



PRESENTING ALL MATURE IN CHRIST

A Pathway of Discipleship

INTRODUCTION

We exist to make disciples for the glory of Jesus Christ through gospel proclamation, biblical teaching, intentional discipleship, and love for one another that we may present all mature in Christ (Colossians 1:28-29).

This is our mission as a local church of Jesus Christ. We therefore want to encourage and equip all covenant members of Christ Fellowship Leesville to engage in this mission. But what does making disciples look like in this church? How does each member know how to walk with others toward him? The elders have prepared the following as a guide to clarify our mission based on God's word and the empowering of the Holy Spirit. Our prayer is that all covenant members will have both a clear vision and a vibrant passion to fulfill our mission for the glory of Jesus Christ, that the culture of our church will be defined by discipleship in Jesus.

A BIBLICAL FOUNDATION FOR DISCIPLESHIP

Matthew 28:18-20 – And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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.”

This closing passage of Matthew's gospel account has been famously called "The Great Commission." It begins with Jesus establishing his reign as the

crucified and risen King – *all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me*. He has the authority and right to command whatever he desires. What does he command of his followers? Simply put, make disciples. He lays out a simple path to this command:

1. *Go and make disciples of all nations* – proclaim the gospel and walk with sinners of all nations toward faith in Christ.
2. *Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit* – display their faith in the triune God as they unite with Christ, his church, and his mission.
3. *Teaching them to observe all I have commanded you* – instruct believers in Christ to give their lives in devotion to the commands of Jesus their King.

Every follower of Jesus is brought into this Great Commission. We do not simply become disciples of Jesus Christ. We also make disciples of Jesus Christ. Disciples who make disciples fulfill the King's command. The command comes with a strong promise, comfort, and assurance – Jesus is with us always in this mission.

Colossians 1:28–29 – *Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.*

This passage is the foundation of our mission. The reference is included with our statement. The apostle Paul puts Jesus Christ at the beginning, at the center, and at the end of his mission: “*Him we proclaim*,” “*mature in Christ*,” “*he powerfully works*.” Another way to say this is that Jesus was the subject (*Him we proclaim*), the source (*he powerfully works*), and the goal (*mature in Christ*) of Paul's mission. But it wasn't just a passion for Jesus that drove Paul. It was a passion for people to know Christ as Savior and follow him for a lifetime. Which people? All people! Three times he says “everyone”; there was no one excluded from Paul's Christ-centered mission. What actions would he take? He would *proclaim, warn, teach, and present*. Proclaim to everyone Jesus and his gospel. Warn everyone of sin and God's holy judgment. Teach everyone to turn to Christ and live for him. Present everyone mature in Christ – strong disciples who love Christ, know Christ, and walk with others toward Christ. For all this, Paul says, he toils. He struggles. He works hard. Paul is deeply committed to see people's hearts made alive in Christ,

then grow and become more passionate about Christ themselves. This all comes from someone who himself is mature in Christ; he is doing all this *with all his energy that he powerfully works in me*.

We must do no less. Christ must be the subject, the source, and the goal of our mission and our hearts. His glory compels us to proclaim him to everyone, warn everyone, teach everyone, and present everyone mature in Christ.

THE PATHWAY

With a biblical foundation in place, we must as a church take discipleship both seriously and joyfully. To do so, we need clarity on what making disciples of Jesus looks like at Christ Fellowship Leesville. We propose the simple pathway below to show how we walk with others toward Christ. At whatever stage the Lord connects us with individuals, we are all on the same pathway toward the same goal – maturity in Christ.



ENGAGING OUR MISSION AND PATHWAY

Now that we see the journey of following Jesus at Christ Fellowship Leesville, what are the practical ways we will engage our mission and make disciples of Jesus? How do we make sure everyone is moving through the pathway and being presented mature in Christ? The following are the ways we can and should do so in the current life of our church. They are listed under the pathway points established above. These are not exclusive ways, and they may look different

over time. But all connect with our mission in the key aspects of gospel proclamation, biblical teaching, intentional discipleship, and love for one another.

PROCLAIMING

- Individual covenant members will engage their communities with the gospel in their day-to-day lives. This includes making the gospel known, sharing Scripture, giving personal testimony, and inviting people to come to our worship service or other ministries. The church will equip members with training as well as materials such as tracts to help them share the good news of Jesus Christ.
- The church will corporately engage with organized outreach ministries such as our ESL classes, annual Easter Egg Hunt, and Soccer Camp as a means of making connections and drawing our community to hear the gospel of Jesus. Members will be called upon to serve and perhaps share the gospel themselves as the Lord leads.
- Every Sunday during our worship service, we will intentionally proclaim the gospel of Jesus in our preaching, our singing, our prayers, and our fellowship. One of our elders will always invite individuals to come and discuss what it means to repent from sin and turn in faith to Christ. We can and must assume that there is at least one person in our weekly gatherings who is lost, and pray for their salvation.

CULTIVATING

Love and pursuit of Jesus – A personal love and pursuit of Jesus as believers is grown through spiritual disciplines as instructed in God's word. We will encourage and instruct all believers in the church to engage in and develop these habits of grace. The fruit of these disciplines results in greater love for Christ and others.

- *Reading* – planning daily to read through God's word as a whole or to study a book or theme of the Scriptures in depth
- *Praying* – communicating with God daily and moment by moment, addressing him with adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication
- *Singing* – praising God and rehearsing biblical truth through song
- *Gathering* – attending the Sunday worship service each week for fellowship, singing praises and biblical truth, prayers, and the exposition of God's word in preaching. This must be a high and delightful priority

- *Giving* – giving to the church and to others through money and resources
- *Serving* – devoting time and energy to meet the needs of others
- *Encouraging* – building up others in their walk with Christ in times of joy and sorrow

While these are personal disciplines, we will instruct all believers that they can best cultivate these disciplines through the ministry and commitment of the local church as the following will show.

Covenant membership – Believers who attend regularly will be encouraged to enter into covenant membership with our church. It is through a faithful commitment to the local church that discipleship works best.

- All individuals will be directed to attend our Starting Point Class taught by our elders so they can learn about our church, its confession of faith, its covenant, its mission, and its expectations of its members.
- All believers desiring to join in covenant membership must be baptized believers. In fulfillment of the Great Commission, we will baptize those who are new believers or have not been baptized, giving them a biblical foundation for this sacred ordinance of the church.

Teaching ministries – The church will provide formal opportunities outside the worship service throughout the year to equip covenant members and their families with biblical truth to grow in their knowledge and love for Jesus Christ. While not every member will be able to attend each of these, all will be strongly encouraged to commit to attending them.

- Life Groups
- Men's Bible Study
- Women's Bible Study
- Cornerstone Classes
- Cornerstone Kids
- Upper Room Student Ministry

- Life Groups
- Men's Meetup
- Women's Gathering
- Fellowship Meals and Events

Genuine fellowship – The church will provide formal opportunities outside the worship service throughout the year to equip covenant members and their families with biblical truth to grow in their knowledge and love for Jesus Christ. While not every member will be able to

attend each of these, all will be strongly encouraged to commit to attending them.

Discipleship relationships – The church will encourage and provide opportunities for all members to build more intimate and focused relationships that foster growth in Christ and/or future ministry for Christ.

- *Close, personal discipleship* – These are intimate relationships made up of two to three people. They can consist of a mature believer meeting with a younger believer or believers who are mutually growing together in the Lord. Covenant members will be given a practical way (such as an online form) to indicate their desire for such a relationship, whether to lead another believer, to follow another believer, or to mutually grow. Each relationship will be encouraged to center around Bible study and prayer for one another and include accountability and counseling. The Bible study may take the form of reading a book of the Bible or a biblically sound book that will foster their growth as disciples, and discussing that book together. These meetings can happen at whatever regularity works for the individuals, whether once a week, every other week, or once a month. They also can be catalysts to form deep friendships between members of the church, just as Jesus developed with his disciples (John 15:15).
- *Pastoral discipleship* – The elders will engage in specific training with those pursuing pastoral ministry, whether they are students in college or seminary or men in the church who desire the role of elder. Such training will carry high expectations of commitment and discipline, including Bible study and book reading, regular meetings to train, Bible memorization, and writing (2 Timothy 1:13-14).

Sacrificial service – The church will make known opportunities to serve others regularly as well as develop members' spiritual gifts to build others up in Christ.

- All covenant members are expected to volunteer and serve the church regularly and formally. They will each be assigned to a specific ministry that aligns with their skills or passions, under the guidance of a ministry leader.
- All covenant members are encouraged to develop the spiritual gift given to them at salvation, that it may be used to build up the body of Christ out of love for one another (1 Corinthians 12-14). Those unfamiliar with their

gift may seek wisdom from the elders and those with whom they have discipleship relationships.

MULTIPLYING

At some point, a disciple growing in Christ will engage in making disciples themselves. It will be the joy of this church to send all believers equipped and passionate to make more disciples for the glory of Jesus.

- Engaging in personal evangelism
- Leading in church ministries
 - Leading a life group
 - Leading an organized ministry of the church or joining a ministry team
 - Teaching in a ministry of the church
 - Discipling others in close relationships
- Sent out from the church
 - Short term missions trips
 - Planting or revitalizing churches
 - Pastors leading other churches
 - Missionaries to the nations

CONCLUSION

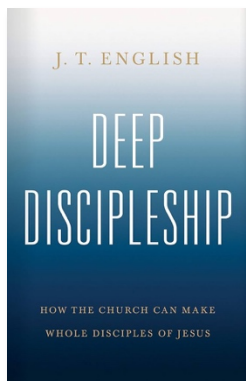
Our mission to make disciples for the glory of Jesus Christ requires the presence of Christ in our hearts, the toil and struggle of Paul in the labor, and the energy of the Holy Spirit powerfully working in us. What will happen if we are obedient to the commission of King Jesus to make disciples for his glory? Joy! Jesus told his disciples in John 15:10-11: *"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full."* May we joyfully make disciples for the glory of Jesus Christ and present all mature in him.

RESOURCES

The following are some helpful books the elders recommend to aid in your understanding and growth as a disciple of Jesus. [These books are available for purchase here.](#)

BOOKS ABOUT DISCIPLESHIP

These books will help you understand what discipleship is or how to engage in it.

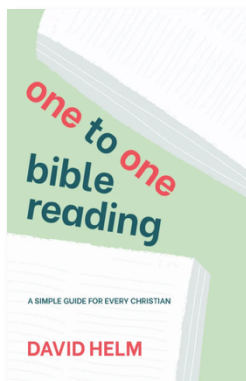
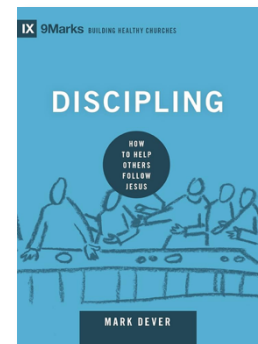


Deep Discipleship by J. T. English

While written with church leaders in mind, it is useful for understanding the importance of discipleship in the church context. This book equips churches to reclaim the responsibility of discipling people at any point on their journey.

Discipling by Mark Dever

Following the pattern found in Scripture, this short book explains how disciple-making relationships should function in the context of the local church, teaching us how to cultivate a culture of discipling as a normal part of our everyday lives.

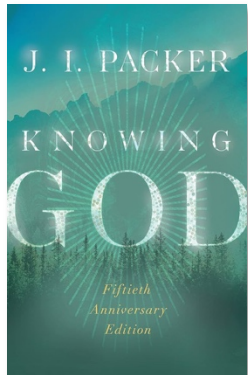


One to One Bible Reading by David Helm

This book is a simple guide for every Christian to engage in reading the Bible together in one-to-one relationships.

BOOKS FOR DISCIPLESHIP

These books are recommended for those in close discipleship relationships to study together.

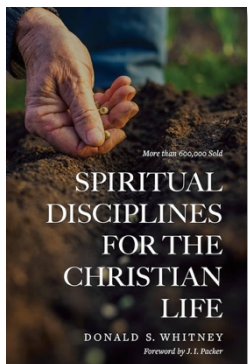
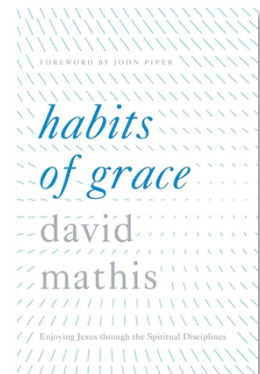


Knowing God by J. I. Packer

For more than 50 years, this book has been a deep but accessible resource for all believers to grow in the knowledge and grace of Jesus Christ.

Habits of Grace by David Mathis

Three seemingly unremarkable principles shape and strengthen the Christian life: listening to God's voice, speaking to him in prayer, and joining together with his people as the church.



Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life by Donald Whitney

This book is an in-depth look at spiritual disciplines to help individuals grow in following Christ.

Deeper by Dane Ortlund

This book points believers to Christ, making the case that sanctification does not happen by doing more or becoming better, but by going *deeper* into the wondrous gospel truths that washed over them when they were first united to him.

