

DISCIPLE MAKING

A PODCAST WITH DR. JOHN TOLSON

Episode 28: Teaming Up to Make Disciples

My wife Punky Tolson is going to chime in for this chapter as we continue talking about making disciples.

John: At some point in your life, you've obviously made a commitment to Christ. Give me a little snapshot of that.

Punky: I officially made a commitment to Christ in high school through Young Life, but after I made that commitment, I really strayed away from the Lord. I recommitted my life in my mid-thirties and at that point my life looked very, very different.

John: As you reflect back on that first commitment in high school, is there something that would have made a difference and perhaps would have kept you from straying?

Punky: There is and it's a big part of why I do what I do now. Nobody ever came and put their arm around me and walked with me and told me how life with Jesus works. I professed my faith, and I was saved and sealed and my name was written in the Lamb's book of life, but I was a spiritual baby sitting there with my thumb in my mouth not knowing what to do next. I could not reconcile in my own mind why I still kept doing things wrong when Jesus was in my heart. It was a very slow growth process.

When we are born, we are infants, and somebody has to nurture us and take care of us. Somebody has to feed us, diaper us, change us and help us grow up and learn how to feed ourselves. When you come to Christ you are born again; you are a spiritual infant. So where is the spiritual mom or dad that then nurtures you and tells you how to pick up a little spiritual fork and knife and cut into the Word of God and understand it for yourself?

For a long time, I was in this spiritual infancy (maybe approaching toddlerhood as I began to understand some things here and there). I had people who loved me and got me to church, but there was no one intentionally adopting me, taking me under their

wing and raising me up to be solid in my faith and know how to walk as a Christian woman and how to live life on this planet for Jesus.

John: In Matthew 28:19 Jesus said, “go and make disciples of all nations” and you know I like to translate that as “go and make disciples who make disciples who make disciples...” So, what would your challenge be today to those reading and thinking about disciple-making?

Punky: If you need to grow in your faith (and we all need to grow in our faith-- there is always someplace else to grow toward), then pray and seek out someone to help you grow, to disciple you, to come alongside you-- somebody you'd pick as a spiritual mother or father. If you have been in Bible study forever or even if you've been in Bible study or church just a little while and you have a hunger and a thirst for the Word, or you've been learning something in life recently, pray and ask the Lord to send you someone to disciple-- someone who you can help grow up in the faith. You may not know a ton, and you don't have to go to seminary but what you do have combined with your life experiences and God's truth, you can invest in someone else. It will be the most enriching and fulfilling experience of your life. The big thing is the Lord commanded it because he needs fully functioning, thriving, flourishing followers of Jesus Christ and not babies who are still sucking their thumbs.

So, here's the question: Have you been discipled? Are you discipling someone else?

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