

BEN WASHINGTON BAPTIST CHURCH

BIBLE STUDY

Discipleship 101

Living as The Church – Part 2

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DISCIPLESHIP 101

Living as the church through discipleship means intentionally growing to be more like Jesus within a supportive Christian community, focusing on heart transformation through gospel truths, prayer, worship, and sharing faith, not just attending services, but integrating Christ's teachings into everyday life, work, and relationships to become active followers who help others do the same. It's about a lifestyle of learning, imitation, and bearing fruit together, moving from mere conversion to deep, lived-out faith.

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The Church's Role

- The church's main mission is discipleship, not just gathering people, but equipping them for Christ's work.
- It provides the structure (church membership) and authority for teaching and growth.
- It's where people find spiritual safety and learn to navigate struggles together.

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LIFE IN THE CHURCH

Committing Your Life to the Church

First, let's make sure that we are not guilty of belittling God's church in any way. It's not a social club; it's not a building, and it's not an option. The church is life and death. The church is God's strategy for reaching our world.

- What we do inside the church matters.
- We tend to equate church life with events and programs. But these are not the way to make a church.

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Throughout the Bible, we see pictures of the global church (which includes all followers of Jesus in all locations) and the local church (which includes particular followers of Jesus in a particular location). Out of 114 times that the “church” is mentioned in the New Testament, at least ninety of them refer to specific local gatherings of believers who have banded together for fellowship and mission.

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Bearing One Another Burdens

In Part 1, we said that every Christian is a minister. Paul said that God gave pastors, teachers, and elders to the church so that they could teach the rest of us to minister. A pastor's job is not to do all of the ministry in a church, but to "equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12)

So, who should we be ministering to?

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1 Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. 2 Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. (Galatians 6:1-2 NIV)

Ministry sounds intimidating until you develop a realistic view of what ministry is really about.

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Transformed by the Gospel

So how do we change a person's heart? It's impossible.

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Every Member Doing Its Part

The mission of your church is too important to leave to everyone else. The moment you begin to believe that your church can be healthy while you sit on the sidelines, you have given up on God's plan of redemption.

- The goal of the church is to grow up in every way into the likeness of Christ. But the church will never reach this goal unless "each part is working properly." This doesn't mean that we will all function in exactly the same way, but it does mean that we all have responsibility.

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THE LOCAL CHURCH

We are on this earth to continue the mission that Jesus left for us: “Go and make disciples of all nations.” We can’t do this on our own, nor are we expected to. God tells us to work together with the Christians He has placed in our lives to bring His healing and transformation in to the life of the world. His plan of redemption involves the church working in **UNITY** to reach the people around.

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Jesus was clear about His purpose on earth: “The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost” (Luke 19:10). Our calling like Jesus’s is focused on reaching those who don’t know God:

14 "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:14-16 NIV)

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OUR FOCUS IS NOT INWARD!!!

Known by Our Love

We know that we're supposed to love one another. The two greatest commandments are to love God and love people (Mark 12:28-31).

- Love is basic to what it means to be a follower of Jesus, and it should be what motivates us to reach out to the world around us.
- The only reason that we can love anyone else is because God loved us first (1 John 4:19).

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A Compelling Community

On the night that He was betrayed, Jesus prayed for His disciples. That was a pivotal moment for them, and Jesus prayed that they would be strengthened, focused and protected.

20 "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, 21 that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22 I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one-- 23 I in them and you in me--so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. (John 17:20-23 NIV)

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Jesus prayed that we be united. Why? So that the world would believe that Jesus was sent by God, and so that the world would know that God loves us.

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Your Church Matters

We are called to make disciples, and strengthening the other members of the church body is an important part of this. But if we are not working together to help the unbelieving world around us become followers of Jesus, then we are missing the point of our salvation.

- If your church is not actively blessing the surrounding community, then you are ignoring God's mission. We can never forget that we have a role to play in God's plan of redemption.

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THE GLOBAL CHURCH

As important as the local church is, God's plan extends way beyond your town. God is not going to stop with just your community. Until our vision of the church encompasses the entire globe, we do not have an accurate view of God's church or His plan of redemption.

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Before the End Will Come

The world will not end until God's plan is accomplished. God sends His people out into the world to embody and to proclaim His healing, and He will not wrap up human history until this has been accomplished.

Though we should long to see Christ glorified in our immediate context, we should share Paul's passion to see Him glorified in every corner of the globe.

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Working Together for the Gospel

Once we start developing a passion for Christ's glory to be seen around the world, we need to figure out what role we are called to play. Make no mistake, every Christian is called to be involved in spreading the gospel around the world! No one is called to a life that is separate from global missions.

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A Vision of the End

God tells us that history is moving toward a specific and glorious end. God promised Abraham that through him all the nations of the earth would be blessed. This is what God's plan of redemption has been about from the very beginning. And when we look ahead to the end of the story, we see that God's promise to Abraham will be fulfilled. John was actually allowed to see the fulfillment of this promise that God made to Abraham:

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9 After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. 10 And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." (Rev 7:9-10 NIV)

SUPPORTING THE SINNER BUT NOT THE SIN

Questions?

References

Material Excerpts From:

Chan, Francis and Platt, David: Multiply: disciples making disciples.
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