

# DISCIPLE MAKING

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A PODCAST WITH DR. JOHN TOLSON

## Episode 1: Changing America

The only way to change America is to change people. You change people, and everything changes. Very few people would argue that we need some change in the lives of people in our country. Throughout Scripture, especially in the gospels, God laid out a very clear strategy of how to change the planet. The problem is that we have not executed that plan faithfully over the years. So, this booklet is going to deal with that strategy. Very few ministries and churches, especially churches in America, are actually doing what we are talking about. I'm not trying to be critical or mean, but Jesus gave us a strategy to change the planet, so let's get with it.

So, the question is this: You are no more prepared for heaven than the moment Jesus comes into your life. So why didn't he just beam you up to heaven? Why did he leave you here? Why do you need to get so serious about the Lord and following him and allowing him to use your life? What is the motivating factor behind that? The Scripture tells us that we have a problem. In the very beginning, God created mankind (Adam and Eve) and he set them up in a perfect environment (The Garden of Eden) and everything they needed was there, including God Himself. Then one day they basically decided they wanted to run their own lives. So as a result of that, they no longer had this intimate relationship with God but were separated from Him. Scripture says that the ultimate problem that resulted from that was sin. We read in Romans 3:23 that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" and then in Romans 6:23 that "the wages of sin is death." The reason all of humanity has to die someday is that way back, years ago, these two people screwed up. And as a result of that, in our human nature all the way down through the centuries, we have an inherent resistance in our hearts and an inclination to want to run our own lives. We have offended god. That's basically what sin is. Sin is a spiritual cancer. Sin is a debt, and that debt has to be paid.

Let me just say very clearly, there is no other religion on the earth that gives an adequate answer to the problem of sin. "The wages of sin is death." How are you going to pay the debt? Either I pay my own debt, or someone comes up with a solution where someone else pays it, and pays it in such a way that it satisfies the God we have offended.

Harry Ironside, a famous teacher, preacher, and author from the early 1900s, often told the story of a young man who was a soldier in the Russian army. Because his father was a friend of Czar Nicholas I, the young man had been given the important role of paymaster each month for the soldiers in the barracks. The young man meant well, but his ability and character were not up to his responsibility. He ended up gambling away a large amount of the government's money as well as his own. Knowing that a representative of the Czar would soon check the accounts, the young man became frightened. He was in such despair over the astronomical debt he had incurred that he decided to take his own life. With a revolver on the table in front of him, he wrote on the ledger "A great debt who can pay?" and he fell asleep. Later that night, Czar Nicholas, as he often did, visited the barracks. He recognized the sleeping young man and then his eyes fell on the ledger. Realizing what had happened, he reached over and wrote one word beneath the young man's question. Then he left. The young man awoke suddenly and grabbed his gun but as he did his eyes fell on the ledger. Beneath his own words "A great debt who can pay?" he saw one word: "Nicholas." The Czar knew the whole debt and he was willing to pay it himself. Resting on the pledge of his commander, the young man fell asleep again. The next morning, a messenger came from the palace with the exact amount that he owed. Only the Czar could pay the debt, and he did.

Only Jesus could pay our debt to God, and he did. So, what's the motivating factor in allowing the Lord to work in and through your life? After all Jesus has done for you and me, there ought not to be anything we wouldn't do for him.

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