

In Reality, Discipleship is a Real Challenge

I grew up in a family that loved sports. I distinctly remember being in my grandmother's backyard as she taught me how to hit a baseball. I also remember that my grandma was not afraid to throw high and inside to back me off of the plate if needed.

If It Was Easy

My freshman year of high school, I got the opportunity to start on the varsity baseball team. I was utterly terrified. The only thing I new for sure was that I was going to have to practice and play harder than any other guy on the team if I wanted to earn their respect and keep my spot.

In the midst of all this inner turmoil, my father shared a simple truth with me that has stuck with me. He said, "Matt, if it was easy, everyone would do it".

"If it was easy, everyone would do it." That simple truth somehow helped to sustain me through my freshman year of high school. It rings even more true as I am now a man with a family and am planting a church.

Hard, But Worth It

Discipleship is hard. It is one of the hardest things I have ever been a part of. Discipleship is not easy, but it is worth it! The reason more men do not engage in discipleship relationships is because of how hard it is.

I want to give you 5 realities of discipleship so that you may enter into this hard work with the proper expectations. All disappointment stems from unmet expectations. I believe that if you can enter into this with proper expectations, you will

be better prepared to do what is hard.

5 Realities

1. **A disciple is willing to change.** A willingness to change is a must for a disciple. Galatians 4 says that we were slaves to our sin, but Jesus has freed us. We were slaves to sin and that means that if we are going to be a disciple of Jesus, we are going to have to let the Holy Spirit change our sinful desires.

2. **A disciple is stable.** The bible says in Eph. 4:13-14, *"until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes."* (Ephesians 4:13-14 ESV)

This scripture is talking about the gifts that God has given to His people. He has given them gifts to build up the body so that they can aspire to the "fullness of Christ" and ultimately will not be "tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine."

3. **A disciple is able to be under authority.** In our culture, we hate the idea of being under authority, but to be a disciple you must understand the freedom that can be found in it. The greatest example of being under authority is found in Jesus' relationship with God the Father. Jesus, being fully God, submitted himself to God the Father by becoming a perfect sacrifice for humanity's sins. *"So Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.'"* (John 5:19 ESV)

4. **A disciple loves the church.** You must love the church if you want to be a disciple. To me, this may be the hardest one at times. The church is made up of people and people are

messy. These people are different than me and some of them annoy me, but that does not excuse me from loving them and being in a community with them. *"Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,"* (Ephesians 5:25 ESV)

5. A disciple loves those who do not love Jesus. A disciple understands that we are all broken and despite our brokenness, Jesus died for us (Rom. 5:8). This does not give us a spirit of privilege but instead a spirit of humility. A disciple knows that they do not deserve the salvation they have been given and because God was good enough to save them they must love people like Jesus loved them. We have received the love of God undeservedly. Therefore, we have no right to keep it to ourselves.

These realities are hard, and the truth is that not many are doing it. We need men to be disciples who make disciples for the glory of God.

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