

The Power to Make Disciples

Think about the disciple makers in your life. Where do you think they found the 'Power to Make Disciples?'

Matthew 28:18-20 "And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

The Power to Make Disciples doesn't come from having a master's degree. It doesn't come from being wealthy and influential in the community. And it certainly isn't reserved for just pastors and Bible teachers. Anyone can be a great disciple maker; anyone can access the Power to Make Disciples.

Let me explain why I feel that way. If you and I were in the same room and I held up a book and ask "do you feel like you could lift this book"? What would be your response? You would probably respond that you could also lift the book. But why would you feel that way? Most likely you would feel that way because you saw me lift and you know 'hey, if Gary can lift it then so can I.'

When we witness physical power and see it demonstrated it gives us confidence. The same is also true when we witness spiritual power. In this lesson we will use examples from our own lives and show how they make disciples and the tools they used like Prayer, the Bible and the Holy Spirit.

Before Christ sent His followers to 'go and make disciples' He reminded them that He has all authority in heaven and on earth.

For three years His disciples witnessed Him healing the sick, walking on water, turning water into wine and raising the dead. Now they would begin pouring what Christ had taught them into others and eternity of all of mankind would be hanging in the balance.

Is it possible for 'uneducated fishermen' to carry the gospel to millions of people until it reached us? The short answer is 'yes, it's possible', but how is it possible? How did the greatest story ever told get from the original disciples to us?

I believe that part of the answer is found in **Mark 6:7-9**

"And He called the twelve to Himself, and began to send them out two by two, and gave them power over unclean spirits. He commanded them to take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bag, no bread, no copper in their money belts— but to wear sandals, and not to put on two tunics."

The Power to Make Disciples

Jesus insistent in Mark 6 that as these men went out that they take ‘nothing for the journey except a staff.’”

Why not prepare? Why not do some planning? Why not form some committee’s?

I believe Jesus wanted these men to learn very quickly that the Power to Make Disciples comes from Him. I think Christ sent them out without anything but a stick so they would be forced to rely on His power not theirs.

At first glance it doesn’t really make sense for Jesus to send a few uneducated men to spread the gospel to the rest of the planet. But then again, His ways are not our ways. But somehow it worked didn’t it, somehow these uneducated fishermen found the Power to Make Disciples.

Somehow, the great commission to go and make disciples has been fulfilled for over 2 thousand years using normal people just like you and me.

Nothing has really changed since then; Christian’s today must also learn to rely on Christ Power to help us make disciples.

Why We Need Power

The Power to Make Disciples comes from the Lord and has the ability change our desires, our behavior and even our fears. We need that Power to make disciples because this is a spiritual battle and Satan does not want Christians making disciples.

Paul knew the people that were making disciples and responsible for the growth of the church would face obstacles. He knew Satan’s would attempts to stop them from making disciples. He wrote about this spiritual battle in **Ephesians 6:12**

“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Paul knew the church at Ephesus would be facing a fierce spiritual battle as they began to grow and spread the gospel of Jesus Christ. He knew they must learn to draw on the power that God provides. Christians today face the same spiritual battles as they disciple others and spread the gospel.

Ephesians 6:14-18 “Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—“

The Power to Make Disciples

After Paul told the church about the spiritual he told them about some practical things they could do that would help them during this battle to make disciples. He told them things they could do to prepare for this spiritual battle. He told them about the power to make disciples.

So who do we prepare for this spiritual battle? What can we do to overcome obstacles to making disciples?

John 15:4-5&16 “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing”

Remember in John 15 where Jesus is talking about ‘bearing fruit’ and abiding in Christ and Christ abiding in us. We talked about the importance of that relationship with Christ and how that relationship affects our ability to make disciples.

Just as the branch needs to draw energy and nutrients from the vine we must also be able to draw strength and wisdom from the Lord. There are 3 ways to access the power to make disciples. There is Power in Prayer, Power in the Bible, and Power in the Holy Spirit.

Power of the Bible

Several years ago I heard a sermon on the Power of the Bible. The evangelist started the sermon by reading the story of Christ being tempted by Satan in

Matthew 4:1-11 “Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.”

But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’”

Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written:

*‘ He shall give His angels charge over you,’
and,*

*‘ In their hands they shall bear you up,
Lest you dash your foot against a stone.’”*

The Power to Make Disciples

Jesus said to him, **“It is written again, ‘You shall not tempt the LORD your God.’”**

Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. 9 And he said to Him, “All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.”

Then Jesus said to him, **“Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.’”**

Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

After reading the story in Matthew chapter 4 the evangelist suggested that since Christ used scripture to battle Satan that we should do the same.

He even suggested that we store our Bible open to the story in Matthew chapter 4 when not in use. That way if Satan was milling about he would have something familiar to read.

Several months later an argument started in one of our deacon meetings. In a matter of minutes about half of our group was involved in this huge argument over something that I can't even remember.

As I sat there I remembered the story the evangelist told about the Power of the Bible. So without saying anything I opened my Bible to Matthew 4 and placed it in the center of the table.

Guess what happened... the argument stopped IMMEDIATELY. Huh, it worked?

Hebrews 4:12 “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

Years later a friend told me that lots of people at his church were in a huge battle and several church members were threatening to leave. He was devastated at the thought of losing his friends and asked me if there was anything he could do to prevent it.

A ‘business meeting’ had been scheduled for later that week and whichever side won the losers would be finding another place to worship.

I told him how about what had happened at the deacon meeting. He and several other members went to the church before the big meeting to pray and when they finished each one left their Bible on the altar; open to Matthew 4.

The Power to Make Disciples

He called me after the meeting and told me that all of that prayer and scripture must have been just too much for Satan. The anger and hard feelings that seemed to be dividing the church simply just disappeared.

The Bible is a powerful tool in this spiritual battle to make disciples. The more time we spend in the Word the better we will be prepared.

Power of Prayer

Matthew 7:7 “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.”

Many of us have had experiences with the power of prayer. The fact that the God of the Universe hears our prayers is not really news to most of us trying to make disciples. There has never been a significant spiritual awakening that wasn't preceded with prayer. The Power of Prayer will significantly affect our ability to make disciples.

Jesus often went away into the wilderness away from the crowds and away from His disciples to pray. **Luke 5:15-16 “However, the report went around concerning Him all the more; and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities. So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.”**

There is a story in Acts chapter 9 where we can really see how the use of prayer can lead to discipleship.

Acts 9:36-41 “At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did.

But it happened in those days that she became sick and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room. And since Lydda was near Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent two men to him, imploring him not to delay in coming to them.

Then Peter arose and went with them. When he had come, they brought him to the upper room. And all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them.

But Peter put them all out, and knelt down and prayed. And turning to the body he said, “Tabitha, arise.” And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. Then he gave her his hand and lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her alive.

The Power to Make Disciples

And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed on the Lord.

Notice that the Bible says Peter put them all out and then knelt down and prayed. He didn't bring in a bunch of cameras or stage an audience to witness the event. This wasn't going to be about Peter. This was about Jesus and the Power of Prayer, this was about the power to make disciples. The message here is simple we all have access to the Power of Prayer. The Power of Prayer isn't about the one speaking it's all about the One listening.

Jesus said in Mark 11:24 “Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.”

I've seen the power of prayer manifested in discipleship hundreds of times. Prayer is a MUST, it's not a suggestion. If you think you possess the ability to call people out of the darkness, you are mistaken. Our prayers will unleash power we can't see into the lives of those we can.

Power of the Holy Spirit

1 Thessalonians 1: 5 “For our Gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance.”

I believe when we accept Christ as our Lord and Savior we all receive the Holy Spirit. The affect that the Power of the Holy Spirit has on our ability to make disciples is clear in **Acts 1:8**

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Notice the sequence of events...First we receive power from the Holy Spirit...then we shall be witnesses for Christ.

I remember going to see a man that had been visiting our church. I knew the Holy Spirit was drawing our team to minister to him and his family. When we arrived, he introduced us to his niece, who had been staying there for a few days. I immediately began talking with him about his relationship with the Lord.

However, his niece kept interrupting asking me about Jesus. I would politely answer her and turn my attention to her uncle that we had planned on visiting. Again she interrupted me and asking about heaven, eternal life and having a relationship with God. Again, I politely answered and resumed talking with her uncle.

About five words later I finally got it... It was like the Holy Spirit was screaming in my ear “HELLO! IS THIS THING ON?” “THERE IS SOMEONE IN THIS ROOM THAT WANTS TO KNOW MORE ABOUT JESUS AND IT ISN'T THE PERSON YOU'RE TALKING TOO”

The Power to Make Disciples

I felt like an idiot and as quickly as possible ended my conversation with her uncle and began sharing with her about Jesus and how she could have a personal relationship with Christ.

After she prayed, accepting Jesus as her Lord and Savior, she told us, “My uncle told me someone was coming to visit from the church and tonight I would find out about God. I have been waiting all day to talk with you.”

Was the Holy Spirit drawing us there? Absolutely! Were we there to share the plan of salvation? Of course! The Holy Spirit was drawing her to Christ and our team to her.

There are literally thousands of stories like this where the Holy Spirit moves us to talk with people that desire to know more about Jesus.

John 14:26 “But the helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.”

Look at John 14:26read it carefully...It says THE HOLY SPIRIT will teach you, AND bring to your remembrance all things...The Holy Spirit will help you remember Scriptures. (However, for us to remember we have to have read it.)

Remember to always pray that the Holy Spirit will give you the words to say and then trust that it will happen.

Don't overthink the great commission. We all have the power to make disciples. The creator of the universe, everything seen and everything unseen has given us the power to make disciples.

Acts 1:8 “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

The power to make disciples comes from the Lord and the reason we need it simple. We need that power in order to overcome Satan and fulfill the great commission. We need the Power in Prayer, Power in the Bible, and Power in the Holy Spirit.

We can make disciples...

Jesus said we can

Thank you for your service to the saints.

God Bless