

## 2021 Spire Measuring Discipleship Huddle Teaching September 15, 2021—Nashville, TN

### Mentimeter.com

1. *In a word or two, how has the pandemic impacted your church's ability to make disciples?*
  2. *How does your church measure effectiveness?*
  3. *How do you currently measure your disciple making?*
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Fully Appreciate the complexity of a disciple of Christ...How do you measure this?

- Like trying to measure a Sunset...
- Today, I want to stretch your thinking on measuring discipleship
  
- Last week I talked with a city director of one of the larger cities in the US. Do you know how Covid has impacted the Navigator disciple making ministries in cities? NOT AT ALL.
  - Why, because their model was NOT centered around a corporate weekly service
- One of the consequences of Covid...is the Church is being forced to rethink its measurement or model of making disciples
  - Acts 8.1 Defining Moment for the church—Paradigm Shift
    - Not for every church...Jerusalem Church didn't shift and began a slow and arduous death
      - Acts 2.42-47 Really cool paradigm—10 years earlier from this passage...
        - We have all preached/taught it
      - But it didn't translate beyond the Jewish practices/traditions
        - But, from Acts 8.1 Jerusalem resisted/hesitated in the spread of the gospel
    - Church in Antioch, Ephesus, Colossae & Rome pivoted and multiplied their disciple making paradigm
  - The Church Grew dramatically for the next 300 years as it was freed from the cultural confines of Jerusalem in the first 7 chapters of Acts
  - Churches today are facing the same paradigm shift.
- Northpoint Community Church
  - Andy Stanley—March 2020 (18 months ago)
    - Shutting down through August
      - Then Easter of this year...
      - Over a year
    - Staff had to figure out how to make disciples within ministry to remain viable
  - They were committed to make disciples without their weekend experiences

- They contacted about partnering to develop a (PRE/POST) assessment to help them better monitor how they are doing
  - Many larger churches today want an assessment to measure if/how they are making disciples (PRE/POST)
  - These churches are large and have experienced "success" in terms of **impact, size, notoriety, and life change**, and now know something is shifting...ARE WE REALLY MAKING DISCIPLES of lost or found people?
    - They are turning their attention toward this purpose.
- Discipleship has Waxed and Waned over my 50 years of watching the church
- Francis Cosgrove telling me, "*If you lose your calling for making disciples, you never had it.*"

Three essential factors we will discuss concerning ***Measuring Discipleship***

- 1. Measurements are not perfect** (Measuring)
- 2. There is great variety in how the life of Christ is manifested in his followers' lives** (Discipleship)
- 3. The life of Christ & the teachings of scripture are the basis for measuring discipleship** (Discipleship)

In the remaining time in this first session, I want to talk about Measurements because everyone is enamored with assessments and measurements.

- I wish I had \$1 for every time someone has asked me what my enneagram # is/was.
  - Assessment DuJour

### **Part 1—Measurements are not perfect**

- *Every measurement has a margin of error*
  - I am currently working on 3 instruments:
    - John Walker/Charity Byers on Christian Mental Health
      - 5 scales and 58 subscales
    - Northpoint Church in Atlanta on Spiritual maturity...we will look at shortly
      - 4 scales and 19 subscales
    - Lilly Grant for one on Christian Financial Health (FHA)
  - I have completed—20-30 instruments
    - 4 for Exponential (B5, DM5, HM5, M5)
    - 2 for World Vision
    - 5-6 to measure Spiritual Maturity/Discipleship/Character from one perspective or another.
  - None of them are perfect
  - Danger of assuming instrument is perfect
    - ILLUSTRATION about my IQ in 8<sup>th</sup> Grade
  - Please don't use any kind of measurement of Discipleship inappropriately

- A lot of misinformation circulating around measurements/assessments
    - A lot of damage done in the name of assessments
    - People often interpret instruments beyond their knowledge base or expertise
    - IF THIS IS SO>>>
- What is the Primary Purpose Measuring Discipleship?
  1. To understand the individuals that you are accountable to (not for)
    - Measurements are for understanding not manipulating people
  2. To know how to serve people to grow best from where they are
    - I hear so often
      - To take their next best step in following Jesus...
      - Really! Baptism, Group...
    - That often isn't their next step.
      - Marriage
      - Anger
      - Bitterness
      - Lordship
      - Addiction
    - To help them figure how to grow in their walk with Christ
    - To empower people to know where and how to begin in fulfilling their calling
- Goodhart's Law:
  - **When a measure becomes a target, it ceases to be a good measure**
  - Measures such as these have become targets:
    - Attendance
    - Budget
    - Baptisms
    - Groups
    - Followers/Clicks/Likes/Forwards...
- However we decide to measure discipleship we have to remember these three things about our measurement:
  - Every measurement is imperfect
  - Primary purpose is to better understand and serve the individual
  - We must ensure that our measures don't become an end in themselves

**Questions for #1 Huddle Group:**

- Please introduce yourself giving:
  - Current role in ministry
  - Current location for ministry
  - Primary reason for selecting this huddle
- How have you permanently pivoted like Acts 8.1 in your church.
- How have you seen assessments/measurements used in an inappropriate way?
- How have you seen assessments/measurements used in an appropriate way?
- What measures have you seen become targets and how have they then failed to be useful measures?
- What would be some new measures for digital discipleship?

## Part 2—There is great variety in how the life of Christ is manifested in his followers' lives

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1. How many types of bananas are there in the world?
  - a. 50
  - b. 200
  - c. 1000
  - d. 2000
2. Who was the most impulsive?
  - a. Paul
  - b. Barnabas
  - c. Peter
  - d. Timothy
3. Was this a character flaw for Peter?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No

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- God is a creative God
    - One of the problems I have with the Enneagram is it limits God's creativity to 9 types of people (or 18-27 given a wing or two)
    - Bananas? **more than 1,000 types** of bananas in the world, which are subdivided into 50 groups
    - Look at people from around the world?
      - Measuring Discipleship must accommodate individual's styles or differences
  - I would suggest, Jesus intentionally chose individuals of diverse personalities and cultures
    - Why else did he spend a full night in prayer...
      - Impulsive Peter
      - Driven Paul
      - Reticent Timothy
      - Caring Barnabas
  - Think of the disciples of Jesus, no two were alike
    - Look at the way the team operated
      - Great competition because of Great differences
    - Paul & Barnabas in Acts 15
      - Not a spiritual maturity issue, a personality/passion difference
  - Discipleship must be seen from God' creative perspective
    - The goal is NOT to produce a bunch of individuals who all look, act, talk and smell the same
  - **The challenge is to understand what are the eternal attributes that God desires in all of his followers and what are the unique particularities that you should encourage a specific disciple to develop or employ**

- *If you don't know the difference between the eternal and the personal, you will clone not disciple*
- This was a problem for me...
  - My mother holding my earlobes and looking me in the eye
    - Don't you dare start something else until you finish what you have started.
  - The first guy who disciplined me was an accountant.
    - He couldn't understand why I wasn't so regimented
  - My second discipler was Don Loomer
    - He was very regimented..."high S"
      - Predictable, stable, consistent
    - I wanted to be like Don, but one problem...
    - I am not wired like Don
  - I love to start things...
    - Terrible at finishing them
    - Does that make me a bad disciple?
    - According to some yes...
      - SDM (Standard Discipleship Model)
- Navigators were terrible at this for decades
  - Khakis and Blue shirt
    - Yes, military culture
  - But one man for one year and then multiply
    - 32 years later...world would be reached for Christ
- Wasn't till I was in my late 30's I realized I was maturing, and this strength of starting things was a gift, not a curse
  - Yes, I needed to curate it and build teams around me, but it wasn't a faulty discipleship gene.

But it isn't just differences in styles that makes measuring discipleship a challenge, let me suggest it is also differences in stage

- Throughout the NT we see individuals helping others grow through stages of growth...
  - Paul describes his spiritual life as a journey/race with different stages in Philippians 3
    - *<sup>12</sup>Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. <sup>13</sup>Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind\* and straining toward what is ahead, <sup>14</sup>I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.*
    - <sup>15</sup>All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently that too God will make clear to you. <sup>16</sup>Only let us live up to what we have already attained.*

*<sup>17</sup>Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you.*

- In other places he describe:
  - Spiritual Milk instead of Solid food as they should be more mature—1 Corinthians 3
  - I have finished the course set out before me—2 Timothy
- Peter calls the new believers in 1 Peter 2 “new born babes”
- In scripture there were clearly developing faith journeys which the disciples were on as well as those they worked with.
  - We must account for these different seasons or stages.
  - Let me suggest 6 that can be seen in one Christian writer or another for the past 500 years (St. John of the Cross)
- Six Stages
  - 1. Explore      Discovering**
    - *General awareness of something more to life but not fully committed to a life of faith in Christ.*
  - 2. Build      Developing**
    - *General awareness of the need to grow in their faith in Christ and taking these steps toward maturity.*
  - 3. Own      Deploying**
    - *General awareness of the need for deep intimacy through Christ and ministry to others through their gifts.*
  - 4. Wilderness      Deconstructing**
    - *General awareness of the need to rethink spiritual maturity as more nuanced than once thought and struggle with deeper issues of faith.*
  - 5. Thrive      Delighting**
    - *General awareness that their life is a gift of God which they live daily in gratitude, freedom and service to him.*
  - 6. Beyond      Detaching**
    - *General awareness that faith has culminated in a content, confident, and compassionate lifestyle lived simply as they ready themselves to meet their Savior, Jesus.*
- One of the reasons measuring Discipleship is so difficult is because what prayer looks like in the initial stages of faith development looks so different from prayer of a saint who has walked faithfully for 50 years
  - Or spending time with God
  - Evangelism
- These differences must now be accounted for in two ways
  - Style—personal
  - Season—faith development
- However we measure discipleship, it must accommodate for individual DIFFERENCES & SEASONS

## Questions for #2 Huddle Group

- In your disciple making of individuals in the past, how have you accounted for different styles or seasons?
- Everyone in the group pick at least one NT disciple from this list and give a brief description of their distinctiveness:
  - Peter
  - John
  - Mary
  - Barnabas
  - Paul
  - Timothy
  - Lydia
  - Apollos
  - Priscilla
  - Titus
- How were you not allowed to be uniquely you as you were disciplined?
- From your life, what distinctives did you notice in the various stages of your spiritual growth?
- Which, if any of these six stages of spiritual development best describes you and why?
  - Explore      Discovering
  - Build        Developing
  - Own          Deploying
  - Wilderness    Deconstructing
  - Thrive        Delighting
  - Beyond       Detaching



## Part 3—The life of Christ & the teachings of scripture are the basis for measuring discipleship

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1. When you came to know Christ, how did you grow?
  - a. This approach may not work any longer...
2. What are the top qualities you believe are most important to measure as a disciple matures in their faith?
  - a. Would you have said that 10 years ago, i.e. has your answer evolved over the years? Mine has changed...

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- Acts 8.1—what worked prior, wasn't going to work now (Acts 2.42-47)
    - Paul and Barnabas have to figure this one out...(Acts 11)
    - 2 Timothy 2. <sup>2</sup>And the things you have heard me say\* in the presence of many witnesses\* entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.
      - What do you notice...four generations...?
      - And there is a life transfer
    - 1 Thessalonians 2. <sup>8</sup>We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God\* but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us.
      - Here again, life on life
    - Life change occurs in the context of a close relationship
  - Notice how Paul's **CATCH AND RELEASE (*Sodalic*)** seems so different from the Jerusalem model, which was to **BUILD AND EMPLOY (*Modalic*)**
  - *Loonshots by Safi Bahcall on how the work together*
    - Look at Acts 11 with Peter, Acts 15 with Paul...
    - As we study Church History, we find both models used throughout the church...
      - I would suggest, the longer and larger a church became, the more it used the Build and Keep approach to sustain itself
      - The younger and leaner a church or organization was, the more compelled they were to extend the mission beyond themselves
    - It doesn't have to be so but will only be different if intentionality and effort is made to contradict **organizational entropy**.
  - Notice after Acts 8.1
    - They didn't have a curriculum
    - They didn't have resources
    - They made phenomenal disciples before they had weekend services, curriculum, or professional clergy
    - Only had parts of the NT and a life-on-life mentality
  - North Point Church helps their disciples identify four lenses through which their spiritual movement may be seen. We have elaborated each of these

four marks of a disciple through 4-6 subscales which can be more closely measured.

- CONNECTION WITH GOD
  1. View of God
  2. Time with God
  3. Experience of God
  4. Faith / Trusting God
  5. Prayer
  6. Scripture
- IDENTITY IN CHRIST
  1. Self-Knowledge
  2. Differentiation
  3. Sense of Worth
  4. Focus on Self
- BELONGING THROUGH COMMUNITY
  1. Interdependent Relationships—Give and receive, see self as part of the body of Christ, community
  2. Openness and Trust—Authenticity, vulnerability, accountability
  3. Difference—Recognize difference, empathy
  4. Forgiveness
- PURPOSE THROUGH ENGAGING IN MISSION
  1. Living for others--Justice
  2. Discipleship—Multiplication
  3. Defined sense of calling--Work and faith integration, part of something bigger than myself
  4. Evangelism
  5. Generosity
- So how do you assess where a disciple is in their journey/walk?
  - Especially if they aren't in your physical presence every week?
    - Worship Service
    - Group? Online?
- Can it be digital?
  - I used to say no, but now think it can be
  - Paul started about 16 churches
    - He spent time with 47 individuals
  - Paul's discipling was personal, but it was **also** through digital (his letters).
  - John appears to have pastored about 7-8 churches (1, 2 & 3 John, Revelations).
    - He clearly disciplined through face to face, but it was also through digital (his letters)
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IDENTIFY ONE OR TWO TAKE AWAY...MAKE IT CONCRETE



### Questions for #3 Huddle Group

- What do you notice about John's discipling of Gaius in 3 John? (especially v3, 9-10 & 13-14)
- Give examples of Paul's discipling of others digitally?
- How did he allow for life on life to take place when he wrote so much digitally?
- What can we learn from his approach?
- What is one thing you have learned about measuring discipleship which will impact how you disciple from this point forward?
- Do you want more information on the Spiritual Formation Inventory as we develop it? If so, send an email to [April@TrueWiring.com](mailto:April@TrueWiring.com) and ask to be on the North Point inner Circle.

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1. *What's the most difficult part of making disciples?*

Notes from Johnson, Jan; Willard, Dallas. *Renovation of the Heart in Daily Practice: Experiments in Spiritual Transformation (Redefining Life)* (p. 161-162). The Navigators.

Churches that cause children of light (disciples) to emerge and mature have turned their efforts under God toward making spiritual formation in Christlikeness their primary goal. The reason most congregations fail to routinely produce children of light (disciples) is distraction. While majoring in minors, they become distracted by things the New Testament says nothing about. They devote most of their thought and effort to sermons, Sunday school, style of music, denominations, camps, or board meetings. *Those matters are not primary and will take care of themselves when what is primary is appropriately cared for.*

Such matters are "vessels" but are mistaken for the "treasure." The apostle Paul made a distinction between the vessels (or "jars of clay," our body, 2 Corinthians 4:7, NIV) and the treasure ("the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ," 4:6). We might also apply this "vessel" distinction to the *practices, traditions, and groupings* to which many congregations devote their attention and effort. Many groups have become nearly 100 percent vessel. Often there is much good associated with these vessels, but we mistake them for the treasure: the real presence of Jesus Christ in our midst, living with increasing fullness in every essential dimension of the personality of the individual devoted to him as Savior and Teacher.

We debate: Should there be prayer ministry, and should it be part of the service, after the service, or at a different service? Should we be seeker friendly or whatever the alternatives are? How should we raise funds for the church, and how should they be spent? Such things are not unimportant, but they are not the foundational matters. And that is why the New Testament says nothing about them.

# Spiritual Formation Index

EXPLORE

DISCOVERING

## Stage 1

### Stage 1 is to EXPLORE: *Discovering*

- Full Definition: Individuals in this stage of faith development explore who God is and seek to make sense of how he relates to them. There is an awareness that there is more to life than what they are currently experiencing, but they are not yet entirely sure how to attain this. In this stage, there is a quest for greater meaning in life and a focus on finding answers. God is seen mainly as a powerful force in nature or life. The emphasis is often on works and serving others because there is a lack of complete reliance on grace through faith for their own righteousness. They are seeking to grow themselves.
- Brief Definition: General awareness of something more to life but not fully committed to a life of faith in Christ.

BUILD

DEVELOPING

## Stage 2

### Stage 2 is to BUILD: *Developing*

- Full Definition: Individuals in this stage of faith development are learning about God and are beginning to experience his presence. There is an awareness that one grows and learns best in community with others. Their learning comes from others, studying, and opening to God. Their commitment to Christ is integrated through their learning and leaning into a body of beliefs. God is seen as their Savior and Lord in which they are confident they will find answers to life's questions. They know they have a long way to grow and are on the journey.
- Brief Definition: General awareness of the need to grow in their faith in Christ and taking these steps toward maturity.

OWN

DEPLOYING

## Stage 3

### Stage 3 is to OWN: *Deploying*

- Full Definition: Individuals in this stage of faith development develop intimacy and effective ministry. There is an awareness that they grow from the inside out and they find their outward expressions of faith through their gifts and abilities. Their learning comes from authentically relating to scripture, interacting with others in their faith community, and serving others. Their relationship with God provides hope and is their basis for life and ministry. They take personal responsibility for serving others and for their own growth.
- Brief Definition: General awareness of the need for deep intimacy through Christ and ministry to others through their gifts.

WILDERNESS  
DECONSTRUCTING

**Stage 4**

**Stage 4 is to experience WILDERNESS: *Deconstructing***

- Full Definition: Individuals in this stage of faith development wrestle with trusting in God when what was hoped for doesn't become a reality. There is an awareness that deep faith is forged through times of struggle. Developing a resilient faith requires genuinely walking through dark times and learning to trust God despite circumstances, not because of them. Isolation tends to accompany this stage, and programmatic approaches to growth and ministry seem to fall short of expectations. It becomes clear that faith is more nuanced than once believed. Their learning comes from honestly facing their doubts and finding freedom in the next stage.
- Brief Definition: General awareness of the need to rethink spiritual maturity as more nuanced than once thought and struggle with deeper issues of faith.

THRIVE  
DELIGHTING

**Stage 5**

**Stage 5 is to THRIVE: *Delighting***

- Full Definition: Individuals in this stage of faith development experience a depth and quality of relationship with their Lord that is unwavering. This resoluteness is typically the fruit of decades of growth and struggle. They experience growth through lifelong habits of spiritual disciplines. Their sense of God, self, ministry, and all of life converge to create a deep sense of purpose. Faith is not an internal belief, but a way of living manifested in relationships inside and outside the church. Their life demonstrates a healthy abiding in and outpouring of the Spirit. Their heart breaks for the things that break the heart of God.
- Brief Definition: General awareness that their life is a gift of God which they live daily in gratitude, freedom and service to him.

BEYOND  
DETACHING

**Stage 6**

**Stage 6 is to go BEYOND: *Detaching***

- Full Definition: Individuals in this stage of faith development sense their earthly life is just a preparation for all of eternity. They exhibit a quiet confidence with their Savior, who continually draws their attention toward heaven. There is a renewed openness to the things of God. They seek to be sensitive to work only where they see their Lord working. They have little need for programs or productions. Life is experienced in intimacy with God and others by simply being who they were created and crafted to be. All their life has prepared them for what is to follow, yet they are content to labor where they find themselves. They are less and less engaged in things of this world, while more and more yearning for eternity.
- Brief Definition: General awareness that faith has culminated in a content, confident, and compassionate lifestyle lived simply as they ready themselves to meet their Savior, Jesus.

## **Making Disciples Biblical**

### Matthew 10

*<sup>42</sup>And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward."*

### Luke 14

*<sup>26</sup>If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple. <sup>27</sup>And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.*

*<sup>33</sup>In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.*

### John 8

*<sup>31</sup>To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. <sup>32</sup>Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."*

### John 13

*<sup>35</sup>By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."*

### John 15

*<sup>8</sup>This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.*

### Titus 1

*<sup>15</sup>To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted. <sup>16</sup>They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good.*

### 1 John 2

*<sup>3</sup>We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. <sup>4</sup>The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*

*<sup>5</sup>But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. *This is how we know we are in him:* <sup>6</sup>Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.*



### 1 John 3

<sup>10</sup>*This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother.*

<sup>24</sup>Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. *And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.*

### 1 John 4

<sup>1</sup>Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. <sup>2</sup>*This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God,* <sup>3</sup>but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God.

<sup>13</sup>*We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.*

### 1 John 5

<sup>2</sup>*This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands.* <sup>3</sup>This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome,\* <sup>4</sup>for everyone born of God overcomes the world.

<sup>13</sup>I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

<sup>18</sup>*We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him.* <sup>19</sup>*We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.* <sup>20</sup>*We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true.* And we are in him who is true—even in his Son J

### 2 John 1

<sup>12</sup>I have much to write to you, but I do not want to use paper and ink. Instead, I hope to visit you and talk with you face to face, so that our joy may be complete.

### 3 John 1