

Know. Love. Serve. How We Grow Disciples

So let's begin by defining our terms. What is a disciple? A disciple is a learner. In biblical times, a disciple would attach himself to a rabbi or teacher. The disciple would focus solely on learning from that teacher. He would follow the teacher, interact with him, and do whatever he instructed. **The measure of success** for that disciple was based on how much he became like his teacher.

Luke 6:40, A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher.

Therefore, **A Christian disciple is someone who is learning to live like Jesus.**

Our goal as a church is to have frequent and meaningful encounters with Jesus, so that we begin to look like him, think like Him, and act like him. We want to help you on that journey.

Colossians 2:6, So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him.

At ACF, our number one priority is to make disciples.

We exist, in partnership with the Holy Spirit, to help people become more like Jesus.

At ACF our Discipleship Strategy was birthed out of our Mission Statement.

We make disciples by enabling people to know, love, and serve Jesus Christ. That has become our all-consuming mission.

Our strategy is illustrated here:



Discipleship is an ongoing process that results in a reflection of **God's love and grace**, and of the heart and character of Jesus.

Let's now get into the specifics of what we mean by **KNOW-LOVE-SERVE.**

LOVE

We define **love** as **learning to follow Christ with others**.

When a person discovers who God really is, he or she cannot help but be gripped by His love. John expressed it well when he said,

1 John 3:1, "How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!"

But His love was not given simply to be enjoyed; it was given in order to be given away. Therefore, once we come to **KNOW** him, we are then expected to apply that truth by **LOVING** others.

1 John 4:11, 12, "Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us."

God's love is **made complete** in us when we learn to follow Christ with others.

LOVE Actions You Can Take

Here are some **actions you can take that will help you** to **LOVE** God more:

In a world where you're trying to grow spiritually, environment is everything. You and I cannot grow in a vacuum. Just as Jesus got close with His disciples, so too must we get close to others in order to grow.

Join a Small Group These are clusters of friends on a similar spiritual journey who can speak into you and you into them so that all of you grow in Christ together.

Find an accountability partner These are friends of your gender, usually one or two people from your small group, who can really hold your feet to the fire and pull you along with greater intensity.

ACF LOVE Opportunities

Here are **some opportunities** in which ACF will help you to **LOVE** God better:

ACF Groups are small gatherings, generally 4-14 people, pursuing life transformation in community. Groups are mixed gender, life stage, married or single, or gender specific. All are striving to imitate the way the early disciples invested in each others' lives.

Acts 2:42, They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Common activities:

Learning from God's Word (the apostles' teaching)

Doing life together (fellowship)

Worship (breaking of bread and prayer)

Serving (based on "they gave to anyone who had need" Acts 2:45)

Men's and Women's Groups are gender specific, midsized studies and small groups that generally meet at one of the communities and are open to anyone of that gender.

The natural outflow of time invested in small group communities should lead to smaller huddles of deeper personal investment.

Discipleship Relationships are intimate subsets of small groups, generally 1-3 people. In these smaller clusters, we strive to follow the pattern of Jesus as He developed His disciples.

Common activities:

Under the training of one or two others of the same gender, as you follow Jesus together. The most important element of this model is the relationship – the more open and honest it is, the greater the growth will likely be.

Personally submitted to the Word of God. Discussions, applications and assignments for these relationships need to be focused on and dependent upon one's interaction with God's Word.

Held accountable to the life and character of Jesus. Members of this group need to have permission to inspect, encourage and rebuke as needed to foster Christlikeness.

Finding others with whom you can start new discipleship relationships. Disciples are expected - sooner rather than later - to themselves disciple others.

Our church has bet the farm on this one.

In summary, **loving** God means we are learning to follow Jesus with others.

It may be a dozen folks; it may be two – but the common denominator is that they are **intentional relationships** where we are learning to become more like Jesus.