

Producing and Developing Disciples

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: 2 Timothy 2:1-7

Paul began this chapter by telling Timothy of his role in making disciples (v. 2). He mentioned three “occupations” that illustrated Timothy’s work as a preacher. Two of these were directly related to the work of making disciples (soldier and farmer). In a related passage, Paul mentioned another related “occupation” – a shepherd (1 Corinthians 9:7). The work of making disciples is ongoing. We do it by doing the work of the farmer, the shepherd, and the soldier.

What Do We Mean by “Making Disciples”?

- Jesus commissioned His apostles to go out and make disciples (Matthew 28:19) – “produce”
- This commission would also include helping them to grow in the faith (Matthew 28:20) – “develop”
- When one is converted, he is “born again” (John 3:3, 5; 1 Peter 1:3) – he is like a newborn babe in Christ (1 Peter 2:2), not yet capable of doing the work of teaching and making disciples (cf. 1 Timothy 3:6; James 3:1)
- After being “born again,” he begins the growth process (1 Peter 2:2) – he is not to remain in a state of spiritual infancy (Hebrews 5:12-14); eventually, he is to reach the point when he can help produce and develop other disciples

Steps Involved in “Making Disciples”

- Sowing/planting (Luke 8:5-8, 11) – this is done through preaching (1 Peter 1:23-25); the seed implanted is able to save (James 1:21)
- Watering (1 Corinthians 3:6) – this is done through persuading and exhorting (Acts 2:40; 17:2-4); this enables the seed to take root
- Reaping (John 4:37-38) – this happens when people respond to the gospel (Acts 2:41, 47); this is the point in which they are “born again” (1 Peter 1:23)
- Tending (Acts 20:28-30) – this involves teaching the truth and protecting from harm (Titus 1:9-11); primarily the work of the elders (Acts 20:28), but there is also a sense in which all of us are involved in this (Ephesians 4:16)
- Equipping (Ephesians 4:11-12) – this is the process of preparing them to make disciples themselves (2 Timothy 2:2); we put on the full armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-17), and do so to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

Doing the Work of “Making Disciples”

- As a farmer – we need to be sowing the seed by preaching the gospel (1 Thessalonians 1:8; Acts 8:4); we need to be watering the seed by persuading them of the truth (1 Peter 3:15; 2 Corinthians 5:11); we need to be reaping by taking people from belief to gospel obedience (Acts 22:16; Romans 6:17)
- As a shepherd – we need to be tending the souls of others by encouraging faithfulness (Hebrews 3:12-13); this can also be done by restoring those who have fallen away (Galatians 6:1; James 5:19-20)
- As a soldier – we need to be fighting the good fight (1 Timothy 6:12); contend earnestly for the faith (Jude 3)

Conclusion

- Jesus commissioned His apostles to go out and make disciples – convert them, help them be faithful
- We do the same type of work today – convert people to Christ, teach and encourage faithfulness
- At the same time, we need to make sure we are faithful disciples ourselves – we must be baptized into Christ (Matthew 28:19) and then observe all that He commanded (Matthew 28:20)