

The Discipleship Group

To those who are called to disciple the nations...

In the summer of 2011, God gave me an assignment to write materials in the form of a three year system that Christian men and women can use to reproduce disciples. Most Christians don't reproduce or invest themselves in others because they don't know how or where to begin. Their best effort has been a Bible study or a particular book on a topic they go through with others. These are good and valid things to do, but the key to reproducing the *lifestyle* of a disciple is in a long-term investment of time into a relationship through a systematic way where measureable achievement and growth are both visible and experiential. This is not something attained alone by attending church services once a week. There must be something much more involved, just as Jesus involved his life into a systematic, ongoing relationship with twelve men, and more specifically, his closest disciples—John, James and Peter.

The material in my discipleship system comes from 40 years of experience in planting and pastoring churches. I also carry a Doctorate of Ministry and a Ph.D. in Theology that has equipped me to provide fundamental teachings of the Christian faith and tools to aid in rightly dividing and handling the Word of Truth. Through all my years of ministry and study toward my degrees, I have discovered one important truth—my growth and maturity was accelerated through disciplined study that required me to think and to seek God for truth. It is my conviction that *unless* we train disciples to think for themselves, study on their own, and discover truths in the Word—on their own (as the Holy Spirit teaches them)—we will never wean them from total dependence on weekly sermons. Weekly sermons are important, but they aren't enough to make mature saints, equipped to hear from God on their own. Accelerating growth in any Christian requires training and instilled discipline to dig for truth in the Bible. This is why Jesus asked *questions* of his disciples. He didn't just tell them things, he asked questions to get them to think, to ponder, to consider what they had witnessed of his life, and the insights they gained from it.

The best way to conquer a people is to keep them ignorant and uneducated—totally reliant on what someone *more* educated will tell them is true. If they aren't equipped to discern God's Word and study it accurately, they'll never experience true freedom and liberty in Christ. They will be enslaved by ignorance and become vulnerable to deception from false prophets and teachers. Why do you think the Dark Ages in history were so dark? Because only the religious leaders, the educated, had access to the scriptures and kept the members of the church entrapped by their ignorance of the truth. That's why we must equip and train disciples of the Lord to discover truth in God's Word, able to share their discoveries with the other three in their weekly meetings. I believe the church is weak today because the saints are weak in their knowledge and understanding of the Word. Because they're complacent and lethargic in their studies of scripture, they place all their confidence in their teachers as the sole source of revelation. Yes, we are to learn from sound preaching and teaching by God's leaders in the church, but if that's all we do, we won't grow, and we won't become disciples that make disciples.

Because of this, I've taken the approach to train and equip the saints to learn how to dig out truths for themselves. I begin by laying a foundation in Book One that layers each week upon the previous weeks and prepares the disciple for the next book. There are a total of six books, each containing 26 weeks of assignments (it takes a minimum of six months to complete each book with a group). Each week has six to seven tracks of assignments, easily done with 15-20 minutes

of study a day, before they meet with their discipleship group. Everything presented in the books lays groundwork for the next week of assignments (and the next book) until three years of discipleship is complete. Jesus gave us this model of three years himself. For his church to be successful and his kingdom to be carried on after his death and resurrection, he laid the groundwork for his disciples to carry on his kingdom purposes through disciplined training.

The disciple who fulfills all three years (six books) will obtain an equivalent knowledge and grasp of the Word as most seminary graduates do (not necessarily in the specialized areas of scholarly teachings in seminary—i.e., Greek and Hebrew languages) by experiencing the tools, the maturity and the growth they'll obtain by learning how to dig for truth in the Word as they are taught by the Holy Spirit (1 John 2:20, 27). In my system the disciples are trained to feed themselves, to be able to hear the Holy Spirit's revelation of truth, and to be able to exhort, share, teach, and train others.

Most seminary students graduate with knowledge, but not always with experience in discipleship. The Christians who complete my system will not only know how to study as effectively as any seminary student, they'll also disciple others along the way, and have many layers of discipleship groups below the three they have discipled in their group. They'll come out of their three years as a "seasoned" saint, able to lead their own congregation, if that's the Lord's will for their life. My discipleship books are designed to train and equip disciples to become leaders and influencers with God's kingdom principles and values.

I believe God is bringing back serious, intentional discipleship to his church. I've been assigned to do my part to help produce strong, mature, equipped, empowered men and women to carry forth his great commission to make disciples of all nations. Would you please pray about and consider joining me in my campaign to provoke a culture of discipleship in the church—by being a discipler of others yourself?

God bless you!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jay Zinn". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jay Zinn

www.jayzinn.com

www.iZeeBooks.com (where my books may be purchased)