



*The Podcast Focused on
Revitalizing Conventional Christianity
—One Person at a Time*

Inside Jimbo's Head™

Series 1, Cultural Christianity Versus Kingdom
Christianity

Episode 20, Getting Down to the Nitty-Gritty:
Making and Growing Disciples, Part IV—Growing
Disciples Jesus' Way©

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Introduction

Okay! Here it comes! Are you ready?

Sound Effects: Opening Jimbo's Head

Well, with everything going on, I guess I forgot to talk to Hershimer about how the sound of a donkey got in that mix. Oh, well, as some of you have pointed out to me, it fits the situation Whatever you mean by that? Uh!

So we are about to finish up the making and growing disciples portion of this Getting' Down to the Nitty-Gritty section. Remember, this is the pragmatic section of our present study on Cultural Christianity Versus Kingdom Christianity. Boy, have we ever gotten down to the nitty-gritty, don't you think?

I hope you have followed along carefully and changed your thinking about the gospel of the kingdom and how to share that authentic gospel. I also pray you have allowed the deep paradigm shifts to take place in your lifestyle so that you can live the life of God's image-bearer. If you took the episodes seriously on Paul's radical attitude and actions found in Philippians chapter

three, your life has to be much different today. Most importantly, I hope you have come to understand that the idea of being an image-bearer has more to do with being a devoted part of a community of disciples rather than an individualistic endeavor. But more on that later.

Hey, did you have the same reaction to that one-minute comedy skit with a punch by LifeLine Productions as I did? At first, I laughed. Then I realized how many times I have failed in the past to love my wife. But then the hammer came down hard. How many times has my love for God been based on what He has done for me rather than how I should sacrificially live my life as His willing servant? The answer to that question has had a far more powerful effect on my life than almost any other.

While I know everything I do is dependent on God's work and empowerment in my life, I still believe that what J. F. Kenedy said in his first inaugural address fits the kingdom of God as well. "Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country." Of course, if you still see yourself as a member of a secular government and not under God's new government, complete with its special cultural way of life, you may have difficulty with that one.

Speaking of what God can do for us as the basis of our "spiritual" lives, how did that replay of the Stories From the Frontlines of Ministry affect you this time. The two young men in this story mean a lot to me. I watched them struggle through life, seemingly growing farther and farther away from the life of a disciple of Jesus. The story you heard took place over a decade ago. Recently, I had a chance to talk to the father from that story. I shared with him the Gospel narrative we spoke of in the last episode. "Wow, that sounds exciting. Where can I see this happening?" was his response. "Well, it is happening in my life," was my reply, "and I know of a few others who are getting ahold of its effects in their lives." "Oh, I get that, Jimbo, but from what you said, the key is it happening in a community of disciples. Where can I see that happening?" I put my head down. Most people I know who name the name of Jesus are far too busy living their American lifestyle to put the kingdom of God and living as His image-bearers in community with others above all else. "See, I told you it wasn't real," came the older but just as defiant man's reply!

So, how about it, my friends. When we talk about how to grow disciples, are you ready to live the radical lifestyle the New Covenant calls for, or are you just interested in changing your thinking? You are interested in that radical lifestyle. Great! So let's get radical and turn the world inside-out and upside-down. Shall we?

Inside Jimbo's Head Theme Music

Opening—Where We Have Been and Where Are We Going

Because of the amount of time we will need, I will not review where we have been. Today I want to focus on four things. The first is how people learn to do. Next, we will look at the Jesus Method of making and growing disciples. Finally, I will focus on some key aspects that make the Jesus Method work. If we have time, I would like to sum up this whole nitty-gritty section of making and growing disciples.

I will not go in-depth with each of these, for they are covered in my forthcoming book entitled "Invested, A Personal Journey from an Event/Message Driven Ministry Model into the Attitude of Jesus." However, Joel Heim and I will take several episodes of the Diggin' Deeper Café to discuss each of these in a more in-depth manner with Dr. James Randolph and Kevin Birky.

But remember, I am not sharing these things with you to change your thinking. That may be the first step. Your part is to commit by making the hard decisions to allow the Holy Spirit to change your lifestyle. How? By keeping your life focused on the things of the Spirit, the things of the kingdom, and not the things of this world. What will happen? You will live the lifestyle of Jesus and His early disciples, living as God's image-bearer, so with others, you can form a community of disciple-makers.

Section I—How People Learn to Do

I want to start our discussion on growing disciples with a story that illustrates how people learn to do things. I was having a discussion with a businessman as we sat in a restaurant. This person was part of a company that, in part, taught others how to run a business through a system of books and digital materials. Far too often, I heard him say, "Let the system train them. Give them the materials to read and hear. The cream will rise to the top." When I tried to share the importance of coaching/training, he retaliated with the same question I heard many times: "How do people learn?" As soon as those words shot past his lips, he answered his question, "People learn through visual, auditory, or kinesthetic processes." I had heard that answer cross his lips as many times as I heard the question.

I sat back and smiled. Everyone who knows me knows how I hate to argue! Okay, stop laughing. For those who do not know me, that was a lie—though I am getting better. As I smiled at him, he looked straight into my eyes with a bewildered look on his face and questioned, "What?"

"I think you are comparing apples and oranges, my friend," I responded.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"Well, before I go there, let me ask you a question. If you had a terminal brain tumor, which surgeon would you rather have operate on you? The first went through all the classwork and got the highest marks ever achieved at any medical school. However, that is all the experience he had—the classroom. The second made average grades in his course work but trained under the world's best neurosurgeon. That training included first watching the master neurosurgeon perform many surgeries. When the master surgeon thought he was ready, he allowed his student to do parts of the surgeries along with him. After many surgeries where the student worked with the master surgeon, the surgeon finally let him do whole surgeries under his watchful eye. Finally, the master surgeon released his student to do surgeries independently. So which would you allow to do your brain surgery? Would you choose the one with high academic grades? He learned by reading, listening, and classroom discussion. How about the one with average grades but who participated in a coaching/training process with a master surgeon? He learned by doing with a skilled coach/trainer."

My friend, the businessman, sat back with an exasperated look on his face. You see, he made hundreds of thousands of dollars each year holding classes where he taught sales with another company. The operative word being taught. After we sat there for a few seconds in silence, he finally replied, "Well, Jim, I guess you got me!" That was not my purpose, but the words did bring a smile deep inside this old guy's heart. And yes. It did slip out onto my smug face.

My business friend was right. People do learn information in three ways. Sixty-five percent of us process and absorb information visually, responding well to visual cues such as pictures, notes, and diagrams. Thirty-five percent of us tend to retain information after hearing it. Only five percent of people process and absorb information through touch or imitation.

Nevertheless, here is the issue. The keyword in those statistics is one word, "information." That's right. We process and absorb information visually, auditorily, and kinesthetically. However, that is not the way we learn to do. When we think about discipling people, we must think in terms of the outcome we want. Do we want a group of people who understand everything about Jesus, or do we want people who live like Jesus?

In April of 1981, Bruce R. Joyce and Beverly Showers published an article in the Journal of Education entitled Transfer of Training: The Contribution of "Coaching." In this article, they shared their research on transferring training from the classroom to the job site. Joyce and Showers learned that if "theory" was the basis of the learning process, only 10-20% of skills were attained, and only 5-10% of skills were transferred to the job. While not many skills were developed, 50% of those learned were lost when it came to the "real-life test." When demonstration was added to theory, the percentage of skills attained by the student increased from 10-20% to 30-35%. However, the percentage of these skills that transferred to the job stayed at 5-10%. A similar situation developed when practice was added to theory and demonstration. The skills attained when practice was added increased to 60-70%, while the skills transferred to the job remained at 5-10%. Now, when feedback was added to the theory, demonstration, and practice, the number of skills attained jumped to 70-80%, and the transfer to the job of these skills doubled to 10-20%.

So, if I were a businessman and put money into a training program based on theory, demonstration, practice, and feedback, I would think I wasted my money. I mean, if only 10-20% of the skills learned in the classroom were able to be carried over to the real-life situation of the job, I would fire the training company I hired! How about you?

Here, however, is the good news. When coaching was added to the theory, demonstration, practice, and feedback, 80-90% of skills were attained, and the same percentage (80-90%) were transferred to the job. This combination passed with flying colors the "real-life test." Please note that the most effective way to help someone acquire skills is through theory, demonstration, practice, and feedback. However, the most effective way for those skills to be translated into practice is using all four concepts plus coaching.

Now think about how discipleship takes place in the conventional culturalized churches we attend in the United States. I sat in a Starbucks working on one of my books. I noticed a young lady

ferociously devouring a very large textbook. This textbook had all kinds of multi-colored “sticky notes” protruding out its many pages. At some point, I took a break and went to have my “Mint Majesty” tea refilled. Because I had to walk past her, and because I enjoy people and their “story,” I struck up a conversation. Okay, those of you who know me also know one more important thing. Sticking up a conversation is the first step in seeing if Father will develop a redemptive or transformational relationship. Remember the B.L.E.S.S. lifestyle?

Soon into the conversation, the young lady told me she had just finished nursing school. She was now studying for her nursing certification test. I asked what she liked most about nursing school. She quickly replied, “It was the clinicals.” Clinicals are where you get to do nursing under the watchful eye of a registered nurse.

“Why the clinicals,” I asked.

“Oh, I want to be a nurse. I was fascinated by the clinicals. That is what I want to do. In fact, I remember everything from my clinicals.”

Her answer blew my socks off. Okay, I go around barefooted often. “Weren’t you taught everything in that thick textbook during your classroom experience?”

“Oh yes, we went over the entire book. However, I cannot remember anything from that class. I remember everything from my clinicals. I have to cram to remember the stuff from class.”

I smiled. I could vividly remember those days of cramming during my classroom education days. I began to share my concepts about learning to live as a disciple of Jesus. We talked about what I called the “Jesus System.” (Today, I see it more as the Jesus Lifestyle.) She was fascinated and ended the conversation with a dramatic emphasis.

“Wow, no wonder I have such a hard time living what they talk about at church all the time!”

When I finally got back to my table and sat down, I could not write. I was overwhelmed by such a sad, sad story illustrating the modern church’s failure. There was one reason I knew the story was more than sad. This simple story was very insightful and too common in American churches, including the American evangelical churches.

“. . . Such a hard time living what they talk about at church.” How often have I heard those words? How often have I cried them out myself as I tried to grow in Christ? How about you? Have you ever thought or spoken those words?

“. . . Such a hard time living what they talk about at church.”

The words which kept rolling around in my head like sharp barbs bringing the most pain were “. . . talk about at church . . .”

I’ve shared that story with many people in many places. However, it still haunts me. Why? The main reason, “Houston, We Have A Problem,” is this very issue. Words alone never prepare anyone to do anything, let alone live a new way of life. Think about how you were trained as a child. If you came from a fairly functional family, your parents spent many hours with you. You

watched them, you mimicked them, and you learned to live as they walked alongside you. Did your parents ever pull out a whiteboard? Okay, that one is easy for me. Whiteboards weren't invented yet when I was a kid. I know I'm old—very old. But think about that question. Here are a few more. Did your parents project pictures on the wall behind them to illustrate what they were talking about, or could you see it in the lives they lived? Did your parents simply tell you what to do and then expect you to do the task? If so, you were a very frustrated kid with very frustrated parents.

Yet, this is what happens in the “discipling process” in most churches today. Could the problem be we do not spend enough time together to keep our eyes on those who live the lifestyle of Paul? Remember that command from Philippians chapter three. The truth be told, today in the modern church, we are told by example to keep our ears on those who talk like Paul, not our eyes on those who walk like Paul. But more on that in a few minutes.

In the past, I have talked about how Paul ministered to disciples. We find this in I Thessalonians chapter two, verses seven through twelve. He tells us that he was like a nursing mother pouring herself into her children. But the one that gets me is a few verses down where he says he was like a father, exhorting, encouraging, and imploring each person to walk in a manner worthy of God. Today, when we think of those three words in the context of the church, exhort, encourage and implore, we think of preaching and teaching. But those words carry a very specific meaning in Greek that is missed when we put our 21st-century filter over them.

In Greek, the word “encourage” means coming alongside or calling someone alongside to entreat, comfort, and instruct. The word translated “encourage” means coming alongside or calling someone alongside to soothe, console, and encourage. The word translated “implore” means to “summon as a witness” or “bear witness.” You can do none of those things from behind a pulpit or from in front of a classroom. You can't even do it in a coffee shop studying the Bible or from a podcast, for that matter. But get this! If all we were called to do is transfer information to people, the modern church fails at that as well.

I'm sure you can remember when I shared the latest and most appalling results on the condition of the church. In 2020 the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University, under the direction of George Barna, released part of a report entitled “#11: Churches and Worldview.” The findings are devastating. The large majority of evangelical Christians no longer hold the basic tenets of Biblical Christianity, and it's even worse for mainline and Catholic Christians. These statistics say nothing about how modern Christians live their lives. However, it does point out that the modern church has failed if all they were trying to do is teach people information. But discipling is not about transferring information. It is about developing a lifestyle. For a reminder of our failure in the way we live, please go back and relisten to episode one, Houston, We Have A Problem.

Section II—The Jesus Method of Growing Disciples

“But Jimbo, if what we do now is failing, what is the alternative?”

In the past, I have called it the Jesus Method, or as I talk about it today, the Jesus Lifestyle of growing disciples. By now, you should be able to speak on what constitutes Jesus' method of growing disciples. Simply put, the Jesus method, the Jesus lifestyle, of growing disciples is sacrificially investing your life in the lives of others as they walk life alongside you. Yet as you will soon see, it goes far beyond that individualistic approach.

Those words describing Jesus' method of growing disciples, especially going beyond an individualistic approach, are as foreign to Western people as Swahili. Why? As you have heard me say many times before, the modern church has replaced Jesus' lifestyle in making and growing disciples with a 21st-century educational model. That should be no surprise, for the church has replaced authentic community with a 21st-century model of organizational development and growth. Yet, I still hear from people, even old friends, how the church isn't really doing all that bad. Why do they say such things in light of the mountains of evidence to the contrary? They have lived and breathed for so long in conventional culturalized American Christianity they can see no other alternative. The church has also developed vast theological systems that support how they do church and their failure to produce people who live as God's image-bearers. This problem only adds to the blindness of most people in culturalized Christianity.

Now think about this little piece of information. If you look at how leaders are made in the conventional church, you realize that only 10-20% of what is learned in the classroom makes its way into their lifestyles, according to the Joyce and Showers' research. However, the New Covenant never gives that kind of leeway to anyone, let alone leaders. Remember Paul's command found in Philippians 3:17, "Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us." Then there is the command from I Peter 1:15, "But as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct."

Today, leaders are trained in a classroom and are taught to be satisfied with such a small percentage of what they learn transferring into their real-life situations. Don't believe me? Look at their theology that accepts feckless Christianity as the norm until Jesus returns. Based on their present reality, how do you think they will train others? You got it! Actually, you see it all around you every Sunday morning. The fact that most Christians are satisfied with being in community (if you can call it that) for ninety to one hundred and twenty minutes each week speaks to how community has nothing to do with how we grow disciples. It also speaks to why we cannot keep the command Paul gives to Jesus' followers to keep our eyes on people who walk like he walked even if we can find them. Then there are all the excuses, theological and otherwise, which we come up with to take the teeth out of Peter's command. Forget all the other commands of the New Covenant. We actually think grace allows us to ignore them or excuse disobedience to them rather than enabling us to keep them.

When I share how preaching and teaching do not grow disciples, I often hear that I do not believe in the power of the Word of God or the inworking of the Holy Spirit. Oh, never make that mistake, my friends. However, the power of the word is not in what you learn from it but from how much of it is internalized into your inner person. Only then, as you keep your eyes off

the things of the flesh, the things of this world, and keep them fixed on the Spirit, will you live and walk in the Spirit. Only then will you live a lifestyle that pleases God and fulfills the righteous requirement of the law. In other words, only then will you fulfill the purpose of salvation, living as God's image-bearers, expanding the authority and blessing of His kingdom in this age. We can only learn to walk and live in the Spirit by watching those who live and walk in the Spirit. We can learn about it in a sermon or teaching or even by listening to a podcast, but we will never learn how to live/walk in the Spirit until we walk with those whose sole goal in life is to live/walk in the Spirit.

I often get another argument about what I call the Jesus lifestyle of growing disciples. It comes from the very commission Jesus gave to His disciples to make disciples found in Matthew chapter twenty-eight. In that great commission, Jesus tells His disciples to go make disciples, baptizing them and "teaching" them to "observe" all that He had commanded of them. When this is pointed out to me, it is always followed by a very excited, "See, see, Jesus told them to teach!"

The solution to this argument rests in the Greek word translated "teach," for the problem lies in how this word is always translated into English. The word in question here is "*didaskō*." This word is always translated into English by the word "teach." It is where we get the term didactic teaching method. This method sees the teacher as the expert and the student as the receptor of the teacher's knowledge and experience. Lessons are primarily lecture-based, with factual information being exchanged from the teacher to the student. When we place the filters of our native culture over the scriptures, this is what we often perceive Jesus to be doing with His disciples. But when we remove our cultural filters, we see quite another story unfolding.

Jesus played the role of coach/trainer rather than a simple didactic lecturer. Was there an exchange of information? Yes! Information was exchanged the same way the master surgeon exchanged information with the student learning to do surgery in my example I gave to my business friend. The master surgeon, however, was training his student to do surgery, not just learn about surgery. He taught his student to do surgery through the process I outlined in the illustration. This illustration is exactly the way Jesus grew disciples.

By the way, this Jesus way of growing disciples fits the second definition of the word "*didaskō*" given in the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, the go-to work on defining Greek words found in the Bible. The historical Greek language does use the word "*didaskō*" to refer to the passing on of information. However, it also refers to acquiring skills including basket weaving, hunting with a bow, and pottery making. In other words, "*didaskō*" also means training a person to do something. Unfortunately, this has been missed by Bible translators. Whenever there is more than one way a specific Greek word is used, the context determines the definition and thus the translation. In the great commission, the context is to train people to keep the commands of Jesus, not simply teach them to understand what Jesus taught and commanded.

It is great to know this kind of information. It is great to know the church is failing (I guess). It is great to know people learn to do through training, not simply teaching. It's great to know there is a different way of growing disciples than the failed methodologies of the modern church.

However, doing it? Well, that is another question, isn't it? To help with this, I would like to shine a light on some particulars that need further clarification on how Jesus grew disciples.

Section III—Specifics of the Jesus Lifestyle of Growing Disciples

Centrality of Community

When we put our American cultural filters over scripture, we miss many things. Some of them are nuanced, while others, to those without our cultural filters, stick out like a sore thumb. One such key aspect of scripture that sticks out like a sore thumb is the centrality of community. In the last episode, I spoke much about community and told you we would spend a whole "Nitty-Gritty" section of our study on this subject. So let me simply point out a few things unique to how Jesus used community to grow disciples.

Jesus called together a community of disciples, and from within that community, He grew His followers. While there were times that Jesus sat down and taught the masses, His training of His disciples took place in the crucible of real-life situations. You don't have to read far into the Gospels to see how Jesus used the questions, mistakes, and successes of individual disciples, turning them into training lessons.

They watched how He interacted with religious critics and those who humbly came before Him with requests. They saw how He dismissed human-made religious rules yet obeyed the Father. Jesus taught them about the significance of His forthcoming death and resurrection, yet also gave them an object lesson on it at the last supper. They watched Him minister to both the spiritually sick and needy and the physically sick and needy. They heard Him preach the good news that the kingdom had come, and they watched how He lived the culture of that kingdom. However, Jesus did not stop at simply letting them hear His teaching on these things or watch how He ministered. He had them minister while He watched them and then sent them out on their own to minister as His example trained them to minister. All of this took place within the community context as they traveled from place to place with Him.

How Jesus made community central to His way of growing disciples is the first and most important key to the basis of Jesus' lifestyle method of growing disciples. As I have already stated, it is also the one aspect missed in most, if not all, Western attempts to make and grow disciples.

Ordinary Versus Superstars

To understand the second key to Jesus' way of growing disciples, we must look at who Jesus called to become a part of this all-important community. Was it the rich and famous or the ordinary people? While the call went out to all, most of those who responded were the ordinary, not the superstars of the day.

I have often found it interesting how Jesus chose ordinary people to do the work of and lead His kingdom. He entrusted the work He began to these ordinary men and women. These actions do not mean that He rejected the "superstars" of His day. However, most of them were so wrapped up in themselves, their positions, possessions, and achievements they could not deal with His "counting the cost" questions. How about you? Do you remember the counting the cost

questions from the last episode? Have you meditated upon them, taking them to heart? Do you remember the rich young ruler? How about the Jewish leaders, well-educated men all, with powerful positions in their community? Few of them were willing to walk away and follow Jesus. After Peter spoke before the Jewish rulers, elders, scribes, and everyone from the high-priestly family, we read their reaction to Peter and James in Acts chapter four verse thirteen:

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus.

Paul, who was anything but a common person, actually a superstar who walked away from everything, as we saw in our study of Philippians 3:7-10, explained it this way in First Corinthians chapter one, verses twenty-six through thirty-one.

For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. And because of Him, you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, so that as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

Now we know that Paul, who was a superstar of his day, was also given a very special place in the work and leadership of the kingdom in this age. What was the difference between him and those other well-respected superstars that did not follow Jesus? The answer is simple. Paul walked away from the whole of everything in its entirety, seeing everything, as well as his religious and cultural way of life, as a damaged loss and detriment to his partnership with Jesus and His kingdom. Paul turned his back on all these things and treated them as doggy-dew to be scraped off the bottom of his shoes, or should I say sandals in Paul's case. Remember Philippians 3:7-10.

Now here is where we have a problem in 21st-century America. Most of us do not consider ourselves the superstars of our day. We are just the hard-working average Joes or Joesehines of our culture. But we must remember there was no middle class in Jesus' day. You were either living from paycheck to paycheck or people of wealth. You were either poor or what we would consider the superstars of our day. There was no in-between. In my book, *Communing with the Trinity, A Doctrine Experienced in Reality*, I point out how the middle-class of 21st-century America fit into the wealthy of the rest of the world. We would definitely be considered the wealthy of Jesus' day. Thus if the average Joes or Josephines of our culture do not react to the gospel in the same way Paul did . . . Well, I just think I will let you finish that sentence for yourself.

In-depth Relationships

Throughout this entire Nitty-Gritty section of our study on Cultural Christianity Versus Kingdom

Christianity, I have emphasized the importance of in-depth relationships. The depth of relationship Jesus had with His disciples is the third key to how He grew disciples.

I hope by now, you have caught on to the fact that friendship-type relationships are not enough. To be sure, they are part of the package. However, a relationship based on and demonstrating *agápē*, God's love, is much different than one based on *philéō*, friendship. Friendship is based on the mutual benefit of both parties. However, God's love, *agápē*, is the self-emptying, self-sacrificial attitude of servanthood that drives Jesus's disciples to dangerous acts of unselfishness. Friendship falls apart, but *agápē* stands strong when people act in ways not deserving of a relationship. Certainly, Jesus' relationship with His disciples, especially the twelve, had all the aspects of friendship. However, the investment Jesus made in their lives, even when they did not deserve such investment, is obvious throughout the gospel accounts. All these took place before His ultimate investment on the cross, which no one deserved.

The scriptures give us a clear picture of the type of relationships we should have with other Jesus followers and demonstrate to those we disciple. Authentic community life is the dynamic cauldron where the correct seasonings of their new life in Christ flavor the disciples' lifestyle. Only in community can the depth of relationship, called for in the New Covenant, take place.

A good way to get a handle on these relationships is to study the use of the phrase "one another" throughout the New Covenant. As you do that study, you will see how the relationships we are to have with one another are directly tied to Jesus' life. You will also see them exemplified in the depth of relationships He had with those He was discipling.

The Jesus method of making disciples, lifestyle discipleship, is always done alongside one another. It is never a formal relationship or one that takes place once or twice a week. The Jesus method of making disciples is an ongoing, daily, side-by-side, in-depth relationship taking place within the community context. If we wonder why we do not see the results of Jesus, we need only to look at the fact that our methodologies are far from His.

Apprenticeship Approach

Next, we must look at another fundamental approach to how Jesus grew disciples. He used an apprenticeship approach as opposed to an academic approach. By now, this should be apparent. Remember how I asked my business friend which surgeon he would want to do his brain surgery if he had a terminal tumor? The first surgeon is an example of how we try to grow disciples in the conventional culturalized church. The second surgeon is an example of how Jesus grew disciples. Oh, yes! The first surgeon is an example of how leaders are trained in conventional culturalized Christianity. So if we would not choose the first to do our brain surgery, why would we choose such leaders to lead in growing disciples?

Remember what we learned earlier about how people learn to do things. The least effective way to help a person learn a new skill is a lecture and simple classroom interaction. However, the most profitable way to help a person learn new skills is through active participation and coaching. However, looking at the example of Jesus and His early followers, we discover spiritual growth

is based on more than the disciplines of theory, demonstration, practice, feedback, and coaching. It takes the Holy Spirit's work because the life of an authentic disciple of Jesus is miraculous. However, while the Holy Spirit works from within a person, He works through the actions of others as they live according to the scriptural example in authentic community. These actions must be invested, sacrificial, and identifying with people—it takes sacrificial invested ministry. That, my friend, is the heart and soul of making disciples. It is the heart and soul of authentic Christian life and ministry.

Training is what Jesus did as He grew disciples. He taught and demonstrated how life in the kingdom was to be lived. *By the way, living kingdom life in and of itself becomes the ministry.* Here, we see how others' responses to Jesus' lifestyle and message became the springboard for discussions with His disciples. Often, the way the disciples reacted to His teachings allowed Him to strike, so to speak, while the iron was hot. Only through a life lived alongside His disciples, the life of a master with apprentices, could the impact that Jesus had with them take place.

Along with that area, Jesus also intertwined teaching and demonstrating how to minister the kingdom to others. He put His disciples in ministry opportunities as He prepared to send them out on their own. One example is seen in each place where Jesus feeds the crowds and has them serve the people. Another example is John chapter four, where the disciples did the baptizing as new disciples were made. As the disciples learned by watching and doing with Jesus, He began to send them out. However, He did not send them out on their own. They were sent two-by-two. None of the three accounts of sending out of the twelve speaks of them reporting back to Jesus. However, when Jesus sends out the seventy, we read that they did report back to Jesus. It does not take a stretch of the imagination to realize that the same thing happened with the twelve. Finally, after three years of traveling with Jesus as Jesus' ministry on earth was finished, He sends them one last time. However, Jesus does not leave them as orphans but promises the Holy Spirit and that He would be with them until the end of the age.

This process is what historically happens in any apprenticeship program. The master of the craft allows his apprentices to watch carefully while explaining what he is doing. Then he allows them to do tasks with him. Once the apprentices master certain tasks, he allows them to do the tasks themselves under the watchful eye of the master. Eventually, the apprentices are allowed to do all they have learned on their own while reporting back to the master from time to time. Finally, the master sends the apprentices out independently to continue what they learned through his teaching and example. Many of these become the master to new apprentices.

Isn't it awesome to know that this last step is different when focused on the Jesus Method of growing disciples? He, who was the one who came alongside the disciples, when he left, sent another to come alongside them. The Holy Spirit is now our *paraklētos*, who now comes alongside us. As such, He motivates, comforts, soothes, encourages, and instructs, i.e., trains us just like Jesus did the twelve. This reality is why Jesus' method of making and growing disciples is more powerful than mere human apprenticeship programs. Our master comes alongside us and lives inside us as we grow as disciples and go forth to make disciples of others.

Keeping It Small

The final key to how Jesus grew disciples is how Jesus' main emphasis was on a small group of disciples.

In the culturalized American church, success is measured by the number of people attending, the budget's size, and the number of programs offered. Oh, and don't forget how effective a building is in drawing people and making them feel comfortable. Much has been written bemoaning these metrics, and most leaders often say they do not measure success in those terms. When leaders say this to me, I often ask them what would happen in the following scenario. The attendance at your church dropped by fifty percent, the budget dropped by seventy-five percent, and all the programs stopped. Unless they deal with the church from a dictator's standpoint, they often just give me a very shy smile.

You see, some leaders may say they do not use those standards, but the people in the church measure success by those standards. Thus, those same leaders who say they don't use those metrics have to plan their ministries around them to maintain their positions. Instead of shying away from those standards, other leaders embrace them and have developed what they consider strong arguments in favor of them. Oh, how adept we have become at arguing the benefits of a failing system.

Jesus was not after big crowds, many followers, or impacting His culture. Jesus knew that the culture of His day was passing away and that He was instituting a new, radical, unique culture that the world had never seen before. For this reason, He kept His followers down to the select few who, though they did not completely understand everything, had active faith in Him. They clung to those things they understood and allowed the Holy Spirit to reveal the truth about Jesus. These were the ones who accepted, no matter how hard, the radical teachings of the one the Jews thought they had all figured out—the Messiah.

Jesus did not want a crowd, count noses and nickels, nor did He make things easy. When people did not understand Him or walked away from Him, Jesus did not chase after them with explanations. He did not share the simple parts of His message and add the tougher stuff once a person decided to follow Him. The true Messiah hit people right between the eyes with what many today may see as bold, almost harsh, truth statements. He did not candy-coat what He was doing or saying. Jesus wanted the select few who would allow Him and His word to radically change their lives so that their worlds would continually be turned upside down and inside out. And guess what? After Jesus left, these radicalized followers of Jesus continued His ministry and turned the whole world inside out and upside down. The message they preached is that there is now a new king and a new government. Oh, and guess what? They kept things small as well. How? While some estimate the number of disciples who followed Jesus during His earthly ministry to be over one hundred, he focused on a group of twelve. Even then, He gave special attention to those who would become leaders within that group—Peter, James, and John. While thousands of people became disciples of Jesus after His ascension at Pentecost and shortly after, the leadership in Jerusalem keep things small through intimate communities developing within

homes.

Can this happen in the 21st-century American church? Yes, but only if we are willing to walk away from the foundational issues of our American culture and live in the cultural realities of the kingdom culture. This transformation will only happen if we begin to focus on the partnership we have with Jesus and His kingdom and the full, complete, intimate, experiential relationship we have with the persons of the Trinity. Only then will we walk away from our old religious and cultural realities and begin to count all things in their entirety as doggy-dew to be scrapped off the bottoms of our shoes. Only then will we stop trying to eat doggy-dew sandwiches and focus on the full, complete, intimate relationship we have with Jesus and the power of His resurrection. Only then will we focus our lives around the full, complete, intimate, experiential communion we have with the sufferings of Christ, being made like Him in His death.

When these things happen through authentic repentance and authentic faith that produces obedience, we will take our rightful places as God's image-bearers. Only then will we be endowed with divine authority to fulfill our responsibility of extending God's kingdom into people's lives. Only then will authentic community and authentic spiritual growth occur as we live in communion with the persons of the Trinity and each other. Then people will know that Father sent Jesus. Then we will live in communities that become the physical representation of the kingdom of God. Then what we say will be backup by who we are and how we live both individually and together in communities of communion. Then God's purposes for this age will be finished, and the new age will be ushered in by Jesus' return.

Concluding Thoughts

You can read much more about all of these issues in my book, *Invested: A Personal Journey From an Event/Message Driven Ministry Model into the Attitude of Jesus*.

I had hoped to review the basic things we have learned in this portion of the Getting' Down to the Nitty-Gritty section of our study of Cultural Christianity Versus Kingdom Christianity. However, that old clock is once again ticking away. So I will begin the live broadcast of the Diggin' Deeper Café, which is connected to this episode with that review.

Sign Off

So, let me remind you that this Sunday at 8 PM CST, 9 PM EST, this conversation continues. My good friend and co-host, Joel Heim, and I will be live in the Digging Deeper Café. Here we will be joined by either Dr. James Randolph of Advancing Christ's Kingdom Global Ministries or Kevin Birky of Mulberry Tree Ministers in Kouts, Indiana. As promised, I will begin with a review of what we have learned from these lessons entitled, "Making and Growing Disciples." My friends who join me will be asking me questions about this Inside Jimbo's Head segment and bringing their unique commentaries. And yes, we look forward to your questions and comments, as well. In fact, it is your questions and comments that are the reason for the live broadcast. So come

to the Hello, Jimbo Speaking Facebook page or the Hello, Jimbo Speaking Youtube Channel this Sunday at 8 PM CST, 9 PM EST and join us.

If you are listening to this podcast after it first drops, you can find the video of this Diggin' Deeper Cafe on the Hello, Jimbo Speaking website at www.jimbospeaking.org. You can find a lot more on this site as well.

One last thing. While you are listening, please, be sure to subscribe to this podcast, consider becoming a support partner at either the \$0.99, \$4.99, or \$9.99 monthly level, or make a larger monthly or one-time support gift at the Hello, Jimbo Speaking webpage at www.jimbospeaking.org. 100% of these funds go to support my direct ministry to higher-risk youth.

So, until Sunday and the Diggin' Deeper Café or the next episode of the Hello, Jimbo Speaking Podcast, go out there and, by God's grace, make it a great life that honors and glorifies Father through the faith that produces obedience. Do not settle for anything less. Why? Father settles for nothing less! See you next time.