then how will anyone ever really grow on a personal level? Much like James said in Acts about the new believers then, New Believers today need to learn and study the Torah. In studying the Torah they will continue to learn about the Father and His ways.

The often overlooked, or maybe it’s better to say misunderstood parts of “The Great Commission” is that we are to be making disciples and teaching them all that Messiah commanded, which was the Torah, the Instructions of the Father.

If you’d like to look into the Great Commission a bit more, please see the article on our website titled: [“The Great Commission”](#)

We hope that this teaching has blessed you.

Remember, continue to test everything.

Shalom!

For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at www.testeverything.net

Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

EMAIL: Info@119ministries.com

FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/119Ministries

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