Introduction

The American Church in Crisis by David T. Olson

On an average weekend, 17.5% of the population attends a Christian Church.

- Evangelical 9.1%
- Mainline Protestant 3.0%
- Catholic 5.3%

By 2020 the projected population attending a Christian Church each weekend will be 14.7%.

- Evangelical 8.5%
- Mainline 2.1%
- Catholic 4.0%

There are several reasons for the decline.

- The loss of the authority of Scripture.
- The clergy abuse scandals.
- Christians not living like Christians.
Sixty years ago, A W Tozer wrote:

“Our most pressing obligation today is to do all in our power to obtain a revival that will result in a reformed, revitalized, purified church. It is of far greater importance that we have better Christians than we have more of them.”

John Stott said: “The problem is growth without depth. There has not been sufficient growth in discipleship that is comparable to the growth in numbers. We need to go beyond evangelism.”

Most professing Christians don’t understand what it means to be a disciple.
Most churches don’t have a process to make disciples.

I. WHAT IS A DISCIPLE?

A disciple is a learner or follower.

We are followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

“Follow my example as I follow the example of Christ.” I Corinthians 11:1

“Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.” I John 2:6

The goal of our faith is to become mature, complete, fully devoted followers of Jesus.

“Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.” Philippians 3:12
According to Matthew 22:34-40,
- A disciple loves God with all his heart.
- A disciple loves people.

In this series called r12 discipleship, we will see that a disciple is:
- Surrendered to God – Romans 12:1
- Separated from the world – verse 2
- Sober in self-assessment – verses 3-8
- Serving in love – verses 9-13
- Supernaturally responding to evil with good – verses 14-21

Jesus said, “I am the vine and you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit, apart from me you can do nothing.” John 15:5

What kind of fruit is Jesus talking about?
- Fruit in evangelism
- Fruit in ministry
- Fruit in our personal life – Galatians 5:22-23

“I have told you these things so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.” John 15:11

Do you want to experience his love and his joy?
II. HOW CAN I GROW AS A DISCIPLE?

Jesus had a process for intentional discipleship.

“He appointed 12 – designating them apostles – that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach.” Mark 3:14

At Lakes Free, we have a discipleship path for our church.

The Discipleship Journey At Lakes Free

Exploring Christ
- "I believe in God, but I am not sure about Christ. My faith is not a significant part of my life."
  - Acts 17:24-28
  - John 13:28
  - If this is you...
  - Ask intentionally
  - Tracking the journey or similar level group

Growing in Christ
- "I believe in Jesus and I am working on what it means to know and follow him."
  - Proverbs 3:5-6
  - John 15:5-8
  - 2 Timothy 1:13-14
  - If this is you...
  - Connect with an adult
  - Join a small group like Discipleship Explored
  - Explore opportunities to serve using your spiritual gifts

Close to Christ
- "Jesus is an important part of my life, and I depend on him daily for guidance and seek to live for him."
  - John 15:5
  - Ephesians 5:1-16
  - If this is you...
  - Cultivate the spiritual disciplines in your life
  - Explore opportunities to serve using your spiritual gifts

Christ Centered
- "My relationship with Jesus is the most important relationship in my life, and it guides everything I do."
  - Galatians 2:20
  - Philippians 3:17-18
  - If this is you...
  - Seek opportunities to disciple others
  - Use your spiritual gifts to contribute to the fulfillment of the Great Commission

We're all on a journey as followers of Christ. The goal is to grow closer to Him and to bring glory to His name. We do this as we become more like Christ in our own lives and as we seek to share the good news of Jesus with others.

Conclusion

Where are you at in your journey of faith?
What is the next step for you?
Where will you use your gifts in ministry?