

Three Gospel Anchors for Your Discipleship Ministry

In these years of great changes all around us, our discipleship plans are often interrupted. Circumstances change, people drop out or quit our programs, and sometimes we wonder if all of our efforts are worthwhile or if we are making a lasting difference in the kingdom of God. How do we as disciple-making leaders stay emotionally healthy, full of hope, and moving forward when so many things are changing around us? What “anchors us” in these changing times? In this session we will remember three “gospel anchors” that give us hope in changing times and remind us to keep trusting that God Himself is at work in our disciple-making efforts.

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Getting Started:

- What do you know about anchors? What is their purpose? How do they work?
- My goal in this session is to lay the groundwork by reminding us of THREE gospel anchors to keep your discipleship ministry from “sinking” during times of change or uncertainty.

I. **Anchor #1:** God Calls All Believers to a Life of Discipleship. Life as a disciple is not an “advanced track” for extra spiritual Christians. THEREFORE, when I call a fellow believer to grow as a disciple, I am not asking that person to do something extra or unusual or amazing; rather, this is the life God intends for all believers.

A. Hebrews 5:11-14

1. Spiritual progress for all believers is assumed, and in this text, it is shocking in its absence.
2. Spiritual progress as defined in this text is not about Bible knowledge alone, but about spiritual discernment, the ability to see the difference between good and evil, and to choose the good.

B. Hebrews 12:1-4

1. This text captures several key discipleship elements: the witness of God’s people, the importance of focusing on Christ regardless of the “topic of the day,” and the role of struggles in our faith journey.

2. A life truly focused on Christ is at the heart of discipleship; indeed, the glory of Christ as our Prophet, Priest, and King is the main point of the entire book of Hebrews.

II. **Anchor #2.** God Himself is the Key Disciple Maker! Ultimately, this work of disciple-making is His work, not ours, and His tools should be our main tools. THEREFORE, when my “discipling plans” don’t work out as I intended, I can trust God to continue HIS work.

Example: Proximity: Habits of a lifetime (www.presbyterianireland.org)

Three Implications of this:

- A. Use the Bible! It is God’s favorite tool to grow us. Heb 4:12-13; II Tim 3:14-17
- B. Teach people to pray! Luke 11:1
- C. Foster redemptive relationships! Acts 2:42-47

III. **Anchor #3.** God Uses ALL of Life to Disciple Us. Every aspect of life is part of the process, just as every part of church life should be. Men’s Ministry, Women’s Ministry, Youth Ministry – all should be accomplished with a discipleship mindset.

- A. When plans change or my efforts fail to produce what I hoped, I can still be confident that God is using the changes or failures for our good and for His glory.
- B. When those I am discipling struggle with sin or are making very slow progress, I can know that God is using that struggle or failure to grow that person.
- C. When other church ministries appear to be rivals to my disciple-making efforts, I can trust that God will use these other ministries too.

Let’s Talk!

- How have you seen your discipleship “plans” suddenly change in recent years due to Covid, impact of war, or sudden schedule changes? How did you feel when that happened?
- Have you ever felt like a “discipleship failure” when your plans or program were suddenly interrupted or discontinued? How did you handle that?

Suggested Reading: Each of these books brings something helpful – and there are many others:

- *Discipleshift* by Jim Putman, Bobby Harrington, and Robert Coleman
- *Discipleship that Fits* by Bobby Harrington and Alex Absalom
- *Contagious Disciple Making* by David & Paul Watson
- *The Master's Plan for Making Disciples* by Win & Charles Arn
- *The Disciple Making Church* by Bill Hull
- *The Trellis and the Vine* by Colin Marshall and Tony Payne
- *Deep Roots of Resilient Disciples* by Rick Hill
- *Emotionally Healthy Discipleship* by Peter Scazzero