

# Relational Discipleship

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## Introduction

### What a journey we have all been on

- Politics—covid—the economy—now a war
- So easy to get distracted –angry –frustrated
- Now more than ever we need to be sure of who we are and what God desires for us

### My beliefs

- We live in a world at war –darkness – Ephesians 6:10
- We were saved from God’s wrath for God’s mission – through the church

### Ephesians 2:1–10 (NIV)

**1** As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, **2** in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. **3** All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. **4** But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, **5** made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. **6** And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, **7** in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. **8** For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—**9** not by works, so that no one can boast. **10** For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

### Ephesians 2:19–22 (NIV)

**19** Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household, **20** built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. **21** In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. **22** And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

### Ephesians 3:10 (NIV)

**10** His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms,

### Ephesians 6:10–14 (NIV)

**10** Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. **11** Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. **12** For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. **13** Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. **14** Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place,

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## Key beliefs about the church

### 1. We (the church) were called to be and make disciples not converts

#### Matthew 28:18–20 (NIV)

**18** Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **19** Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20** and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

### 2. Jesus’ method for making disciples is relational discipleship

- He didn’t say go and make disciples any way you want to
- Jesus knew that relationship is the best way to really teach (modeling—questions and answers, correction)

#### Matthew 4:19 (ESV)

**19** And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

### 3. We were given a definition for a disciple

- Following Jesus—being changed by Jesus—committed to the mission of Jesus
- Head (authority – the mind), Heart (relationship), Hands (skills and abilities)
- Every command God gives promotes and protects relationship
- Maturity in Christ is your ability to love well in difficult situations and with difficult people
- It makes sense that maturity is built in relationship if your ability to have relationship is maturity

#### Matthew 4:19 (ESV)

**19** And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

#### Matthew 22:37–40 (NIV)

**37** Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ **38** This is the first and greatest commandment. **39** And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ **40** All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

#### 1 Corinthians 13:1–7 (NIV)

**1** If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. **2** If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. **3** If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. **4** Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. **5** It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. **6** Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. **7** It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

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## Encouragement to the church

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- I have watched from afar
- I am so proud of how the leaders here have handled this
- Maturity is revealed when there is a problem
- Next steps.... maturity

### **1 Corinthians 3:1–4 (NIV)**

**1** Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly—mere infants in Christ. **2** I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. **3** You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans? **4** For when one says, “I follow Paul,” and another, “I follow Apollos,” are you not mere human beings?

### **1 Corinthians 6:1–7 (NIV)**

**1** If any of you has a dispute with another, do you dare to take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the Lord’s people? **2** Or do you not know that the Lord’s people will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? **3** Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life! **4** Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, do you ask for a ruling from those whose way of life is scorned in the church? **5** I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers? **6** But instead, one brother takes another to court—and this in front of unbelievers! **7** The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated?

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## **Discussion Questions**

1. What is the difference between making converts and making disciples?
2. What was Jesus’ method for making disciples?
3. Define “relational discipleship.”
4. Discuss: “Maturity in Christ is your ability to love well in difficult situations and with difficult people.”
5. In 1 Corinthians 13, what is the difference between “love IS patient, and love IS kind” vs. today’s definition of “love FEELS patient, and love FEELS kind.”

## **NOTES**