

In Matthew, chapter twenty-five, Jesus talks about the principle of multiplication in the parable of the talents. To summarize the parable, Jesus is describing the results of the outcome of three servants who were entrusted with different talents given to them by their master. Two servants invested their talents and came back with more. To them Jesus said, *"Well done good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things: I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness."* The third servant hid his talent and failed to invest it. To him Jesus said, *"You wicked and lazy servant! . . . Throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."* Of all three servants, the only one Jesus was displeased with was the one who neglected to invest his talents.

The ultimate investment you can make with your life is only by investing in something that will out last it. Jesus invested His life in twelve men for three years. Now, two thousand years later, look at His return. Jesus had a pretty good yield on His rather small, but significant investment.

Just think about the potential of investing your life in a handful of reproducers for the rest of your life. The impact of your few short years on this earth can continue to draw dividends for thousands of years. That is called an eternal investment! Generation after generation of disciples will be reproduced because you were a reliable person. They probably won't even know who you were, but that does not matter, they will know who Jesus is!

So how about you? Are you making the ultimate investment with your life or are you wasting it on things that don't really matter? Ask yourself right now how many people will you invest your life in with the days you have left? If you start investing in at least two disciple makers a year, you will be making an ultimate investment. Someone said it like this — *"You can count the seeds in an apple, but you can't count the apples in a seed."*

NO OTHER PLAN

An old sermon illustration brings home the point of Jesus' words when He told His disciples to "go and make disciples."

Just after Jesus had ascended back to heaven from earth He saw the angel Gabriel. Gabriel said, "Jesus, so good to see you back in heaven. How did it go on earth?" Jesus said, "Gabriel, it was awesome. The Father allowed Me to do some incredible things while I was there. I cast out demons. I healed the sick. I calmed the storms. I made the lame to walk and the blind to see. I was crucified on the cross but rose again three days later to show God's resurrection power." "Wow, that is unbelievable," said Gabriel. "But I just have one question. Now that you're gone, is all that good stuff coming to an end?" "On no," said Jesus. "You see, Gabriel, while I was there I had this plan to entrust all My teachings to twelve guys who will teach others. My plan is for them to keep it going." With a puzzled look on his face, Gabriel said, "But Jesus, what if it doesn't work? What if they don't do it? What is your back-up plan?" Then Jesus looked at Gabriel and said, "Gabriel, I have no other plan!"

May you always remember that you are Jesus' plan to reach the world. He has no other plan and He said, "Go and make disciples."

For more information contact:
Ken Adams



2564 Highway 154
Newnan GA 30265
(770) 254-0291

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HE SAID... "Go Make Disciples!"

by Ken Adams

In an interview in *Christianity Today*, Billy Graham was asked an interesting question. *"If you were the pastor of a large church in a principle city, what would be your plan of action?"* Mr. Graham replied: *"I think one of the first things I would do would be to get a small group of eight to ten or twelve men around me who would meet a few hours a week and pay the price! It would cost them something in time and effort. I would share with them everything I have, over a period of years. Then I would actually have twelve ministers among the laymen who could in turn take eight or ten or twelve more and teach them. I know one or two churches that are doing that, and it is revolutionizing the church. Christ, I think, set the pattern. He spent most of His time with twelve men. He didn't spend it with a great crowd. In fact, every time He had a great crowd it seems to me that there weren't too many results. The great results, it seems to me, came in His personal interview and in the time He spent with His twelve."*

Interesting interview, don't you think? I would whole-heartedly agree with Mr. Graham's words, especially the part about Jesus setting the pattern. In fact, a simple study of the Gospels easily reveals that multiplying disciple makers was "THE," not just "A" strategy Jesus chose to reach the entire world with the good news of His love and forgiveness. Two things Mr. Graham said, however, are utterly amazing. First is the fact that he only knows one or two churches that are using Jesus' pattern. That's quite a statement from a man who has traveled around the globe and probably influenced Christianity more in the last fifty years than any other single individual. Secondly is Mr. Graham's statement that this pattern has revolutionized the churches who are using it. If this is the pattern Jesus established, my question is, "What pattern have churches been using for the last two thousand years?"

Don't you think it's time to start a new revolution?

A DISCIPLE REVOLUTION

His words were intended to revolutionize the human race. In Matthew 28:19 & 20, He said, *"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, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."* Jesus spoke these words to His disciples right as He was preparing to make His final departure from this world. I guess you could say these are Jesus' last words — His final remarks.

We all know that a person's "famous last words" are usually their most important words. These words that Jesus spoke are certainly no exception. The most important things Jesus Christ said to His disciples was... **"make disciples!"**

Fulfilling Jesus' words would totally revolutionize society. Christians would turn the world upside down. All we have to do is obey His command. He said we are to make disciples by going, baptizing, and teaching. This command is so simple, how have we missed it? As we are going through life we are to lead people to faith in Christ, symbolized by baptism, and then teach them the things Jesus taught us. In turn, these new disciples continue the process while we do the same.

For years, many have referred to the most important words of Jesus as the "Great Commission." This phrase is used to refer to Christ commissioning His disciples to make more disciples. It is imperative that we understand this is not the "Great Suggestion." Jesus didn't leave disciple making as an option. It is not one of the purposes of the Christian life — it is "THE" plan to reach the world for Christ! To truly revolutionize society for Christ we must have a "Great Commitment" to the "Great Commission."

MULTIPLYING: THE MISSING LINK

Having a great commitment to the Great Commission means having a personal commitment to multiplying or reproducing disciples who will make disciples. We must understand that Jesus' strategy to reach the world was all predicated on the principle of multiplying disciples, not adding them.

The principle of multiplying disciples was modeled by Jesus and witnessed again in Paul. In 2 Timothy 2:2, Paul told Timothy, *"And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others."*

The missing link in fulfilling the Great Commission is the intentional act of multiplying disciples. True discipleship is not occurring unless it reproduces more disciples that reproduce more disciple makers. Paul didn't tell us to make sure the notebooks were filled in. Paul didn't tell us to make certain all the goals could be checked off. Paul didn't tell us to become theologians. He told us to entrust the things we really need to know about Christ to others who will do the same. Paul instructs us to do what someone described so accurately — "Don't catch fish for a hungry man, teach a hungry man how to catch fish!" The "passing on" principle is the key link to discipleship.

When you pass on discipleship through multiplication, it doesn't take very long to see how Jesus commissioned us to make disciples of "all nations." Someone put it like this: If you take one grain of popcorn and put it on the first square of a checkerboard, then double it on the second square, then multiply it on the third square, by the time you get to the 64th square, the United States of America, including Alaska, would be six feet, six inches deep in un-popped popcorn.

An even more realistic picture of the power of multiplication goes like this — If you reach one person for Christ each week for the next 16 years (52 x 16) you will only reach 932 people. Make that one person every day (365 x 16) and you reach 5,840 people. If, however, you reach one disciple in six months, in a year you have two disciples. If those two reach two more you'll have four disciples. At the end of the . . .

1st year = 4	4 years = 256
1 1/2 years = 8	5 years = 1,024
2 years = 16	6 years = 4,096
2 1/2 years = 32	6 1/2 years = 8,192
3 years = 64	16 years = 4,294,961,296
3 1/2 years = 128	<i>(almost the world population)</i>

These illustrations clearly show us that Jesus didn't ask us to do something that was totally unattainable. He commissioned us to do a task He knew to be possible. So, two thousand years later, what is the problem? There are obviously many reasons why the mandate for multiplying disciples has gotten muddy over the years. One reason, however, is that there seems to be a shortage of "reliable" individuals who are 100% committed to a lifestyle of making disciples that make disciples.

Ask yourself a couple of simple questions. Were you personally disciplined by a reliable person? Are you committed to being a reliable person? How many individuals can you say you personally know that have multiple generations of disciples in their spiritual journey because they have been reliable? Will you be the missing link in the chain or will you pass on what Christ has given you? Don't ever forget that the only reason you know Christ today is because the original disciples were committed to Christ's commission. Will the next generation come to know and grow in Christ because you are equally as committed? Will you make the investment of discipling two disciple makers every year for the rest of your life?

THE ULTIMATE INVESTMENT

Imagine for a moment that you had a lump sum of money you could place in an investment fund. What kind of fund would you choose if there was absolutely no risk — high yield or low yield? That's a no-brainer. If there was no risk of losing your money, you'd be a fool not to invest in the highest yield possible. Only a fool wouldn't multiply their money.