



BACKGROUND

BOOK HISTORY

God worked on me for a number of years to bring this book together. In school, I was always stronger in math than writing. As such, the urge to write a book was definitely seen as God's calling. A few years ago, I had an idea to write a fictional book, but I could not seem to figure out how to write a book on the chosen topic. I then pulled together a presentation for a women's church group on "Lighthouses and God," which became the next idea for a book. Again, I could not develop the idea into an entire book. Instead, this idea would develop into a chapter about light contained in this book.

The idea for The Disciple's Comprehensive Toolkit slowly developed. It is interesting to look back and see God working in His own time. A pastor at my church announced that she was leaving to establish a new church in the Lehigh Valley of Pennsylvania. I felt that God was calling me to encourage her since this was a great leap of faith on her part. I started creating what I have now entitled a "Disciple Toolkit." I painted and decorated a wooden box and added in various discipleship tools (they were actually miniature dollhouse accessories).

The pastor's toolkit contained the words Faith, Hope, and Love formed from wooden blocks. In addition, there were marbles in the box. A card accompanied the box stating "you may start believing you have lost your marbles...you have not...they are right here." There were also other tools in her box, such as seeds, a shovel, and a Bible.

Recently, another close pastor friend and his wife were leaving the same church because they were called to Chicago. So, I was off making another disciple's toolkit. This box would include a few new items, e.g., a lighthouse and a reference to John 3:16, which reads "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." A card accompanied the box with Scripture, prayer, and discussions about the tools for effective discipleship.

Upon completing the second box, I realized that God wanted me to write a book discussing the various tools needed for effective discipling. The book was to describe the tools that disciples would need to assist them in their journey; a journey called a Christ-centered life.

There are many books on one or two aspects of discipling, but I have not found many that talk about all the facets of effective discipleship. This book was created to fill this gap by providing a well-rounded description of all the tools required to truly be an effective disciple for Jesus Christ.

ACTS 2 - MAKE DISCIPLES

After being upset with the church I had grown up in, I decided to venture out and visit other local churches. I wanted to know how others experienced God and church. What could I learn in a new place? I found an exciting and growing church in Liberty Corner, New Jersey. When I started attending Liberty Corner Presbyterian Church, I heard a new catch phrase: They were an "Acts 2" church. I wondered what that meant. I grabbed my Bible and read the second chapter of Acts.

Acts 2 is Scripture pertaining to the time of Pentecost when the disciples received the Holy Spirit. Many repented and came to Christ on that day.

The church was living the phrase on its website, which was "Making Disciples of Jesus Christ." At that time, I did not really know what that meant, either. I had grown up in a church where belief was stressed and relationship with God was almost forgotten. Mission work somewhat existed. It was a church where once you graduated confirmation class, you were left on your own. No one equipped me to be a disciple.

Jesus tells us in Matthew 28:19 to "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." First, this is heavy stuff for us to digest. Our first thought is probably "Who me?", "Why me? I am no one special", or "I do not know anything about being a disciple. I do not even know if I am one!"

DEFINITION OF DISCIPLE

Let's step back. Jesus originally had 12 apostles or disciples. We know that much. So what does the term "disciple" mean? In the dictionary, we will find that disciple means a learner or pupil.

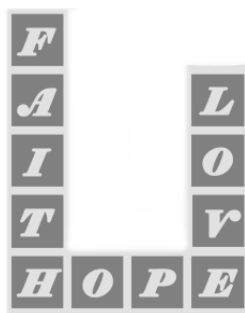
I think some confusion comes from determining if the word "disciple" is something we are or something we do. Is it a noun or a verb? Jesus told us to make disciples, so He places it as a noun. The word disciple is both a noun and a verb. The noun means a follower of Jesus Christ. The verb means to convert to a disciple. I think we typically associate the term disciple as the verb meaning to reach people who do not believe in Christ. But there is much more.

Put simply, a disciple is someone who has accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. They work to grow a relationship with Christ by prayer, reading God's Word, attending church, and using their spiritual gifts to further God's kingdom on earth. They are faithful stewards with their money, time and talent. They share the Good News of Jesus Christ with those that do not believe.

For some reason, many Christians do not believe that they can effectively disciple. They may wonder why Christ would ever select them in the first place. But just look at who Jesus selected in the Bible. Jesus picked some unlikely characters to be His disciples. He selected fishermen and tax collectors who were not the most favored people in society. He picked people that He knew would deny and betray him! He trusted 12 unlikely men to spread Christianity. Yet these 12 would go on to bring millions to Christianity, including you and me.

During the past years, I have been busy teaching adult Bible studies and youth confirmation classes. I have been told by adults and youths alike that "We do not know how to disciple" or "We are too new at this to disciple." I believe God needs all types (mature and young in age and experience) to build His kingdom. This includes YOU!

I recently realized that the words FAITH, HOPE, and LOVE form a "U" as shown below:



I know that these are the English translations of the original words, but I believe that all of these words begin with U (you)!