

God Wants You to Multiply

My wife and I have four grown daughters, and the youngest of them is 24. We are not planning to have any more babies. Our girls are the joy of our lives—and we love it when they visit our empty nest.

But even though we're finished with the task of bringing Grady children into the world, I'm not finished reproducing. I believe every Christian is called to bear spiritual children. Jesus called us to make disciples, and this is what He was referring to when He told His followers: "My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit ..." (John 15:8a).

So for the past several years, I've invested most of my waking hours discipling younger Christians. I offer them counsel and share the life lessons I've learned in ministry. We meet for coffee or meals and take trips together; we also chat using every medium available—phone, text, WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook and Skype. I love watching young people grow spiritually.

Discipleship is not just a hobby—it's my passion. But something dramatic happened a few months ago that proved to me how serious God is about this process of spiritual multiplication.

I was preaching at Berean Church in Pittsburgh on a Sunday morning in October. After my message, I invited people to the altar who wanted to be filled with the Holy Spirit. I also had a word of knowledge that there was a young man in the audience who had a porn addiction.

Many people responded, but I noticed a tall guy right in the middle of the group at the altar. I laid hands on his head and prayed, and then moved on to pray for the others. When I looked back I saw that this young man was on the floor. He was trembling and speaking in tongues.

When I finished praying for everyone, Pastor Mark Moder closed the service. But the young guy was still on the floor, so I sat down next to him and prayed quietly. I could tell the Holy Spirit was doing some deep work in him. He must have stayed horizontal for 20 minutes.

When he finally sat up and gained composure, I asked him a few questions. He told me he was 20 years old. He told me he came to the altar because he'd been a slave to pornography. He said it was his first visit to this church.

"What's your name," I asked.

"Dante Lee Grady," he replied.

"Huh? You're kidding," I said.

"No, seriously! I was surprised to find out the preacher this morning has my name!" he said.

Since that day, Dante Lee Grady and I have become close. He came to my home in Georgia in January for a discipleship retreat, he traveled with me when I preached last month in Pennsylvania, and he's joining me on another ministry assignment in May.

This guy is on fire for God now. He's ravenously reading the study Bible I gave him, he's plugged into Berean Church and he feels a call to fulltime ministry. And he texts me often to ask questions about his faith.

I never had a biological son. But now I have a spiritual son who actually bears my name.

When I asked God about this unusual experience, I sensed that my encounter with Dante was a prophetic sign—not just for me but also for the body of Christ. God is reminding us that we must take the command to make disciples seriously. Our priorities must shift.

We've all read the research about the younger generation in the United States. Statistics show that many young adults have left the church or have no interest in Christianity. Yet I've also seen that when I offer to be a mentor or a spiritual father to young people between the ages of 18 to 34, they are eager to latch on.

When I offer love and encouragement to these young adults, they can't get enough. This generation isn't interested in dry religious programs, but they crave an authentic and relational connection with a mature Christian who is willing to spend time with them.

The spiritual sons and daughters I'm investing in today love worship, they want to experience the Holy Spirit's power, and they are eager to share their faith everywhere. Dante has almost 10,000 followers on Twitter (@whoknowsDante), and he loves to tell them about Jesus.

Watching Dante Lee Grady become a mature follower of Christ gives me great hope for the future. It reminds me that every Elijah should have a young Elisha following him and begging for a double portion of the Holy Spirit. And if you read that story in the Bible, you learn that Elisha surpassed his mentor. That is my heart's cry—that those I invest in will do greater things than I did!

Don't miss the greatest adventure of the Christian life. Don't let the life of Jesus end with you—pass it on to the next generation. Be a multiplier. God wants you to reproduce His life in others. {eoA}