



# DISCIPLESHIP

## From the Older Adult Ministry Of the Kentucky Conference

### TRAINING, EQUIPPING, PREPARING PEOPLE FOR DISCIPLESHIP

In our last article on Discipleship I wrote about how we can help people be connected with Jesus and the Church. I talked about Bible Studies and prayer groups. This article moves to the second step: training equipping, and preparing people for discipleship. We could also call this step in making disciples “Growing in Christ.”

A disciple is one who is being connected to Jesus and the church and is being trained, equipped, and prepared for discipleship. It is a life-long process and one that can be started at any point in our life-long journey of faith. If you are now deciding to be and grow as a disciple at whatever point in your journey of faith you are in, I encourage you to get started now. It is not too late. In today’s culture, too many people are looking for a quick-fix without the commitment or the perseverance to understand that we are called by God to be in this process for the long term.

As our grandchildren grow and mature, there must be a long-term commitment by their parents to a good diet, exercise, sleep, learning, affection, and faith to name a few. Without these things on a consistent basis the body and mind of any child will not grow as God designed them to grow. It is the same with discipleship. If we are to grow spiritually in order to become the disciple Jesus has called us to be, there are certain things we need to make a life-time commitment to do. It means making a commitment of our time and energy and focus to be trained and equipped to build the Kingdom of God.

So let me ask you this:

- What training do you need to be an effective disciple of Jesus Christ?
- In what areas do you need to grow in your faith?
- What gifts has God given you that need to be developed in order to practice intentional discipleship?
- Do you know what your gifts for ministry are?
- Do you know how to tell your story of how God has been active in your life?

If you answered “no” or “I’m not sure” to even one of these questions, then you now have direction in how you can proceed. Knowing the next step is vitally important and extremely helpful.

Here are some resources you can consider:

1. If you are looking for purpose in the second half of life, try these:

- a. At The Crossroads: By Clayton Smith & Dave Wilson. Small group or individual study with free leader guide that includes a Spiritual gifts inventory, mission/purpose statement and legacy planning. Older adults, especially Baby Boomers, are looking for ways to live a life with purpose in retirement.
  - b. Sharing A Life of Significance for Retirement: by R. Jack Hansen and Jerry P. Haas. Looks at life's intellectual growth and service to others, determining new goals for one's life and marriage.
  - c. Remembering your Story by Richard L. Morgan. Has a section on how to develop and share the story of your journey of faith.
2. The 2018 Festival of Wisdom and Grace will be held at Lake Junaluska, NC, on August 13-16 and is for those in the second half of life. Rev. Dr. Clayton Smith, author of At the Crossroads will be the Teaching Pastor. He comes from the Church of the Resurrection (UMC) in Kansas and will speak on his book. His emphasis will be on how those approaching or in retirement can discover their purpose, passion and mission. He will also be leading a workshop on Redefining your Purpose for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Half of Life. There will also be a workshop on learning how to tell your story at the Festival. If you want to learn more about the Festival of Wisdom and Grace, you can get that information by going to the Lake Junaluska web site and check out the calendar. Just scroll down to August 13-16. You are welcome to call or email me also. I am on the Executive Committee and can answer most if not all of your questions.
  3. Another way to learn and grow in discipleship is to try something new, something that is outside of your comfort zone, something you have never tried before. Start a new group in your local church on discovering your gifts for ministry or begin a neighborhood Bible Study in your home. Ask your pastor what you can do. Join an existing ministry in a jail or a nearby state prison. You never know, it may be the most blessed experience of your life. Serve a meal regularly at a local soup kitchen or start a food closet for your congregation. There are a lot of things you can do to make a difference in other's lives but please do not limit yourself to those things you have been doing for 20 years. Where would we be today if Peter had decided to stay a fisherman? Or Paul had continued to persecute Christians? Or if John Wesley had simply given up after the failure of his ministry in Georgia? Or if the pastor or person who led you to Christ had said "no" to God's call to make disciples? God is calling you to be that person to someone in your life. Maybe a relative, a child, a stranger, someone who feels rejected by society.

I pray God's blessing on each of you as you seek God's guidance in learning God's purpose for your life. Find and get the training you need. Be equipped to fulfill the ministry God has for you. And prepare to make a difference in people's lives. Be a disciple of Jesus and make disciples of Jesus Christ. Remember the old saying, "You may be the only Jesus someone sees today." God bless.

Sue Eaton, 502-412-0254; [sueeaton@bellsouth.net](mailto:sueeaton@bellsouth.net)