

Disciplemaking Leaders: Pursue a C.L.O.S.E.R. Walk with God

Discipleship is a process that begins after conversion and continues throughout a believer's life. Discipleship calls for our undivided attention and commitment to follow the commands of our Lord. Discipleship is not an option for any church or believer. Christ mandated it in the Great Commission. To disciple others is to obey our Lord's command; to do otherwise is to disobey Him.

It becomes easy for every church's disciple-making mission to get cluttered with lots of things to do. And most church leaders are very good at doing things. As a result, administration of programs replaces actual disciple making practices. As you look ahead to the next year, slow down and refresh your conviction for disciplemaking by looking to the Master himself.

How does a Jesus-centric disciplemaking conviction rescue you from a "program management" culture? Have you resigned to herding people through classes and events? Are you relying too much on better preaching? Or do you have a robust, disciple-making strategy built around life-on-life investment, like Jesus?

THE QUICK SUMMARY - [Growing Up](#), by Robby Gallaty

Growing Up is a manual for making disciples.

It will answer the what, why, where, and how of discipleship. Underline it, write in the margins, interact with it, and meditate on it.

You are not learning this information for yourself only, although you will definitely benefit from it. You are learning for all the people you will disciple in the future. The gospel came to you because it was heading to someone else.

A SIMPLE SOLUTION

Like any journey, the discipleship journey requires you to take steps. Discipleship only occurs as you take the next steps of dependence on and obedience to Jesus.

Also like any journey, the discipleship journey requires you to take the first step in order to continue the journey.

Robby Gallaty outlines a walk with Jesus – discipleship – with a series of steps described below. They may seem simple – but keep in mind that even the longest, most complex journey you can imagine starts with a simple first step.

The six practices discussed below (C.L.O.S.E.R.) have proven to be irreplaceable in spiritual development. When these disciplines are pursued, the desire for going even deeper with God will be birthed in your soul.

Communicate – Knocking on Heaven’s Door

Instead of merely asking God to address your checklist of requests, have you focused on praying for things you have discerned that truly matter to him? God reveals more of Himself to you as you pray for the things that matter most to Him?

Learn – Mining for Gold

Our task when we open our Bibles is to arrive at the meaning God intended for the passage we are reading. Every genuine believer receives a wonderful Gift at the time of salvation – the Holy Spirit comes into us and dwells within our bodies. With the help of the Spirit, we can – without human intervention – understand the Bible for ourselves.

Obey – Follow the Leader

How do you make disciples? By teaching them to obey His commands. In order to do so, you must first know his Words yourself. You must get into the Word until the Word gets into you.

Store – An Eternal Investment Strategy

For the believer who truly desires to be a full-fledged follower of Christ, simply reading the Bible daily will not be enough. As a disciple, your goal is not merely to get into the Word, but to get the Word into you.

Evangelize – Show and Tell

Many people misunderstand our Christ-given responsibility in evangelism, thinking that success is determined by how many people we personally win to Christ. This is not the teaching of Scripture. Success in evangelism is in the sharing, not in the saving.

Renew – Hearing from God

A heart that obeys God is a heart that has first come to love Him. Our love for God grows as we know him. The better we know God, the more we love Him. The primary way God has revealed Himself to us is through his Word. A heart that knows God is a heart that has been transformed by the renewing of the mind through the study and application of good works.

Rob Gallaty, [Growing Up](#)

A NEXT STEP

How are you walking C.L.O.S.E.R. with God?

Communication

- On a scale of one to ten, with ten being the highest, how would you rate your prayer life?
- List three people who are far from God for whom you can pray over for the next three weeks. Follow up by meeting them over coffee or a meal to talk about their spiritual condition.

Learn

- Have you ever had a difficult time understanding God's Word to the point it wanted to make you quit reading it?

Obey

- How does Jesus' prayer in John 17 affect your life as a believer?
- What are some areas of your life that need to be submitted to the Lordship of Christ?

Store

- How is your life saturated with the Word of God?
- List barriers that have prevented you from memorizing Scripture in the past. How will you overcome these barriers?

Evangelize

- Think about your daily and weekly routine. "As you are going," who can you share the gospel with?
- List three friends, family members, or acquaintances who are unsaved. Commit to praying for God to open their hearts to hear the gospel. Then commit to sharing it with them.

Renew

- How do you view the Word as spiritual nourishment to your soul?
- Describe your pattern for reading the Bible over the last month.

Gather your leadership team and review the above questions together. Discuss your answers to each. Encourage open and honest conversation as it is highly likely that few if any of them have seen discipleship modeled well. After talking about your personal experiences, now reflect on where the average attendee at your church may be. How does this experience in your personal and the team's journey impact your design for discipleship congregation-wide? Using a large flip chart tablet, outline some ways to engage more people in this important discipleship conversation.

Excerpt taken from SUMS Remix 77-3, issued October 2017.

*This is part of a weekly series posting excerpts from one of the most innovative content sources in the church world: **SUMS Remix** book excerpts for church leaders.*

SUMS Remix takes a practical problem in the church and looks at it with three solutions; each solution is taken from a different book. Additionally, a practical action step is included with each solution.

As a church leader you get to scan relevant books based on practical tools and solutions to real ministry problems, not just by the cover of the book. Each post will have the edition number which shows the year and what number it is in the overall sequence. (SUMS Remix provides 26 issues per year, delivered every other week to your inbox).

>> [Subscribe to SUMS Remix](#)