



## 2: Win | Pastor Joe Wittwer | September 27, 2009

### A. Fellowship Time (10-15 minutes)

1. Chitchat. Perhaps offer coffee, tea, or a cold drink with some snacks.
2. Pray (or invite someone to pray) to open the discussion.

### B. Review Time (Read the summary below to the group: 5-10 minutes)

Let's review Life Center's four guiding purposes first: **Love** God and people. **Win** our friends to Christ. **Grow** into all God wants us to be. **Send** all of us to do God's work in a broken world. Last week we discussed our first and highest purpose, which is love. The Great Commandment is to love. Our second purpose is to win our friends to Christ, which we see in Jesus' Great Commission. [Read **Matthew 28:18-20** together.] These are the last words of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew; it is His final charge to His followers. There are four verbs in the Great Commission: go, make, baptize and teach, but only one in the Greek is an imperative command—"you (implied by the imperative form) make disciples." What does it mean to make disciples? It means we help someone come to faith in Jesus and then follow Him wholeheartedly. So, there are two parts to making disciples: we call them "win and grow." When a friend believes in Jesus and prays a prayer of salvation, the job isn't over; it's just begun! We have to help them become wholehearted a follower of Jesus. We call this "grow." Everything that comes before the decision to follow Jesus, we call "win"—it's what we do to help a person come to faith in Jesus. So, all of it together—win and grow—is making disciples. It takes both. Let's start with the win piece.

#### 1. How do we win our friends to Christ?

Let's begin with some examples from the word. **John 1:41-42** says, "*The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, 'We have found the Messiah' (that is, the Christ).<sup>42</sup> And he brought him to Jesus.*" Andrew found his brother, Simon, told him what had happened to them, and brought him to Jesus. Later in the chapter: **John 1:45-46** "*Philip found Nathanael and told him, 'We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.' 'Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?' Nathanael asked. 'Come and see,' said Philip.*" Philip found his friend, Nathaniel, told him what had happened to him, and brought him to Jesus. "Come and see," he said. Later, in John 4, Jesus met a woman by a well. Her response is captured in **John 4:28-30**, "*Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, 'Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?' They came out of the town and made their way toward him.*" She found her neighbors, told them what had happened to her, and brought them to Jesus. When someone met Jesus, they found their family, friends and neighbors, told them what had happened, and brought them to Jesus. Find, tell, bring. It's natural; it's relational.

- a) **Find: Someone you love.** Notice whom they found. Andrew found his brother. Philip found his friend. The woman found her neighbors. They all reached back into their immediate network of relationships. They found people they loved. Most people come to faith in Jesus through the influence of a trusted friend or family member. Impersonal or intrusive methods rarely work; in fact, they are usually counter-productive. We need to be intentional about cultivating authentic friendships.
- b) **Tell: Them what you know.** What do you talk about with your friends? Everything. Friends talk about what matters to them, so when you build an authentic friendship, you'll have lots of opportunities to share your faith...naturally. Tell them what you know. And for most of us,

that starts with our own experience. Share the difference Jesus has made in your life.

- c) **Bring: Them to Church.** We bring people to church because Christianity is a team sport; we do it best together, not alone. The Christian faith is experienced and practiced in community. So it makes sense to let them get a taste of Christian community, see it, hear it, and feel it themselves. Many people need to belong before they can believe. **Psalm 34:8** says, "Taste and see that the Lord is good." People need to taste before they can see that they need to experience God's love and Christian faith in community; before they own it themselves. And if we do it right—if the church lives out its faith genuinely, honestly, in love it's a beautiful thing. If we do it right.

**2. We win people by demonstration as well as proclamation.** (Read **Matthew 5:13-16**)

As Christians trying to win others for Christ, we must talk the talk AND walk the walk. Some people need to actually see love in action to be moved to action themselves. We need to be moral...*and* we need to do good. James writes, "*Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world*" (**James 1:27**). Keeping yourself unpolluted is morality. Looking after orphans and widows—that's doing good. We need to do both. We need to be people of high integrity, sterling character, and good deeds, especially for the poor. We need to be Christians who love God and love people, Christians who live out our faith by doing good for the poor, the oppressed, the marginalized and the forgotten. We need to be a different kind of Christian.

**C. Life Group Questions** (select, revise, and add as desired: 20-40 minutes)

1. What comes to mind when you hear we're to make disciples?
2. Joe talked about two parts of disciple-making, one before the cross and one after. They comprise two of our four guiding purposes at Life Center. What are they? Of the two parts of discipleship, is there one that you personally feel unequipped to perform? How might you help one another prepare for and engage in discipling others?
3. Most people come to faith in Jesus through the example and encouragement of their family and/or friends. We can't live out God's call to make *new* disciples if all of our friends are already Christians, so what are some things you're doing or can do to purposefully cultivate new friendships with "pre-Christians"?
4. Why is it important to bring "pre-Christians" to church? If we see church as a place for non-believers to witness a Christian community, what should church look like? In what ways is our church a good example of genuine Christian community? Are there things we need to work on? What type of example are you exhibiting at church?

**D. Personal Application** (1-3 Minutes)

- This week, think back to the list of ways folks brainstormed for reaching out to non-believers...block parties, potlucks, game nights, soon perhaps a snow-shoveling party! Put one of these or your ideas to action this week by planning an event and inviting new friends.
- If you'd like to hear more on the Gospel story and the find-tell-bring approach, go online to the Life Center web site and listen to "The Big Story," Joe's series from a year ago (or pick up a CD at the info center).
- Start or continue reading *The Hole in Our Gospel*—there's a reading plan to prepare for the series in this week's bulletin.

**E. Prayer Time** (As a whole group or subgroups of 3-4: 10-15 Minutes)

- Pray that God will help you build genuine relationships with pre-Christians, and that He will help you with all the parts of find-tell-bring with those friends.
- Pray that you'll take loving actions this week in obedience to demonstrate God's love to others.
- Bring praises and requests to God that came up during your discussion.