

INTRODUCTION

BECOMING A  
DISCIPLE-  
MAKER



DEVELOP SPIRITUAL GROWTH SKILLS  
AND HELP OTHERS TO DO THE SAME

BILLIE HANKS, JR.  
*with*  
RANDY CRAIG

BECOMING A  
DISCIPLE-  
MAKER

*Becoming A Disciple-Maker Introduction*

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# INTRODUCTION

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“...go make disciples of all nations...”  
(Matthew 28:19)

Welcome to one of Christianity’s most rewarding experiences. This course’s unique relational format is designed to implement one-to-one, life-to-life disciple-making in today’s churches. Its instruction prepares participants for an inspiring journey of personal spiritual growth and ministry. Each weekly session will strengthen your usefulness in the Kingdom as you acquire new ministry skills. Because life-to-life training is now being emphasized in churches worldwide, you can look forward to both using and sharing everything you learn during this course’s highly motivational instruction. Its interactive methodology produces new vision and provides spiritual training for a lifestyle of New Testament disciple-making.

***A Personal Word from Billie Hanks Jr. –***

Disciple-making refers to a healthy biblical relationship in which a more mature Christian spends quality time with a younger believer, showing him or her how to walk by faith, develop godly character, and gain proficiency in ministry skills. When personal training is combined with traditional small group teaching, highly accelerated spiritual growth takes place naturally, just as it did in the early Christian community.

*It’s important for you to first refine your own spiritual disciplines. Then you will be prepared to transfer those skills to others. The first few weeks of this instruction will focus on that preparation.*

The life-to-life ministry of a Christian disciple-maker employs the biblical methodology of spiritual multiplication described in 2 Timothy 2:2. The apostle Paul wrote, “*And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.*” The process of entrusting biblical teachings to others enables spiritual growth and personal witness to multiply naturally.

*This course’s mission is to help churches train disciple-makers to personally befriend and equip new church members with the needed spiritual skills to enjoy a lifetime of effective ministry.*

### ***Why New Testament Disciple-Making Is Vitaly Important –***

New believers deserve far more than a handshake when they join any Christian church. They need a Christ-centered friendship! This requires having believers who are prepared to walk with them while investing in their lives. Through such spiritual friendships, your church’s new members will learn how to grow, use their spiritual gifts, and feel welcome in the church. To assist with this ministry, you will be equipped to personally disciple new members and help them develop a network of spiritually motivated Christian friends.

In addition to providing spiritual fellowship, you will answer new members’ questions and become their personal prayer partner. Through this relational ministry, every person discipled will be encouraged to join a Bible-study group and faithfully participate in worship. This investment of time and spiritual influence is based on instructive verses like Proverbs 13:20a: “*He who walks with wise men will be wise...*” Experience has demonstrated that accelerated Christian growth takes place naturally in the context of a meaningful spiritual relationship with a more mature fellow believer.

### ***Intentionality –***

Many churches have no intentional process for personal *training* designed to successfully assimilate new members. Consequently, pastors are merely left to *hope* their church’s new members will find dedicated Christians to disciple them. This frequent but often unrecog-

nized omission leaves their “back doors” wide open! In contrast, many churches like yours are now providing a long-term disciple-making process because they want to welcome, encourage, and equip their new members. This is the underlying reason your pastor and church staff have adopted this life-changing course of instruction. Both the Scriptures and the concepts you’ll receive will help you prepare future generations of disciple-makers for their ministries.

The Lord clearly revealed His deep personal concern about the special needs of new Christians. For example, He asked, “*Simon son of John, do you love me...?*” When Simon Peter answered, “*Yes, Lord*” the Lord replied, “*Tend my lambs.*” (John 21:15) Our Good Shepherd made it perfectly clear that investing in new believers’ lives unmistakably demonstrates our love for God.

### ***Christian Witness –***

For years, churches have overlooked their most valuable asset for fulfilling their assigned mission. Ironically, this neglected spiritual resource is their own membership’s newest believers. Why are these fledgling Christians often so effective in terms of outreach? They are typically overflowing with inner joy and still share natural *relational bridges* with non-Christian family members and friends. Potentially, each one can learn to testify spontaneously. You will soon be walking alongside these new Christians, showing them how to respond to daily witnessing opportunities. Through your example, many will learn to share their faith as a lifestyle and learn how to personally encourage and equip others. This simple life-to-life discipling process is the way spiritual multiplication begins and grows in a healthy church environment.

### ***New Insight –***

Increasingly, today’s pastors are realizing the importance of providing good examples for new church members to follow. Christian educators also acknowledge that although disciple-making has long been neglected, it’s a vital part of a healthy church’s ministry. In past decades, a wide variety of new-member classes have been conducted to help churches close their “back doors.” However, it is generally acknowledged that our serious global-attrition problem still exists.

This long-standing condition has confirmed that reliance on a small-group approach for effective new-member assimilation has proved inadequate. Extensive field testing in numerous countries has revealed that the most natural and successful method of new-member assimilation is simply Christ-centered friendships. This course focuses on the observable reasons a relational methodology has proved so reliable whenever it has been practiced through the centuries.

### ***Friendship Factor –***

Studies show that feeling connected is highly important to new church members. They desire meaningful Christian friendships. Without those bonding relationships, over time, they tend to exit unnoticed through their churches' "back doors." This is one reason why *Becoming A Disciple-Maker* has been developed. It helps create a sustained environment of enjoyable fellowship. This warm spiritual atmosphere produces contentment and increased maturity. Because your ministry assignment is to provide immediate and long-term spiritual growth for new members, you will meet a strategic ministry need. Without your investment of time and encouragement, a significant percentage of your church's new believers and other new members will predictably fail to mature. As a result, many of them will never learn how to effectively share their faith. This simple but often repeated pattern of neglect is why so many new Christians gradually become discouraged and inactive. Looking back, few of them will ever comprehend why their church experience was so unfulfilling. They will live with mixed feelings of guilt and frustration, having once tasted the truth and liking it, but not learning to grow. Sadly, this failure describes the ongoing observable pattern of many new Christians worldwide.

### ***Individual Care –***

Because new Christians enter the Lord's churches as newborn believers, they must be treated like lambs. Through *Becoming A Disciple-Maker's* relational ministry of personal follow-up, needed spiritual nurture is immediately available. Personal spiritual encouragement is provided until each new member is growing consistently, sharing his or her faith naturally, and successfully equipping others. The Bible describes this loving spirit of personalized care as it was first experienced in the early church. Paul wrote, "*We proved to be gentle*

*among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children.”*  
(1 Thessalonians 2:7)

### ***Freedom of Expression –***

Through personal friendship, an environment of genuine openness steadily develops in disciple-making churches. As time passes, their patient, relational approach to new-member assimilation allows for sensitive subjects to be addressed. As needed, relational ministry provides the opportunity for life’s predictable trials and challenges to be privately discussed in the light of scriptural teaching. As a result, positive spiritual progress typically takes place in the lives of those equipped. You will observe this growing new spiritual maturity as you meet with your trainees. The Bible summarizes this wonderful experience of transformation: *“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.”* (2 Corinthians 5:17)

### ***Spiritual Growth –***

You will be prepared for your future ministry and function as a spiritual role model. Philippians 4:9 says, *“Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice, and the God of peace will be with you.”* This verse inspires us to focus on our own spiritual development as we seek to be a good example to others. This spiritual apprenticeship process is based on the timeless biblical model described by King Solomon:

*“Iron sharpens iron,  
So one man sharpens another.”* (Proverbs 27:17)

Scripture’s relational methodology is the dependable path to continued spiritual development. *Becoming A Disciple-Maker’s* life-to-life training follows that historical pattern. Its rewarding ministry helps equip new church members to *“...grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.”* (2 Peter 3:18)

### ***Flexible Schedule –***

This course’s customized format makes it easy to reschedule a meeting if you or your new member are unavoidably detained. Because of



this flexibility, important instruction is never missed. Another secret behind the effectiveness of this equipping process is its focus on consistency. The weekly assignments provide for quality time to be spent together in prayer, Bible study, fellowship, and ministry-building activities. The Scriptures describe this relational aspect of the Lord's leadership style by reminding us that, "*And He appointed twelve, so that they would be with Him and that He could send them out to preach.*" (Mark 3:14) His personal association with the Twelve was at the very core of His ministry.

### ***Balanced Ministry –***

Pause for a moment to visualize a magnificent grand piano. Next, ask yourself, Why does it have three legs? Would you agree that each leg performs an equally important physical function? Without each of its legs doing their part, the instrument would be unable to fulfill its musical purpose. Just as a grand piano needs all three of its legs, a church needs the use of all three of its New Testament methods of communication: *preaching, teaching, and training*. Today, most churches are blessed with good preaching and teaching, but few have a biblically based ministry of training. In many cases, this third New Testament feature of an effective ministry is either neglected or totally missing.

### ***Spiritual Multiplication –***

For a church's ministry to be robust and reach its full potential, the transition from *spiritual addition* to *spiritual multiplication* must take place. Multiplication is the powerful spiritual principle by which the church was called to carry out the Great Commission. "*Other seeds fell into the good soil, and as they grew up and increased, they yielded a crop and produced thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold.*" (Mark 4:8) However, for this first-century methodology to experience church wide acceptance, our current generation of Christians must be helped to comprehend its importance. The world's spiritual harvest fields can only be reaped through our participation in personal disciple-making. When the Lord's highly committed church members faithfully apply this ministry pattern, over time, any city, state, or nation can be evangelized. The first-century church's example of disciple-making was so natural, transferable, and achievable that any congregation can experience it! This dynamic process simply requires an understanding of

verses like 2 Timothy 2:2, plus the resolute decision to equip enough disciple-makers to individually equip every new church member to grow, share their faith, and multiply spiritually.

### ***Closing the Church's "Back Door" –***

Many concerned Christian leaders are now analyzing the alarming attrition rate within their own denominations. Through their personal experience, they are acutely aware that today's new believers are facing a wide range of worldly temptations and distractions. They know the church's enemy can effectively prey on new members' primary areas of vulnerability to erode their spiritual vitality. The Lord's parable of the seed graphically illustrates this unchanging reality: "*Other seed fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked it, and it yielded no crop.*" (Mark 4:7) This also demonstrates how these negative spiritual influences can impact any Christian's personal walk and witness. Given these circumstances, our first line of responsibility is to carefully guide and protect all new believers.

### ***Becoming A Disciple-Maker's Two Semesters –***

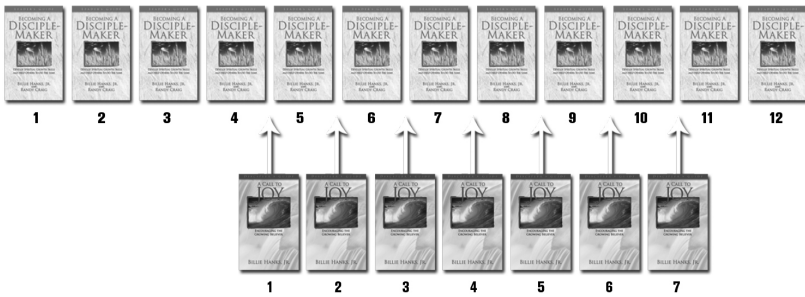
In order to become a *Certified Disciple-Maker*, each student must complete both semesters. The following graphic explains the process:

#### ***Semester One –***

Includes 12 weeks of small group teaching using *Becoming A Disciple-Maker* along with 7 weeks of one-to-one training in *A Call to Joy*.

At the conclusion of the fourth *Becoming A Disciple-Maker* small group session, each student will continue meeting weekly as a group for *teaching*, but will also pair up with a friend in the class (men with men and women with women) and meet one-to-one for *A Call to Joy training* on another day of the week. This can be done over coffee or tea, over a meal, at any mutually convenient location. Usually, only 1½ hours are needed.

***Becoming A Disciple-Maker* small group teaching**



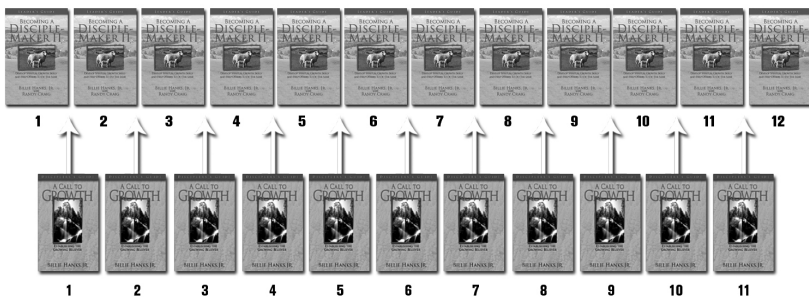
***A Call to Joy* one-to-one training**

***Semester Two –***

Includes 12 weeks of small group teaching based on *The Master Plan of Evangelism* along with 11 weeks of one-to-one training in *A Call to Growth*.

At the conclusion of the first *Becoming A Disciple-Maker II* small group session, each student will continue meeting together as a group for *teaching*, but will also continue meeting one-to-one for *A Call to Growth* training on another day of the week.

***The Becoming A Disciple-Maker* small group teaching**



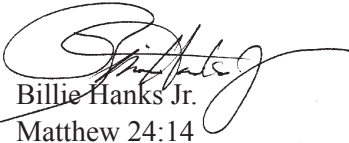
***A Call to Growth* one-to-one training**

***A Worldwide Impact –***

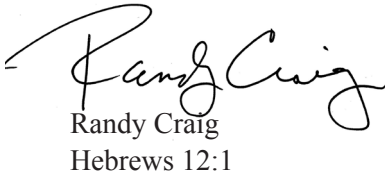
As Christianity restores the early church’s long-neglected methodology of learning by observation, a dynamic new generation of witnesses is being prepared for service. Luke 10:2 tells us that “*The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.*” Therefore, we are instructed to

ask the Lord to, “*send out workers into His harvest field.*” The global need for equipped workers has never been greater. Due to the sheer number of unreached people, Christians of every country are being led to rediscover how to make disciples and multiply spiritually. Your ministry is therefore greatly needed. May you catch the vision for a lifestyle of relational ministry and carry out your strategic personal role in fulfilling the Great Commission!

In that prayer,



Billie Hanks Jr.  
Matthew 24:14



Randy Craig  
Hebrews 12:1

