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Week 1c: Why Do We make Disciples?

To Obey Yeshua's Command: We make disciples at the command of our **Messiah**. **Yeshua's** statement in **Matthew 28:18-20** to **"make disciples"** is not an option, it is a command that we are to carry out.

We are convinced of Yeshua's Lordship: "All authority has been given to Me on heaven and earth" (Matthew 28:18). His command to **make disciples** is based on **His authority**, for **"all authority has been given to Him on heaven and on earth."** As *Ben Elohim* (the Son of God), **Messiah's authority** was inborn. Through the incarnation (**His** birth as a human into this world), **He** emptied **Himself** of all privileges, and was lifted up high as **He** gave **His** life to bear **the sin of many (Isaiah 53:11)**. Now, as our risen **King, He** has all authority as **Lord of all (Psalm 2:7-8; Isaiah 9:6)**.



We are committed to Messiah's discipleship: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, immersing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Ruach Ha'Kodesh, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:18-20a). To the degree we are convinced of **Messiah's** Lordship in our lives, to that degree we are committed to **His** discipleship, and no more. The result of discipleship is a dedicated life, as one moves from being a mere believer to a true follower of **Yeshua**, **a doer of the Word (James 1:22).** In **Yeshua's** command to **make disciples**, we see four discipleship life commitments:

> **1. Discipleship is a purpose-oriented life, "Go therefore."** As you go, wherever you go, you have an underlying purpose: you go to **make disciples**!

Whether you are next door, at work, shopping, or on vacation, you have a commission from **the Lord**: to be **Messiah's** messenger, sharing the Good News and making disciples.

2. Discipleship is an other-oriented life, "makes disciples of all nations." Our service for **ADONAI** is entirely others-focused. As we disciple people, we edify and serve them in their walk with **the Lord**. We are to reach out and **make disciples** of people from **all nations**, not showing favoritism or prejudice for any one group of people.

3. Discipleship is a Messiah-oriented life, "immersing them." Through **immersion**, we identify with **Yeshua**, united with **Him** in **His death** as we **die to sin (Romans 6:5-7)**, and are **raised** to live for **Him**. Through our lives, we represent **Him**, modeling **His** life to those we are serving.

4. Discipleship is a Scripture-oriented life, "observe all." The goal of teaching is obedience. As we **make disciples**, we teach them to obey the commandments of **God**, for these are the convictions of believers everywhere. Through discipleship, we learn to live out of obedience to **God's** Word rather than out of natural inclination. The testimonies of what **the Lord** has done in our lives come from obedience to **God's** Word, not to the world.

We are completed in Messiah's fellowship, "I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). The power for discipleship is found in our personal relationship with **Messiah. He** is **Immanuel, God with us (Isaiah 7:14)**! The relationship with **Messiah** can restore what sin has destroyed. We are never without **the Resource** to all that **God** has called us to do; the only way we can **make disciples** is through **Messiah**. **Yeshua's** fellowship will never end, **"He will never leave us or forsake us" (Hebrews 13:5b)**. Completed in **His** fellowship, we have the love of **God** poured into our hearts by **the Ruach** given to us.

To Empower Other Believers to Honor Yeshua: When a person prays and makes a decision for **Messiah**, it is merely a starting point. Discipleship reveals what the person actually prayed about. Through discipleship, we teach a person what it means to live as a believer; walking with **the Lord** as they pray, the study of **God's** Word, sharing their faith, and so on. Do not assume that people are already doing these things, as these are spiritual and not natural disciplines that are not easily implemented until they are taught.

We must move from decisions to disciples. Discipleship is about growing to become more like **Messiah** as we follow **Him**. We do not want believers to become mere members of our congregation; we want the congregation to be made up of disciples. It is possible to be a believer to be spiritually dysfunctional and not growing as **God** intended for them to grow. The same is true for a congregation. If there were a Messianic congregation on every street corner, it wouldn't make much of a difference if each of them was dysfunctional. They could not help themselves, let alone anyone else. Effective discipleship is needed for a person to become mature and functional, ready to serve in the Body of **Messiah**. Through discipleship, we mature to be like Yeshua and follow in His ways, walking in the dust of our **Rabbi**.

Faith in **Yeshua** makes you a child of **God**; discipleship is **God's** way for you to mature as **His** child. As people grow in their relationship with **the Lord** through discipleship, they are ready to move from **milk** to **solid food (Hebrews 5:14)**. Through reading and understanding His Word more and more, they gain insight in how to live faithfully for Him, honoring Him, and seeing the difference He makes in their lives.

Just as there is not salvation without faith in Yeshua, so there is no spiritual growth without discipleship. Believers are not growing unless they are properly grounded and rooted in the faith. If they do not have an actual prayer life and are not consistently in the Word, they are malnourished and unplugged. Though their knowledge of the externals may be impressive, be wise and very careful about this important matter. Do not make assumptions unless you know for sure that a person has been discipled. If you neglect to do this, you will end up with people in your congregation serving and teaching who do not share your values.

To Have a Functional, Unified Community: It is essential that discipleship be in our DNA. When a group of people are not unified, leading them can be like herding cats. The same discipleship for all members of the community brings a unity of mission and values. This type of true unity is vitally important for congregational health. Unity comes as people actually **"walk together in agreement" (Amos 3:3)**, when they have shared values. Just because a couple has the same last name doesn't mean they have unity. Likewise, simply because a group of people are part of the same community, it does not mean they have unity. Unity is not found in common personality traits or hobbies, but in sharing the most important things of life together. People will naturally move towards division unless they are taught unity through discipleship in common values.

Lack of discipleship is often the tragic cause of congregational disunity and immaturity. If you are not discipling people in your community's mission and values, beware! There are always more rams in the flock than shepherds, and without unifying your values, those who are strong-willed will end up taking over and enforcing their values on others. People are imperfect, and personalities will always clash; but through discipleship in unifying values, they will be held accountable to the fact that the primary value of love must dictate how disagreements are dealt with in the congregation.

To Protect the Flock: We must protect our flocks from unbelievers who merely want to fit in (see the book of **Jude**). These wolves will enter your community in pursuit of those who are not discipled, those who are ungrounded, who are straying from the flock. These unbelievers may appear to "fit in," knowing when to stand and when to sit down, how to hold their Bibles the right way, etc, but do not know why they are doing those things. Do not be fooled, for people like this have simply learned the lingo of the community, they are not truly saved, nor do they understand our values.