Lesson 13: **Missional Disciple-making**

1. Introduction:

Fulbe is a secondary school teacher and a faithful Christian. In the course of interacting with students, he is has gotten to know many Muslims. He has many opportunities to talk with their parents when they visit the school or when he makes his rounds to the students' homes. A few of them, including two village sheiks, have expressed a deeper interest in his life and the claims of Christ. Fulbe is amazed as he has never experienced this type of openness, but he is also somewhat confused as to what to do next. He cannot imagine they would feel comfortable if he invited them to church. When he suggested his discipleship group host a meal for some Muslim families, they told him the group was for studying the Bible, not eating food. "Didn't Jesus eat with sinners?" Fulbe replied.

a. Why is it difficult for these sheiks to visit a church? What do you think of Fulbe's suggestion?

2. Read Acts 2:41-47; Matthew 10:11-13. Briefly retell the passage in your own words

3. Discussion Questions

a. Head - What does it say and mean?

1. If you had a chance to experience the community of the early church, what would you observe?

2. What was the impact of the early church's spiritual community on non-believers who experienced their interaction?

b. Heart - What is my attitude?

1. How have you experienced the kind of Christian community like the early church in Acts 2? What impact did this have on you? On unbelievers in your area??

4. How can discipleship groups get involved in missions?

Life-on-life relationship was the primary way in which Jesus made disciples. If we are going to see churches produce transformed disciples who impact the world, we must apply the disciple-making practices of Jesus to our missions outreach as well. In practical terms, we have emphasized the importance of forming discipleship groups as the primary environment for believers to grow in the local church. Similarly, this committed community is also critical to reaching out to the world.

This is for two reasons. First, disciples need the ongoing encouragement of other disciples to keep sharing the Gospel with unbelievers they know. The primary reason Christians stop evangelizing is that they aren't receiving regular equipping and encouragement from other like-minded believers to keep persevering in it. Second, non-believers are often unwilling to trust Christ and leave their current community, without having assurance that there is a new community ready to embrace them. This is especially true among resistant people where a new believer will be ostracized and even persecuted for believing in Jesus. The saying, "belonging before belief" is especially true for people from strong cultural or religious communities.

Thus, there is no way to sustain cross-cultural outreach apart from the encouragement and embrace of a discipleship community! Missional disciple-making can happen in and through every discipleship group as they engage with non-believers. Consider five practical ways that your small group can connect with non-believers:

a. IDENTIFY and meet practical needs of people you know. A practical way to display the love of Jesus is to join together as a small group in meeting the needs of people. One small group in Ethiopia collected money to help HIV patients, while another helped repair widows' homes, and another built a log bridge for a community.

b. INVEST your time, talent, and treasure in what matters to other people. One of the best ways for you to connect with non-believers is to spend time doing what other people in your community do. For example, buy a football, take it to an open area near your home, and see how many opportunities you will have to meet unbelievers. Even better, get your discipleship group involved in organizing a regular youth football match. Or find out about community events in your city and plan to get involved as a small group.

c. INVITE non-believers to a social gathering with your small group. As you get to know people in your community, invite them to your home together with a few people from your discipleship group. Plan the evening around food, family, fun and fellowship and let them experience true relationship together. Do not feel pressured to have a "spiritual moment" but rather use this event to build bridges into their lives and introduce them to your discipleship community.

d. INSTRUCT non-believers in ways in which add value to their lives. Every person can benefit by hearing practical truths from God's Word which affect their everyday lives, even if they have not yet believed in Jesus. For instance, every family needs on-going, practical training in marriage and raising families. One way to connect with unbelievers is to plan a couples' night with your small group where you invite other unbelieving couples for a night of instruction around biblical concepts in marriage.

e. INAUGURATE a new way of life by celebrating critical moments in other's lives. Everyone experiences marriage, promotions, graduation, loss of loved ones, financial hardship, etc. These critical moments provide natural opportunities to connect and develop deeper relationships with unbelievers. Find practical ways in which your discipleship group can encourage and assist them in both their accomplishments and grief.

This approach to missions is different from inviting a person to church, because it involves opening your life and others in your group for unbelievers to experience, whereas a person can become lost in a church that is large and culturally different. Life-on-life relationship goes hand-in-hand with proclamation of the Gospel, so that people both see and hear the message of Christ lived out in the discipleship community.

5. Discussion Questions

a. Hands - How can I obey?

1. What new attitudes and skills does your discipleship group need to more effectively reach out to unbelievers?

2. What could your group do to invite spiritually receptive people to experience the community life of the group?

b. Help – How are my relationships?

1. How could you invite seekers to experience your discipleship group in a way they feel comfortable and open to dialogue?

6. Memory Verse

Acts 2:47 "*And the Lord added to their numbers daily those who were being saved."*

7. Prayer

a. For ourselves and each other:

b. For those who have not believed in Jesus: