

Discipleship Training Course

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- The Old Testament tetragrammaton name of God (derived from the four Hebrew letters translated into English as YHWH) has been rendered LORD unless translated Jehovah or Yahweh
- Pronouns referring to the Trinity and some specific terms relating to the Trinity (such as Name and Word) have been capitalized
- Speech marks around entire quotes and at the beginning of new paragraphs have been omitted
- Anglicised spellings have been used
- All quotes begin with a capital letter and end with a full stop
- Some weights, measures and times have been replaced with easier to understand terms given in the footnotes using square brackets
- All verse numbers, footnote numbers and symbols have been removed
- Poetry has been indented and only new sentences start with a capital letter

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1. Old Testament teaching on evangelism

The theme of evangelism is seen throughout the Bible. Evangelists are **soulwinners**. This is commended in Proverbs as a form of wisdom:

*The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life,
And he who wins souls is wise.*

Proverbs 11:30 (NKJV)

Ezekiel was given a commission as a watchman over the people of Israel. This commission can be extended to us in our responsibility to witness to those who have not heard the gospel and need to be saved:

As for you, son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel. When you hear a word from My mouth, give them a warning from Me. If I say to the wicked, "Wicked one, you will surely die," but you do not speak out to warn him about his way, that wicked person will die for his iniquity, yet I will hold you responsible for his blood. But if you warn a wicked person to turn from his way and he doesn't turn from it, he will die for his iniquity, but you will have saved your life.

Ezekiel 33:7-9 (HCSB)

Jonah was sent to proclaim a word of coming judgment to the people of Nineveh. They believed God, repented, fasted and prayed. Instilling a godly fear of judgment is one aspect of evangelism. However, we should emphasise God's love towards us in sending His Son to die for us (John 3:16). Jonah's example is more instructive in his sense of calling to proclaim a message to a people he did not know.

Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time: "Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you."

Jonah obeyed the word of the LORD and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very large city; it took three days to go through it. Jonah began by going a day's journey into the city, proclaiming, "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown." The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.

When Jonah's warning reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust. This is the proclamation he issued in Nineveh:

"By the decree of the king and his nobles:

Do not let people or animals, herds or flocks, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. But let people and animals be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from His fierce anger so that we will not perish."

When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, He relented and did not bring on them the destruction He had threatened.

Jonah 3 (NIVUK)

2. Jesus' teaching on evangelism

Jesus called some of His disciples out of the occupation of being fishermen, telling them that if they followed Him He would teach them how to fish for men instead. Evangelism can therefore be seen as fishing for souls:

*And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then He said to them, **"Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."** They immediately left their nets and followed Him.*

Matthew 4:18-20 (NKJV)

Jesus sent out His twelve disciples to preach the gospel to train them in evangelism:

He called to Himself His twelve disciples, and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every sickness. Now the names of the twelve apostles are these. The first, Simon, who is called Peter; Andrew, his brother; James the son of Zebedee; John, his brother; Philip; Bartholomew; Thomas; Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus; Lebbaeus, who was also called Thaddaeus; Simon the Canaanite; and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him.

*Jesus sent these twelve out, and commanded them, saying, "Don't go amongst the Gentiles, and don't enter into any city of the Samaritans. Rather, go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. **As you go, preach, saying, 'The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!'** Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, and cast out demons. Freely you received, so freely give. Don't take any gold, silver, or brass in your money belts. Take no bag for your journey, neither two coats, nor sandals, nor staff: for the labourer is worthy of his food. Into whatever city or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy; and stay there until you go on. As you enter into the household, greet it. If the household is worthy, let your peace come on it, but if it isn't worthy, let your peace return to you. Whoever doesn't receive you, nor hear your words, as you go out of that house or that city, shake the dust off your feet. Most certainly I tell you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgement than for that city.*

Behold, I send you out as sheep amongst wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to councils, and in their synagogues they will scourge you. Yes, and you will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them and to the nations. But when they deliver you up, don't be anxious how or what you will say, for it will be given you in that hour what you will say. For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.

"Brother will deliver up brother to death, and the father his child. Children will rise up against parents, and cause them to be put to death. You will be hated by all men for My Name's sake, but he who endures to the end will be saved. But when they persecute you in this city, flee into the next, for most certainly I tell you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel until the Son of Man has come.

A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be like his teacher, and the servant like his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more those of his household! Therefore don't be afraid of them, for there is nothing covered that will not be revealed; and hidden that will not be known. What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in the ear, proclaim on the housetops. Don't be afraid of those who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul. Rather, fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna.

Aren't two sparrows sold for [a small coin]? Not one of them falls on the ground apart from your Father's will, but the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Therefore don't be afraid. You are of more value than many sparrows. Everyone therefore who confesses Me before

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men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.

Don't think that I came to send peace on the earth. I didn't come to send peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man at odds against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. A man's foes will be those of his own household. He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me isn't worthy of Me. He who doesn't take his cross and follow after Me, isn't worthy of Me. He who seeks his life will lose it; and he who loses his life for My sake will find it. He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward. He who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man will receive a righteous man's reward. Whoever gives one of these little ones just a cup of cold water to drink in the name of a disciple, most certainly I tell you he will in no way lose his reward."

Matthew 10 (WEBPB)

Jesus taught the value of a soul compared to earthly possessions:

*Jesus called the crowd together with His disciples, and said to them, "If anyone wishes to follow Me [as My disciple], he must deny himself [set aside selfish interests], and take up his cross [expressing a willingness to endure whatever may come] and follow Me [believing in Me, conforming to My example in living and, if need be, suffering or perhaps dying because of faith in Me]. For whoever wishes to save his life [in this world] will [eventually] lose it [through death], but whoever loses his life [in this world] for My sake and the gospel's will save it [from the consequences of sin and separation from God]. **For what does it benefit a man to gain the whole world [with all its pleasures], and forfeit his soul?** For what will a man give in exchange for his soul and eternal life [in God's kingdom]? For whoever is ashamed [here and now] of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."*

Mark 8:34-38 (AMP)

This is also seen in His parable of the rich fool:

*Someone in the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me." But He said to him, "Man, who appointed Me a judge or arbitrator over you?" Then He said to them, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions." And He told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man was very productive. And he began reasoning to himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?' Then he said, 'This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.'" **But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?' So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."***

Luke 12:13-21 (NASB1995)

Preaching the gospel can be likened to inviting unworthy guests to a great banquet. We should go out into the highways and byways and compel such people to come and dine:

When one of those who sat at the table with Him heard these things, he said to Him, "Blessed is he who will feast in God's Kingdom!"

But He said to him, "A certain man made a great supper, and he invited many people. He sent out his servant at supper time to tell those who were invited, 'Come, for everything is ready now.' They all as one began to make excuses.

The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please have me excused.'

Another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I must go try them out. Please have me excused.'

Another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I can't come.'

That servant came, and told his lord these things. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor, maimed, blind, and lame.'

The servant said, 'Lord, it is done as you commanded, and there is still room.'

*The lord said to the servant, **'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.** For I tell you that none of those men who were invited will taste of my supper.'*

Luke 14:15-24 (WEBPB)

Jesus encouraged His disciples to pray to the Lord of the harvest to **force out and thrust** workers into His harvest field:

And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news (the Gospel) of the kingdom and curing all kinds of disease and every weakness and infirmity.

When He saw the throngs, He was moved with pity and sympathy for them, because they were bewildered (harassed and distressed and dejected and helpless), like sheep without a shepherd.

*Then He said to His disciples, **The harvest is indeed plentiful, but the labourers are few. So pray to the Lord of the harvest to force out and thrust labourers into His harvest.***

Matthew 9:35-38 (AMPC)

Jesus also sent out seventy two of His followers to teach them how to evangelise:

*Now after these things, the Lord also appointed seventy-two others, and sent them two by two ahead of Him into every city and place, where He was about to come. Then He said to them, "The harvest is indeed plentiful, but the labourers are few. Pray therefore to the Lord of the harvest, that He may send out labourers into His harvest. Go your way. Look, I send you out as lambs among wolves. Carry no purse, nor wallet, nor sandals. Greet no one on the way. Into whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house.' If a peaceful person is there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you. Remain in that same house, eating and drinking the things they give, for the labourer is worthy of his wages. Do not go from house to house. Into whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat the things that are set before you. Heal the sick who are therein, **and tell them, 'The Kingdom of God has come near to you.'** But into whatever city you enter, and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, 'Even the dust from your city that clings to our feet, we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the Kingdom of God is near.' I tell you, it will be more tolerable in that day for Sodom than for that city. Woe to you, Chorazin. Woe to you, Bethsaida. For if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which were done in you, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You will be brought down to hell. Whoever listens to you listens to Me, and whoever rejects you rejects Me. Whoever rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me." The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your*

Name." He said to them, "I saw Satan having fallen like lightning from heaven. Look, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will in any way hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

Luke 10:1-20 (NHEB)

Soulwinning brings great joy to the kingdom of heaven. Jesus taught three consecutive parables to emphasise this point:

Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear Him. And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them."

*So He told them this parable: "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbours, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.' Just so, I tell you, **there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.**"*

*Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently until she finds it? And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbours, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.' Just so, I tell you, **there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents.**"*

And He said, "There was a man who had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.' And he divided his property between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.

*But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants."' And he arose and came to his father. **But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.** And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' **But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.'** And they began to celebrate.*

Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.' But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, but he answered his father, 'Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!' And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.'"

Luke 15 (ESVUK)

Jesus anticipated that some people would not believe in Him despite His resurrection from the dead through a parable which also illustrates the punishment of those who reject the gospel:

Now there was a certain rich man, and he was clothed in purple and fine linen, living in luxury every day. A certain beggar, named Lazarus, was taken to his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table. Yes, even the dogs came and licked his sores. The beggar died, and he was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died, and was buried. In Hades, he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far off, and Lazarus at his bosom. He cried and said, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue! For I am in anguish in this flame."

But Abraham said, "Son, remember that you, in your lifetime, received your good things, and Lazarus, in the same way, bad things. But here he is now comforted, and you are in anguish. Besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, that those who want to pass from here to you are not able, and that no one may cross over from there to us."

He said, "I ask you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house; for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, so they won't also come into this place of torment."

But Abraham said to him, "They have Moses and the prophets. Let them listen to them."

He said, "No, father Abraham, but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent."

He said to him, "If they don't listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if one rises from the dead."

Luke 16:19-31 (WEBPB)

After His resurrection, Jesus commissioned His disciples to go and preach the gospel to the whole of creation:

Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; He rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen Him after He had risen.

He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: in My name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on people who are ill, and they will get well."

Mark 16:14-18 (NIVUK)

Jesus explained to His disciples that the Holy Spirit would come upon them and enable them to fulfil His commission:

Then they gathered round Him and asked Him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by His own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Acts 1:6-8 (NIVUK)

3. Other New Testament teaching on evangelism

The first disciples were more willing to obey Jesus' command than to obey men:

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*So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the Name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, for **we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.**"*

Acts 4:18-20 (ESVUK)

Jesus' prediction of the gospel spreading across the world began in earnest when Stephen was martyred (Acts 7) and a great persecution broke out against the church. The devil meant it for harm, but God meant it for good (Genesis 50:20).

A great wave of persecution began that day, sweeping over the church in Jerusalem; and all the believers except the apostles were scattered through the regions of Judea and Samaria. (Some devout men came and buried Stephen with great mourning.) But Saul was going everywhere to destroy the church. He went from house to house, dragging out both men and women to throw them into prison.

But the believers who were scattered preached the Good News about Jesus wherever they went. Philip, for example, went to the city of Samaria and told the people there about the Messiah. Crowds listened intently to Philip because they were eager to hear his message and see the miraculous signs he did. Many evil spirits were cast out, screaming as they left their victims. And many who had been paralyzed or lame were healed. So there was great joy in that city.

Acts 8:1b-8 (NLT)

Paul received a revelation to preach the gospel in Macedonia. This led to suffering and persecution along with the establishment of a church in Philippi:

And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

Acts 16:9-10 (ESVUK)

Paul encouraged the Romans over the importance of evangelists being sent out to preach the gospel:

How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written:

*"How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace,
who bring glad tidings of good things!"*

Romans 10:14-15 (NKJV)

Paul taught Timothy that God desires everyone to be saved:

First of all, then, I urge that petitions (specific requests), prayers, intercessions (prayers for others) and thanksgivings be offered on behalf of all people, for kings and all who are in [positions of] high authority, so that we may live a peaceful and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This [kind of praying] is good and acceptable and pleasing in the sight of God our Saviour, who wishes all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge and recognition of the [divine] truth. For there is [only] one God, and [only] one Mediator between God and mankind, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom [a substitutionary sacrifice to atone] for all, the testimony given at the right and proper time.

1 Timothy 2:1-6 (AMP)

Paul encouraged Timothy to be prepared to preach the word both in season and out of season:

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*In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of His appearing and His kingdom, I give you this charge: **preach the Word**; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction.*

2 Timothy 4:1-2 (NIVUK)

Paul also encouraged Timothy to do the work of an evangelist, emphasising that he has a duty to serve in this way even if it was not his major motivation or calling:

*But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, **do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.***

2 Timothy 4:5 (NIVUK)

James encouraged his readers to turn sinners back from the error of their ways:

*My brothers, if any among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that **he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death, and will cover a multitude of sins.***

James 5:19-20 (NHEB)

Peter encouraged his readers to always be prepared to explain the gospel to another person:

*But in your hearts set Christ apart as holy [and acknowledge Him] as Lord. **Always be ready to give a logical defence to anyone who asks you to account for the hope that is in you, but do it courteously and respectfully.***

[And see to it that] your conscience is entirely clear (unimpaired), so that, when you are falsely accused as evildoers, those who threaten you abusively and revile your right behaviour in Christ may come to be ashamed [of slandering your good lives].

1 Peter 3:15-16 (AMPC)

Finally, the last word in Scripture to sinners is from the Spirit and the church to come and receive the free gift of the water of eternal life:

*The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” He who hears, let him say, “Come!” **He who is thirsty, let him come. He who desires, let him take the water of life freely.***

Revelation 22:17 (WEBPB)