

Making disciples is my third priority

### Video Key Points:

- Yesterday (Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>), Will Gideon spoke about this affirmation at EGCC and made an important point, that to fulfill this third priority it is necessary to live out the first two priorities of Loving God and Loving Others. In our desire to serve God and be a part of sharing the gospel, it is vital that we experience spiritual transformation in our own lives that lead us to ever more love our God our Father and walk in love as Christ did.
- In this video I want to highlight a different aspect of this Affirmation. I want to think about it not just for me, but for all of us together as a church. Can we together affirm that: At EGCC making disciples is our 3<sup>rd</sup> priority. You might then ask, isn't it obvious and automatic that churches make disciples of Jesus. Well, it is possible for churches to continue and even outwardly prosper without actually producing disciples of Christ. Here are some alternative ends that churches might end up pursuing:
- One – Focusing on drawing a crowd and building up the numbers. It is easy to be content if people are willing to attend worship, especially if they are dropping a little something in the offering plate (or giving by EasyTithe nowadays). As long as the numbers are going up, then doesn't that mean the Kingdom is growing? Well, not necessarily. People may be coming but are they learning to follow Jesus as His disciple? Discipleship is not automatic and it's not easy, and for it to happen churches have to make it a priority.
- Two – Learning the Bible as an intellectual exercise but not as a way of life. Of course, Christians should study and learn the Bible and we know that meditating on the Word of God is key to spiritual growth. However, one can learn a lot about God and not really know God. We are to study the Scriptures for the purpose of obeying the word of the Lord to us. Jesus repeatedly said it is not just those who hear His teaching that are one of his disciples but those who put it into practice.
- Three – Being a friendly congregation and keeping people happy. Churches can end up basing their decisions on what will keep the peace in the congregation. This can happen in subtle ways that shift the church from its focus on making disciples.
- Now, here is the thing, if a church is doing the work of making disciples then it will get those three things as well, at least to some extent. If new disciples are being formed the church will be growing in numbers. There will be deep Bible studies and people will grow in their knowledge of the Scriptures. And Yes, a church of growing disciples will have joyful fellowship, especially as they put into practice the command to love others and learn the Biblical way of resolving conflict and disagreements. So, we can look for these things and be encouraged when they are growing in the church, but let's keep discipleship as a priority. May the Lord guide us that we may invite more people to follow Jesus and learn how to walk as His disciple.

### Questions for Understanding:

- Can you think of examples from the gospels when following Christ ran counter to the three alternative priorities mentioned above?
- Read John 6:60-71 – How does this fit as an example?
- Matthew 23:1-4 – What does it mean they sit in the seat of Moses?
- Read Luke 12:49-53 – What does Jesus mean here?
- How can a church keep the work of making disciples as a priority?

### Life Questions:

- Which of the 5 devotional days spoke most to you this week?
- I Corinthians 12:4-7 – What has the Spirit given for you to do that serves the common good within the church?
- Ephesians 2:10 – Are you fully on board with the idea that God prepared you to do good works in service to Him?

Closing in Prayer: Use one of the Devotion prayers or Pray using your own Words