HOLISTIC DISCIPLESHP

BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR DISCIPLING THE WHOLE PERSON

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Holistic Discipleship

Basic Principles for Discipling the Whole Person

Kevin Peck
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INTRODUCTION

From all my experience leading my church and working with other churches, I've seen in us a tendency to play this either/or game with discipleship of our own and evangelism of the masses. We'll either spend all our time developing our own, shutting off outsiders, or open our doors wide to the world and keep it shallow with our training.

But what do the Scriptures say?

The Scriptures show us a glimpse of heaven in the future. What we see there is multitudes upon multitudes of people from every tongue, tribe, and nation worshiping Jesus (Rev. 7:9). That is our end. All of the world will be reached, and the evangelists' wildest dreams will come true.

They also show us how we'll get to that end. Just look at the history of Jesus' ministry.

Jesus comes to earth, grows to an adult, begins His earthly ministry around 30, and dies around 33. During those critical three years, He spends a disproportionate amount of time with 12 men. Investing in them, living with them, correcting them, teaching them, showing them how to advance the Kingdom.
Of course He preached, but He didn't only preach. Of course He healed, but He didn't only heal. He spent the majority of his time preparing a rag-tag group of men to continue His ministry and take His message to the ends of the earth after He left.

So let me get this straight. Not only will the evangelist guys get what they want, but from what it looks like, the all-development-no-outsiders guys are also right?

The reality is that, yes, God has the end in mind, and yes He also gave us the means. Not only did God destine the world to bow at the feet of Jesus, He also designed how it will come to pass.

The fundamental way that we are going to see Jesus save men across the globe is through discipleship.

That's right, the good-old-fashioned, life-on-life, person-to-person, dirty, messy process of teaching people to obey all that Jesus has commanded. Showing people with our words and our lives how to follow and magnify the Risen Savior.

That's it...it may not be sexy, it may not sell books, but it is how God designed His redemption plan.
We've all heard this before, I know. But think about it...to most of us it seems nuts. The Son of God comes to earth and rather than staying and preaching for forty years, He spends three years investing in 12 men and then He leaves!

Can you imagine that strategy meeting? King Jesus chatting it up with the angels in heaven..."So, Lord, what's the plan?"

"Well I'm going to be born a child, grow up as a blue-collar worker’s son for 30 years...spend three years ministering to less than 1% of the world’s land mass, and then entrust 12 men with world evangelization."

What?! Surely we could come up with something new, maybe more efficient, maybe even as a back up plan? No. There isn't a plan B and there doesn't need to be one. Discipleship is God's choice plan for redeeming the world.

This is not profound. It's not new. It's simply not finished. And most of us simply refuse to accept it. When it comes down to it, for most of us being as successful as Jesus was at developing leaders would feel like a wasted life.

See how that's a problem? To think little of this model and to reject
this model is to reject God's ordained means to accomplish His mission.

The reality is if you reach only 12 in your life, it's a win. It will probably feel like you're spending too much time with a few and neglecting the many, but this is precisely how God will redeem every last one of His own!

MAYBE frame this piece as a redefining document for how our generation, how our movement, approaches discipleship. JUST MAYBE

So wherever you are, however long you’ve been in the business of making disciples of our King, join me as I seek to follow Jesus in His plan. Reading this eBook is a very small step in a very grand plan that God has graciously given us a part in. Don’t just read this and tweet about it, use it!

Read, skim, share, discuss, and yet whatever you do, let this eBook be as helpful as it can be not in your talking, but in your doing the work of a disciple-maker. Let’s make disciples and hasten the return of our Lord!
DEFINITION & FRAMEWORK

DEFINING DISCIPLESHIP

We tend to think of discipleship one of two different lenses. For some discipleship is the same as coaching. We help others get from point A in life to point B. For others discipleship is education. We help others learn some information they are lacking. While discipleship is not less than these, it's more than these.

That it to say discipleship is not merely coaching people along their way to an already identified win. It’s also to say discipleship is not merely imparting knowledge to the unlearned, however much insight we can deliver. Nor is it simply these two combined.

Jesus calls us to worship Him in heart, mind, body, and soul, and to lead others to do the same. To reduce our own devotion or what we encourage in others to anything less is a gross misuse of our time and energy, and at the end of the day it’s disobedient to God’s will. Thus we must begin with a clear definition of what we mean when we say discipleship.

*Discipleship is helping the whole person become all that God has designed them to be in Christ.*
A FRAMEWORK FOR DISCIPLESHIP

Now approaching the discipleship of the whole person can be more than a little vague and difficult to know where to start. And without identifying a clear approach, we’re all doomed to default to what we do best – whether coach or teach – and reduce our disciple making to something far less than Jesus intends.

So to begin not only making this digestible but also to help hold ourselves accountable to approaching the whole person, let’s walk through a framework to approach discipleship.

The framework has two major components:

1. Seeing discipleship in its place in God’s story
2. Seeing all layers of the whole person

Discipleship in God’s Story

Before we could ever begin rightly assessing the different layers of the person we intend to disciple, we need first to view discipleship in its proper context. Before we start trying to making disciples, we need to see our work in light of God’s larger plan of redemption.

Discipleship is not a stand-alone task, but rather the primary
means of accomplishing God's plan for redemption. As mentioned above in our motivation for discipleship, discipleship is "the how" of God's mission to gather to Himself a people for His own possession and glory. Therefore, when we think about discipleship, we can see it as the action in God's story of restoring humanity.

The Whole Fallen Person

Now that we can see discipleship in its proper place, we can dig deeper to what all is entailed when God restores fallen man. If God is intent on restoring each of His children to full and complete worship, then He must mean to fix all that was lost when we fell in the garden. So what does that look like?

The secret to approaching an accurate view of the fall is to establish that before humanity is anything, before we can define men and women by any action, any feeling, any thought, humanity is created in the image of God. And in God’s image, fashioned after the great “Us” (Genesis 1:26), the great eternal, loving Trinity, we are relational beings. Since our first breaths we have related to God, to ourselves, to one another, and to creation itself.

Yet in the garden, our first parents sinned. They rebelled against God and God judged them. In full accord with their willful rebellion, He cursed them and all their relationships, creation, and
all of us who would follow in their lineage. Now if that’s true, than all that can be known about our deficiencies, our most base problems, is in the story of the fall. What all did we have before it and what all did we lose through it? Defining what exactly mankind lost in the fall is our first step in building a helpful framework for discipleship.

The most simple and yet thorough framework I’ve been able to develop is to say that, with the fall, humanity suffered the loss of its four crucial relationships – with God, with ourselves, with one another, and with creation.
Relationship with God

First, humanity was separated from God. There is now theological discord between God and man. Where there was once trust and obedience there is now enmity and insubordination between God and mankind.

This means discipleship must address our theological brokenness. We must help people properly see God as He really is. We must help people have a proper true view of God.

For making disciples of the lost, it’s helpful to acknowledge up front that those who have not received Christ as Lord suffer this reality in every way. They are totally disconnected from God. They can pray, sure, they can even obey some of Jesus’ greater ethics, but they are in darkness, they don’t have the Spirit, they don’t have life. Their relationship with God is totally fractured.

Yet they are not without hope. God is not far at any moment from using your lips to deliver the saving power of His gospel and initiating the restoration process of their profound theological disconnect.

Once they have received Jesus and professed His Lordship, been baptized, the process has just begun. For every disciple is first restored to a right relationship with God, then able to imitate the
Son of God. And the end we ought to have in mind as we begin to
guide them in their imitating Jesus is not understanding but
obedience. For consider Jesus’ choice words before His ascension:
“Teach them to obey all that I have commanded you” (Matthew
28:19). He isn’t after understanding, He wants obedience.

Further, we can all rest assured that full restoration to our Lord is
indeed a process. For what God begins to restore at conversion, He
perfects through sanctification, and He is not finished until He
calls us heavenward (Philippians 1:6; 3:12-16).

This inescapable fact is helpful because it reminds us that the lost
are not the only ones in need of theological growth. For even after
years of endurance, those of us in the kingdom are prone to lose
the connectivity, prone to spiritual fatigue.

If you ever begin to think your most mature disciples don’t need
to continually hear the gospel preached fresh, don’t need to be
reminded of God’s great love for them in Christ, then test yourself.
Are you delighting in the presence of God?

If you ever doubt, honestly assess your own lack and simply
repent.

To recap and help implement the theological segment of holistic
discipleship, below is a progression of content I consider placing
before disciples at the early stages of the process:
THEOLOGICAL CONTENT PROGRESSION

Though not exhaustive, below is a list of topics I walk disciples through in the earliest stages of their theological development. I choose these because they cover some essentials of what we all lack in our early Christian life, but feel free to get creative with these.

• The Gospel.

The inaugural content of every disciple’s theological life is that very content which gives spiritual life: the gospel itself. Before you say anything or crack any book with them, establish that they believe and love the gospel message itself. God created them, they passively received Adam’s sin and willfully committed their own, God redeemed them through the blood of Jesus, and God is restoring and will one day fully renew them by the power of the Spirit.

• Spiritual Disciplines.

As you teach a child how to eat, drink, sleep, walk – so we must teach children in the faith to read and know their Bible, to pray, and to share their faith and make more disciples.

• Systematic Theology.

As you witness your disciples mature in the regular disciplines of the Christian life, educate them in the nuances of precise Christian doctrine. In due time, graduate them from milk to solid food. For young believers, I couldn’t recommend more highly Wayne Grudem’s Systematic Theology.
ACTIVITY

Before we move on, take a moment to consider your own experience with seeing theological deficiency in the life of one of your disciples. What is an example you’ve seen of how bad doctrine manifests in a disciple's life? Consider how a negative behavior pattern you witnessed was really a symptom of a theological disconnect.
Relationship with Self

The second feature we must observe in the fall is that humanity was separated from its own sense of self. Mankind lost its identity. There is now psychological discord within humanity. Where there was once a clear understanding of the purpose, design, and destiny, there is now identity confusion and longing for purpose.

In our fallen state we see ourselves other than we truly are. Humanity no longer primarily sees themselves as worshippers of God, as sons and daughters of God, as servants of God, as lovers of God, but as something entirely false.

In making disciples, we must help people properly see themselves. Those outside of Christ must see themselves as sinners, as depraved, as enemies of God. Believers must see themselves as children of the living God.

The overwhelmingly popular identities as lovers of money, success, and sex, or any other idol, are falsehoods that keep people from living in their new identity in Christ.

What’s utterly important for disciples to grasp is the profound idea from Scripture that through Christ’s saving work, God transforms us. He takes us from one status and changes us to a new one. We can think of this as the gospel transforming us such that our old
identities are replaced with new ones. The table below shows some of the many identity transformations we experience in Christ.

**Old Self --> New Self**

1. Enemy of God --> Son of God  
2. Slave to Sin --> Slave to Righteousness  
3. Hater of God --> Lover of God  
4. Spiritually Dead --> Indwelled by the Holy Spirit  
5. Powerless Against Satan --> Victorious in Christ

In sum, we are first our new self and then anything else. Anything that would dictate behavior contrary to that of who God says we are is a mistaken identity.

I want to say on a personal side note that this aspect of Jesus’ restoring work can be toughest to grasp for achievers, or those who are most comfortable getting things done.

We can feel like we're doing everything right and the whole time be forgetting who He says we are. Along the way we miss what delight there is to be found in knowing and operating according to whom God has made us to be.
Not only for high achievers, but for all of us and our disciples who would do God’s work, the proper way to approach any endeavor is to think rightly about our identity in Christ. The thought process goes best like this:

1. Think about who God says you are in Christ
2. Think about how He feels toward you
3. Out of that recognition, enjoy doing what He made you to do

As we begin discussing a content progression for developing a disciple in their sense of true Christian identity, I want to highlight two pillars that support an ongoing true sense of self: the gospel message and the gospel community. The gospel message, according to Paul’s words to Titus, is the very source by which we take hold of our new identity and the very source by which we grow into our new identity. The gospel changes us and the gospel trains us for righteous living.

Titus 2:11-14

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.
The second pillar, without which the first is sure to crack and fall, is the gospel community. Once the gospel has been received by a disciple, God’s church reinforces and helps disciples maintain awareness of their new and true identity in Christ. that is in relation to others

IDENTITY CONTENT PROGRESSION

Though not exhaustive, below is a list of topics I walk disciples through in the earliest stages of development into their Christian identity.

I choose these because they cover some essentials of what we all lack in our early Christian life, but feel free to get creative with these.

1. The character qualifications of church leadership in 1 Timothy 3:1-13 & Titus 1:5-9. Have them read and consider that these are not lofty and unattainable ethics, they are standard traits of Spirit-empowered and time-tested Christian character.

2. Reflect on the personal implications of the Scriptures covered through daily Bible reading of the disciple. When meeting, ask what their readings have taught them not only about how God relates to them, but of what that says about who they are.
ACTIVITY

Before we move on, take a moment to consider your own experience with seeing a misunderstanding of identity in Christ play out in a disciple. What is an example you’ve seen of how a mistaken sense of self manifests in a disciple’s life? Consider how the behavior you saw reflected a mistaken identity, and probably meant that person’s identity was in their behavior.
Relationship with Others

The third feature we must observe in the fall is that humans were separated from other humans. There is now social discord between man and man. Where there was once harmony and unity there is now strife and division between people. From the moment sin entered the world, the blame game started, competition ruled over cooperation, and strife arose.

This means discipleship must address our relationships. We can't just address what people believe about God, but what does their belief mean for their relationships? Relationships with their spouse, family, friends, coworkers, strangers?

It’s worth noting up front that there’s no one-size-fits-all approach to developing social growth in disciples, but the source of power to change is the same for all.

One reason for the divergence in approach is that introverts and extroverts will experience this pain differently. Introverts will likely experience the problem emotions of social strife – rejection, abandonment, ridicule – and run from people for safety, leading them to social isolation.

Extroverts more likely will experience those same emotions and lash out at people for safety. They won’t leave and cut themselves
off, they’ll stay present and do what they can to cut others off. Both ways are not just empty forms of coping with social pain, they alike further the social strife through hostility.

We can see how the behaviors are different, and therefore the first steps of counseling either one might sound completely different, yet we come to the leveling power of the gospel not only to save, but to transform Jesus’ people.

Though the application method may be different, the source of the cure is the same. For Jesus was abandoned, despised, rejected, and spilled His blood to satisfy all His wrath against all His chosen, both introverts and extroverts alike. There is none left for us to give, we must agree with Him and forgive.

The secret to encouraging disciples to be people of forgiveness is in getting them to see how great Jesus’ forgiveness is toward them, and therefore how capable they are of forgiveness. The forgiven forgive.

Indeed we were all guilty of an un-payable debt to the Most High God, and indeed in Jesus we are all cleared of that debt. The more closely disciples walk in recognition of that fact, the more apt they will be for gracious social behavior.
SOCIAL CONTENT PROGRESSION

Though not exhaustive, below is a list of topics I walk disciples through in the earliest stages of development into their place in and engagement with God’s family.

I choose these because they cover some essentials of what we all lack in our early Christian life, but feel free to get creative with these.

1. The "one-anothers" of Scripture. Of all the commands given to the early church, some of the most profound for daily discipleship are those in which Jesus and His Apostles directed their hearers to behave in a certain way toward “one another.” LIST THOSE HERE I put them here and not in the social discipleship because, again, the primary grace by which God reminds of who we are is His church, and living in proper relation to it is how we achieve proper relationship to ourselves.

2. Reflect on the relational implications of the Scriptures covered through daily Bible reading of the disciple. When meeting, ask what their readings have taught them not only about how God relates to them, but of what that says about how they ought to relate to others.
ACTIVITY

Before we move on, take a moment to consider your own experience with seeing a misunderstanding of forgiveness in Christ play out in a disciple. What is an example you’ve seen of how a refusal to acknowledge their own justification manifests in a disciple's life? Consider how the behavior you saw reflected a mistaken sense of personal sin and guilt before God, and the consequent weightiness of Jesus’ grace toward them.
Relationship with the Physical World

The fourth and final feature we must observe in the fall is that humanity was alienated from the nourishment of the world. There is now physical discord between man and creation.

Where there was once provision and enjoyment there is now need and toil between man and nature. Where there was once an understanding concerning the created order there are now a plurality of demonic worldviews.

The world that once was meant to provide for us and bring us joy is now against us. Disease, hunger, natural disasters, even the decay of our own physical bodies. The world is against us.

Proper discipleship of the whole person, therefore, will help men and women understand God, which informs our identity, which informs how we interact with others, which in turn helps us interact with the world we inhabit.

When we think of our physical world, one of the first things that comes to mind for many of us is beauty. We love to be in it and observe all that God has created to glorify himself. After beauty, the second-most common thought is pain.
Our world is beautiful and yet clearly fallen. There are all kinds of pains, and things show to be not as they should be. This damage too is because of our sin.

**Simple Theology**

The theology here is simple. Before the fall we enjoyed a proper alignment. The Creator ruled over us, and we submitted in worship. We loved and had harmony with one another. We as representatives of the Most High filled the earth and ruled over it and all its creatures. At the fall we flipped it. We exalted the created things to gods and worshiped them, subjecting our true Lord beneath our own feet.

As judgment God cursed the ground. He made it harsh, unruly, and bitter against our lordship. The effects of that curse are what we now know as the pains of death, decay, toil, famine, drought, disaster, and disease. Our physical needs are real and the Bible is not silent to them. Approaching them rightly must be addressed in Christian discipleship.

Moreover, they’re best approached as fourth priority. Once a disciple understands who God is, who they are, how they relate to others, then they can begin to understand and align themselves with God’s will for how we should engage our physical world.
What we demonstrated at the fall is that we were terrible stewards over what God gave us. We turned everything on its head and made a wreck of things. To counteract the physical fall, holistic discipleship makes us into responsible stewards over what we’ve been given – our bodies, our families, our work, and our communities.

With our bodies we ought to care for them, not neglecting good health, rest, and exercise. With our families we ought to cherish them the same and see to it that they’re never without food, shelter, and guidance. With our work we ought to trust Jesus and work hard through ease and obstacles, through successes and losses.

With our communities we ought to be merciful toward our neighbors and fight hard for justice, giving food, water, shelter, medicine, and prayer to as many as possible, not merely in crisis relief but through community development.

That’s simple and yet a lot, I know. Aside from making more disciples, name a better way to bring young disciples to their knees in prayer.
PHYSICAL CONTENT PROGRESSION

Though not exhaustive, below is a list of topics I walk disciples through in the earliest stages of development into responsible Christian stewards. I choose these because they cover some essentials of what we all lack in our early Christian life, but feel free to get creative with these.

1. The pre-fall order. Have them read in depth the first three chapters of Genesis and observe. What was the state of things between God and man, man and man, and man and creation before the fall? How did that change after the fall? Have them compare Scriptures’ assessment of the world after the fall to the world as they see it.

2. The composition and depravity of man. Have them read and study what the Scriptures teach on these and discuss how the truth of Scripture changes their previous understanding. When it comes to how we think about and what we do in and toward the world around us, these beliefs have a more significant bearing than most of us would guess. Humanity is body and spirit relating to God who is spirit and creation that is purely physical. For these particular topics in a young disciple – and just about any doctrine for young believers – I couldn’t recommend more highly Wayne Grudem’s *Systematic Theology*.

3. Managing their household well. By this I mean helping them develop healthy rhythms of work, rest, and overall physical care for themselves and their family. This could include diet, exercise, sleep, how much they work, their observing a real Sabbath, and how they manage their
finances, among other things. Have them study the household-related qualifications for church leadership and establish a plan to exercise more responsible dominion over all they’ve been given to steward.
Discipleship in the 21st Century American Culture

There is a difference to me between ministry and discipleship. The Scriptures seem to indicate that Jesus had a different relationship with those He spent the majority of His time with and the rest of the people in ministered to.

In His context they were called a common name: disciples. Other cultures have a set of expectations for discipleship baked into the culture, ours does not. We will have to make this formal and clear. There must be a formal, articulated and agreed upon set of expectations for teacher and students.

This should include meeting frequency, an expectation of a posture of learning, and other areas of accountability. While it is possible to do without this, I have not found it most beneficial.

Structural Considerations

1. There must be formal teaching times. I suggest a twice a month gathering in a common place to meet for formal instruction in the doctrines of God. Again, while discipleship is more than this, it cannot be less.

2. Disciple in groups. I suggest 4-7.

3. Disciple those of the same gender.
4. Practice spiritual disciplines together – Bible reading, prayer, fasting, evangelism, etc.

5. A good format is Neil Cole’s Life Transformation Group model (REFERENCE Organic Church). This should be done weekly, even if formal instruction times are only every other week.


7. Have an end date communicated on the front end. You can always extend, but have an expectation for when your formal time will end.

8. Expect replication and set a timeline.
Closing Thoughts

Holistic discipleship addresses all four broken aspects of humanity. Discipleship is demonstrating that the gospel is the solution to all of man's needs created by the fall. Discipleship is restoring the whole person back to God, to self, to others, and to this physical world as much is possible before the second advent of Jesus.

Of all the pushback I’ve had personally and of all I’ve heard from others, our biggest aversion to actually executing on this is that it feels too small, too narrow, too inefficient. We do this and sure, we make a few disciples, but is this really wise when we look at all the work left to be done?!

I hear you, but there’s now way around it. This is Jesus’ plan.

What’s your plan? How did you spend you time last week? Seriously, how much time investing personally to a few? Think about your week. How much time did you spending investing in the many, how much on the few? Are you investing in the few to reach the many, or are you investing in the many to reach a few?

One on many says you are the savior, one on a few says He is the Savior.
Are you banking your ministry legacy on your teaching alone? Is this what you see our master doing in the Scriptures? I’m not saying He didn't teach, but I am saying leaned on and banked on a few who would not only learn from him but be with Him in all of His life. He preached to many but He banked on a few.

The call to discipleship is not just a call to teach but a call to teach them to **obey**. Right in the very words of Jesus is the key to His strategy for reaching the entire world. You can't do this one to many...you can only do this one to few.

> And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:18-20)

The command is go make disciples by teaching them to obey. If you are a parent and you think simply telling your kids what to believe and how to act is enough, you're out of your mind.

There is no short cut to this and there is no exemption card. You can't outsource this, you can't delegate this. You can't cut this command up and divvy out the responsibilities...you go, make
disciples, you baptize, you teach them to observe all that He commanded you. As hard as this seems, this must be the air we breathe. This cannot become just a department or a program. This is the plan of God.

I can't tell you how much it pains me to watch the common ministry practice of using people to get things done instead of using tasks to make disciples of people. It's like saying "I don't have time to disciple you, because we need to work to disciple others." What?! It’s crazy talk.

Leaders, on a real practical note... Embed this at every level of your organization...if this is how Jesus did it, if this is the plan for redemption then...

...this is how you lead your family...
...this how you develop leaders...
...this how you develop staff...

Be astute and wise in your discipleship of yourselves and your discipleship of one another. Be considerate of all the painful effects of the fall. Use sympathy, empathy, wisdom, and care. Get in their shoes, and make disciples of every nation.
This is God's design. We can do no better.
APPENDIX: GUIDEBOOK & EXERCISES FOR HOLISTIC DISCIPLESHIP

The final pages include a brief overview and leader’s planning guide for each aspect of holistic discipleship. Each section includes a key passage of Scripture, the basic principles of the aspect, a suggested content progression for discipleship in the aspect, and some discussion questions.

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Discipleship as God’s Work to Resolve Theological Brokenness

"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you. And, lo, I am with you even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-19)

Principles

1. In order to know anything of ourselves, others, or our environment we must know the creator. This is the beauty of God's revelation. We can know Him, and through Him, ourselves, others, and our world. But, as the creator, he alone is the de-facto authority on the rest.

2. Discipleship is more than, but not less than helping others to know God. We cannot properly relate to anything or anyone else until we relate properly to God.

3. The gospel is central to our knowing God. Apart from the good news of Christ in the gospel, humanity cannot know God. So discipleship is always primarily about helping others to hear, receive, obey, and herald the gospel.

4. Because of the gospel, we can know God. By knowing God, we can love, obey and worship Him.
5. The end of theology is obedience and joy, not understanding. Discipleship is aimed at teaching people to obey what God has commanded. If you are not working toward obedience through repentance and faith then you are working in vain.

Content

1. Start with the gospel. It would surprise you how many people cannot articulate the gospel. This should be understood both in terms of salvation and sanctification – how the gospel saves them and how it is saving them. This helps build the picture in the disciple's mind about the over-arching redemption plan of God.

2. Build in them a working knowledge and practice of the spiritual disciplines.

3. Read, Pray, Share you faith

4. Add others as you go.

5. We never graduate from this! To reinforce that in our own church, every leader, no matter how mature, no matter how influential, is regularly confessing sin, being held accountable to the disciplines, and praying for the lost in a small group of their peers.

6. Build a systematic theology. Help your disciples get the big picture of all the Scriptures major themes.
Discussion

1. How do you see bad theology play itself out in one of Christ's disciples in the Bible?
2. How have you seen bad theology play itself out in a disciple you've developed in your own life?
3. If you need an example: How would a person who does not believe in hell be limited in following Jesus?
Discipleship as God's Work to Resolve Identity Crisis

*Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others. But what we are is known to God, and I hope it is known also to your conscience. We are not commending ourselves to you again but giving you cause to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast about outward appearance and not about what is in the heart. For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.*

*From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:11-21)*
Principles

1. In order to progress as disciples of Christ, our identity in Christ becomes paramount to our living like Christ.

2. We do not simply behave different, we different natures. In helping others to become more like Jesus they must have firm grasp on who and what they are in Jesus. The Christian life is not a practice in sinners acting like something else, but rather those who have been reborn learning to act according to their new nature as children of God.

3. Discipleship is helping others live according to their new identity.

4. So sin, then, is acting against our design in God. Holiness is thinking, believing, and doing according to God's intended purpose for us.

5. Jesus becomes then, not only the sacrifice for men, but also our example of living according to our new nature.

Content

1. Understand the identity and nature of the unregenerate.
2. Understand the identity and nature of the regenerate.
3. Understand the view of self of the person being discipled.
4. Understand the tendencies of the disciple toward the old self.
Discussion

1. How have you seen a misunderstanding of identity in Christ play out in one of Christ's disciples in the Bible?
2. How have you seen a misunderstanding of identity in Christ play out in a disciple you’ve developed in your own experience?
3. If you need an example: How would a person who does not view their self as a child of God, an heir to the Kingdom, view their struggle against sin?
Discipleship as God's Work to Resolve Relational Brokenness

Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. (Ephesians 2:11-16)

Principles

1. In light of our reconciliation to God through Christ, we have been adopted into a new family.

2. We are to treat "one another" as members of God's household, reflecting His character.

3. We are to treat outsiders as members of God's household, reflecting His character.
Content

1. Understand the "one another" passages in the New Testament.

2. Reflect on the relational implications of the Scriptures brought to light through the disciple’s daily Bible reading.


Discussion

1. Is there something about you that is hurting your relationships that you have never addressed? Do you blame personality? Do you settle, thinking, "It's just who I am"?

2. Why do we often fail to address these relational "quirks" in our discipleship? If you don’t have experience in this, why do you think no one has made a point to address yours?
Discipleship as God's Work to Resolve our Interaction with the Physical World

The Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.

To the woman he said, “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.”

And to Adam he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” (Genesis 3:14-19)
Principles

1. Though we have been reconciled to God through Christ and have been adopted into a new family, the physical world has not yet been redeemed.

2. Redeemed children of God are among the first fruits of a new creation, but the rest of the created world will only be made right after Jesus returns.

3. Discipleship must help us understand how to Glorify God while still living in a broken world.

Content

1. Understand the physical world order before the fall. Discuss implications of Genesis 1-3.

2. Compare the pre-fall world to the world as you see it today. Discuss the Christian worldview regarding current events.

3. Understand the composition of man.

Discussion

1. How does the bible inform us concerning natural disasters? How should this inform how we disciple other men?

2. Should discipleship inform our view of our own bodies? How so?
ABOUT KEVIN PECK

Kevin is the lead pastor and an elder at the Austin Stone Community Church in Austin, Texas. In partnership with founding and preaching pastor Matt Carter, he has seen God grow the Austin Stone from a small gathering of young people to a city-loving church of over 7000. Kevin’s passion is to equip and mobilize Christ-exalting leaders in the home, church, city and globe. He received a Master’s of Divinity from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and is currently working toward a D.Min in Leadership at Southern Seminary. He is the joyful husband of Leslie and father to three beautiful girls, Ellie, Halle and Ivey.