

Jesus' Three Training Tiers, Expanded

“Is Jesus only our **moral** example, or is He also the example of how we do **ministry**?”

I believe Jesus is the model for humanity, both our moral model and also our model for ministry so let's begin with a short, 10-question pop-quiz on Jesus's ministry.

My perspective as I aim to develop faith-communities to multiply disciples is the progressive facets of Jesus' ministry This is an ongoing process of lifelong life-learning in *koinonia* in community. What power is released

	Question	True	False
1	Jesus spent most of His time teaching the crowds and the multitudes in parables.		
2	Jesus related to different people differently based on the way they related to Him.		
3	Jesus invested almost one full year into His Twelve disciples.		
4	Jesus poured most of His time into those who responded to His call in a temporarily "closed" group?		
5	When His disciples said "yes" to His call to "come & follow Me," Jesus immediately gave them a job to do.		
6	Jesus spent most of His intense ministry to mixed-gender groups to reach more.		
7	Jesus recruited the most accomplished people of His time to join Him since His intended end was so far-reaching.		
8	Jesus used all of the social media available at His time in order to reach more people		
9	Jesus was a quiet revolutionary, who lived in submission to the existing religious authorities, even while sowing seeds for radical change.		
10	Jesus' aim was to spend the rest of His life with His Twelve, but unfortunately He died prematurely.		

through intentionality when it's part of authentic community, like Jesus modeled. This provides a broad, practical approach to training God's people in the 21st century in small faith-communities, which is reproducible in any culture at any time to any age group, and avoids the wild pendulum swings of the latest fad.

Most small group systems put the pressure on a few key leaders to carry out most responsibilities. It's what our society models with its top-down business leadership philosophy. Many leaders willingly

embrace the expert position as “answer man” or “ministry expert” since it does bring a measure of felt value in the short term.

I believe it's scripturally accurate and practically wise, though, to spread the ownership among the prepared many. “Equipping comes before empowering.” Each and every one of God's people bears His image. The experiences of the entire group belong to the faith-community as a treasure and resource. When the Reality of everyday life shatters expectations, this exposes our inner sense of value, providing growth-opportunities. Stay alert for these. Keep your eyes open.

I want to introduce you now to some fascinating insights from an excellent current writer on healthy small groups and multiplying disciples. Bill Hull uses a time line from a harmony of the Gospels to provide insight for crucial phases or tiers in the DiscipleMultiplying process in ministry.

As I read the Gospels, Jesus developed emerging leaders in three broad tiers. “Come & See.” “Come & Follow Me.” “Come & Be with Me.” These three progressive facets of Jesus' ministry flow out of the Gospel narratives and provide insight for a broad, flexible approach to training God's people to be agile disciples in the 21st century. I personally believe this is one of the missing facets in many of our small groups. We do not adequately distinguish the things that differ. This eventually retards spiritual growth in all but a small remnant.



Tier 1. "Come & See"

“Come & See” lasted only four or five months for Jesus' initial disciples before Jesus sent them how to consider a higher commitment level (and also the later “crowds” become a growing “Come & See” group). Jesus introduced them to Himself and to His ministry by simply inviting them to “come and see.” This first tier is an invitation to come, hang out with Jesus and those around Him. It's an open, welcoming group into which people may easily enter, connect and have their needs met. This is spiritual pediatrics with the required

commitment very low in this open, permeable group, as it is for young children in a family.

Notice how relational and community centered this invitational “Come & See” tier is in John 1:35-51. Jesus invited the first two, Andrew and John after they approached Him with interest. Andrew invited his brother, Peter. Jesus invited Philip who invited Nathanael, five of His future Twelve Apostles. Although Jesus invited each to come and see as individuals, *koinonia* in community is still the intended culture for discipling.

This 1st tier simply embraces each where they are without placing expectations on them. A modern equivalent would be most worship service and the one-on-one coffee or lunch. Also, in our open, mixed-gender home or community groups advertised to “come, get your needs met,” attendees often come and go with very light commitment and preparation. Important, but don’t leave them here!

The “bar” is purposefully low in this tier... simply come. Selection is one distinctive of the latter two tiers, but not this one. The focus is primarily on getting to know His Father and His abundance through Jesus as felt needs are met. His Father’s compassionate presence rushed in through the immediate felt-needs of the lost and the lightly committed... *infusion of the Father’s love*.

Open, mixed, permeable community groups are central to gather from the curious world of people around you and to build numerical growth. Read this for yourself in John 1:19-4:54, Matthew 4:12, Mark 1:14, Luke 4:14-30 and 3:19- 20 (a flashback), although some harmonies have John 5:1-47 also as “Come & See” (some passages in the Gospel are more difficult to fit in historically).

In “Come & See,” the disciples did very little. Their primary ministry was inviting their network of friends to “come & see.” Full buy-in comes before significant ministry (although Jesus gave His disciples a taste of hands-on experience baptizing at the Jordon River, John 4:2). Watch for spiritual desires to be awakened naturally as we rub shoulders in *koinonia* in community. Jesus trained by “*I do it to you*” and “*I do and you watch.*”

Jesus designs “Come & See” to naturally begin the earliest tier of the maturing process in community, very similar to growth in a nuclear family. He simply invited people into His Father’s

compassionate presence and touched the immediate felt-needs of the lost and the lightly committed. Those who had stepped from the antagonistic world into the curious crowd now had an opportunity to experience the caring touch of the Father and Son. Then each can make the decision if we are the kind of people they want to journey with to the rare heights.

Later as His initial disciples grew into succeeding tiers, Jesus’ “Come & See” aim seemed to be similar with the *crowds*, primarily by meeting their needs. Look at Jesus’ later ministry to the crowds. As an aside as we read the Gospels, carefully not *who* Jesus was relating to, the antagonistic world, the curious crowds, or His committed followers. When the crowd needed to learn, Jesus taught them. When hungry, He fed them. When sick, He healed them. Demonized, He cast out demons. When they sinned, He forgave them. The Father cares deeply about the crowd.

A “Come & See” group builds numerical momentum, but don’t leave people stranded there, even if the momentum sizzles! Open groups are great for “*wider,*” but not ideal for developing the “*deeper*” later tiers. In this tier, Jesus modeled an *open* group, and for the last two tiers a *closed*-group with increasing commitment for in-depth spiritual growth to develop strong, resilient, emerging influencers/leaders (“*deeper*”). Even in the 1st tier, Jesus began with His end in mind, multiplying disciples developed through small *primal* groups, as small as three or four same-gender learners of Jesus.

Yes, let people take leisurely time in the group without any weight of expectation. Yes, be patient without coercion. And also don’t be satisfied to leave them there since “Come & See” is being a spiritual midwife. It’s delivery and pediatrics. Necessary, good, essential, but not ultimate. Growth demands buy-in. So lead them gently, yet firmly, toward personally answering the question: “*Is this the type of person I want to become with these people?*”

Jesus had the allure and ease of a man who knew where He was going. So He simply invited without feeling a compulsion to recruit. At the end of this brief period, Jesus even sent His followers home to carefully weigh the cost of increased commitment. Such full buy-in would be essential for the deeper, sustained spiritual growth necessary for His future leaders who would have the world on their hearts. Jesus

held His followers with an open hand, knowing the Father would call His *T-EA-M* (John 6:65 + 17:6).

And how did Jesus know they were ready for an increased commitment? He sent these original five home for a few months to consider before approaching them again in Mark 1:17f. What is Jesus looking for? I wonder if the “*horse whisperer*,” Buck Brannaman, might have learned his approach to win over a skittish horse from Jesus’ model.

Jesus patiently waited until the individual was personally drawn to Him, gently meeting each where they were until they felt safe and secure. First develop trust. Then invite into the Family of God. Then cross the bridge of decision and heed Jesus’ call for the trail. When we consider the call of the trail, what will we need? We must find an experienced guide, be outfitted with necessities for our adventure and make a determined choice.

And how did Jesus teach in “*Come & See*”? Jesus gently introduced them to His Father’s plan of restoring His presence (“*you shall see heaven open...*”, John 1:51), but only as they were thirsty. A sense of need fuels healthy learning, raising what is taught to the “*must know*” level. Since the Father only wants what we freely give, the *crowd* set the pace for how much of the Father’s initiating *first-love* they received.

As Jesus taught the crowds, He used simple language, language common to the day to teach simple truth (neither religious jargon nor simplistic ideas). I have written some basic five-week material centered around Jesus for this tier. No preparation. Interactive. Open and inviting. I call it the “*Meet Jesus...*” series.

The choice each must make to move beyond this 1st tier is: “*Do you choose to be more an admirer of the beauty on the heights? Or an adventurer setting out toward the heights together with others?*” Jesus calls us as **adventurers** to join with Him on His epic crusade.

Tier 2. “*Come & Follow Me*”

“*Come & Follow Me*” was a ten to eleven month transition period for His first disciples. Jesus gathered them aside into **same-gender**, temporarily *closed primal* groups of four or so for hands on training. This ran parallel to His growing “*Come & See*” ministry so they had

easy outlets to minister. This separate group put these guys into a transparent and authentic group environment with a wise Mentor. Authenticity and transparency in a SmallGroup are keys to high-impact change.

Jesus called two more of His future Twelve during this 2nd tier (James and Levi/Mathew), although Nathanael and Philip are not mentioned again until the 3rd tier. Jesus apparently ministered to both “*Come & See*” and “*Come & Follow Me*” together in one setting, often taking these men aside afterwards. Same setting, different aims.

“*Come & Follow Me*” is designed to deepen maturity, accelerate our perspective to serve others, and ultimately multiply groups. Specifically, Jesus aims to widen and deepen their view of who His Father is and His abundant provisions, often through a “show & tell” ministry. He did marvelous works, then used the *Word/Works* model to open eyes to essential truth.

Although disciples are not driven to perform, they are drawn by the presence of the heart of servant Jesus to serve the highest and best of others. Over time, a disciple will show she or he is **f**aithful and **t**eachable. So, Jesus simply needed to test if they were **a**vailable in order to discover if they were **F-A-T**. Ask. Call them. Challenge them like Jesus did.

Although association and demonstration are essential in each tier, the call of selection first begins with “*Come & Follow Me*.” It was crucial for Jesus to eventually identify those with a higher spiritual desire and to challenge them toward this next tier. Selection seems to be the great divide between the first two tiers since “*Come & See*” has no selection criteria.

And each follower must personally accept the invitation.

“Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of men.” At once they left their nets and followed him (Mark 1:17-18).

They made no excuses, but “*at once*” followed with ready hearts. The world is always on Jesus’ heart, although He knows He must first gather those who are willing to pay the price, whether many or few. In order to prepare them as agile followers, He draws the ones progressively closer who respond to Him “*at once*.”

So, what were Jesus' selection criteria?

How did He identify those ready to move from “*Come & See*” to “*Come & Follow Me*”? Disciple means learner, and no spiritual learning takes place without doing according to Scripture. Do they come having thought through what has been taught, asking and answering questions (rabbinic learning)? Do they risk-take to pray for people, even if awkward? Do they volunteer to help set up or call people? Do they invite, come early, stay late? Do they serve people or try to lift themselves up by vying for position? Are they giving what they are learning away in their normal relationships, at work and at play?

His disciples watched Jesus, then Rabbinic teaching would give them additional time and training in a different setting targeted to their awakening spiritual desires. This allows for increased commitment and desire to grow naturally alongside the growing numbers. And for some, it may take years because they are unwilling to risk position, reputation or time, like the priests (Acts 6:7). Jesus patiently ministers to those in “*Come & See*,” even while wooing those who were willing toward more.

And what did Jesus call His “*at once*” disciples to **do** in this 2nd tier? Nothing, except to invite and include! Jesus simply called them “*to hear and to see*,” deepening their experience from a point of increased buy-in, which changes our lens and how we see everything.

Jesus walked around so awake to people, so aware and open. Read the following passages associated with this tier as a unit, Mark 1:14-3:12, Luke 4:31-6:12, Matthew 4:13-4:25, John 5:1-47 and be amazed.

What subtle genius!

To call His disciples initially to a job on the team or to ministry would have tapped into the deep-seated, twisted societal value system of performance-to please. Instead, they watched Jesus relate naturally with His Father and serve and minister. They learned to love God and to love people like Jesus does, as image-bearers for the sake of others (“*I do it & you watch*” training).

“*Come & See*” is necessary and essential, as it prepares us to accept the challenge to move further along on our journey. “*Come & Follow Me*” normally runs side-by-side with “*Come & See*,” rubbing

shoulders with the welcoming tier as a natural context for maturity and multiplication.

For the “*Come & Follow Me*” learners, the focus turns from “meet my needs” to preparation for serving others. It shifts from a self-focus to an otherly focus in collaborative, vulnerable groups. A hundred years ago, as a society we needed to work shoulder to shoulder with one another in cooperation. Today is the “*selfie*” generation. People are dying to be seen by others, and we have the answer, but must take time in small, *primal* groups, like the Trinity, to penetrate deeply into the lives of Christians.

“*Come & See*” and “*Come & Follow Me*” need each other, which is why they appear parallel. “*Come & See*” draws numbers and is the pool which fuels “*Come & Follow Me*.” “*Come & Follow Me*” builds depth into “*Come & See*” people, preparing them for the 3rd tier. “*Come & See*” provides movement and numerical growth, which will feed “*Come & Follow Me*.” Now we develop servants as emerging leaders in “*Come & Be with Me*,” who will then be able to multiply more “*Come & See*” groups. All three are crucial since Jesus’ plan taps into synergism, although each tier is designed for a different purpose.

In our 21st century Western church, we normally think “individual.” Jesus thought “*primal* groups.” He built His ministry most likely upon three primal groups of four each (which is the Twelve). In the 1st century culture, church planters thought “groups.” Jesus’ strategy centered on community, *koinonia*, *oikos* (extended family/friends). By contrast in the 21st century, we more often think size and sizzle and rapid growth. This must change in order to train like Jesus did.

Those Jesus invited to grow in “*Come & Follow Me*” either accepted or declined. He invested Himself fully into those who said “yes.” Jesus also dignified anyone who said “no” by never demeaning or pressuring (see the rich ruler later in Luke 18:18-25). He trusted His Father to draw men to Himself, even if it took years like with the priests. Jesus also never lowered His “bar” for “*Come & Follow Me*” since He needed seasoned, agile emerging leaders to carry out His worldwide campaign (Lk 14:25f).

As far as training, they still hung out with Jesus, though intermittently at times (see the 2nd call in Luke 5:1-11, implying they left for a while). Jesus showed them essentials of the ministry, which

center around how to abide in His Father's fullness as their best and serve the highest of others in the power of the Spirit (Acts 10:37-38).

Over-arching all, Jesus modelled a servant heart. He only did and said what He received from His Father.

Jesus specifically trained and demonstrated how to serve others as agile disciples, able to flex from a DNA of solid core beliefs and values. He taught in the highest way, through the give-&-take of the interactive Hebraic style of questions/answers that metabolizes knowledge into character (see Luke 2:46-47). Jesus also modelled how to:

- to throw a "Levi-party" to draw lost acquaintances in,
- to evangelize through word-&-works by casting out demons and healing,
- to preach and teach out of Jesus' delegated authority,
- to invite disciples into closer association with Himself,
- to spend time in prayer alone with His Father,
- to withstand trials and antagonism from authority figures without wavering.

He needed followers who were free from the narrowness of religion and from judging, both of which are community destroyers. His disciples, therefore, learned to break free from conventional traditionalism. Specifically, Jesus called His new "wine" to new "wineskins" (without destroying the old wineskins, Mark 2:22), and deliberately violated extra-Biblical Sabbath practices that had grown over the years around God's Word (Luke 5:33-39, 6:1+6; 11:38-39; 13:14). His disciples would ultimately go to the ends of the earth. They must learn now to be agile risk-takers, able to adjust and to flex to the vagaries of circumstances from solid core beliefs. Jesus has the world on His heart.

To know God intimately is a shared experience, a connected trust within an environment of grace. Allow the blazing love of the Trinity to transform us as individuals and give it away in community. This natural type of ministry aligns with God's creation-design and with Jesus' tiers of servant preparation for ministry. All of us must learn to minister in each role for the health of the spiritual children we raise, full of both grace and truth.

Who around you is busy raising up more spiritual moms & dads? What part is God inviting you and me into?

The indwelling present-riseness of Jesus Christ our Lord makes us sufficient (2 Corinthians 3:2-6). So don't let the devil disqualify you by whispering to you poverty thoughts. As Elton Trueblood wrote:

What [Jesus] did was to collect a few very common men and women, inspire them with the sense of his spirit and vision, and build their lives into an intensive fellowship of affection, worship & work."

In "*Come & See*," Jesus' training style is: "*I do it to you and you experience it.*" Now in "*Come & Follow Me*" it shifts more to: "*I do it and you watch.*"

Jesus focused on developing the few in primal groups to reach the many. So He was willing to do to the one what He would like to do to the many. In order to release this spiritual *DNA*, I have written eight five-week, interactive studies to lay into our lives this essential spiritual *DNA*. I call the series "*DiscipleMaking Companion*." All are free downloads, taking the group as active learners through foundational books in the Bible and key building blocks for our spiritual journey.

Tier 3. "*Come & Be with Me*"

Tier Three lasted nearly twenty months, longer than the first two combined. After spending the night in prayer with His Father, Jesus further focused on the few in a closed group to ultimately reach the many. He selected and called His Twelve to Himself...and they came.

The world was on Jesus' heart. He could not shorten this necessary process because He needed followers who were relentless in following Him with wholehearted allegiance. His worldwide campaign was too crucial. Jesus attached supreme importance to training these Twelve. Jesus trained them by drawing them close to Himself, association to demonstrate through life-on-life relationship...

...that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons (Mark 3:14b-15, cp also Luke 6:12-16).

Jesus concentrated on the Twelve, even while ministering to the crowds. He still invited new followers from the crowds into the earlier tiers to also build for the future (like the 72 in Luke 10:1). Jesus' design reproduced...then and now.

This final tier weaves together all eight basic ministry priorities described in Coleman's book, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, to fulfill His intended end. Jesus aimed at multiplication of resilient influencers with the world on their hearts (*consecration, impartation, delegation, and supervision* added to the earlier three of *selection, association and demonstration* to fulfill His intended end of *reproduction*).

Jesus knew the Family of God and the Kingdom of God needed emerging leaders prepared to take their place as servant-first leaders/influencers. To disciple others and to advance the Beautiful News to the ends of the world through a word/works ministry takes "*grit*" (passion with perseverance). These could then disciple others and advance the Beautiful News through a word/works ministry to the ends of the world down through every generation.

Jesus still used His regular life as a teaching laboratory, in this tier to train in a closed group. Jesus taught the crowd, then explained in private to His disciples, the Rabbinic style (Luke 8:4 + 9). Carefully read through Luke 12f and note who Jesus spoke to, the "crowd" or "disciples." Jesus also trained by sending His Twelve out on short-term mission trips, and brought them in close, alone with Him, as they debriefed together upon their return. It's the training style of "*I do it with you*" and into "*You do it & I give feedback.*"

As in all learning in Scripture, this is not simply information, but also formation. In the first century, disciples were described as "*covered with the dust of the Rabbi.*" Certainly a Rabbi's followers began to think more like the Rabbi, but even more importantly, they acted like Him. Learning was a close-up, face-to-face, life-on-life way of doing, not just thinking. The fifth NT book is called the book of *Acts*, not of words. Those in the book of Acts were followers of a way of doing life.

According to the Apostle Paul in 1 Thessalonians 1:6-7, three essential elements exist in healthy, flourishing Christian SmallGroups. Each small group is *relational, Biblical, and intentional*. *Koinonia* in Christ forged by the Spirit around an interactive, responsive time in

God's Word leads to LifeChange. This is accelerated as we put it into practice in our lives and pass it along to others. We grow by doing. The *S-T-U-D-Y* form to gather ideas from chapter studies in the "*DiscipleMaking Companion*" series focuses on our "*I will...*" choice and "*pass along one idea to one person.*"

"*Come & See*" does not mix well with "*Come & Be with Me*" in a single setting. I caution doing this in your 21st century small group ministry. The intended end for each is poles apart. Jesus exposed this in the John 6:60-71 event when many disciples turned back from Jesus. Each is diminished when a church program attempts to accomplish the purpose of both in one setting. This pulls the group down to the lowest common commitment level so as to not leave any behind.

Jesus still used His regular life as a teaching laboratory in this tier to train on-the-job, although He trained in a *closed group* to develop depth. Jesus taught the crowd, then explained in private to His disciples who drew close and asked, which is the Rabbinic style (Luke 8:4 + 9). Carefully read through Luke chapter twelve and following. And note who Jesus spoke to, the "*crowd*" or the "*disciples.*" Jesus also trained on-the-job by sending His Twelve out on short-term mission trips. He then brought them in close, alone with Him, as they debriefed together upon their return. It's the training style of "*I do it and you help*" and into "*You do it & I watch, giving feedback as necessary.*"

Jesus' design reproduced. This final tier of training weaves together all eight basic ministry priorities described in Robert Coleman's excellent book, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*. Jesus fulfills His intended end, which was reproduction of resilient influencers with the world on their hearts. The early tiers drew on association, demonstration, selection, and this third tier adds consecration, impartation, delegation, and supervision to fulfill His intended end of reproduction.



Followers are free to grow to the degree they are willing to take ownership and responsibility to serve others out of the Father's first-love. Living things reproduce...it's God's design. So strive to move

through all three tiers so we are able to partner with the Holy Spirit to “Go & Multiply Together.” Our own response is the primary limiting factor. So as leaders, don’t hesitate to challenge towards all that God has for them, raising up **F-A-T-So’s** (**F**aithful, **A**vailable, **T**eachable, **S**erving-**o**thers)..

The chart below provides some broad guidelines, comparing and contrasting the three training tiers. “Come & See” best grows numerically in open, permeable groups. “Come & Follow Me” seems to be the transitional bridge into Jesus’ intended end in the training process, “Come & Be with Me.” The last two both grow in-depth best in small, **same-gender, closed, primal** groups.

1. "Come & See"	2. "Come Follow Me"	3. "Come & Be with Me"
Welcoming & invitational	Inviting into fuller buy-in	Equipping those with full buy-in
Little or no pre-prep discussion teaching	Pre-prep, active "Discovery in Doing" learning	Pre-prep, active "Discovery in Doing" learning
Focus is more on meeting my felt needs	Focus is more on serving the needs of others	Focus is on multiplying so more needs of others met
Less active during the week	Engaged & active in 24/7 life	Engaged & active in 24/7 life
Numerical growth & sense of movement	A disciple who makes other disciples	A disciple trained with vision to multiply other disciples
Open, mixed-gender group	Closed, same-gender T-E-A-M	Closed, same-gender Band of Brothers

Very practically, when you join a group or launch a group, ask what you are looking to accomplish. In a single ministry setting, the initial tier of “Come & See” does not mix well with “Come & Be with Me.” The intended end for each is poles apart.

“Come & See” grows numerically best in open, permeable groups and “Come & Be with Me” grows in-depth in small, same-gender, temporarily closed groups. Those whom Jesus invited must develop into spiritual young adults to become warriors, strongly reliant on Him, giving their strength to others, choosing Scripture as their comfortable home, and overcoming evil in themselves and for others as a pattern of life (compare 1 John 2:14). Begin with the end in mind.

What kind of disciples do you want to raise up in your group?

Followers are free to grow to the degree they are willing to take ownership and responsibility. Living things reproduce...it’s God’s

design. Their own response is their primary limiting factor. So don’t hesitate to call them to all that God has for them. Raise up **F-A-T** servants who follow Jesus without compromise (**f**aithful, **a**vailable, **t**eachable).

Specifically, the younger generation today does not want a Christian experience where we lower the “bar” to accommodate society. God has called us to join His epic adventure to win the world back to the Father’s love. Call them, like Jesus. The Master’s Men come (Mark 3:13B).

Intended Target:

“Go & Multiply Disciples Together” (Acts 1:1ff)

From the start, Jesus began with this intended end. For His worldwide crusade to win His prodigal world back to the Father’s heart, He needed women and men trained to go the distance. He still does today. Do we believe Jesus is not only our **moral** model, but also our **ministry** model?

After His resurrection, Jesus met for forty days with His disciples. He gave His 1st century and 21st century disciples five specific Commissions (one in each Gospel plus Acts). These five Commissions were like the valedictory service for Jesus’ eleven disciples as they moved out into the great world purpose of the Lord Jesus Christ. Not five different commissions, but five commissions given in different places, each with its specific significance toward this one epic adventure.

One of these marching orders from our Commander-in-Chief have come to be called the Great Commission, our marching orders today.

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:19-20).

This intended end was fulfilled shortly after Jesus was raised from the dead by the Father’s power. His intended end is still ongoing,

worked out in His 21st century disciples, Acts 29 to each new generation.

“Jesus was deeply concerned for the continuation of [His plan], and his chosen method was the formation of a small band of committed friends” (Elton Trueblood).

Mentors, we must also create space for our followers if they are ever to achieve the stature, which is their God-given destiny. If we hold on, we ultimately make both of us co-dependent. We don't need to be as radical as Jesus (He died to create space!) But do follow His model.

Don't rush! Spend sufficient time so lifelong transformation becomes internalized and sustaining (He invested three-years). *“Equipping must precede empowering.”* But do release them by creating space, resourcing them, and praying for them fervently and often, like Jesus. Don't keep them in our shadow, although be available as needed...normally their initiative as they come and ask life and ministry questions.

If Jesus is also our **ministry** model, this demands that we evaluate all our 21st century ministries to see how they align with His model. What our world is like is not ultimate for how we minister. First, what did Jesus model? Then how could this look in this culture in which Jesus strategically placed me.

I wonder what could happen today through an entire community of authentic, full-orbed disciples if we took Jesus **ministry** model seriously.

Summary

Let me ask you: “Is Jesus only our **moral** example, or is He also the example of how we do **ministry**?”

Look again at the short ten question quiz from the beginning. Now begin to compare and contrast how you presently minister with Jesus' timeless style. Jesus, the smartest person to ever live, builds to last. Jesus built from the ground up with His three-tier training process, *“focusing on the few to reach the many.”*

This ministry aligns with God's Eden-creation design and Jesus' 1st coming purpose to re-create a new race of fully engaged people to

partner with Him in reaching out to our generation. Jesus laid a solid, foundational DNA built on the “Kingdom-math” of exponential multiplication (in contrast to addition), as He calls us on this epic adventure with Him.

In time, this depth multiplied “after its kind,” like the 1st creation impacts our cities around us. This **ground swell** of growth began slowly with Jesus' disciples since exponential growth begins slowly. However, because Jesus built solidly, His approach has led to the millions of Christians in the world today. It's the math of exponential multiplication to which Jesus has also called us. What's your personal choice?

“Start me with ten who are stout-hearted men and I will soon give you 10,000 more” (Oscar Hammerstein, in *New Moon*).

As His people, we are caught up with Him in His epic adventure to restore His lost world of people to relationship with the Father. This is God's unchanging plan for the ages. His people have the awesome privilege to partner with Him...before we fully understand. Our little stories now have eternal meaning because they are lived out within His epic adventure.

His unfinished mission defines our destiny together as the church and our call as individuals. It's staggering that the same God who spoke the entire universe into existence desires to partner with me as one of His intimate allies.

From the start, Jesus began with this intended end. For His worldwide crusade to win His prodigal world back to the Father's heart, He needed women and men trained to go the distance. Our Commander-in-Chief still does today.

“[The tipping point] in all these instructions was that the mission of his disciples was not different in principle or method from his own. He began by giving them his own authority and power to do his work (Mark 6:7; Matt. 10:1; Luke 9:1), and he closed by assuring them that what they were doing was as though he was doing it himself” (Robert Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*).

I'm calling other agile, Barnabas disciples to come, learn on the fly with me. Then bring this back to your peer groups and experiment

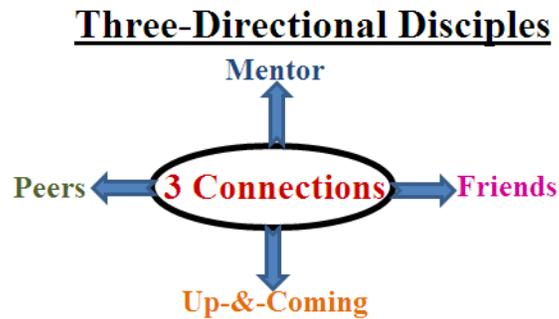
yourselves. This more flexible, “agile” approach develops lifelong disciples from a more broadly based community perspective. Develop three-directional discipling relationships in order to become an agile, **F.A.T.** disciple yourself (**F**aithful, **A**vailable, **T**eachable) and partner with the Spirit of God to multiply other **F.A.T.** disciples who serve others through three directional DiscipleMaking.

1. *Ones who lift us up*: Find someone farther along than you are who can lift you up and challenge you to the next level.

2. *Ones who walk alongside us*: Develop a formal or informal peer structure of Barnabas ministry with mutual discipling of friends.

3. *Ones who we can lift up*: How has another believer helped you grow? Do the same to others.

We learn as we give it away, so make disciples, not excuses.



If there would emerge in our day such a fellowship, wholly without artificiality and free from the dead hand of the past, it would be an exciting event of momentous importance. A society of genuine loving friends, set free from the self-seeking struggle for personal prestige and from all unreality, would be something unutterably priceless and powerful. A wise person would travel any distance to join it (Elton Trueblood).

Take time to talk this through with those in the know in your local church. God places those in authority in order to support us and partner with us. We need each other in order to reach for God’s call on our lives, not only admirers but also adventurers.

What Are Take-Aways that Impacted Me?

What Will I Personally Do About This? *"I will..."*