

Biblical Counseling Is In-Depth Discipleship

Using the sufficiency of the Scriptures
for facing, dealing with, and enduring problems
in a manner that pleases God



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The disciples of Jesus Christ are to be His witnesses to the uttermost part of the earth and they also are to teach disciples of all nations to practice all that Jesus taught. These two missions are principal characteristics of biblical discipleship (*based on Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8*). Because biblical counseling deals with **every** aspect of a person's life, it can be described as in-depth discipleship. It includes evangelizing, baptizing, teaching, admonishing, instructing, comforting, encouraging, restoring, strengthening, reproving, rebuking, and exhorting others to follow a biblical pattern of life (*based on Matthew 28:19-20; Romans 15:14; II Corinthians 1:4; Galatians 6:1; I Thessalonians 3:2; II Timothy 4:2; Hebrews 3:13; 10:24*).

BIBLICAL DISCIPLESHIP IS GOD'S PLAN

We know from *Acts 1:8* that the Lord's eternal plan is to use believers as His witnesses in their own communities, in the nations, and even in the remotest part of the earth. The Lord not only tells us what His plan is; but He also tells us how to fulfill the great task of reaching the world. *Matthew 28:19-20* describes God's method of equipping and encouraging His children to make disciples of Jesus Christ. This is often called the "Great Commission" because it is a command to every believer. Note that there are two parts to making disciples: baptizing and teaching. Of course, only believers are to be baptized (*see for example, Acts 2:41, 8:12, 18:8*), so evangelism is implied as part of making disciples. Often, this is the only part of the "Great Commission" that is greatly emphasized. But the second part is just as important. It involves helping the new disciple to live God's way.

The discipleship process must be so thorough that the disciple learns to teach others in the same scriptural pattern of living he is being taught. God's plan is that every one of His children is to be involved in making disciples. This multiplication process is to

be continued until the whole world is reached with the Gospel. In *II Timothy 2:2* we see an example of this process. Note that there are four generations in this verse: the Apostle Paul, Timothy, faithful men, and others. God's plan involves a multiplication process, in which we learn God's principles, and then teach others, so that they can, in turn, teach still others.

But, often, we hear, "I cannot disciple because no one discipled me." Well, God does not give us a command without also giving us the capability to carry it out. The marvelous truth is that at the same time that believers are carrying out their responsibilities to make disciples, God is doing a wonderful work in their lives. God actively works all things in the lives of His children for their good (*Romans 8:28*), which is to fulfill His promise to conform them into the image of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ (*Romans 8:29*).

As God is actively involved in the lives of His children, they grow in faith, and they increase in their capability to minister as the Lord intends (*Philippians 2:13; II Peter 1:2-10*).

THE PROBLEM

Since God's plan is perfect, powerful, complete, and easily understood, the question now is: "Why has every person in the world not been reached with the Gospel?"

Obviously, God is not to blame. He is perfect in all His ways and His plan is perfect. The failure is on the part of man.

While man has failed in many ways, we will only look at four of the hindrances to God's plan for reaching the world.

Hindrance 1: Many reject the Gospel even when it is presented perfectly and with great love.

Jesus said in *Matthew 7:14*, "... the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it." But just because God's way is narrow does not mean that man cannot find it. God tells us in *Romans 1:20*, "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse."

It is certainly true that those who reject the message of salvation are totally responsible for their rejection. However, this does not excuse God's children from their responsibility to be witnesses to