

GAME TIME

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Take a minute to pray for God to guide you as you study...

When I was in high school, I was on the basketball team. I was the captain of our team, and I loved to play as many minutes as possible. I remember one game in particular where I didn't start by being on the court. For some reason, my coach decided that he was having someone else start in my position. That was really weird for me as I ALWAYS started each game! I was the captain after all. For this game, it was different. I decided to trust my coaches and simply took my seat on the bench. The game started. The other team scored. My team scored. The game continued on for quite awhile, and I still was riding the bench...waiting. After half-time, I still hadn't played one minute. Finally, in the third quarter, I had the words that I had been waiting for - "Matt, you're in!" It was game time! It was time for me to put into practice everything I had learned and worked on. It was time to see what I could do for our team.

Over the last nine lessons, you've been learning and even practicing tools to help you become an active disciple-maker. But, so far, it has just been information. Information is incredibly important, but you can know something and never do anything with it.

You can KNOW that water is a necessity to keeping your body healthy, but if you never drink it, than you failed.

You can KNOW that walking around in a lightning storm is a bad idea, but if you don't listen to that advice and stay inside, you might get shocked.

You can KNOW that Jesus is the Savior, but if you never accept Him, then you missed the greatest thing ever.

And if you KNOW the tools and the methods of discipling someone else but never do it, then you missed the greatest opportunity to partner with Jesus in winning souls to the kingdom!

So, because you know the tools and principals of discipling someone else and are prepared with knowledge, IT'S GAME TIME! It's time to get on the court and put your knowledge into practice.

In the first lesson in PRACTICE, you were invited to start praying for God to put someone on your heart for you to disciple... to lead them into a deep relationship with Jesus. Do you know who it is? Often times, the first person that you think of is the person God wants you to disciple. Is it your neighbor? Is it your roommate? Is it your co-worker? Is it a close friend? Is it someone that you don't really know but see their need for God in their life? I've even known people that decide that God is calling them to disciple an "enemy!"

There is a powerful story in the Bible about God choosing someone's enemy as the person that they are to help disciple. It's found in Acts 9. A man named Saul was traveling through the country persecuting Christians. He hated them! He wanted to destroy anyone that was following, "The Way." Jesus appears to him while he is traveling to Damascus. The light is so bright that Saul is blinded, and Jesus says, "Saul! Why are you persecuting me?" Saul is taken to Damascus where he didn't eat or drink anything. Instead, he was just thinking and searching for answers for his life. God calls another man, Ananias, a Christian, to do something incredible! Here's how the conversation goes...

Acts 9:10-12: "In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!" "Yes, Lord," he answered. The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight."

Ananias is thinking, "Are you kidding me?" God was asking Ananias to go talk to the guy that has been hunting Christians and killing them because of their faith. That sounds like suicide! And yet, when God gives a command, He makes a way possible too. So Ananias goes to find Saul. When he gets there, he places his hands on Saul and tells him why he was there. Immediately, scales fell from Saul's eyes as his sight was restored. Saul gets up and is baptized, giving his heart and life to Jesus. And you probably know the rest of the story. Saul's name is changed to Paul, and he changed the world by spreading the Gospel.

Because Ananias answered God's call to go to the person that He knew was ready, Paul was disciplined and changed the world! So here's the BIG question:

Who is God calling you to disciple?

Who is it? What is their name? If you haven't determined who it is, then between now and the next lesson, spend some dedicated time in prayer to determine who they are. Why? Well, it's because the next two lessons are unique lessons that will walk you through your process in discipling someone else. You will need to know who it is that you are helping grow to know Jesus better.

If you already know who it is, write their name below.

Your Disciple: _____

Right now, with whoever is with you, pause for a minute to pray for this journey that you are about to take with your disciple.

Alright, now let's get to the first four steps in disciple-making.

1. Where are they on the "Disciple Spectrum?"

Everyone is on the spectrum, the Disciple Spectrum. It's basically a continuum between being an Atheist (does not believe in God) and a Disciple (fully devoted to God).



Everyone is on this spectrum! And when you first begin to disciple someone else, finding out where they are on this spectrum is the first and most-important step. This step establishes where they are with Jesus and helps you know how deep or basic you need to be as you guide them towards discipleship. So how do you figure out where they are on the spectrum? Well, the easiest way is to ask them this question:

"Where have you seen God working in your life recently?"

It feels like a very direct question, and it is, but you'll instantly get a response that will help you as you help them. If they are an Atheist, their response will be something like, *"I don't believe in God."* If that is their answer, then this might not be the right time for you to connect with them. Of course, you'll continue being their friend and representing Jesus to them, but they might not be at the place where they are ready to move towards discipleship. Some will answer with a question like, "What do you mean?" Then it would be up to you to continue asking questions like, "Have you seen God blessing you in your work life or your family life? Have you see God working through something painful that you recently experienced? Have you seen God helping you in any way?" This is your friend you're talking to, so you probably will know a few things that are going on in their life that you can refer to. Keep asking questions until they can see God working in their life in some way.

If you are still struggling, use the Fruits of the Spirit to help. Say something like, "Where have you seen God giving you (Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness or Self-control)?" Those are all spiritual blessings, so they naturally point back to God in their life.

2. Give a personal testimony.

After they have shared where they have seen God in their life, it's only natural for you to share a story or a testimony about how you've recently seen God in YOUR life. Be transparent about your faith. Share about the good God you serve. Let them see your love for Jesus, and this will be the catalyst to starting a rich journey as you help them know God in a deeper way.

3. Invite them to take the disciple journey with you.

After you both have bonded over God in your lives, give them the invitation to take a journey to know Him better. You don't have to be super specific about what that means, because it could mean something different in each situation. The basic idea is that you'll be meeting on a regular basis to talk about God in your lives, to learn more about who He is and to see how He can impact your lives in a positive way. This is the initial connection, but you are setting up the rest of the journey with them.

4. Set up an appointment.

After you have found out where they are with Jesus, after you've shared your testimony, after you've given them the invitation to journey with you, the next part is setting an appointment. You aren't going to want to launch into a Bible study right then, so set up a time in the coming days where you can meet to talk more about God.

Sometimes it feels like starting is the most difficult part, and with making another disciple, I think this may be the part that keeps so many from actually doing it! And even though it is scary, and you might be afraid, God has already gone before you, He's prepared their hearts, and the only piece left is for you to connect with them.

I'm reminded of the words of Moses as he tells about God. He writes -

Deuteronomy 31:8: "The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged."

If God has already gone before you, there is nothing to fear! Have holy boldness as you approach this person, knowing that God has already prepared the way for you. Trust Him, and let Him work through you to help someone else grow to know Him better.

FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS

1. Are you ready for game time when it comes to discipling someone else?
2. What are you afraid of?
3. How can you overcome those fears and be bold?

LESSON 10: GAME TIME

