

“We train disciplemakers...”



A culture of making disciples — p. 2



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Update from Kansas Communities Ministry

Making Disciples Naturally Podcast

Nov. 23, 30: R. Spann: rejoicing in the midst of trials

Dec. 7, 14: Karla and Vivian: Keeping Christ the center this Christmas

Developing a Culture of Disciplemaking

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Preaching the Gospel to yourself daily Goads and Nails excerpt

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Two steps in disciplemaking

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Men, mark your calendars for our Spring Men's Retreat, March 28-29, 2025 at Camp David, Hesston, KS
Speaker: David Wooddell, former businessman and current Navigator Rep.

Website mini tutorial

Did you know that the KansasNavs.org website is a treasure house of encouraging and educational information? In addition, did you know you can search for specific messages and speakers? From the home page at KansasNavs.org, you can navigate to the following pages:

About our Ministry: A useful description of the history of the Kansas Communities Ministry. What is the story of how God worked?

Conferences: Information about upcoming retreats and conferences

Media: A fantastic repository of messages (many with handouts), dating back to 2009. You can search by ANY keyword, including title, date, speaker, topic, etc. Then click on the word “audio,” “video” or “PDF” for that talk which will bring up the corresponding files.

Resources: Here you will find Discipleship Resources, Kansas Communities Ministry resources, Navigator® resources as free downloads (hand, wheel, bridge, etc.), links to partner ministries, as well as all our previous newsletters.

Podcasts: Again this is a searchable list of all our podcasts to date.

Blog: All of Dr. Spann's blogs are available here, in searchable format. This searches all the words in the blogs as well as titles.

We urge you to check out this website and use these resources for your own growth as well as investing in others.

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“For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any double-edged sword, piercing even to the point of dividing soul from spirit, and joints from marrow; it is able to judge the desires and thoughts of the heart. And no creature is hidden from God, but everything is naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must render an account.”

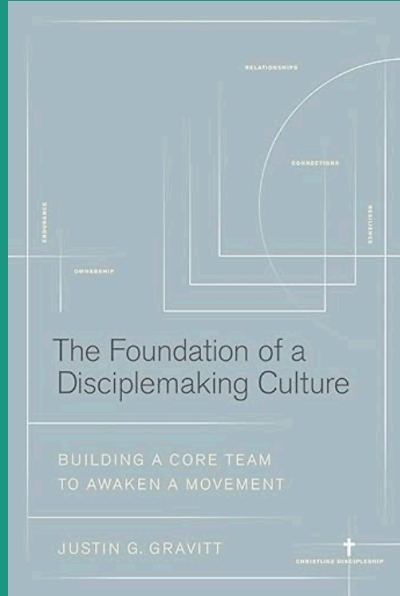
—Hebrews 4:12-13 (NET Bible)

The Foundation of a Disciplemaking Culture, Pub. NavPress, 2024

by Justin Gravitt

Justin Gravitt has been on Navigator staff for some 20 years. He has developed disciplemaking cultures in Texas, Ohio and overseas. He founded and directs the Dayton Disciple Makers Network consisting of several like-minded churches. He currently serves with Navigators Church Ministries as National Director of Innovation and Momentum.

This book gives a clear and practical pathway to development of a disciplemaking culture, both within a church as well as in other ministry settings. According to Justin, part of the key to this process is development of a CORE team which energizes and keeps the momentum going. This team is characterized by people who have a **Common vision**, **Own** that vision individually, are **Relationally** resilient as a result of



their connection to one another and the mission, and have **Endurance** to weather discouragement and hardship (**CORE**). He makes the excellent point that there is a vast difference between a “group” and a “team.” He writes “Groups come together around common interests for individual purposes and priorities. In other words, individuals join to get something that fits their own agenda... Teams come together around a common vision or purpose, unlike groups that bring separate goals to their shared ideas.”

The CORE team members are being disciplined by the leader and they, in turn, disciple others. The fire of enthusiasm to keep making disciples can be fanned by the Holy Spirit through this concept.

This book reminded me of the excellent foundation laid by Jim Morris and so many others years ago. This book can help us re-ignite that vision as we carry on the ministry into the next decades.

Goads and Nails

By Richard Spann

“Preach the Gospel to yourself daily.” — Jerry Bridges

(Excerpt from Vol. 3 pages 99-101)

As I consider Jerry’s statement as mentioned above, I first of all must ask myself this question: What is there about the Gospel that I need to be reminded of every day? It is obvious that my need is not partial. It is total. I need what will cleanse the guilt and paralysis of the past, provide power for the present and hope for the future. I am completely dependent upon the workings of His Grace in the Gospel to deal with the sins of the past, the sin nature that results in sins, and the law that condemns me the sinner.

In the Gospel, I see that Christ “appeared so that he might take away our sins.” (1 John 3:5) As Jerry once stated, Christ has “exhausted the wrath of God.” My sins are buried in the deepest sea, removed as far as the east is from the west, and in the Old Testament picture, carried by the scapegoat into the wilderness, never to be remembered again.

In the Gospel, Christ has dealt with my sin nature. He has removed the source of sin, sin’s factory, in his death on the cross. “For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin.” (Romans 6:6) In the Gospel I am removed from the curse of the law and its condemnation. In Romans 7:4 we read, “So, my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of Christ.” And in Romans 10:4 it says, “Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.”...

This Gospel delivers us from “the dominion of darkness” (Colossians 1:13) and delivers us to Him. “That you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God.” (Romans 7:4b) This Gospel is Christ Himself, living in us, that we might say with the Apostle Paul in Philippians 1:21, “For to me, to live is Christ.”

May Christ so manifest His life in you so that He Himself is seen in and through your life as you preach this Gospel to yourself daily.

In Christ, Richard Spann

Two Steps in Making Disciples by Richard Spann

“There are two steps in the process of making disciples:

1. Determine what you want to develop,
2. Develop what you have determined”

— Howard Hendricks

Many organizations and churches have an interest in discipleship. Most of these will even include some mention of the word “disciple” in their vision statement. The understanding of what a disciple is, however, varies widely. It is critical, as Howard Hendricks points out, to determine what we want to develop. Would it be better, for example, to have one hundred people who are ninety percent committed or to have ten people who are one hundred percent committed? Is it enough to simply populate our pews and fill the seats at our conferences? Or do we wish to penetrate our neighborhoods and workplaces with the Gospel? Are we satisfied with emotion and activity, or is it reproduction we have as our target? Do we want to develop those who are flawless in their recitation of their creeds, or those who are being transformed into the likeness of Christ by the Holy Spirit? Our Lord had much to say about discipleship. His comments center around the disciples’ relationship to Him, to His word, to His love for others and to His work.

A disciple’s relationship to his/her Lord is seen in Luke 14:25-33. On three occasions our Lord declared that a relationship to Him takes precedence over our possessions, our own will and any other relationship which we have. To fail in any of these three is to result in the forsaking of our first love. (Revelation 2:4) It will lead to disqualification as His disciple.

In regard to His word, He says the following in John 8:31b: “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.” To hold to His teaching, we must let our roots go down deep into the word of God as we read, study and memorize His word. The intent is not to merely have a better grip on God’s word, but that it will have a better grip on us.

Our Lord demonstrated His love to His disciples in the upper room as He washed their feet. In that same chapter He gave them a new command. “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” (John 13:34-35) Love for others is a foundation stone of our fellowship and witness to the world. The absence of love in our fellowship limits our penetration into that world with the Gospel message.

The work of Christ is described in Luke 19:10. “For the son of man came to seek and to save what was lost.” He shares this same work with His disciples as we see in the Great Commission. (Matthew 28:18-20)

From these scriptures we are able to determine that we want as a disciple one who is devoted to the person of Christ, governed by the word of Christ, mastered by the love of Christ, and committed to the work of Christ.

(continued on next page)



“What is ‘man-to-man’? It is meeting another — eyeball to eyeball — face to face. It involves sharing your whole life and ministry with him, so he, by the grace of God, will progress from spiritual immaturity in Christ to spiritual maturity in Christ.”

— Jack Griffin, who was converted at a Billy Graham crusade in Sydney, Australia in 1959. He then was discipled and, with his wife, May, ultimately pioneered the Navigator work in Australia. Quote found at <http://discipleshiplibrary.com/pdfs/R1000.pdf>

Two Steps (Continued)

Having determined what we want to develop, then, we must develop what we have determined. This is, of course, the work of the Holy Spirit. He works in our lives by circumstances and in ways that are beyond our comprehension. Some of the methods by which He works are readily discernible and it is to these that we will direct our attention. These include prayer, the word of God, the Body of Christ (the church), and individual personal relationships.

The Apostle Paul demonstrated the importance of prayer in the formation of disciples on numerous occasions: in Colossians 1:9-14, Ephesians 1:15-23, and Philippians 1:9-11. We see Paul praying for others throughout the book of Acts. Prayer places our desire for the spiritual growth of others before the throne of our Lord God, trusting Him to so act that many laborers for the kingdom would come from the lives of those for whom we are praying.

Paul also recognized the effect that the word of God has in our lives. He states in Acts 20:32, "Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified." The role of the word of God in our lives is included in the High Priestly prayer of our Lord. "Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth." (John 17:17) There is no growth in the spiritual realm apart from the word of God. If we sink our roots deep into His word, we will experience a firm foundation for our walk with Him.

It is impossible to disciple others individually apart from the body of Christ, that is, the church. An old African proverb states that "It takes a whole village to raise a child." Our Christian faith is no different. We all need continuous counsel, encouragement by others, a place where we are accepted, one in which we are challenged, comforted and have opportunity to use the gifts which He has supplied.

In addition to the body of Christ, there is additional benefit to meeting with others individually to obtain maximum growth in Christ. As the Scriptures relate to us, "a cord of three strands is not easily broken." We see this modeled throughout Scripture: Moses and Joshua, Elijah and Elisha, Barnabas and Paul, and Paul and Timothy. The Apostle Paul describes the importance of learning individually from others in his letter to Timothy as follows "You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings — what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra, the persecutions I endured." In this list, Paul enumerated what he felt was important for Timothy to model in his own life. Paul did not shrink from exposing Timothy to problems, concerns of various sorts, and ever present danger. How, we may ask, are we discipling others today? Do we live, work and spend enough time with them so that they may see and benefit from our example; our low points as well as the high points? Do we relate to them our discouragements and our failures? It is only as we enable them to see that the treasure in our jars of clay is from the Lord that they are taught to look to the Lord in their lives.

Aristotle was once quoted as saying, "We can hit our target more accurately if we can see it." In making disciples we need a target. Our Lord has given us numerous ways by which we can assess the growth and development of others for whom he has given us oversight. It is my prayer that as you look to the scriptures for His guidance, He will enable you, also, to determine what He wants you to develop and to develop what you have determined.

In Christ, Richard Spann

"True salvation is wholly a work of God. It is said to be both a finished work and a gift, and, therefore, it lays no obligation upon the saved one to complete it himself, or to make after payments of service for it." ~ Lewis Sperry Chafer, Founder and First President of Dallas Theological Seminary. Quote found at https://www.azquotes.com/author/25205-Lewis_Sperry_Chafer#google_vignette