

A Woman's Guide to
Discipling

*Inspiration, Advice, and Practical Tools for
Helping Others Grow*

A Woman's Guide to
Disciplining

DANA YEAKLEY

NAVPRESS 

Discipleship Inside Out™



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NavPress is the publishing ministry of The Navigators, an international Christian organization and leader in personal spiritual development. NavPress is committed to helping people grow spiritually and enjoy lives of meaning and hope through personal and group resources that are biblically rooted, culturally relevant, and highly practical.

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ISBN-13: 978-1-60006-714-3

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Printed in the United States of America

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Acknowledgments

THE CONTENT OF this workbook has been handed down from generation to generation of women. It is truly written by women for women. Because of that, I have many people to recognize and thank.

Much of the content in this workbook first came to me many years ago in the form of personal training and mentoring given to me by Deb and Lee Maschhoff.

In 2000, with the help of my administrative assistant, Ellen Susman, I compiled a workbook called *The Gentle Art of Discipling Women* for the collegiate staff of The Navigators. In it I gathered what I had learned from the Maschhoffs and my own experiences discipling women. Thank you, Ellen, for your vital help in bringing the original workbook into being.

As the positive responses to the original workbook multiplied, NavPress encouraged me to adapt and expand the content for a broader audience than just Navigator staff members. That is what you hold in your hands. In expanding the content, I drew on the hearts and experiences of many other women who disciple women: Cathy Bowman, Lori Butler, Ann Chris, Stacy Frazer, Sherry Graf, Heather Hanneman, Meaghan Hart, Kim Havenstein, Jennifer Johnson, Sue Kline, Beth Luebe, Deb Maschhoff, Gretchen Riedel, Melanie Rogers, Carol Rugg, and Ellen Susman. These women's lives demonstrate what we are aiming for in this workbook.

Props to Sue Kline, editor and lover of God and people, who helped me put into words what I really mean.

And finally, I want to thank my husband, Tom, who continues to encourage me to be all God has made me to be.

Introduction

MANY YEARS AGO, my husband, Tom, and I met a couple who lived with joy and purpose. We loved being around them and joined a group that met at their home. This group studied the Bible to discover how to live a life that was pleasing to God.

After some time in the group, Tom and I asked this couple if they would meet with us individually to help us grow in our walk with God and in our marriage. Later they told us they had been praying we would ask them to do just that!

I began meeting with Deb, the wife, and Tom began meeting with Lee, her husband. Sometimes the four of us would get together to play cards, go out for dinner, or study the Bible. No matter what we did, we enjoyed being with them. We took in much from observing their lives, listening to what they shared from the Word, and trusting God together in prayer.

That was thirty-five years ago. Looking back, nothing has been as rewarding and life-changing as those years when this couple helped us grow spiritually. Because of their faithful friendship and godly example, we too began spending time with couples younger than ourselves to help them grow in knowing God and living for Him. We were not perfect by any means, but it was a joy to share our lives, the Word, and prayer with others.

I want others—you!—to know the joy of helping other women grow in their walk with Christ. That's why I compiled this guide. I say "compiled" because most of the content did not originate with me; it was received from women who have gone before me and next to me in helping other women grow. My goal is to launch, inspire, instruct, and

give you skills for discipling others.

Chapters 1 through 3 are intended to be confidence builders. You will discover that “making disciples” (that is, helping others grow) is God’s idea. His purposes and His heart permeate the last words of Christ to His disciples, words we call the Great Commission. And because God always equips us for what He asks us to do, you’ll learn that you *can* make disciples, not because you are such a committed woman or even a capable woman but because God, through His Holy Spirit, will be with you and bring the growth in those you help.

Chapters 4 through 6 introduce you to some classic tools for helping other women grow spiritually. These tools come from The Navigators, an organization whose name is almost synonymous with discipleship. You will learn how to use these tools in the context of your own life, which will then prepare you to use them with those you disciple.

Chapters 7 through 9 will teach you skills that will help you disciple others. You will also receive the foundation you need to create your own collection of ideas and tools for helping other women grow in Christ.

Finally, in chapter 10, you will meet the Master Discippler, Jesus Christ, and receive insight and inspiration for your role as a discipler of women.

God is not looking for women who have it all together or are Bible experts. He is looking for women with available and tender hearts. He is looking for women who have a heart for Him and the faith to believe He can support them in whatever He calls them to do. Do you have a heart for God? Good, then read on!

The eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. (2 Chronicles 16:9)

SECTION ONE

The Heart of a Discipler

MANY WOMEN I talk with feel inadequate or overwhelmed when they think about discipling other women. But in the face of those inadequacies, God has provided confidence builders.

In this workbook, we begin with a look into God's heart as revealed in Jesus' life and final words. Next we'll face our fears head-on and find the strength we have in Christ. Then we'll take inventory of our spiritual journeys thus far and discover what we have to offer others.

Chapter 1: Famous Last Words

Chapter 2: "Here Am I, Lord. Send Her!"

Chapter 3: The "B" Process

Famous Last Words

Go and make disciples.

(MATTHEW 28:19)

WHEN JESUS BEGAN His ministry—a ministry that lasted only three years—He didn't start a local church as we know churches. He did not take over a synagogue and start a revolution. He didn't preach in the arenas of the Roman Empire. Instead, Jesus invited twelve men to be with Him for three years, to go everywhere He went. And that is what happened. These “disciples,” as they were called, observed His life: how He related to people, how He handled opposition and disappointment, what His priorities were. They listened as Jesus taught about God's kingdom and His ways. They noticed how Jesus showed His dependence on God the Father through prayer. In all these things, Jesus was modeling for His disciples exactly what He wanted them to become.

After His death, burial, and resurrection, Jesus appeared again to these disciples. He spent forty days with them, and then He spoke His last words to them before returning to His Father. I think we can all agree that last words are important. Jesus' last words were a command and contained His vision for reaching the world with the gospel. Not surprisingly, Jesus commanded His disciples to do what He had just spent three years doing: “Go, and as you are going, make disciples of all the nations!”

Let's look at Jesus' command as recorded by His disciple Matthew:

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped

him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore *go and make disciples* of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:16-20, emphasis added)

1. Jesus' command is to "make disciples." How would you explain to another person what a disciple is?
2. Read John 8:30-32. Those following Jesus came to believe in Him. What did Jesus invite them to do that would prove that they were His disciples?
3. What does it mean to continue in His Word? Why is this so important?
4. Read Matthew 4:18-22 and Luke 5:27-28. What invitation does Jesus give these men who became His disciples?

5. How does that invitation add clarity to your understanding of what a disciple is?

When I was a rookie disciple, I did a word search (manually!) for every use of the word disciple in the four gospels. (I encourage you to do the same, but with an online tool such as biblegateway.com.) What left the most lasting impression on me were all the stories of the disciples following Jesus here and there. Whether He was teaching, eating, healing, or walking along the road, the disciples were following along. That image of living as a disciple still shapes how I live today, nearly thirty years later. To be a disciple is to follow where He goes. It is to live each day in His company. And to make disciples is to help other women experience that same level of intimacy with their Savior.

— SUE KLINE, AGE 58, WHITE HALL, MARYLAND

6. After following Jesus and living life with Him for a period of time, the disciples realized the seriousness of the commitment required from them. In Luke 9:23-25, Jesus describes the great impact of following Him. How does His explanation help your understanding of what a disciple is?

7. A key verb in Jesus' command is *go*. In Matthew 28:19, it can be translated, "Go, and as you are going . . ." What does that phrase tell you about the nature of making disciples?

People have been obeying Jesus' command to make disciples since the day He delivered it. Here is one woman's story of the impact on her life when someone obeyed Jesus' last words:

A woman once asked me if I knew how to know Jesus better, follow Him more closely, and look at life from His viewpoint. At first I was offended. I was so prideful that I had no idea I didn't know something I needed to know. But I had noticed how this woman served the Lord, her strong understanding of the Scriptures, and her graciousness and joy. I had none of that and I wanted it.

She proceeded to help me become a disciple of Jesus Christ. Even though we were busy with our kids (I had three and she had two, all ages four and under), we met frequently at her home, on my front steps, or at a restaurant. She arranged for some college students to babysit my children so I could meet with her — can you believe that?

Since then, I've spent my life looking for other women who are hungry and do not know what a feast they can have in Christ. They are at Christ's banquet table, and it has been my privilege to show them how to eat!

— DEB MASCHHOFF, AGE 69, MISSION VIEJO, CALIFORNIA

8. How does the woman who invited Deb to grow reflect the command of Jesus in Matthew 28?

9. Think of someone in your life who has helped you learn—maybe a teacher, friend, or coach who taught you a life skill or sport or perspective that you might not have learned on your own. What did he or she do that helped you learn?

10. How did this person let you know you were special?

11. What, if any, similarities do you see between your experience and the one Deb described in her story?

In my early twenties, I also had the privilege of being helped spiritually by another woman, but I didn't immediately make the connection that perhaps God wanted me to do the same for someone else. Then one night in the early 1970s, I was attending a prayer group. We were praying over Matthew 9:37-38—that God would send out laborers into His harvest. I found I could not pray.

God was speaking to my heart, saying, “If you pray for others to be sent out as workers, you must be willing to be sent yourself.” So while others were praying, I was confessing my fear and selfishness to God. I was agreeing with Him in prayer that I would not only pray for others to be sent out into His Harvest but also go if He would send me.

What a life-changing prayer that was. I seriously contemplated what it meant for *me* to make disciples. I had many fears and “buts” in my life at the time. I was constantly tired from caring for our first baby. Where was I supposed to find the energy and time to help another woman grow? And I wasn't skilled in making disciples; how would I ever learn? But God gently led me to trust that He could not only send me but also use me.

As you think of this command from Jesus to make disciples, you may be a lot like I was, saying, “But, Lord . . .” God is not surprised by your fears, nor is He disappointed in you for hesitating. He invites you to be honest with Him. In the next chapter, we will get real with

God and ourselves about why we feel inadequate or hesitant to follow His famous last words. Don't be fearful; you're about to enter into the most exciting adventure possible with God. And He'll be right there at your side.