

**The Zacchaeus Approach: Thirteen Principles for Being Incarnational and
Missional**

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Abstract

Churches, pastors, leaders and believers often struggle with making disciples that reproduce themselves in others. This article presents three key challenges, faced in today's context for making reproducing disciples, that are often overlooked.

Attractional, missional, and hybrid models of ministry alike can benefit from Jesus' approach to Zacchaeus. "The Zacchaeus Approach" is based on the analysis and observations drawn from the Biblical story written by Luke, a medical doctor, found in the Gospel of Luke 19:1-10. The thirteen transversal principles found in this New Testament narrative are discussed as an incarnational and missional guideline for believers to reproduce other disciple-makers. A disciple-making movement axiom is defined with the purpose of rapid disciple multiplication and streams of multiplying churches.

Keywords: overlooked challenges, disciple-makers, Zacchaeus approach, incarnational, missional, thirteen principles, empowerment, disciple-making movement axiom

The Zacchaeus Approach: Thirteen Principles for Being Incarnational and Missional

What are some of the essential, yet disregarded, challenges found in making disciples that reproduce other disciples? Are churches, ministry leaders and individual believers exerting energy and resources effectively in disciple-making? Are there transversal principles in disciple-making regardless of ministry model? Zacchaeus' experience with Jesus was ground-breakingly disturbing to the Jews, but it also offers a head-turning simplicity in practical concepts to fulfill the Great Commission today. Jesus' approach to Zacchaeus provides insights on making disciples and generating a disciple making movement.

The Struggle in Making Disciples Who Reproduce

Multiple challenges are found in today's Christianity, particularly in the making of disciples who make disciples – regardless if an individual or church ministry adheres to an attractional, missional or hybrid model of ministry. Three of the most relevant, yet disregarded challenges are: First, sequentialism in ministry. “Sequentialism is the thought and practice that adheres to linear, step-by-step processes. Sequence is perfectly logical but can take years to unfold. And like dominoes, the whole process comes to a halt if one plank falls” (Garrison, 2007). Second, the absence of enlistment of new believers. The lack of immediate enlistment of new believers hinders the individual's spiritual growth and the church's fruitfulness. “In most movements, new converts are quickly incorporated into the life and work of the church. They are not only welcomed they are put to work” (Garrison). On the job training is the best way to learn and grow. Christian leaders do not intentionally hold new believers back, they just focus on preparing them before they are sent; this can take months, if not years, therefore, keeping young Christians incubated and developing almost exclusively within a church

pod. Third, faithlessness in works. This is displayed in three ways: a) By speaking but not going, and by going and not speaking. Some leaders believe in the “build it and they will come” notion. Christians pray to the God of the harvest to send laborers, but their works are demonstrated by only “preaching the truth”; or, they are actively working with a seeder in the field, but with no clear Gospel seeds – the work has no message (Matthew 9:38; James 3:14-26; I Corinthians 9:16-23). b) By waiting (or searching) for the resources, when “the resources are in the harvest” (Garrison). c) By not preparing to receive guests. When a guest arrives at “church” on Sunday, the guest leaves and often does not return, much less commit. The leader and the church would love to see a crowd, but would not know how to handle them if they did come – due to being crowd incognizant.

The Exertion of Energy and Resources in Ministry

These issues often lead Christian Evangelical pastors and their respective churches to frantically look for ideas, place them in the shopping cart, and attempt to implement it – sometimes successfully, sometimes not. If it does not go as planned, a new strategy is chosen for next season. Ministry strategy kits are great, but are they what believers need? (And do leaders need to live in anxiety?) The “open the box, place in microwave, heat and eat” mentality can be a slippery road. “Ready-made-out-of-the-box” ministry, or ministry replication, may appear to work, but at the risk of not making true disciples of Jesus, or reproducible disciples in the next generation (or in the next city). The successful implementation of a ministry strategy requires understanding its DNA. In addition, people typically learn to relate to God and do ministry by what they see their leaders doing. What are they seeing? There are many reasons why leaders copy other successful ministries. First, it is easy to “copy and paste,” as it potentially provides the appearance of accomplishment. Secondly, there is pressure from the pew. Church

goers want to experience modern worship “as seen on TV” (Nothing wrong with modern worship, just as long as it is real worship from the heart. The same is true of traditional worship). Thirdly, leader’s find themselves mentally exhausted and drained of ministry ideas and strategies. Fourthly, academic institutions and ministry training organizations are often excellent cookie cutters, and their graduates only do more of the same. The list goes on, but a most recent advent has shaken worldwide Evangelical Christianity. The COVID pandemic has distanced people from local church gatherings and pastors are scrambling to get “back to normal”. How does one go back to normal, better yet, become successful in ministry? But should the local church go back to the “successful normal”? Churches and individuals should turn their focus to Christ’s established ministry model – incarnational and missional.

Jesus’ Model as Seen Through Zacchaeus’ Story

Warren Wiersbe said, “God does not want us to have ‘ministry imitation.’ He wants ministry by *incarnation*” (Wiersbe, 2007). A shift is necessary, and Jesus is the example to follow. What did He teach His disciples? Leaders’ hands and feet must get dirty in this process. A Biblical approach to making disciples is crucial. So, how does incarnational ministry launch and develop? Jesus’s *incarnational* ministry establishes the proper principles for making disciples.

His approach to Zacchaeus is not only extraordinary, it also displays *intentional missional* thinking for the day-to-day. Jesus’ Zacchaeus approach displays thirteen principles for *incarnational* and *missional* ministry. The story of Zacchaeus is found in the Gospel of Luke. He is a man depicted as "short of stature" (Luke 19:3). This description of Zacchaeus' encounter with Jesus is brief and happens towards the end of this Gospel book. Jesus is described as constantly travelling, he has moved throughout Judea, declaring "good news to the poor" (Luke 4.18) and preaching to large crowds. He

has also expelled demons from the demon-possessed, healed the sick, (4:33-41; 8:26-55) and associated himself with numerous sorts of outcasts, including lepers, adulterous women, and tax collectors (Luke 5:27-32; 7:37-39; 8:1-3; 15:1-2). At this moment in the narrative, he has informed His disciples that He is ready to travel to Jerusalem to suffer and die (Luke 18:31-33). The encounter between Jesus and Zacchaeus occurs in Jericho, a city near Jerusalem, and is the final event Luke describes before Jesus enters Jerusalem and presents the Easter Passover story - culminating with crucifixion and resurrection. Among the gospel authors, Luke exclusively narrates this moment (Solevag, 2020).

Zacchaeus' Encounter with Jesus as Narrated in Scripture

¹ Then Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. ² Now behold, *there was* a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. ³ And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature. ⁴ So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that *way*. ⁵ And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him, "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house." ⁶ So he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully. ⁷ But when they saw *it*, they all complained, saying, "He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner." ⁸ Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold." ⁹ And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; ¹⁰ for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:1-10).

Thirteen Principles for Being Incarnational and Missional

The following thirteen principles are drawn from Luke 19:1-10. The story is a description of Jesus' meeting with Zacchaeus and there are no direct prescriptions provided by Luke in his writing; therefore, a broad hermeneutical observation of the text is applied to extract the action concepts from the ten verses in the passage.

Intentionally Go Places to Find People (19:1-3)

Jesus traveled throughout Judea, consistently surrounding Himself with people and engaging them. In this occasion, "Jesus entered and passed through Jericho..."

(Luke 19:1). Zacchaeus was amongst the multitude who expected to see Him. Jesus consistently was surrounded by people and often connected with a particular person. His incarnational ministry was not a “commute between heaven and earth” - He remained amongst the people on earth (Gordon, 2010). His plan was evident, “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14).

One of the most stunning features of Jesus’ ministry – in its Palestinian first century setting – was His consistent socializing with people labeled as “sinners”. The “sinners” were those in the Jewish context who lived in disregard of rabbis’ interpretation to the laws of the Old Testament. For all that matters, they could be wealthy business people who neglected attendance at a synagogue and/or conducted business with the occupying Roman force (tax collectors, as an example). They were the “unreligious” in a sternly religious society. Social engagement with sinners (and with Gentiles) was religiously forbidden in Jesus’ time. Specifically, you were not to partake in a meal with such sinners. In ancient societies as this, drinking and eating were overwhelming symbols of fellowship. To share drink and food with these people was to assert them and be identified with them – a visual endorsement. Despite this, Jesus, defied these age-old customs. He wined and dined with sinners on a consistent basis – to the point that the “pious” in that society began to slander and defame Jesus in public (Dickson, 2021).

In Acts 17, Paul goes daily to Athens’ synagogue and marketplace knowing that people congregated there for cultural, religious, commercial, and intellectual purposes (17:17). Paul also frequents the Areopagus – a judicial forum and gathering place to articulate and reason amongst authorities – boldly inserting himself in the debate (Acts 17:22). To go, one must see the need, and be overwhelmed by God’s gift to love people. “The love that we need for ministry (people) is not a natural ability; it’s a supernatural

ability that only God can provide (Wiersbe, 2007). Going to people is the first step to open opportunities.

Initiate Connections with People (19:5-6)

When Jesus' eyes found Zacchaeus', he invited him to come down from the sycamore tree and to partake together at his home. Wayne Gordon (2010) proposes that "living among the people... transforms "you, them and theirs" to "we, us and ours." Simply being in the same space with others is not sufficient to cause an impact on their lives. It is necessary to initiate a conversation, significant enough to generate a positive connection and a lasting impression. To do this, one should become an expert storyteller – as best as possible. "God made our brains to enjoy stories. Story-telling draws people to listen more attentively and generates a bond – they inhabit a story as they listen for what is going to happen next. The brain is hardwired to enjoy transformation" (Holleman).

Neuroscience research describes what occurs in the brain upon hearing a story. According to Zak (2015), when a story is processed by the brain, it injects cortisol (stress, attention) and oxytocin (connection, empathy) that generate a behavioral affect and motivates personal transformation. Jesus was an incredible storyteller and masterfully drew Zacchaeus to Himself.

In another example, the Philippian church was started through Lydia because Paul and Silas sat and spoke with the women who met in Philippi (Acts 16:13). Jesus approaches the Samaritan woman, asks for water and converses about her life (John 14:7). Understanding how and what to talk about with people is an important part of winning their interest and acquiring their trust. Strobel (1993) states, "Christians cannot speak the language of the people they are trying to reach until they know... their target audience". Knowing and understanding the culture is essential to connect with people.

Adams (2016) states, “It is necessary to understand the culture, use the culture, to reach the culture”. When understanding and knowing how to bond with people, through their background and culture, connections become easier. Initiate connections with people.

**Take Interest and Genuinely Learn About the Persons with Whom You Connect
(19:2-3)**

Jesus’ divinity meant he knew Zacchaeus personally – that he was short in stature, was a chief tax collector, overtaxed individuals, was a sinner and incredibly rich. Jesus also knew the Romans used him and the Jews despised him. Christians are not divine but have the competency to genuinely take an interest and learn about another. In a letter, Paul appeals to Philemon, calling Onesimus “my son” (Philemon 1.10) - this demonstrates they knew each other like father and son. Onesimus is Paul’s beloved friend.

In Colossians 4:13, Paul refers to Epaphras – a brother in Christ – and speaks of his great zeal for the people of the church. He has great zeal for Colossians because he sought out to know them.

Harvard research has established there is a loneliness epidemic in today’s culture, and this trend has only amplified (Schulze, 2018). A research study developed on behalf of Cigna Corporation in 2020, based on the UCLA Loneliness Scale, discovered disturbing results. In this survey performed in the United States with 10,441 adults, “three in five Americans (61%) classify as lonely”, fifty-eight percent reported “feeling no one knows them well,” while one out of four Americans affirmed that they “never feel as though there are people who really understand them.” Worse yet, almost half stated they “always feel that their relationships are not meaningful” and just as many surveyed said they are “isolated from others.” Fifty percent of US adults declared

they do not have “meaningful in-person social interactions” and have no quality time or extended exchanges with other people on a daily basis (Edelman & Cigna, 2020).

Sincere interest and care for others helps dissipate loneliness. Heather Holleman (2020) writes, “Consider the primary interest of those around you. I have learned it deeply matters when you simply care about the hobbies of others. Learn the power of entering into the interests of others. As you learn about the people around you, simply ask if you might join them one day in what they love doing.

John Maxwell (2021) quotes Theodore Roosevelt, and affirms, “People don’t care how much you know, until they know how much you care”. People potentially give you permission into their lives if you take interest in them, desire to learn who they are, and connect emotionally. Genuinely learn about people with whom relationships are developing.

Engage People Knowing They Are Made in God’s Image, Despite Their Sins (19:1-7)

Humans are “Imago Dei”. This term originates from the Latin Bible, which translates into English as “image of God.” The “Image of God” is the metaphysical manifestation, uniquely associated to humans, which demonstrates the connection between humanity and God. God the Father is not of human origin or form, but humans are in the image of God in their rational, spiritual, creative, and moral substance. Therefore, every individual reflects the divine nature of God in their capacity to grow into the unique features endowed by the Creator. These unique traits make humans unlike animals or any other creature – logical reasoning, creative ingenuity, emotions, capacity to learn, and the spiritual ability to connect with God (Hatcher, 2012; *What Does “Imago Dei” Mean? The Image of God in the Bible*, 2019). According to Peterson (2017), “The Imago Dei is humanity’s identity (from conception), and this identity is

basic to all human existence. God created humanity to establish an earthly image of God in the world.”

The Genesis account states, “Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; ... So God created man in His *own* image” (Gen. 1:26-27). Addressing and interacting with people from God’s perspective of grace is fundamental to any relationship, and believers are not to act as self-righteous judges. There are no inferior human-beings because all people were made by Him and in His image. Now, this is not to assert that because of “Imago Dei”, humans have no sin. The opposite is true, due to Adam and Eve’s disobedience in the Garden of Eden – referred to as original sin (Genesis 3:1-24), every man and woman is born with a sin nature. This sin nature causes every individual human to sin – referred to as personal sin (Grudem, 2020; Romans 3:9-23, Romans 6:17-19). Regardless of people’s sin nature and tendency to sin, Christ charges His people to love others unconditionally, more precisely, to love like He loved (John 13:34-35). God also directs believers not to make themselves superior to others in self-righteousness, and act as judges (Matthew 7:15). Christians are to love others, are to avoid sin and not desire it, and, when appropriate, confront it (Matthew 18:15) – because of Christ and His holiness grafted into the believer.

Consequently, because of humanity’s sin nature, pride takes its toll – people do not like being told what to do, they recoil when instructed to live to a certain standard just because it is written in the Bible. Authoritarian style of communication disenfranchises people, who, in turn, reject it. Authoritarianism demands compliance, from those who willingly and unwilling submit, and creates a caste system. Fortunately, people are generally open to reasoning when approached appropriately (Strobel, 1993).

Jesus related to Zacchaeus because of His human nature and form – yet without sin – but gave Zacchaeus hope because of His Divine nature – perfect and holy. This was accomplished as Jesus engaged Zacchaeus from God’s gracious perspective - with a desire to love and have an intimate relationship with Him. Philippians 2:7-8 speaks of Jesus’ nature while on earth, “being in the form of God, ... taking the form of a bondservant, And, being found in appearance as a man”. Human’s do not have God’s divine nature but have His divine image within their soul’s DNA. Through Jesus, believers can treat individuals with proper high regards, irrespective of culture, historical background, affluence, or influence. This attitude assists in bridging the Gospel into the unbeliever’s heart. Jesus’s high-level treatment of others is also evidenced in the adulterous woman’s story:

Scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, they said to Him, “Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?” ... they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, “He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.” ... When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, “Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?” She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said to her, “Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more” (John 8:3-10).

Both, Zacchaeus and the adulterous woman, were benefited by Christ’s work and were saved. Their salvation through faith in Jesus gave them Christ’s identity and, thus, made them righteous in the eyes of God (Romans 4:1-9; Philippians 3:7-11).

A correct understanding of human identity – Imago Dei – establishes the underpinning guideline to treat and engage others in any situation. This approach to human life establishes overwhelming trust and rapport with others.

Be Bigger Than Life, But Remain Humble (19:5-6)

Zacchaeus was elated that Jesus would instruct him to come down and invite Himself into his home. Scripture shows that “he made haste and came down, and

received Him joyfully.” The expectation to see Jesus was heightened in Zacchaeus’ heart because he knew of Him and was drawn to Him. Jesus’ miracles, confrontation of Jewish authorities, kindness with children, and teachings regarding the Kingdom of God – amongst other things – drew large crowds, even if at times He chose solitude. *Being bigger than life is the overwhelming Divine impression and the soul stirring caused in the life of a person, or of a people, that generate an unforgettable moment or an observable Godly lifestyle.* Christians are called to be imitators of God and to follow in Jesus’ footsteps (Ephesians 5:1, I Peter 2:21, 2 Corinthians 3:18). Christ is bigger than life and He calls His disciples to be His imitators. Being bigger than life for and through Christ is not about personal popularity, but rather His overwhelming glory in display. A Christian’s life should be so contagious that God’s uncontainable glory shines through everyday life – including in life’s difficulties. Being bigger than life is not because of who the believer is, it is about who Christ is in them. Jesus was bigger than life, but He also displayed great humility, as He provoked life changing moments in people. Humility is an essential aspect of being bigger than life.

Life comes full of mountain top and valley experiences. Throughout life, often times, difficult and even malignant circumstances rise and “this will be your opportunity to bear witness” (Luke 21:12–13). Extenuating life moments offer opportunities to demonstrate the glory of God, this is the occasion to “bear witness of Christ’s work. Seize it. Christ is infinitely worthy. He is worth more than life. Don’t waste it” (Piper, 2011).

During one of Christ’s encounters with a large crowd, He looked out into the multitude and was moved with compassion (Matthew 14:13). Jesus is bigger than life – big enough to look at the multitude and see every individual’s personal story, physical need and spiritual agony.

Scripture encourages Christians to “greet one another with a holy kiss” (2 Corinthians 13:12). A kiss demonstrates a certain level of proximity. Walking into a room, approaching people, recognizing, and greeting them adds value to relationships and nurtures proximity. The unbelieving world is constantly observing Christians’ behavior. All believers are to be known by the love they have for one another. Love is the mark of the Christ follower (John 13:35). Be bigger than life, because Christ is bigger than life.

Invite Yourself into People’s Lives (19:5)

“Zacchaeus, ...for today I must stay at your house” (19:5). Jesus inserts Himself into Zacchaeus’ life when, by inviting himself, commits to invest time with him. Henry (2010) writes, “Christ invited himself to Zacchaeus’ house, not doubting of his hearty welcome there; nay, wherever Christ comes, as he brings his own entertainment along with him, so he brings his own welcome; he opens the heart, and inclines it to receive him... Zacchaeus was overjoyed to have such an honor put upon his house” (Henry). To receive Christ at his home was a great honor, far above his personal merit. Christ’s plan was to bless Zacchaeus with the highest blessing of all – redemption.

Likewise, Christ’s disciples must be actively involved in table fellowship – inviting guests over for a meal and sharing life together – with the sole purpose of being a blessing into the persons’ life and to point them to redemption. Personal hospitality is a great way to bless others. A meal together at the dinning-room table is a marvelous tool for Christ’s cause. Once a person is invited into the host’s home, the guest naturally desires to reciprocate and offer the same hospitality in his home (Hirsch, 2021).

In Matthew 10, Jesus sends out the twelve disciples and instructs them saying, “Now whatever city or town you enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and stay there till you go out. And when you go into a household, greet it (Matthew 10:12). The disciples

were instructed to find a “person of peace” (Garrison, 2007) upon entering a city, to be hosted at his home, to bless his family, to remain there until it was time to leave for the next city.

In Apostle Peter’s first letter, he admonishes believers to remain resilient, maximize every opportunity, pray watchfully, love fervently, offer joyful hospitality, minister to one another and be “good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1 Peter 4:10). In the midst of the daily interactions with others, love abundantly, for the daily grind has conflicts, but “love covers a multitude of sins” (1 Peter. 4:7-10). When inviting oneself into people’s life, love in action is indispensable.

Disregard Grumblers (19:7)

Once Jesus is at Zacchaeus’ home the grumblers begin to protest, “when they saw it, they all complained, saying, ‘He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner.’” (19:7). The verse in Proverbs 14:7 counsels the wise to leave the presence of a fool, for he has no word of knowledge. Not providing a listening ear to – ignoring – a grumbler allows the individual on mission to stay focused and on task, and avoids giving credence to the grumbler. A Christ follower does not have time for second guessing himself, much less feel the need to rebuke. Rebuking a grumbler only provides the attention the grumbler demands, provides no benefit, and derails an ongoing mission engagement. There is no need to argue with a grumbler as “bitter words and hard usage never did nor ever will convince, much less persuade anybody” (Henry, 2010).

Weirsbe (2007) declares, “You cannot always help having an enemy, but you can help being an enemy... If you have an enemy eating away at your heart, it is probably because you choose to have that enemy there.” Substitute the word “enemy” for “grumblers” and the statement remains true.

Grumblers are not healthy and do not benefit those around them. Grumbling is contagious and can ignite a spiritual pandemic. Henry (2010) make as clear observation regarding grumblers, “a murmuring complaining temper, indulged and expressed, lays men under a very bad character; such are very weak at least, and for the most part very wicked. They murmur against God and his providence, against men and their conduct; they are angry at everything that happens, and never pleased with their own state and condition in the world, as not thinking it good enough for them. Such walk after their own lusts; their will, their appetite, their fancy, are their only rule and law” (Henry).

In addition to ignoring a grumbler, the best response is to pray, build oneself in holiness, and keep in the love of God (Jude 1:16-21). The Christ follower on mission is focused on holiness and God’s glory, not on the sin that is causing a distraction.

Romans 12:2 admonishes Christians to “not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

Apostle Peter writes powerfully regarding this topic:

⁸ Finally, all *of you be* of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, *be* tenderhearted, *be* courteous; ⁹ not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing. ¹⁰ For

“He who would love life

And see good days,

Let him refrain his tongue from evil,

And his lips from speaking deceit.

¹¹ Let him turn away from evil and do good;

Let him seek peace and pursue it.

¹² For the eyes of the LORD *are* on the righteous,

And His ears *are open* to their prayers;

But the face of the LORD *is* against those who do evil.”

¹³ And who *is* he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? ¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for righteousness’ sake, *you are* blessed. “And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled.” ¹⁵ But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always *be* ready to *give* a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; ¹⁶ having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those

who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. ¹⁷ For *it is* better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

¹⁸ For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit... (1 Peter 3:10-18)

Ignore the grumbler and remain in holiness.

Speak Truth at the Appropriate Time – Share Gospel (19:7-9)

Sitting from up inside a tree, Zacchaeus saw Jesus, he saw the living Gospel walking in his direction. When the multitude complained of Jesus being a guest at a sinner's home, not a single response was provided by Jesus, because His message was *visible*. When Zacchaeus *recognized* his sin, he stood up, *admitted* it verbally and made *restitution*, because Jesus' message was made *known* to him. Christ responds to Zacchaeus saying, "today salvation has come to this house", because the Gospel was *understood*. Zacchaeus did not respond to grumblers when they complained, because he was *focused* on Jesus. He responded to Jesus after truth *convicted* his heart, because the Gospel *penetrated* his soul. King Solomon writes concerning communication and timing in Proverbs, "a word spoken in due season, how good it is!" (Proverbs 15:23), and again he states, "a word fitly spoken is like apples of gold" (Proverbs 25:11). In the book of Isaiah, the author declares, "The Lord God has given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary" (Isaiah 50:4).

Know and understand to speaking credibly. Truth spoken without love antagonizes the listener. To demonstrate love and care while speaking, it is first necessary to listen and understand the "felt needs". Gordon (2010) makes this point, "As we listen to (people's) stories and get to know their hopes and concerns, the present and future, we also begin to identify (people's) deepest felt needs: those hurts and longings that allow us opportunities to connect with them on a deeper level."

Christians are not to be afraid to share the Gospel – to speak clearly, communicate boldly, narrate the whole Gospel and share it with excitement – and believe in the tangible Gospel effect. Believers are not to take years focused on developing a relationship with unbelievers, to then present Jesus. Disciples do not just “drop little nuggets of truth” in substitution of the Gospel - nervousness or anxiety caused by possible rejection from the listener should not be a reason to avoid sharing the Gospel. Jesus followers actively look for an opportunity to share the Gospel to every person and are not ashamed of it (Smith & Kai, 2011). When sharing God’s message, do not settle to merely explain the Gospel, “as though giving a history lesson... speak with bold assurance” (York, 2011), challenge the listener to surrender and conform their heart and life to the image of Christ. Do not negate the power of God while sharing Him. Great communicators need to exhibit a “fire of passion and a heart of conviction (York).

Always be ready to articulate persuasively and with reason. The Apostle Peter admonishes believers in this way, “sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you.” (1 Peter 3:15). In his book, Chan (2012) writes, “God’s word is actually living and active. It gets inside of you; it transforms you from within. We should talk about God’s truth often. But we cannot talk about God’s Word if we are not reading it regularly. We need to be saturating ourselves in Scripture so that it naturally comes out in every area of our lives”. Speak truth – the Gospel – with love at the appropriate time.

Give Room for People to Reflect and Grow (19:8)

People need time to ponder, to reason and respond to the truth that faces them. Notice the word “then” in verse 8, “Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord” (19:8). The word “then” indicates sequence. In this case, it indicates “cause and effect”.

Zacchaeus stood and spoke as a direct result of life changing experience in his soul, confirmed in his heart and flushed out through his actions. He stood up and responded out of his own volition. Jesus did not threaten, blackmail, or use any tactical ploys. In Acts 8, a high-ranking authority and treasurer to Queen Candace of Ethiopia, also known as the “Ethiopian Eunuch” is returning from worship in Jerusalem and is reading the book of Isaiah out loud, but does not understand it. Philip, sent by the Holy Spirit intercepts his chariot and “preaches Jesus to him”. The text continues, “Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, “See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?” (8:26-40). The Eunuch had time to process the information he had read from Isaiah with the insights that Philip delivered as they “went down the road” (8:36). It is not clear how much time lapsed, but there was enough time to make a conscientious decision regarding Jesus. As a result of the Ethiopian’s rational reflections regarding the Gospel, when they reached water, he asked Philip to baptize him.

In Luke 17, Jesus travels through a village in Samaria and Galilee on his way to Jerusalem. From a distance, ten lepers call out to Him saying, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us” (17:3)! Jesus instructs them to go present themselves before the Jewish priests. While in route, all of them are healed. To arrive at the priests, the lepers had time to observe the healing and to reflect on the significance of the miracle. Only one recognized the need to return, to express his gratitude and glorify God at His feet. People need time to process facts rationally and make decisions. Allow time and silence to do its work.

Are moments of silence a good practice in communication? Silvas (2005), quotes Basil of Caesarea (c329 – 379) to answer this inquiry “The good of silence is dependent on the time and the person”. How does silence work while talking? François

Duc de La Rochefoucauld, Prince de Marsillac, eloquently wrote, “We should observe the place, the occasion, the temper in which we find the person who listens to us for if there is much art in speaking to the purpose, there is no less in knowing when to be silent. There is an eloquent silence which serves to approve or to condemn, there is a silence of discretion and of respect. In a word, there is a tone, an air, a manner, which renders everything in conversation agreeable or disagreeable, refined or vulgar” (Willis-Bund & Friswell, 2013).

Similarly, Henry David Thoreau (2014) noted, “Silence is of various depths and fertility, like soil. Now it is a Sahara, where men perish of hunger and thirst, now a fertile bottom, or prairie, of the west”. Speakers, in large groups or individual settings, often feel the need to fill the time delivering information. Moments of silence has its purpose. There is no need to fill time with chatter simply to avoid awkward silence pauses. A pause for silence works, it grants people time to ponder and it is crucial to allow them to grow into a decision.

Allow the Holy Spirit to do His Work (19:3-4, 7-8)

The Spirit of God was at work in Zacchaeus’ life before Jesus’ arrival, as is evidenced by the fact that he wanted to see him and made a concerted physical effort to run ahead and climb up into a sycamore tree – his short stature would not allow him to see over the crowd – knowing He would pass there. Once Jesus is in his home, the Spirit of God brings conviction into his life, as is evidenced by his statements and actions, “Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold” (19:3-4, 7-8).

Given the awful sin condition of mankind (Ephesians 2:1-3), divine assistance is desperately necessary. Man’s fallen nature is described not only by its non-openness to God but also its, obstinacy, skepticism, and meek self-righteousness; this is the spirit of

rejection regarding grace and is sin in its natural state and its complete seriousness. As part of His regeneration work, and via the Gospel message that is sounded, the “Spirit graciously prompts repentance” (Allison et al., 2020). Being the Spirit of grace, God’s Holy Spirit penetrates through man’s rejection of grace, overcoming the human opposition to God’s call unto salvation. The reaction to the Holy Spirit’s activity is a “human response, but not a mere human response” (Allison et al).

John 16:8 clearly states the role of the Holy Spirit, He “convicts the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment”. The responsibility of convincing the heart of men belongs to the Holy Spirit. Henry (2010) makes a remarkable observation, “convincing work is the Spirit’s work; he can do it effectually, and none but he; man may open the cause, but it is the Spirit only that can open the heart.” He continues to explain His work, “The Spirit is called the Comforter, and here it is said, He shall convince. One would think this were cold comfort, but it is the method the Spirit takes, first to convince, and then to comfort; first to lay open the wound, and then to apply healing medicines. Or, taking conviction more generally, for a demonstration of what is right, it intimates that the Spirit’s comforts are solid, and grounded upon truth. See who they are, whom he is to reprove and convince: The world, both Jew and Gentile” (Henry).

Once the Holy Spirit’s work of convincing the heart is complete, the individual surrenders unto Salvation, and the new believer is “sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until” Christ’s second coming (Ephesians 1:13). “Salvation is the giving of the Spirit – Eternal Life – to men. He is given as the result of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ” (Hatcher, 1981). Now, the Holy Spirit takes on a new process – sanctification. The new believer is “sanctified by the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:16). Allow the Holy Spirit to do His work.

Recognize Steps and Decisions Toward Christ (19:9)

“And Jesus said to him, ‘Today salvation has come to this house’” (19:9). Once Zacchaeus is saved - fully surrendered to His Lordship – Jesus announces to the disciples in the room that salvation has come. It is important to recognize the unbelievers’ steps toward Christ. Then, when the unsaved believes in his heart and declares with his lips that “Jesus is Lord”, share this information with to others, and together, recognize the salvation decision.

The book of Acts describes Saul of Tarsus’ – a persecutor of Christians – Damascus Road salvation experience and how the Lord left him without sight. The record in Acts 9:10-19 narrates how Ananias is instructed by God to go to Saul in a Damascus home to lay “his hand on him, so that he might receive his sight” (9:11). Ananias fears for his life and contests with God, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem” (9:13). God confirms to Ananias that Saul is His chosen vessel for the Gospel, and it is safe to be with him. Ananias obeys, prays over Saul and “immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized” (9:18). Thankfully, due to Ananias’ testimony regarding Saul’s conversion, he is able remain with the disciples in Damascus, grows in spiritual strength and initiates his ministry.

Saul returns to Jerusalem and tries to “join the disciples there; but they were all afraid of him and did not believe that he was a disciple. Barnabas took him to the apostles” (Acts 9:26-27), and vouched for Saul concerning his salvation experience, how he preached boldly in Jesus’ name in Damascus, and how they attempted to kill him for preaching the Gospel.

An important observation regarding the recognition of Saul's conversion, is his immediate baptism after Ananias finishes praying. Baptism is an outward display of an inward decision. So, once salvation is recognized, encourage the new Christian in believers' baptism. Baptism is a public declaration of identification with Christ (Matthew 10:32). This simple display makes bold affirmations: First, it indicates Jesus' life, death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6:4-5). Second, it identifies with Christ and His redeeming work (Romans 6:5-9). Third, it represents the dying to self and the old way of life and rising into the new life in holiness (Romans 6:10-11), where Christ is supreme (Hatcher, 2012).

Draw Attention to Salvation and Celebrate (19:9-10)

“And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost” (19:9-10). Once Zacchaeus receives salvation, Jesus publicly recognizes the decision, and declares that He has come to “seek and to save that which was lost” (19:10). Salvation is reason for commemoration. This cannot be emphasized enough. Finding someone who was lost, is an incredible reason to celebrate.

“But the father told his servants, ‘Quick! Bring out the best robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Then bring the fattened calf and slaughter it, and let's celebrate with a feast, because this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’ So, they began to celebrate” (Luke 15:22-24, NIV). Like a loving father whose son has come back home, God celebrates salvation. Celebrate with the individual, family, friends, and church (Stevens, 2021).

It is within human culture to recognize milestones through celebration. When a person grows a year older, a wedding anniversary, a favorite team championship win, a graduation – kindergarten, high school, college, graduate school –, the birth of a child,

or retirement. Clearly, people find plenty of reasons in life to celebrate important occasions. “Celebrations are opportunities to give credit and praise to God. Celebrations build positive culture, and build value into people, and those are things that should characterize effective Christian leaders” (Moore, 2020).

Luke records the resulting work of the Apostles at Solomon’s Porch in Acts 5:13-14, “the people esteemed them highly. And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women.” Attention is drawn to the amount of people saved that day – multitudes of both men and women.

In Acts 10 and 11, the Apostle Peter is intrigued by God instructions to go preach to Cornelius’ household – Gentiles – in Caesarea. Up to this point, the Apostles were under the impression that the Gospel was exclusively for the Jews, not the Gentiles. Peter takes “a few brethren with him from Joppa” (9:23) to meet Cornelius. These brethren would ultimately testify with him – before the other Apostles and disciples – of the power of God unto salvation amongst the Gentiles. Peter thoroughly expounds on the work of Jesus and His message and salvation comes to “all those who heard the word” (9:44). Peter baptizes them and stays a few more days. Once Peter and the brethren return to Judea, the believers are in complete unbelief that the Gospel could save gentiles also. “When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, “Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life” (17:18). Peter and the brethren who went to Cornelius’ house draw attention to the Gentiles’ surrender to Jesus, testify of it to the Jewish Christians, and celebrate.

Encourage Each New Believer to Go and Share Jesus with Others (19:8)

“Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold” (Luke 19:8). As a result of the transformation in Zacchaeus’ life, he

begins to externalize his new identity in Christ. His actions testify of Jesus' mighty work. Zacchaeus excitedly gives verbal and actionable evidence of the Gospel. Those who were grumbling before, surely were praising the Lord and saw the power of God at work. Zacchaeus was sharing his newfound faith.

In Mark 5, Jesus arrives in Gerasenes, he steps out of the boat and is immediately approached by a demon-possessed man – the demon's name was Legion for there were almost two-thousand of them. Jesus commands the evil spirits into the swine, the swine promptly run off the cliff and drown. Townsman are stunned. The man surrenders to Jesus and his new life begins. When it came time for Jesus and his disciples to leave, the previously demon-possessed man “begged Him that he might be with Him” (5:18). Surprisingly, “Jesus did not permit him to join” (5:19). Instead, He told the man “Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you” (5:19). Then, “he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all *marveled*” (5:20). Later, in Mark 7, when Jesus comes through Decapolis to the Sea of Galilee there is a multitude waiting for him. Thousands of people in the pagan region of Decapolis had heard of Jesus because the previously demon-possessed man had obeyed Christ's command to return home to tell his friends, speak of the miracle the Lord had done in His life, and how he was benefited by Christ's compassion (Ligonier, 2016). People were *marveled* and ready to see Jesus. This man, whose name is not mentioned in the Bible, was actively sharing Jesus' Gospel message.

New believers should be taught to share their faith audaciously, as soon as possible, and to as many people available (Hatcher, 1981). Jesus charges all believers to testify of Him by sharing the Gospel of Salvation. In the Great Commission as found in Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus ascends into heaven before his disciples and “spoke to them,

saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 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, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’” This is Jesus’ final instruction – go make disciples. Encourage new believers to go and share Jesus with others.

A Movement Axiom

A disciple-making movement requires simplicity, wild-fire like expediency, an ever reproducing cycle of disciple-makers and multiplication from within people groups through its own leaders (Garrison, 2004). John 5:18 states, “By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples”. Every generation of believers needs to “bear much fruit”. Smith and Kai (2011) affirm, “Bearing much fruit can be the spiritual fruit of life transformation as well as the spiritual fruit of new disciples made”; a movement requires both. Through the lives of disciple makers who train others “the Kingdom spreads into multiple people, groups, and streams of multiplying churches.

Conclusion

Jesus’ approach to Zacchaeus provides insights on making disciples and generating a disciple-making movement. There are three essential, yet disregarded challenges, found in disciple-making today. Channeling proper energy and resources is vital for Jesus followers to reproduce themselves in others, who in turn, also reproduce other generations of disciples – continually. There are Biblical transversal principles in disciple-making, regardless of the chosen ministry model. Zacchaeus’ experience with Jesus upset the Jews, yet it provided stunningly simple concepts to fulfill Christ’s Great Commission.

Jesus Christ's ministry strategy established the benchmark in Christianity for disciple reproduction and a movement for multiplication – for individuals; and small, medium, large and mega churches. Believers worldwide should follow His example. A microscopic analysis of Jesus' Zacchaeus approach reveals His engaging simplicity. It also exhibits His incarnational decision to live among humans, and displays His missional actions for the daily disciple-making lifestyle necessary for every believer. Jesus' Zacchaeus approach displays thirteen principles for incarnational and missional ministry: Intentionally go places to find people. Initiate connections with them. Take interest and genuinely learn about the persons with whom you connect. Engage people knowing they are made in God's image, despite sins. Be bigger than life, but remain humble. Invite yourself into their lives. Disregard grumblers. Speak truth at the appropriate time – share the Gospel. Give room for them to reflect and grow. Allow the Holy Spirit to do His work. Recognize steps and decisions toward Christ. Draw attention to salvation and celebrate. Encourage each new believer to go and share Jesus with others. Learn these principles and go to apply.

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