



**SEVEN THINGS I'VE LEARNED IN SEVEN
YEARS OF DISCIPLE MAKING**

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*Join us as we discuss these
seven things with disciple-
makers around the world on
The More Disciples Podcast*



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INTRO

Since coming to believe in Jesus, there's something that's always bothered, confused and sort of kept me in the dark. When I read the New Testament, I see a gap between how those followers of Jesus lived—which totally resonates with my spirit—and what we see most often modeled today in a Western context.

In John 17, Jesus prays three times for the same thing. That the world might know the Father has sent the Son. Before He prays the first time, he explains what eternal life is, "Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have

sent” (John 17.3). Eternal life is an intimate relational oneness with the Father and the Son by His Spirit in us. It is not intellectual assent about God but rather an actual spiritual experience that followers of Jesus can walk in and manifest to others.

Everyone living knows they are alive physically; they experience life. The same is true of spiritual/eternal life.

Following His definition of eternal life, Jesus goes on to declare that He has lost none that the Father has given Him. He is referring to his eleven disciples he has poured himself into through speaking and demonstration for three years. He prays they might be one that the world might know the Father has sent the Son. He goes on to pray for all who will ever believe because of them, that they—which includes every follower of Jesus since then—might be one. So that the world might know the Father has sent the Son.

Finally, in verse 23, Jesus prays the third time that all disciples would dwell together in such perfect unity (oneness) that the world might know the Father has sent the Son.

*Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent
(John 17.3)*

Since being captivated by this prayer and heart of God, and in obedience to this vision, I have learned seven things to be true:

1. You take care of the depth of your ministry God takes care of the breadth. Intimacy with God is the foundation to everything (John 17:3).
2. Pour deeply into the few who will obey no matter what the cost. This is much more effective than pouring shallow into many who will not put it into practice.
3. Keep doing what you are doing, you will get better at it. Failure is guaranteed, but failing forward is how we get better.

4. Obey and train others who will do the same. You cannot pass on what you do not possess.
5. Simple things grow, simple things multiply. Complex things do not.
6. The Kingdom and the church is always relational before it is organizational. Organization flows out of relationship, not the other way around.
7. We must all connect, communicate and collaborate with one another in unity. All followers of Jesus must unify as churches and the Church from micro to macro (John 17:23).

I will be unpacking each of these seven things, explaining how we learned them, and why they are so vital to making disciples who make disciples.



1

You take care of the depth of your ministry, and let God take care of the breadth of your ministry.

My first childhood memory was my Dad abandoning me at the orphanage. My Mom had died as the result of a house fire, and I had no family willing to take me in. My father was a merchant seaman and chose to continue in that career which necessitated my care being delegated to the orphanage.

I mention this story in conjunction with unpacking the first principle because I learned at a young age how to be a producer. I learned

to achieve and get things done. After coming to faith, I continued to apply that same ethic.

Shortly after I was trained by Curtis Sergeant in disciple making, I went home to Tampa, Florida. I started 63 groups in just a few months and trained others to produce as well. We had hundreds of groups within two years.

That was my single biggest mistake.

The commandment Jesus gave to us is to make disciples, not to produce groups. One day I heard Jesus say, "Do you trust me?" I replied quickly, "Lord you know I trust you!" What then flashed into my mind were all the things I was doing that Jesus had never told me to do.

When I stopped doing those things and began to focus on the few things God was impressing upon me to engage in, real fruit began to occur locally and globally. Intimacy with God is the foundation for everything. We are meant

to bear fruit from that relational intimacy, not produce fruit apart from it.

“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” (John 17:3 KJV)

This is how the church in my home with my wife Stacy was birthed. That same home church continues to this day. It is an autonomous, self-governing, self-sufficient, self-propagating church that is part of a city church comprised of others operating the same way—out of an intimate oneness with God. We began to dwell together in unity as redeemed image bearers. This is where the “micro-to-macro” expression of the church came from in our lives.

“I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me.” (John 17:23)



2

**Pour deeply into the few who will obey
no matter what the cost**

In March 2013, after being trained in the patterns and principles of multiplicative discipleship, I returned home to Tampa to begin putting them into practice. I was extremely enthusiastic and had lots of relationships to begin engaging in to pass on to others what had been passed on to me. I was like a man with his hair on fire.

My mentor/coach Curtis Sergeant met with me over the phone weekly the first month, biweekly the second month, and one time the

third month. After the third month (seeing I was serious and attempting to obey) he said, "Call me whenever and however many times you want." I took him at his word. I called him multiple times a day, every week – for years (I am not exaggerating). He modeled the principle of mentoring for me.

Curtis would also visit Tampa from his home in Alabama every year for the first 3 years. He would spend several weeks observing and coaching me. He repeatedly said, "Lee have you ever considered pouring deeply into a few people?"

I told him (almost verbatim), "You do not know what your are talking about. This is working!" With my background in sales, I assumed he just did not get the concepts of pipeline development and effectively closing the deal. I was making his good thing "better."

He would regularly respond with encouragements that my efforts in the

“Model” phase of the disciple-making process were good, but that I needed to spend more time in the “Assist” phase—which was all but non-existent for me. I was showing the disciple-making process to anyone and everyone who seemed interested, getting them onboard and then moving on to model to new people. Engaging people is one of the things I do best; staying with people is not—and it showed.

Curtis was emphasizing a key disciple-making principle that we had to learn the hard way. He suggested that we should pour deeply into the few people who will obey no matter the cost. I had been practicing the alternative—engaging the many people who will be curious for a brief season, but will not stay in it for the long haul.

“You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others.”

(2 Timothy 2.2, NLT)

Like Jesus, we need to live and model the gospel with people rather than just sharing with them; “do life” with others while passing on the principles. Filter for those who want to sacrificially follow Jesus instead of those who would like to, but who aren’t really willing to make that commitment.

There are few who will follow this narrow path. Find the faithful ones, the ones He has given to each of us.

“I have revealed you to the ones you gave me from this world. They were always yours. You gave them to me, and they have kept your word.”

(John 17.6, NLT)



3

**Keep doing what your are doing,
you will get better at it**

Every task is a question of competency, confidence, or both. This is also true in making disciples who make disciples. The third principal can be restated a number of ways. One of those is, if we do not quit, we win. God is not some cosmic kill joy who is just waiting to slap you down for trying and scream at you that you missed the mark.

The truth of the matter is, we are engaged in spiritual warfare and we will fail repetitively – similar to falling off a bike when first learning

to ride. The good news is, God loves us, will never forsake us and has chosen, called, and ordained us to be His tools to accomplish fulfilling the Great Commission.

We have failed in every way imaginable. However, the great news is we continue to conform more to His image and bear fruit for His glory. To make new mistakes and encourage others to do the same. We ask others engaged in the work, “are you having fun?” If we are having fun, God is having fun. He loves His children. We are His beloved children in whom He is well pleased.



4

Obey Personally, and Train Others Intentionally

In Matthew 5:19, Jesus communicates that the person who is greatest in the Kingdom of heaven is the one who obeys and trains others to do the same. Understanding the truth (intellectually) is not a substitute for obeying truth (in word and deed) and passing it on to others.

In John 14:21 we read that the manifest presence of God is contingent upon obedience. In other words, in order to know Jesus, not just know about Him, we must obey Him. In

my words, “if you want to see the magic (have an intimate relationship with God) you have to do the stuff (obey His commandments).”

The reality is, if we do not obey His commandments and train others to do the same, we cannot experience oneness with God or community with one another. We cannot, by mere intellectual assent, pass on what we do not possess. We must obey and train others. We cannot produce fruit or manufacture movement apart from an intimate oneness with the Father and the Son by the Spirit. We must be both salt and light in this present world. The evidence of intimacy will be disciples who multiply (followers of Jesus), that can be traced through spiritual genealogies, the same way the Bible records physical families. God is glorified when we bear much fruit.

If we desire to do the laundry for all the people in the Tampa Bay Area, we would not have to build, buy, or lease large laundromats. We

would not have to spend money on industrial washers and dryers. We could use the existing washers and dryers in homes, to help/serve one another. Working together, we could figure out how to get it accomplished. Can we fulfill Jesus' commandment to make disciples who make disciples the same way?

#ForSuchaTimeAsThis

If you want to see something you have never seen, you have to do things you have never done. Do what you can, with what you have, where you are NOW. We are all called to obey and train others. Together we can touch the whole world for Jesus!

"I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me." (John 17.23, NLT)



5

Simple Things Grow, Simple Things Multiply

Principal #5 does not take a long time to unpack. When I came back from initial training at MetaCamp in March 2013, I began immediately to put the training into practice. I was not very good at it.

For two years, Curtis kept telling me to pour deeply into the few who would obey no matter what the cost. I did not listen and started 63 Three Thirds Groups within months. I even trained others to do the same so that we had hundreds of these groups within the first 2-3

years. It was my single biggest mistake.

Once I began to focus on the few, like my first disciple, Amanda Dinan (a once demon-possessed Hindu woman), we began to see depth and multiplication in multiple streams locally, nationally and globally.

Curtis told me not to make the same mistake at the next level, and by the grace of God I did not. I traveled to Mozambique to encourage and retrain a friend living there. God took that trip and has used the fifth principal there to catalyze movements in over 20 countries in Africa, with scaling, sustainable leadership reaching numerous unreached, unengaged people groups.



6

**Disciple multiplying movements are
ALWAYS relational before they're
organizational**

Love is not an organization. The bride of Christ—the body of Christ, the church—is not an organization. My first childhood memory was the feeling of abandonment, watching my father drive away from the orphanage. It was a horrible experience. I was maybe three or four years of age. When I came to faith, I realized I loved other followers of Jesus. We know we have passed from death to life because we love one another.

After receiving training in the basic multiplicative patterns of disciples making disciples and home churches in March 2013, I went home to Tampa and started the first simple home church with my wife, Stacy, in our home. Since that time, we have seen literally thousands of these simple multiplying home churches emerge around the world.

It starts with one disciple, making another disciple. However, obedient disciples then group together to form churches where the goal is for everyone to obey. This leads to disciples making disciples and multiplying churches.

As the preceding occurs, there becomes a need for administration and operations (organization) of resources for the work of the ministry. This does not require the formation of a parachurch or 501(c)(3) entity. We, as followers of Jesus, are the church. And while God has, can, and will use parachurch organizations, they are not a requirement to

obey all Jesus has commanded us to do. In many cases they can actually hinder progress and create dependency.

A major issue is that churches actually began to outsource to parachurch organizations the missionary mandate to make disciples of all nations and training them to obey all His commandments. The process and systems of "church as we know it" were adopted by these parachurch organizations with a different focus. We have to identify and be churches and obey as churches from micro to macro. We cannot manage movement organizationally.

Act's 1:8 has the order right:

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come UPON you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and UNTO the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8, KJV, emphasis mine)

We must have intimacy with God and kingdom

community with one another in order to multiply it. It is ALWAYS relational before it is organizational.

7

Jesus' disciples must all, in love and unity, connect, communicate, and collaborate as churches and the Church until the whole world knows.

The first commandment given to mankind was to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth.

Mankind rebelled against God and instead of a multiplying movement of image bearers filling the earth, sin entered into the world and death by sin to all mankind.

Praise God, Jesus the Lamb of God, slain from

the foundation of the world, came in the fullness of time to redeem all mankind from the curse of sin.

This redemption of every tribe, nation, language, and tongue is meant to be accomplished through His redeemed children. It is done through the body of believers from micro (smallest expression) to macro (largest expression) of churches and the Church. Please do not quibble over the word here, you can say or think Ekklesia or whatever word helps you to see and understand God's kingdom purpose coming on earth as it is in heaven.

The 7th and final principal is that we (followers of Jesus/ disciples) must all in love and unity, connect, communicate, and collaborate as churches and the Church until the whole world knows.

Our enemy, Satan, always has and always will seek to lie and divide us from this work by

putting us against one another.

Jesus, in John 17, prays three times ostensibly for the same thing. First, for the 11 that they might be one, that the world might know the Father has sent the Son. Notice, God's heart and purpose is for the whole world to know Him through the obedience of eleven people who Jesus poured himself into for a few short years.

The second time, our Lord prays for all who will believe because of their obedience, again to be one with Him and the Father, that the world might know the Father has sent the Son. The final time, our Lord cries out to the Father that all of us, everywhere, as redeemed image bearers and spiritual families, might dwell together. From homes, to communities, to cities, to regions, to nations, to the world, every people group, and every place might know the Father has sent the Son.

Oh God, hear our cry. We long to be one with

you Lord Jesus and with you our Heavenly Father. Please God, knit our hearts together in perfect unity that we, from that posture, would be the local, national, and global expression of almighty God. Your workmanship on earth as it is in heaven; that your glory may cover the earth as the water covers the sea. Lord, connect us relationally together and help us to communicate, using all the tools you have given us to redeem and may we co-labor/ collaborate in fulfilling your commandment to reach everyone, everywhere.

Amen



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Lee Wood is the Founder and initial catalyst of 1Body Church, as well as a missionary and Apostolic leader with a world vision to launch disciple-multiplying movements until the whole world knows Jesus. He leads and mentors key leaders in launching small house churches to spread the Gospel, starting in the smallest expression in his home in Tampa and eventually across the whole world. This aligns with his philosophy of “dream big, work small”. Lee is married to Stacy, is the father of five and grandfather of five.

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