

Jesus' Four-Stage Approach to Making Disciples

It is evident that Jesus' intent from the beginning of His ministry was to get his disciples ready to carry on His ministry after He returned to His Father. We will observe the four progressive stages through which Jesus' brought the twelve so that they could assume responsibility to take the gospel to the world. By walking through these four stages we can apply them to the way we can disciple others so that they too can become disciple makers.

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Jesus Preparatory Model of Disciple-Making

Premise: Jesus adapted his leadership style to the readiness level of his disciples in order to continually move them to the ultimate level of assuming responsibility for carrying on His ministry.¹

	PRE-DISCIPLE	STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3	STAGE 4
Jesus' role	The inviter	The living example	The provocative teacher	The supportive coach	The ultimate delegator
The disciples' role	Seekers	Observers and imitators	Students and questioners	Short-term missionaries	Apostles
Readiness level	Hungry to know whether Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah	Ready to observe who Jesus is and the nature of his ministry and mission	Ready to interact with Jesus and publicly identify with him	Ready to test the authority of Jesus to work through them	Ready to assume full responsibility for making reproducing disciples
Key questions	Is Jesus the Messiah?	Who is Jesus, and what is his ministry and mission?	What is the cost of following Jesus?	Will the power of Jesus work through us when we take on his ministry?	Will I give my life entirely to the mission of making reproducing disciples?

I. Pre-Discipleship: Inquirer Stage (John 1:38-39)

- A. Jesus asks his would-be followers, “What are you looking for?” (John 1:38)
- B. Jesus is the subject of their investigation: Jesus says, “Come and see.” (John 1:39)

¹ Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard, *Situational Leadership: A Summary* (Escondido, CA: Center for Leadership Studies, 2000).], p. 2

II. Stage 1: Jesus, the Living Example; The Disciples Role: Observe/Imitate (Mark 1-5)

- A. Jesus establishes his authority
- B. Jesus displays his heart of compassion
- C. Jesus encounters the religious establishment's antagonism

III. Stage 2: Jesus, the Provocative Teacher; The Disciples Role: Interact/Assist

- A. Jesus confounds his disciples with his response to the rich ruler. (Mark 10:17-31)
- B. Jesus puts the disciples on the spot: "Who do you say that I am?" (Mark 8:27-35)

IV. Stage 3: Jesus, the Supportive Coach; The Disciples Role: Delegate/Support

- A. Jesus sends his disciples out on mission (Matthew 10:1-42)
 - 1. Clear Instructions
 - 2. Clear Authority
 - 3. Clear Expectations
- B. Jesus brings them together for a debrief.

V. Stage 4: Jesus, the Ultimate Delegator; The Disciples Role: Send/Reproduce

- A. Jesus prays for and sends his disciples (John 17, Matthew 28:18-20)
- B. He gives them their goal: "bear much fruit and be my disciples" (John 15:8)

Exercise: You have three years left in your ministry with no one to replace you, how will you spend the next three years to prepare for your absence?

Suggested Readings:

Greg Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship: Making Disciples a Few at a Time* (InterVarsity Press, 2016), Chapter 4, "Jesus' Preparatory Empowerment Model"

B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve* (Creative Space Independent Publishing Platform, 2018)

Michael Wilkins, *Following the Master: A Biblical Theology of Discipleship* (Zondervan, 1992)