

## Reaching Forward - #6 Reproducing the Discipleship Journey

[Slide 1] Dscplshp #6 Reproducing the discipleship journey in others through the power of the Holy Spirit

[Slide 2] What is a Disciple? *Described as a commitment*

[Slide 3] As a part of the Seventh-day Adventist movement, and recognizing our prophetic role in history, a disciple of Jesus Christ is one who is growing in an authentic relationship with God and others. I will commit to: REACHING FORWARD

[Slide 4] Following God through daily spiritual practices

[Slide 5] Opening myself to God by participating in regular corporate worship

[Slide 6] Returning time, talents, and resources to God

[Slide 7] Willingly serve my local church and community in the context of my spiritual gifts

[Slide 8] Anticipating spiritual growth in others by being in genuine relationships

[Slide 9] Reproducing the discipleship journey in others through the power of the Holy Spirit

[Slide 10] Put yourself in the picture; disciples ready to be active witnesses for Jesus! When we begin our journey with Jesus, we are ready to take on the world for Him.

John chapters 14-17 contain the narrative of a special time that Jesus had with His disciples. He prepares them to do a great work. Can you imagine the disciples taking notes? Jesus wanted to focus them on His salvation purposes and the cosmic significance and urgency of His mission to save.

[Slide 11] Let's read John 15:5-6 together, listening for Jesus' voice as it speaks to us.

<sup>5</sup>*"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup>If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.*

For a light to work, it takes a connection. A lamp doesn't shine unless it is plugged into power. Our connection to Jesus is vital. He is our source of power to be active, reproducing disciples.

[Slide 12] Jesus continues in John 15:7-11.

<sup>7</sup>*If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. <sup>8</sup>This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. <sup>9</sup>As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. <sup>10</sup>If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in His love. <sup>11</sup>I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.*

A truly vibrant life of discipleship is full of joy in God's purposes and is fruitful to His glory. Jesse James (not his full name) was a very little boy when I took care of him in the hospital. He was 9 months old and weighed 7 pounds 9 ounces. When he was born, he weighed 7 pounds 8 ounces. All his caregivers were excited that, this week, he had gained one ounce. You see, Jesse James had severe hydrocephalus; the placement of a shunt had not been successful. So Jesse James kept throwing up any nourishment we gave him despite all the little 'tricks' we used to

keep his food in his stomach. He would gain an ounce, and then he would lose 2 or 3. Then he would gain 2 ounces for a day or two then loose weight again.

[Slide 13] As disciples and churches, we must be healthy, growing, and developing. Ellen White describes the blessing we each receive when we are vibrant, healthy, reproducing disciples. “The effort to bless others will react in blessings upon ourselves. This was the purpose of God in giving us a part to act in the plan of redemption. He has granted men the privilege of becoming partakers of the divine nature and, in their turn, of diffusing blessings to their fellow men. This is the highest honor, the greatest joy, that it is possible for God to bestow upon men. Those who thus become participants in labors of love are brought nearest to their Creator” (*Steps to Christ*, p. 79).

[Slide 14] John 15:12,13, let’s read more of Jesus’ message to us.

<sup>12</sup>*My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.* <sup>13</sup>*Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.*

[Slide 15] This little quote describes reproducing disciples so well. “Christ is sitting for His portrait in every disciple” (*Desire of Ages*, p 827). If you want to know what a vibrant, reproducing disciple looks like, look at Jesus and His example.

[Slide 16] We are talking about a whole focus, or ‘culture’ for our lives, not a one time program. Imagine your upcoming family vacation. You plan, then pack and go. Your whole family has so much fun. Then you return home and anticipate the next vacation. I just described a trip, not a journey.

A journey takes you from a starting place to a totally new destination. It is a “passage or progress from one stage to another.” As a part of the Adventist movement we are on a journey to the heavenly kingdom and when we get there we aren’t coming back to this sinful world again!

[Slide 17] The Discipleship Journey Is Mentoring: When I meet Jesus, I want others to meet Him too. Then I join with them to help them become reproducing disciples too. This journey includes accountability to each other: a deep, authentic relationship of truly knowing each other. This accountability includes ‘tough love’; we are hand in hand together in shared spiritual growth. We pray for each other. We are authentic with our evaluation of strengths and weaknesses. This leads us to call one another to redirection as it may be needed. Our destination is the eternal kingdom, and something will be missing if we, both, don’t arrive.

[Slide 18] This is what Jesus is talking about in John 15:14,15: deep connection!

<sup>14</sup>*“You are my friends if you do what I command.* <sup>15</sup>*I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.”*

This connection with Jesus is so deep and close that, we unite in His salvation purposes.

Here is another definition of mentoring: a form of teaching that includes walking alongside the person you are teaching and inviting him or her to learn from your example. Didn't Jesus do just that?

[Slide 19] "The sinner unites his weakness to Christ's strength, his emptiness to Christ's fullness, his frailty to Christ's enduring might. Then he has the mind of Christ" (*Desire of Ages*, p 675).

[Slide 20] A Tesla coil is a type of resonant transformer circuit invented by Nikola Tesla around 1891. It is used to produce high voltage, low current, high frequency, alternating current electricity. Tesla coils produce higher current than the other source of high voltage discharges, electrostatic machines. They are so *tuned* that they resonate at the same frequency.

Jesus states an imperative, "YOU I call friends!" (v. 15). Servants have restricted status. Jesus took His disciples into His confidence. He invites us to join in His passion to reach the lost: to follow His example and be disciple makers. And to labor in the strength He will provide. We have the Pattern, Jesus Christ, and the call to walk in His footsteps.

[Slide 21] John 15:16 is Jesus' voice, <sup>16</sup> *"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name."*

[Slide 22] Did you notice the repetition of John 15:8 and 16? These verses stand out as if they were highlighted with a neon yellow highlighter.  
8 *"This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples."*  
16 *"I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit."*

This describes multiplication: fruitfulness. Reproduction is not linear; this is a CYCLE. Our connection is maintained through the Holy Spirit. We resonate at the same 'frequency' and call as Jesus did.

[Slide 23] Does this sound familiar? In Matthew 4:19 Jesus was very clear in His invitation, *"Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men!"* This is the highest calling. It is the reason for the group we call 'church.' Multiplication is part of our DNA when we fully understand and join in His salvation purposes. Our shared goal is to create disciple makers by empowering and encouraging everyone to become disciple makers for someone else. The objective is to create disciple makers, not just disciples.

[Slide 24] We, as part of the Seventh-day Adventist movement, have as a core value as part of our 'worldview,' the urgency to reach our community for Christ. We are part of a lineage of disciples that "turned their world up-side-down" for Jesus (Acts 17:6).

It begins by knowing someone, a friend from your neighborhood, or work, or at the grocery store (the possibilities are limitless). One friend at a time is introduced to Jesus: our Jesus who changes lives. This story reproduces and multiplies as each one of us lives our lives as vibrant disciples. "Snowflakes are one of nature's most fragile things, but just look at what they can do when they stick together" (Vesta Kelly).

We begin to live with and see people differently because we are on a journey to the heavenly kingdom. The neighbor with the barking dog is someone to meet and introduce to Jesus. We are certain that Jesus put us next door to them for His salvation purposes. We invest in a new friend, mentor them and invite them to be a new mission team member. Jesus is our Teacher and Guide.

[Slide 25] Seventh-day Adventism is the Gospel on adrenaline: Jesus' second coming is imminent. "The Saviour's promise to His disciples is a promise to His church to the end of time. God did not design that His wonderful plan to redeem men should achieve only insignificant results. All who will go to work, trusting not in what they themselves can do but in what God can do for and through them, will certainly realize the fulfillment of His promise" (*Desire of Ages*, p. 667).

Let's spend some time planning to mentor a new disciple. Spend 10 minutes doing the first section on the Mentoring Activity page. Then spend the next 10 minutes sharing and praying at your table. We will spend some time sharing our plans with the large group.

[Slide 26-30] You might have chosen a chorus that has become the theme song for your study time during the discipleship series or have been singing #330 "*Take My Life and Let It Be.*" Conclude with a group benediction.