PA BIBLE TEACHING FELLOWSHIP

Lessons in Discipling

Making Disciples in the Book of Acts | Tuesday Study Night | October 13, 2026

Colossians 1:24-29. *"Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ"* (v. 28).

- This has been an informal motto at PA Bible for *preaching*, *teaching*, *ministering*, and *discipling*.

Four questions tonight:

- What is *discipling*? Why does it matter? What does it look like? What does it leave behind?

Acts shows us discipling happening.

I. WHAT IS DISCIPLESHIP?

- Greek *mathētēs*: a learner, a pupil, an apprentice. A first-century disciple lived with the teacher and picked up his habits, values, and skills along with his words. You learn a trade standing next to someone who already knows it.
- Jesus "appointed twelve . . . so that they might ***be with him*** and he might ***send them out*** to preach" (Mark 3:14). With him first, sent out second!
- "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19). He didn't call them because they were qualified. He said, *I will make you*.
- **Discipleship** is following Jesus. **Discipling** is helping someone else follow him: doing spiritual good in their life. Helping them to grow in their discipleship.
- Every **disciple** is called *to disciple*.

Matthew 28:19-20 (ESV) **19** ***Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,*** **20** ***teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.***

II. WHY DOES DISCIPLING MATTER?

- **Because Jesus commanded it.** Churches love to count attendance. Jesus (and Paul) count **maturity** (Matthew 28:19-20; Colossians 1:28; Ephesians 4:13). It's our **privilege** to participate in the Lord's work and our **responsibility** to represent him well.
- **Because nobody becomes a Paul alone.** Behind the great apostle stand two ordinary believers: Ananias, "a disciple" (Acts 9:10), and Barnabas, who "took him" (Acts 9:27).
- **Because the church grows through strengthened, maturing people.** "The churches were *strengthened* in the faith, and they *increased* in numbers daily" (Acts 16:5; see 11:24). Strength first. Numbers followed.
- **Because hard times are coming.** "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). Lone and immature Christians get picked off. Discipled Christians stand.
- **Because wolves are real.** Paul's defense was three years of teaching "in public and from house to house" (Acts 20:20, 27). The enemy preys on those Christians who are isolated and under-nourished.

Acts 20:29-30 (ESV) **29** ***I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock;*** **30** ***and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them.***

III. WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE? SIX SCENES FROM ACTS

Scene 1: The risen Lord, still discipling (Acts 1-4)

- Luke's first book was about all Jesus *began* to do and teach (Acts 1:1). Acts is Jesus continuing, now as head of his body.

Acts 4:13 (ESV) **13** ***Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus.***

Scene 2: One man, one chariot (Acts 8:26-40)

Acts 8:30-31 (ESV) **30** ***So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?"*** **31** ***And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.***

- Philip leaves a city-wide revival to sit beside one man. He starts where the man already is reading, in Isaiah 53, and walks him to Jesus (8:35). The eunuch "went on his way rejoicing" (8:39).

Scene 3: The ordinary disciple and the encourager (Acts 9:10-31; 11:19-30)

- Ananias, "a disciple" (9:10), is afraid and goes anyway. His first words: "Brother Saul" (9:17).

Acts 9:26-27 (ESV) **26** ***And when he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples. And they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple.*** **27** ***But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and declared to them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who spoke to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus.***

- "But Barnabas took him." He welcomed him, he comforted him, he was *with him*.

Scene 4: Strengthening the souls of the disciples (Acts 14:19-28)

Acts 14:21-23 (ESV) **21** ***When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch,*** **22** ***strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.*** **23** ***And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.***

- They went back to the cities that had just stoned Paul. Strengthen, encourage, appoint elders, then "committed them to the Lord": entrusted, deposited for safekeeping.
- Timothy was from Lystra – do you think he may have noticed the care and courage of Paul?

Scene 5: A spiritual son with a godly home (Acts 16:1-5)

Acts 16:1-2 (ESV) **1** ***Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek.*** **2** ***He was well spoken of by the brothers at Lystra and Iconium.***

2 Timothy 1:5 (ESV) **5** ***I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.***

- Timothy's faith didn't start with Paul. He knew the Scriptures "from childhood" (2 Timothy 3:14-15). Same chapter: Lydia's household (16:15) and the jailer's (16:31-34).

Scene 6: Tentmakers and a gifted preacher (Acts 18)

Acts 18:24-26 (ESV) **24** ***Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures.*** **25** ***He had been instructed in the way of the Lord. And being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John.*** **26** ***He began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him and explained to him the way of God more accurately.***

- Tentmakers (18:2-3; Romans 16:3-4). They didn't call Apollos out in public. They took him aside and built on what he had right. Result: "I planted, Apollos watered" (1 Corinthians 3:6).