

Field Training... anyone out there interested anymore?
Captain Matt Shiels

I've just finished up my study in Matthew, most of you probably know how it ends with what's been called the great commission statement 'Go and make disciples...' As I was studying this I learned that the emphasis was not on the 'Go', because that can be translated 'as you are going.' The emphasis was on '*make disciples*.'

As I watched how Jesus made disciples, I noticed that this process involved a few things. He sought some people (from all walks of life) to train up. Also, He did not just spend time in the word with them (like holding a weekly Bible Study), but He included them in living out what the Bible teaches. By example, He showed them how to spend time with God alone. He also showed them how to spend time with God in ministry, through helping those in need, sharing the good news of God's love with others, and even going to church to worship...

It's almost like the disciples were Jesus' apprentices, being taught the tools and gaining experience along the way (*...as you are going, make disciples...*) Has anyone seen this kind of active discipleship training happening in our churches today?

I'm all for Bible Studies and small groups, I have been richly blessed in these. But, I'm also worried that we make these types of groups become the extent of our 'discipleship training.' A few years ago I challenged a small group that had been meeting together for years to do something different than simply meeting together once a week. I invited them to skip their regular routine to help with a major food drive that hundreds of people help out at each year. They decided they were going to take me up on that plan and break routine, the result... a whole new understanding and experience of the grace and love of the Lord. They have been 'breaking the routine' ever since. Somehow in all those years of meeting together, they had forgotten what it was like to be 'taught in action,' hands on training.

Jesus told us, "as you are going, make disciples..." If we follow His example, then shouldn't we be discipling one another with more than just meeting together in small groups? (Which I hope we are doing at least that). When was the last time you invited a neighbor to dinner? Went out for a coffee with someone God has put into your life? Helped out with a street ministry? Went on a mission trip? Helped out in a children or youth ministry? Visited some seniors? The Lord has placed the discipleship 'curriculum' at your fingertips, all you need to do now is join in and get your hands dirty...

Perhaps if you are finding it boring to 'just' read your Bible... maybe God is waiting to teach and let you experience what He is like by inviting you to put into action what you have been reading. I'm pretty sure after you've taken the field lesson, the scriptures will come alive once again and your heart will burn with Holy fire.

Remember... if you are going to be a 'follower'... then start following.

I'll be watching for you in the field, come and join in on the hands on training... I am looking forward to being disciplined by you. :)

Much Grace