

Introduction: It is our aim at Pillar Church to “Know Jesus and Make Him Known”. Our fundamental goal is to help you grow in your own personal love for Jesus and commitment to godly character. Additionally, we are also committed to compelling you to become a multiplier; a disciple that wants others to experience the life-changing power of the Gospel and has a battle plan to make that happen.

In this course, we want to build on the content of the Basics Course called *Grow your Faith* and equip you in three distinct ways.

First, we want to teach you *Biblical Principles* that will establish an underlying theology of discipleship and the vision for why you should devote yourself to helping others follow Jesus.

Second, we want to commend a set of *Basic Practices* that can help you envision ways to practically multiply the Gospel impact Christ has had on your life.

Third, we want to focus on *Being Purposeful* so that you can apply what you learn in the life of our church itself. It is one thing to become a multiplier, but when a group of multipliers work together, their impact over time can accomplish things they would have never dreamed possible at the start.

Why do we want you to become a multiplier? Years ago, I was introduced to the power of multiplication through a simple illustration. Imagine one day you were surprised to find out you had been awarded an inheritance by a wealthy, distant relative. When the time came for you to receive it, the executor had been instructed to give you two options for collecting the inheritance. The first option would be to receive an immediate lump sum of \$1 million. The second option would be to receive a penny a month doubled for each month for three years. Then the executor says, “you have 30 seconds to decide.” What would you do?

Most people would feel tempted to just take the \$1 million dollars. Why not? You would have an enviable amount of money and could find plenty of ways to set yourself up for the future. After all, the penny a month doubled couldn't be much more. But your 30 seconds are up. I hope you would choose the second option. Of course, it may not look like much in the near term. After 6 months you would only have 32 cents. After 1 year you would still only have \$20.48. After 2 years, you would have about \$168,000. It's a nice sum but still far shy of a million. Finally at month 27 you would surpass a million dollars. But here is the amazing thing. When it is all said and done you would receive \$687,194,767. That is the power of multiplication.

At Pillar church, we desire to write an even better story; a story of the exponential power of the Gospel. Our story of multiplication would be displayed by ordinary members of the church. Members who have embraced a vision to become multipliers. Currently, we are in the early years, when the multiplication may seem slow and small. But just imagine what God can do as each member grows into a multiplier.

Ten Biblical Principles to fuel a discipleship culture in the church. As we look at the following ten ideas from Scripture you will notice they are divided into two sections. The first section will help you gain a broad vision for Discipleship as a part of God's overall plan for His Mission, His Church and His People. The second section will focus on aspects of individual discipleship that you want to be sure not to neglect as you encourage others in their growth in Christ.

1. The great commission is a disciple multiplying assignment not merely an evangelism assignment. Matthew 28:18-20.

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 ESV)

It is important to immediately avoid the misunderstanding that evangelism is not a part of the great commission. The goal of the Great Commission is not just to make more deeply committed followers of existing disciples. It is to make disciples of people who are not currently following Jesus. Evangelism is necessary to the fulfilling the Great Commission but it is not sufficient. As you see it also includes "baptizing" people into local congregations and teaching them to observe all that Jesus has instructed us to obey.

The main verb in verse 19 is "make disciples" and it is accompanied by three participles that fill out our understanding of what it takes to do so. As a church, WE MAKE DISCIPLES, that's what we do. We make disciples by "going" and "baptizing" and "teaching". The assignment that accompanies the great commission is to produce a church with a healthy culture of discipleship that will include: a.) people who are being "converted" b.) people who are being "trained" and 3.) people who are "living sent". ***Discipleship in the local church goes beyond conversion to helping people become multipliers who can reproduce the evangelistic effort that reached them and the training effort that caused them to live sent.***

Before we leave this point it is important to take notice that this multiplication of disciples is both a local and global effort.

It has a local focus of multiplying disciples among us. The command to go baptize and teach is a group project to make disciples in our normal going in every day life. The church gathers for a scarce number of hours each week to encourage one another, hear the Word, observe the ordinances. But ultimately we spend the greatest portion of our week scattered into our communities where the mission to proclaim the gospel meets new opportunities to multiply.

It has a global focus of multiplying disciples beyond our reach. When Jesus gives the Great Commission, he does not just have their community in view. The assignment is to make disciples among "all the peoples" of the earth. It simply cannot be done without

sending and going to places that the regular patterns of our life and ministry will never touch. In this way the effort is multiplied in each new place.

Let's imagine for a moment a 3D printer with capabilities (yet future) to produce an entire set of household goods to be used to replace things after a disaster in a matter of a few hours. You purchase one for a Disaster response team and are assigned to a major disaster area after a flood. You set up the shop where people can use it and lines are so long you cannot satisfy all of the needs and each day turn away hundreds of people in need. Then one day you get a special piece of software that changes everything. Your 3D printer can now reproduce itself once each day. The next day you do the natural thing and make another 3D printer. Now you have two. The third day you are producing furniture with one and another new printer with the other. The fourth day you are producing furniture with two and making another new printer.

In much the same way, the church is a disciple-producing factory with an assignment to make disciple producing factories among all peoples. Our assignment is not only to establish a great factory in our community but to take that pattern and place factories among all peoples. That is the heart of the ministry Jesus gave to his people.

2. The multiplication of disciples is the primary ministry focus of the local church. Ephesians 4:11-16

"And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love." (Ephesians 4:11-16 ESV)

When you start to read the instructions to a specific church like we find in Ephesians, it becomes clear that all that the church is and all it does really ***exists to help multiply the proclamation of the gospel to the world and the appropriation of the gospel's power for itself***. Churches have all sorts of "ministries" or programs that they use to do the work that they have set out to accomplish. Sometimes their programming is chosen purposefully and promotes the primary mission of the church and at other times the programs are simply absorbed from their traditions. In Ephesians 4:11-16 we see that mature discipleship is the primary business of the local church. Let's not forget that it includes conversion, integration into the local church, training, and sending. The heart of the ministry that Paul points us to here is the work of nurturing spiritual growth in the body of Christ that fuels the engine of the mission endeavor. The work of the ministry develops Christlikeness, love, knowledge, cooperation, unity, and advancement. Observe for a moment what we discover:

It is the purpose for which spiritual gifts are given. Paul describes a variety of spiritual giftings. But notice that the giftings are not an end in themselves but instead necessary contributions for an effective discipleship factory. The identified giftings aid the entire body in the work of the ministry. By themselves they are not the work of the ministry, meaning they are not the central aim of the church. Preaching and teaching are necessary but not the aim. Evangelism is necessary but not the aim, shepherding is necessary but not the aim.

It is the point of the coordinated efforts and programming. The work of multiplying disciples who embody and imitate the love of Christ is the end goal that Paul highlights. He talks about a variety of activities in the passage but never disconnects them from their end vision.

A healthy church measures its effectiveness then, not by the amount of activity going on but the quality and number of disciples being developed through of its work. Imagine for a moment a factory designed to make cars that boasts that it also managed over the past year to make a large number of spare parts for old steamboats. By all accounts they were unable to reach their goal for vehicle production but they decided instead to celebrate a record year making boat parts. This is exactly what many churches do when they never evaluate their effectiveness in disciple making but spend time celebrating lots of activity that may or may not help contribute to the central work of the ministry.

3. The multiplication of disciples is the ministry focus of every Christian. Ephesians 4:12.

“And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,” (Ephesians 4:11-12 ESV)

It is easy in our cultural setting to assume that the “work of the ministry” is something reserved for professional clergy or pastors. Nothing could be further from the truth. Here the work of the ministry that Paul is describing is the everyday impact of ordinary saints that are helping one another grow in their obedience to Christ and participation in his mission. The application of that truth is that this multiplication of disciples is the business of ordinary Christians not professionals. We cannot make the mistake of saying, “that’s not my ministry.” Every ministry small ‘m’ is about that Ministry large ‘M’ or it is disconnected from the overall mission of God described in the New Testament.

To make it simple, if the steamboat boiler conveyer belt is gathering up lots of workers but there is nobody to assemble the chassis of the cars then the factory has lost its way. Each Christian in a local church should concern themselves with answering the question individually, “How am I contributing to the overall discipleship of other members? In what ways can I become more equipped or take a more active role in supporting the sort of growth that is described here in Ephesians as the work of the ministry.

In their book *The Trellis and the Vine*, Colin Marshall and Tony Payne argue that “structures don’t grow ministry any more than trellises grow vines, and that most churches need to make a conscious shift—away from erecting and maintaining structures, and towards

growing people who are disciple-making disciples of Christ.” When they talk about structures they are not talking particularly about buildings but the programming of the local church. They are not saying that a healthy vine does not need the support of a good structure. Programs and organization are a good part of the body, but the primary reason for the existence of any program or function in the local church is the growth of the gospel into the lives of individuals.

4. The measurement of our discipleship is genuine love for God and one another. 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 1 Corinthians 13:1-3; John 13:34-35

It is important at this point to shift from thinking about the large-scale vision of the local church to understanding the substance and goal of discipleship in the ordinary experiences of individual life. We want people to “grow” or “mature”, but what exactly is the measurement that would help us understand if we are making progress. In some settings the measurement may be Bible knowledge, or volunteer hours, or consistency in spiritual disciplines, or any number of other measurements. The good news is that the Bible is clear what the end goal of discipleship is for individuals and it should also be our focus.

The aim of church leaders is to aid the growth of Christians in love.

The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. Certain persons, by swerving from these, have wandered away into vain discussion, desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions. (1 Timothy 1:5-7 ESV)

Here Paul is instructing a younger pastor, Timothy, about some challenges he is facing. He reminds him what the center of the bulls-eye is in discipleship. The bulls-eye is love. He even has a solid enough understanding love to emphasize the need in love for a pure heart, a good conscience, and sincere faith. Love is not just action but a genuine desire for the good of the other person. Love is not just an emotion but a commitment to maintaining a good-conscience by not acting in sin toward others. Love is not just about our relationship with others, but is an act of faith in God as we exercise love practically.

The other aspects of the Christian life are worthless without love.

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. (1 Corinthians 13:1-3 ESV)

Here Paul mentions a whole host of Christian badges of accomplishment; powerful spiritual experiences, prophetic gifts, deep knowledge of God, great faith, extravagant generosity, personal sacrifice. None of them are the primary measurement of Christian maturity. Love is.

The identifying mark of a disciple is love.

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:34-35 ESV)

Jesus could not be clearer about his priorities for his disciples. What will genuine disciples be known for and by? **Love.**

5. The scope of our disciple-making aims at every aspect of life. 2 Peter 1:3-11

For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:5-8 ESV)

In modern times it is more common to see our lives in separated boxes that have little bearing or influence on one another. In that mindset, our “spiritual lives” or “walk with God” are sometimes seen or viewed as separate from other aspects of life like our work, education, family life, recreation, or finances. The truth is we are people created by, who live in a world created by God, with capacities of life that were given by God all for knowing Him and making Him known.

It can also be common to carve up our lives into categories like actions and heart and believe that God cares for one category more than the others. Ultimately God doesn’t desire us to be people who are “good-hearted” but foolish and destructive in our actions. He is not just looking for us to do the right actions on the outside while harboring hatred and bitterness in our hearts toward Him or others.

In the passage above the writer uses idea of a “supplement” to remind us that growth in faith happens indirectly as we nurture things like virtue and self-control, brotherly-affection, and knowledge. In all of the avenues of life where these qualities may be displayed God is working to cause us to grow in faith. Do you want greater faith? Pour in supplements like virtue, knowledge, or genuine friendship and watch God grow your faith.

We were created to love God with all of our heart, mind, soul, and strength. Therefore our actions, thoughts, desires, commitments and every aspect of life matter to God and contribute to our discipleship. The different aspects of our life are interrelated and dependent on one another for growth in faith.

The truth is that Christian growth is not a linear experience. As we seek to foster growth in one another’s lives it becomes obvious that people are at different starting points and have different aspects of strength and weakness. The following five principles are meant to highlight some areas that we may fail to emphasize or overlook in working with one another.

6. Discipleship is not complete without a commitment to obey the Scripture. 1 John 2:1-6

If you love me, you will keep my commandments. (John 14:15 ESV)

Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. (John 14:23 ESV)

Critical to developing a life of following Christ is the clear commitment to value his word and instruction over our own perceptions and opinions. One of the basic insights the Christian faith gives to us is the idea that we have an uncanny ability to deceive ourselves about what is good and rationalize around clear instruction from God. We also continue to face cultural, familial, and political pressures to set aside the teaching of Jesus in favor of updated ways of looking at the world.

Sound biblical teaching anticipates this challenge and reminds disciples to be prepared for times in life where there will be hard decisions that clarify where our allegiances are. Additionally, we bear a level of responsibility to consider how we are purposefully shaping our lives to prioritize obedience to the teaching of the Word of God. More recently, many Christians have begun to dismiss any talk of difficult obedience as "legalism". Concerns about legalism are more related to our motivations for obedience, but the idea that discipleship includes a resolve of the will to obey anything the Scripture clearly teaches is clear from Jesus' own words.

7. Discipleship is not complete without an understanding of following Jesus. Luke 14:25-33

"If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple. (Luke 14:26-33 ESV)

If we are not careful, we will go about our work of making disciples much like a Life Coach working with others to improve their plans. Jesus, of course had something more substantial in mind. In disciple making we are not only attempting to connect one another with the practical wisdom for life, but to entirely re-organize our lives around the calling and purpose of Jesus. In Luke 14 Jesus pictures the cost of discipleship with three pictures. Consider that Jesus is calling his disciples to:

1. A transfer of loyalty that will shake up the fundamental relationships of your life.

2. A lifetime project that will require the dedication of your most important resources in life.
3. A strategic battle that will call for complete resolve to be victorious.

The truth is we are not preparing people if they are not pressed to consider if Jesus is a brother worth losing all other family for. We are not preparing people if they are not pressed to consider whether God's kingdom is worth our entire life resources to advance. We are not preparing people if they are not pressed to consider whether life under any other King would be eternally satisfying.

8. Discipleship is not complete without a firm grasp of the gospel and basic doctrine. 1 John 4:1-6; 2 Timothy 2:1-2

You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also. (2 Timothy 2:1-2 ESV)

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. (Colossians 3:16 ESV)

If the church is a factory for making disciples then the gospel is the blueprint that sets the design. The doctrine of the church is like the machines that churn out the various parts. The members of the church are like the skilled workers who know how to wield the design and the machines to be effective in the work.

Since our goal is not to just help others grow for their own sake but reach a maturity where they can in turn help others do the same, it is important that we help people move from recognizing the gospel and sound doctrine if they hear it to being able to articulate it themselves.

Be convinced that doctrine matters. There is a trend in churches to say things like "our knowledge surpasses our obedience". While I understand the hunger for obedience. The truth is we are not doing people any favors by leaving them unable to discern sound teaching. The ability to do so is critical for shaping our own hearts and minds to live for and desire the kingdom of God. We have not made disciples if people can barely recognize the gospel in our church and cannot distinguish between sound teaching and error.

Gaining a firm grasp on the gospel and doctrine creates new categories and language for our hearts and minds to understand our experiences. Category creation is important for growth in wisdom. The ability to distinguish between two seemingly similar things is an aspect of maturity in any discipline. For example when some people look under the hood of a car they see three categories. They see metal things, rubber things, and plastic things. You will never become an expert at car care without adding some detail to your categories. In the same way, remaining doctrinally vague about the gospel and central teaching of Christianity will not lead to increased expertise in dealing with our hearts.

9. Discipleship is not complete without a commitment to the local church. Acts 2:42-47; Ephesians 3:7-11; Hebrews 10:19-25

“since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. (Hebrews 10:21-25 ESV)

Assembling regularly with other Christians for worship, studying the Scriptures, prayer, accountability, encouragement, and mission advancement is not simply a helpful add-on for growing disciples. It is one of the major ways that the Christian life moves from theory to practice. People have all sorts of arguments and reasons for neglecting the local church and justifying it. But growing Christians who are not pro-actively engaged in the life of a local church are so rare that it is not worth defending the practice of going it alone.

One way of thinking about it is to say that Christianity is a team sport. Imagine if a person described himself as an NFL football player while not being associated with an actual team. Maybe they would explain that they do all the same type of workouts and have the same level of skills so it really doesn't make a difference. Even so, they would not be an NFL player. Even if they seemingly possess a high level of skill, the actual activity of being an NFL football player can only be done with other players, and accomplished as they work together to win games. The church has a mission together that individual Christians cannot be engaged in alone.

In the passage above, it is worth considering that Hebrews is written like a sermon to a church of Christians. So when it says, “Let us” it is speaking to the church collectively. We draw near to God together. We hold our confession together. We stir up love together. We encourage together. The way we do all of that together is by committing to meet together.

10. Discipleship is not complete without a desire for the gospel to reach all peoples. Matt 28:18-20.

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 28:19-20 ESV)

Every disciple of Jesus needs to have their vision for His mission expanded by a close study of Scripture and understanding of the Great Commission. Our work in encouraging one another should lead us to consider how we fit in to the overall mission of Christ. As we mentioned above we are not just making disciples in the church. We are to be concerned about a movement of disciples among the nations. The specific term there indicates that

Jesus has assigned us to strategize how we can overcome every language and culture barrier necessary for the gospel to move freely to every person on earth.

When it comes to our work as multipliers in the local church, the instruction to “make disciples of all nations” in the Great Commission is a part of the “teaching them to observe all that I have commanded” in the following verse. Our work is incomplete if we are not setting before people the calling of Jesus to carry the gospel to unreached people. It should be the normal practice of Christians in a healthy church to ask themselves regularly “why would I stay?” rather “why would I go?”

10 Basic Practices for cultivating a discipleship culture in the local church

“The local church – this Father designed, Jesus-authorized, and Spirit-gifted body- is far better equipped to undertake the work of discipling believers than simply you and your one friend. Jesus does not promise that you and your one friend will defeat the gates of hell. He promises that the church will do this (pg. 68-69).” - from Mark Dever, *Discipling*

1. Be aware.

Pastors and church members often have two entirely different experiences when it comes to the need for discipleship in the local church. A church member may look around and wonder, “Who would I connect with for something like this?” It seems to many people like the person they are worshipping beside is likely growing and uninterested in anything further. Pastors have the opposite experience. They want to see an increase in people being challenged not to be content with where they are at and are aware of immature attenders that would benefit from personal challenge.

The first thing you can do is begin to pray for awareness of the need for evangelism and growth in the lives of individuals that attend the church. Become personally interested in those around you and discover where they are at spiritually. Take time to think about those who God has placed around you and consider how you might steward the relationships that are already in progress.

2. Make a plan.

“Discipling is a relationship in which we seek to do spiritual good for someone by initiating, teaching, correcting, modeling, loving, humbling ourselves, counseling, and influencing (pg. 74).” – from Mark Dever, *Discipling*

Most people who recognize the value of peer-to-peer discipleship stop short of engaging in the practical work because they have never made a plan about how they can personally carry it forward. Here are a couple aspects of a simple plan that you can develop to move you from recognizing the need to engaged in the work.

- **Gather the tools.** Figure out what resources you will use to get started. There are a number of good discipleship guides or books that can be helpful starters

for discipleship. Our course *Basics:Maturing* is designed to help people have a common starting point for what it looks like to grow as a Christian. Familiarize yourself with similar tools and introduce the idea of working through the booklet to get started. Topic specific tools are listed in the appendix.

- **Put it on the calendar.** Talk with your spouse. Sit down and prioritize the time that you will need to make space in your life to help others grow. Look for places in your calendar that can overlap. Can you add a person to your exercise routine? Are there some meal times where others can join you? How can you utilize technology if you cannot be in the same physical place? In our area parents often spend time sitting at a sports field during practices and could meet with someone at the same time. You will only accomplish those things in life that you prioritize on your schedule.
- **Initiate communication.** It can be good to think through how you want to communicate initially. Do you want to write an email? Make a phone call? Send a Text Message? Talk on the next Sunday? It can be important to think through what you are asking someone to do to get started. You could simply ask, "I am thinking about getting together one or two people to study the Bible with and pray together regularly. Would you be interested in getting together this week to talk about that?"
- **Choose a place:** When you first get together it can be good to pick a neutral place to meet up and keep it casual. Many people have not even thought of the possibilities. Coffee shops, Wegmans, Home , The Gym. Take some time to figure out a few ideas to propose right at the beginning.

3. Ask people for contact information.

Many times the opportunity to have an impact in someone's life is there early on after meeting them. Maybe you had a good conversation or were surprised that someone shared a burden or area of struggle in their life. If you are going to become effective in establishing peer-to-peer discipling relationships you will need to take the time regularly to ask people for their basic contact info and follow up with it quickly. Doing so establishes a regular pattern of communication that will allow you to take next steps in getting to know them. Many times God may move in the hearts of people to get more involved encouraging others spiritually and they have no immediate ways to take a next step because they are not gathering the info they need to turn the desire into action.

4. Ask church leaders to connect you with needs.

Another great practice is to ask church leaders to connect you with people who would benefit from meeting with someone. Many pastors are looking for willing and prepared members who would engage in initiating discipleship relationships with others in the church. Let the church leaders know what type of situations you feel prepared and equipped to help with and respond quickly when they present you with opportunities.

5. Focus on a few.

We often underestimate the impact that can be made in personal ministry to a few other people around us. We are all tempted to believe that more people means more effective. The truth is that much of the most important gospel work in individual lives happens in the context of individual conversations and relationship where there is growing trust and understanding. It is in the context of consistent friendship that the challenging words that can be sometimes necessary find their right opportunity. It is in the context of consistent friendship that key insights are discovered that help people grow in new ways.

When we focus on helping a few people around us grow we are not just investing in them, we are impact others through them for years to come. Jesus adopted a similar model for His own earthly ministry. Out of the crowds of people he selected 12 who would be with Him and receive more focus and attention. Out of the twelve there were 3 that were able to share in some moments that went beyond the experience of the other 12. Jesus came with a strategy for the gospel to reach the nations and when he began, he began with a few.

6. Overcome obstacles.

Pastor Danny Williams from First Baptist Lyons regularly explains that we have to believe for others before they believe for themselves. By this he means that an influencer desires and hopes for growth in an individual's life before they even desire it for themselves. Ministry is about helping people see what God can do in their lives when they have not yet been able to glimpse it with their own eyes. There are often obstacles to seeing people grow in their walk with Christ. Because of these obstacles the road to maturity is often a bumpy one with many opportunities to just give up.

When you commit yourself to peer-to-peer discipleship it will not be long before you will be discouraged or faced with the reality that the person you are working with lacks the desire or commitment you had hoped they would possess. Remember, that is part of the reason you are meeting together. If we are going to be effective we have to work to remove obstacles when it feels like it would be easier to give up. You will have to be convinced that meeting together is more important than the person you are encouraging realizes

7. Create an inter-dependent environment.

Use language that emphasizes peer-to-peer discipleship. Of course there are some people who will have the maturity to initiate relationships and situations that foster discipleship. Others will not. Sometimes the language of "I would like to offer to mentor you" or "I am going to disciple you" can cause barriers to healthy inter-dependence. It really does not matter who the more mature person is, we simply need people who will take initiative to get others engaged. You may not feel prepared to be a mentor to others, but the truth is there are large numbers of people who need encouragement and will not initiate the sort of relationships in their life needed to really grow.

The best discipleship environments are never one-way. In an inter-dependent environment with a peer-to-peer focus both people involved in the conversation will be open to being

challenged and grow as they study the Scriptures, pray for one another, develop honest communication, and spur each other on to acts of faith.

8. Emphasize gospel-based motivations for holiness.

The truth is we are not just helping people become more disciplined or make moral decisions. We want them to experience all the fruits that the gospel of Jesus Christ makes available to them through the union we have with Christ.

The gospel motivates us to:

- Confess sin because the cross has removed shame and we do not have to prove ourselves to be morally good to be accepted by God.
- Confess sin to discover ways that temptation has deceived us from delighting in God.
- Forsake sin because we have been created in the image of God for better things. We discover that sin distorts our created gifts.
- Forsake sin because God's instruction leads to more satisfying long-term fruit. We obey by faith in God's promises and wait on Him for satisfaction.
- Love other people even when it is difficult because we know the victorious love of God for us though we were unworthy.
- Serve in ways that are sacrificial because we are co-laborers for a better Kingdom and having nothing to truly lose in surrendering to God.
- Forgive others because we know God's mercy to be greater *towards us* than what is required *from us*.
- Persevere in trials because we know God's grace has given us hope of undeserved favor through Christ when we rightly deserved judgment. Trials are the worst we will ever know, but we have been saved from God's wrath toward our sin because of His mercy.

Without the gospel we are motivated to:

- Hide sin to protect our image.
- Hide sin because we do not believe God offers something better.
- Minimize sin because we believe it is not really holding us back from God's purposes for us.
- Minimize sin because we feel the short-term fruit really makes us happy.
- Obey God primarily because we want to feel loved by Him or fear His anger.
- Love people only when they measure up to our expectations.
- Serve as long as it does not require too much and makes us feel good for serving.
- Hold sin over others as a way of motivating them to treat us well rather than forgiving.
- Complain in trials that we deserve better because of our "record of righteousness".

9. Ask good questions.

You may have noticed that some people are particularly good at engaging other people in conversation and making connections. It is easy to assume that there are just some people that are good at it and others who are not. To whatever degree that may be true, it is important for everyone to learn from those who are particularly strong. One of the basic skills that impactful people possess is the ability to ask good questions.

Questions are a great way to connect with people initially. When you meet someone make an effort immediately to find out basic things about them. Where are you originally from? Are you new to the area? What do you do for work? What types of churches have you been a part of in the past? Would you consider yourself a Christian? Just by having some basic curiosity you can connect with people and find opportunities to minister to them.

Questions are important for getting past surface conversation. When you begin to meet together make it normal to ask some diagnostic questions to one another about your current spiritual condition. What ways have you been encouraged spiritually this week? Are there areas where you felt strong temptation toward sin recently? What have you read from God's word this week? Are there responsibilities in your life that you feel you are neglecting? Any number of questions can help you deepen conversations and working to establish a regular set of questions can help you stay focused on spiritual encouragement and help.

10. Persevere. The most important things we do in life require a great deal of diligence. Making an impact on the spiritual growth of other Christians around us will not come without the cost of perseverance. The reality of spiritual ministry is that it is not always easy to see progress or fruit. For this reason we have prepared an appendix to remind you that we are not just working together at the task, we are joining the work of God to bring His people into maturity in Christ. Read the section called *Grace-based Sanctification* and come back to it often when you believe those you have committed to serving are not making progress. There is always more to the story and God is working in situations where you do not see much growth or change.

7 Ideas for Being Purposeful in disciple multiplication at Pillar Church.

1. **Utilize your Life Group.** It is possible that you have seen yourself as a passive participant in your Life Group. You are involved and even participate in the discussion but the majority of what happens is determined by someone else who is leading and facilitating what happens each week. Consider a different approach to participation in your group. Your Life Group affords you the opportunity to become more personally aware of the needs for encouragement and growth in the lives of those who are attending and participating. You may hear about a prayer request or pick up on an area struggle in the life of one of the other group members. You may be introduced to those who are less mature or not even Christians. You should see this as a great opportunity for engagement and make a plan to help others grow. Life Groups facilitate personal engagement so that peer-to-peer discipleship can be more readily accomplished.
2. **Invite a New Member or Attender to go through the *Pillar Basics: Grow Your Faith* course.** We are encouraging every member to spend time going through the *Grow Your Faith* course with another person. Our desire is to normalize peer-to-peer discipleship in the life of the church. We imagine a day when it is second nature for seasoned members at Pillar to connect with incoming people and go through the *Grow Your Faith* discipleship tool with them. We want the environment to make it easy to say to someone, “One of the things that all of us have done at Pillar is that we have gone through this short course to help one another grow our faith. I’d love to help you go through it if you are haven’t yet.”

You have probably noticed that becoming a member at Pillar includes a public recognition and reception into our family during a Sunday gathering. One of the reasons we do that is so that other members know who is coming into the body and feel responsible to connect with them and help them grow. Here are two reasons you should seek out new members in the future and go through the *Grow Your Faith* discipleship tool.

First, it ensures that new members coming in have an example of discipleship engagement from other members and allows us to help them identify areas for growth and be a part of shaping their walk with Christ. We are helping them grow and find their way into the body by doing so.

Second, it prepares them with a pattern for engaging others in discipleship. The practical pattern we can provide for new believers and incoming members will cause us all to more equipped to expand the impact of the gospel together with people who do not know Christ.

But let’s not forget. There are many regular attenders at Pillar who have not yet solidified their faith and are still seekers. So, get to know people around you and ask God to use you in their lives to clearly understand the gospel and understand what it means to live life as a Christian.

3. **Identify an area of strength in your life and offer to help others (Marriage, Finances, Parenting, How to Read the Bible).** The doors into discipleship relationships are truly endless when you are making yourself available to be used by God. Here are a few examples of how you can take areas of strength, experience, or expertise in your life and impact the spiritual growth of others.
- **Marriage Mentoring.** There are often people in the church who desire marriage mentoring on a number of levels. We have an especially high number of young couples. If you became proficient at using a few marriage mentoring tools, you would find endless opportunities to impact couples marriage and entire experience of life for Christ.
 - **Financial Mentoring.** We have used Financial Peace University to help dozens of individuals and families think through their finances in a healthier way. The relationships created through this financial mentoring provide fertile ground for larger conversations about faithfulness to God and are great doorways into discipleship. We need an increased number of people who can provide good coaching in this area, lead and promote courses, and capitalize on the general openness that people have toward help in this area. Here is a particular area where we can connect with people in the community and help them hear the gospel and grow in Christ.
 - **Parenting Basics.** We often figure out skills for one stage of parenting just in time to move on to the next challenge. We do not often think about reaching back to those who are behind us in the journey and teaching the Biblical Principles and Practical Tips that have helped us along the way. Furthermore there are some great tools like *Parenting:14 Gospel Principles that can Radically Change Your Family* that someone could use to help others think through their own lives.
 - **BCF Courses.** Taking our Self-confrontation course and becoming trained with our peer counselors through the Biblical Counseling Foundation materials will offer great opportunities to make a discipleship impact. It will also raise our capacity to help others.
 - **Endless Categories:** The possibilities in this category are endless really. Entrepreneurship, How to Share the Gospel, Being a Faithful Christian in the Workplace, How to Read the Bible
4. **Start with prayer.** Perhaps this should have been further up the list. Simply put, our ministry will never outgrow our prayers. A little prayer generally leads to a little gospel influence. A lot of prayer leads to endless possibilities. Beyond the unseen effect of prayer, there are even practical ways that it can be a doorway for you into the task of Making Disciples.
- **In your individual interactions** with other people at church take the time to find out the ways they need prayer. Pray for them on the spot and look for needs for discipleship and encouragement in their life. Once you have done

that, it is an easy step to regularly meeting together for encouragement and discipleship.

- **In offering prayer after corporate worship** you can utilize the time the body is already together to connect with people who have prayer needs. We have had this available at different times in the life of the church, but we are in need of a few people who will make it a priority to encourage people to seek prayer afterward and provide it with consistency and do it effectively.
- **In establishing a prayer group in your workplace** you can take the work of making disciples into the “Going” aspect of the Great Commission and connect with Christians and potentially non-Christians in your place of work. You may believe it sounds impossible but there are a number of people at Pillar who have had experience with this and could coach you if interested. Obviously we are not just trying to make better disciples, but more of them as well and this can be a good context for it.

5. **Arrive 15 minutes early for Worship and make connections (or stay 15 minutes after).** Our Sunday gatherings offer great opportunities to connect with new people. Did you know newer people tend to come early? If you were to consistently arrive early and get to know a few people who are coming in at that time, you will be surprised how quickly you have a network of relationships to pursue for Making Disciples. After the service you could plan to work the Welcome Table and meet people who are looking to connect and find ways to personally assist them in doing so.
6. **Start where you serve.** Serving in volunteer opportunities at Pillar will inevitably give you opportunities to get to know people you have not met. Often in the context of serving we learn about one another and will become aware of ways we may encourage growth and initiate peer-to-peer discipling opportunities.
7. **Make a commitment.** Our courses are designed to inform and catalyze the practices that we believe will help you develop into a multiplier. The Make Disciples course is the first in a six part series that we are working on to help our members grow and develop as skilled ministers and leaders in our local community. But sitting through the instructional portion of the course is only part of it. As a reminder before going forward, if you missed any of the teaching sessions, you should watch the videos on the website to make up for the missed content and complete the course. After doing so, we want you to make a commitment that you will do three things to complete the course. Here is what they are:
 - **Work through the Grow Your Faith tool with 1 to 2 other people over the next 6 months.** The tool is self-explanatory and helps give a broad vision for the healthy rhythms of a Christian life. Using it will also help you get comfortable with some of the skills necessary to disciple others.
 - **Read *The Trellis and the Vine* by Colin Marshall and Tony Payne or *Discipling* by Mark Dever.** You get to choose! The books will help fill in some

gaps and provide other insight that will help you grow in your vision for discipleship in the local church.

- **Write a 500-word reflection on what you have learned upon completion.**

When you have worked through the Grow Your Faith tool and read one of the assigned books we would like you to take some time to write out what you have learned. Writing has a powerful way of helping us put into clarity the lessons we learn in a new experience. You may be tempted to think of this as a strange sense of homework at church, and if that is how you see it, that is fine. But do it anyway.

If you are willing to make the commitment to do these things we will provide some reminders, coaching, and accountability to help you make progress. Let us know that you want to make the commitment by sending a short email to elders@pillarchurchsbc.com.