

LESSON 12

Foundations Curriculum

Jesus as Our Reference and Model Worker

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Introduction

Jesus as Our Reference and Model Worker

In this twelfth lesson, we will study what Jesus did and how He did it to choose and form His disciples. We will discuss how the work of God must be carried out according to His directions. We will observe that Jesus worked in levels to form His disciples. How did He do this in practice?

1) Can We Do Things Differently from What Jesus Did?

For many people, the work is nothing more than just another teaching method or practice

Many brothers believe there are various ways to do the work of God. They believe some can do it one way; others, another way. Some do “discipleship,” others hold large meetings; some do personal evangelism, others do mass evangelism. Some engage in spiritual warfare; others, in Bible studies. Still others believe the work of God should be done through a combination of all of the above.

Those who make such claims see nothing beyond methods. This is the problem with so-called “discipleship.” For many people, it is nothing more than just another teaching method or practice.

The method of discipleship generally consists of gathering some brothers and passing on to them the teaching of some portion of the Scriptures. However, it is worth reflecting that Jesus did not command us to do “discipleship.” He commanded us to make disciples — to generate and form lives. And this is not a disposable method; it is an unquestionable principle of the work of God.

There are more than two thousand years of dust over Jesus as a worker. We must wipe away all that dust in order to look to the Author and Finisher of our faith.

The way Jesus operated and His strategy have long been regarded as outdated. What has changed? Technology? Fashion?

It is important to observe that man remains the same. His problem remains independence — the ungoverned life — from God.

Given this, it is worth asking: can we do things differently from what Jesus did? The answer is: of course not!

One of the problems we face is that we do not understand that “WHAT GOD WANTS AND HOW HE WANTS IT” is absolute!

What does God want? A family of many children who resemble Jesus (Romans 8:29). Everyone affirms this. Everyone agrees on this point. But when we ask “HOW DOES GOD WANT THIS?”, many answers arise and generate confusion and division.

It is correct to affirm, however, that there is only one answer to this question, and it is: JESUS.

A PRINCIPLE:

Jesus is our one and only point of reference and model worker!

2) The Construction of the Tabernacle

Jesus did not command us to do “discipleship.” He commanded us to make disciples

When we look at the construction of the Tabernacle — which was temporary and a shadow of what was to come — God chose a man who was fully equipped to build it: Moses. He had been trained in all the wisdom of Egypt and had knowledge of engineering, architecture, and knew how to build palaces, pyramids, and the like.

As the biblical text records: “And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds” (Acts 7:22).

In the construction of the Tabernacle, two things stand out from the start:

- 01 God asks nothing of Moses, despite his being tremendously qualified for the task at hand.
- 02 Moses does not dare to offer an opinion on God’s work. Perhaps Moses had understood that the work belonged to God and not to him.

For the construction of something temporary — which was a shadow of what was to come — God gave Moses three things:

- 01 Clear instructions (Exodus 25:1 to 40:38): it is one of the most repetitive readings in all of Scripture — speaking to Moses, speaking to the people, repeating it as they were building. God was meticulous in commanding the construction of the Tabernacle, establishing every utensil, down to the very pegs that would be used.
- 02 A spirit of wisdom (Exodus 31:1–6): He equipped them to carry out those instructions.
- 03 A model (Exodus 25:9 and 26:30) with clear instructions, through which an image was gradually being formed in Moses’s mind; but God wanted to ensure that His work would be exactly as He desired. So He showed him the pattern.

If God gave such detailed care to building something temporary — a shadow of what was to come — surely, in order to build the church, the Bride of the Lamb, God has given clear instructions, a spirit of wisdom, and shown us a model. Of course He has!

We have received clear instructions concerning the apostolic work. He poured out His Holy Spirit upon all flesh and gave us Jesus as our reference and model worker.

3) How Did Jesus Do the Work?

He preached the Gospel of the Kingdom and made disciples

First: Jesus preached the Gospel of the Kingdom. The seed was the Word of the Kingdom. He sowed in different soils, but the seed was always the same.

“When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside.”

Matthew 13:19 (NKJV)

In Acts 2, in six verses, the abundance of the church’s life in the beginning can be seen clearly expressed.

“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as

anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”

Acts 2:42–47 (NKJV)

Second: He built relationships. Jesus built relationships in order to then send them out to preach (Mark 3:14–15): *“He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons.”*

Note what the text says: He appointed them to be with Him first. Then, to send them out to preach and cast out demons. The work that Jesus did was one of relationship — of forming men to continue what He had done and taught.

Matthew 28:18–20 declares: *“...teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”*

First, Jesus related intensely with His disciples, and then He sent them out two by two to preach: the twelve two by two, the seventy two by two; two went to prepare the Last Supper, two went to Emmaus, two went up to the temple to pray, two went to Samaria, two were set apart in Antioch — and even to fetch a donkey, two went.

Through all of this, He declared His authority. He formed men to carry on what He had taught and preached.

Was this coincidence, or was it a strategy of Jesus? Nothing was accidental. Here there is a teaching and a practice of Jesus that we must apply to every joint and ligament!

Third: Jesus worked in levels. Jesus chose His disciples in prayer before God. He spent the night in prayer. He did not choose them out of personal preference or affinity.

“Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles.”

Luke 6:12–13 (NKJV)

Moreover, He showed no partiality — which typically arises from social status, race, or personal affinities. He did not choose them by affinity; after all, among the twelve there was every kind of person: simple and uneducated men, fishermen, tax collectors (a class despised by the Jews), and Zealots (nationalists, who were capable of resorting to violence).

In Matthew 9:35–38, we see that Jesus had compassion on the multitudes, but what does He do in response?

“Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, ‘The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.’”

Matthew 9:35–38 (NKJV)

Jesus devoted Himself to twelve men: forming and instructing His disciples. A great work is the fruit of a small work tended with faithfulness.

He knew what to give to the multitudes, to the seventy, to the twelve, and to the three (Peter, James, and John). He worked with simplicity, intensity, continuity, and sacrifice to form His disciples.

Imitating Him as a model and holding Him as our reference of a worker must be our pursuit. Jesus was, is, and always will be our reference and model worker. What He did, we must do!

A Quote from Ivan Baker for Reflection:

“The ideal church is one where we say what Jesus said, do all that Jesus did, and say nothing that Jesus did not say, nor do what Jesus did not do. It is the things we say that Jesus did not say and the things we do that Jesus did not do that bring harm and destroy the church!”

CONCLUSION

In this twelfth lesson of the Foundations Curriculum, we learned that the great work Jesus accomplished followed clear instructions from God the Father: preaching to the multitudes, building relationships with the chosen men — His disciples — and causing those disciples to relate to one another as well. Jesus has become our principal model and reference. Therefore, His work cannot be done “any old way” or through “our own abilities.” To follow Jesus means to have a relationship with Him, to follow His clear directions, and to imitate Him in all things. In this way, His work can be correctly expanded.

CONSIDER CAREFULLY

- 01** What did God give Moses to build the Tabernacle?
- 02** What did God give us for the building of the church?
- 03** Is God’s “how” absolute? What is it?
- 04** Are you devoting yourself to making disciples as Jesus did?

“having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.”

Ephesians 2:20 (NKJV)

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