

The Real Reason the Church Isn't Radically Transforming Our Dark Culture

Our culture seems to get darker and darker. How can this be, when millions of Christians across the United States go to church every Sunday and declare their devotion to Jesus? What's missing in the church that is keeping us from making a lasting impact on our dying culture?

Joseph Mattera says it's because of a dangerous trap the church has fallen into—the trap of becoming focused on numerical growth and events as opposed to true discipleship. Mattera outlines this powerful insight in his book, *The Jesus Principle*—which I had the privilege of publishing through Charisma House—and I recently invited him onto my podcast to discuss it. The key, he says, is staying process-driven. But what exactly does that mean?

“When we see Jesus, He told [His disciples], ‘Follow Me, and I will make you to become fishers of men,’” Mattera says. “So there was a process involved, and it had to do with them doing life with Jesus. It wasn't ‘Follow Me, and you'll go to Bible study once a week or you'll come to church on Sunday, or I'll ship you out to a Bible college.’”

“There was a real process, the reciprocity between Jesus and those He called to follow Him. They shared their lives together, and I don't see that happening too much. As a result, we don't see the culture shifting even though we have more people attending church on Sunday than ever in history. So I'm very concerned about that.”

When it comes to discipleship, more is caught than taught, Mattera says. We can't just sit people down, teach them some basic principles once and expect them to walk them out

perfectly. People need to watch someone go before them and exemplify what the Bible teaches. And oftentimes, they need the same spiritual teachings more than once.

And, above all, discipleship is personal.

“[Jesus] was personal with [His disciples],” Mattera says. “You see John leaning on Jesus’ bosom. Making disciples involves emotional intelligence, socialization, emotional maturity. It means there’s an emotional attachment. It’s not just Bible studies and miracles. We’re raising up sons and daughters, not just employees or church members.”

Mattera takes this principle so seriously that when he planted his church in the 1980s, the congregation often called him “Dad” and his wife “Mom.”

“We realized in this fragmented culture, especially in that neighborhood in the 1980s, they needed a father more than they needed a preacher,” he says.

This is a difficult principle to live out if you’re not used to it, though. That’s why Mattera’s book is so important for the church of our day. The book flows from Mattera’s experience of seeing 168,000 people’s lives transformed.

In the book, he talks about understanding your God-given identity, releasing your potential, understanding affirmation, walking in your assignment, the power of delegation and more. These are the kinds of topics church leaders must learn—and even be reminded of!

And it’s not just church leaders who need to know these things. Every believer who is led by the Spirit must learn these principles to walk in spiritual victory and success.

To learn more about *The Jesus Principle*, listen to my full interview with Mattera. And to purchase your own copy of the book, [click here!](#)