

Discipling: Daily Devotional Bible Studies (Chapter 3&4)

Day 1: The Call to Make Disciples

Scripture Reading: Matthew 28:18–20 (ESV)

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Context and Commentary: Matthew 28:18–20, known as the Great Commission, is Jesus’ final instruction to His disciples, given post-resurrection (circa AD 30) on a Galilean mountain. The phrase “all authority” echoes Daniel 7:14, affirming Jesus’ messianic lordship over creation, grounding the mission’s scope. The imperative “make disciples” (matheteusate) is the central command, with “go,” “baptizing,” and “teaching” as participles describing how to fulfill it. “All nations” expands the mission beyond Israel, fulfilling Genesis 12:3, while baptism in the triune name signifies covenantal inclusion into God’s people. Teaching “all that I have commanded” implies holistic obedience, rooted in Jesus’ teachings. The promise “I am with you always” recalls God’s presence in the Old Testament (e.g., Ex. 3:12), ensuring success. Dever connects this to discipling as God’s strategy for kingdom growth (p. 2).

Illustration: A mustard seed grows into a tree sheltering birds (Matt. 13:31–32, cited on p. 35), like a discipling conversation blossoming into eternal fruit.

Reflection: In Chapter 3, Dever argues that Jesus’ command to make disciples challenges worldly notions of kingdom-building through power or philosophy (p. 2). Discipling involves deliberate spiritual good—teaching and baptizing—aimed at presenting people mature in Christ on the Last Day (p. 2). The mustard seed parable (p. 2) underscores that small acts, like inviting a friend to study Scripture, yield significant impact. Dever’s eternal perspective encourages us to invest in relationships despite slow results, trusting Jesus’ promise to be with us. This aligns with the church’s mission to nurture disciples through baptism and teaching, fostering obedience to Christ’s commands within a community of faith.

Christological Point: Jesus’ authority ensures discipling’s success, and His presence empowers believers.

Ecclesiological Focus: The local church is the primary context for the Great Commission. Believer’s baptism (v. 19) signifies personal faith and entry into a covenant community of regenerate members, where discipling occurs through teaching and accountability (p. 4), led by elders.

Bonhoeffer Quote: “When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die.” (*The Cost of Discipleship*, 1937)

Exegetical Questions:

1. How does “all authority” (v. 18) define the mission’s scope?
2. What does “teaching them to observe” (v. 20) imply for discipling? **Theological Questions:**
3. How does the Great Commission reveal God’s global plan?
4. Why does God use relationships for kingdom growth?

Application Questions:

5. Who in your church could you disciple, and what's a first step?
6. How can you prioritize eternal goals in church relationships?

Daily Assignment: Identify a church member to disciple. Pray for them and contact them to schedule a faith-focused meeting.

Day 2: Initiating with Humility

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 9:7–10 (ESV)

Whoever corrects a scoffer gets himself abuse, and he who reproves a wicked man incurs injury. Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you; reprove a wise man, and he will love you. Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach a righteous man, and he will increase in learning. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.

Context and Commentary: Proverbs 9:7–10, part of the wisdom literature attributed to Solomon, contrasts the responses of the scoffer and the wise to correction and instruction. Written in the context of Israel’s monarchy (circa 950 BC), Proverbs aims to guide covenantal living, with wisdom personified as a host (9:1–6). The “scoffer” (lêts) rejects reproof, reflecting a hardened heart (cf. Prov. 1:22), while the “wise man” embraces it, growing in understanding. Verse 10 grounds wisdom in “the fear of the Lord,” echoing Proverbs 1:7 and linking it to covenantal relationship with God. Hermeneutically, this passage underscores the necessity of teachability for spiritual growth, a principle Dever applies to selecting disciples (p. 3). The text’s focus on humility aligns with Jesus’ example of initiating relationships with sinners.

Illustration: A coach picks eager learners over resistant players, as Dever advises discipling those open to counsel (p. 3).

Reflection: In Chapter 3, Dever describes discipling as initiating relationships with humility, noting the awkwardness of choosing teachable individuals, as seen in Proverbs’ wise son who welcomes instruction (p. 3). He emphasizes that disciplers must confess weaknesses, showing justification comes from Christ, not self (p. 3–4). Dever’s insight that discipling isn’t about being a “Socrates-like” sage but living transparently (p. 3) frees us to initiate despite imperfections. This humility fosters authentic relationships within the church, where members model Christ’s dependence. Dever’s call to discern teachable hearts (p. 3) challenges us to prayerfully select those open to growth, building a community where mutual openness drives spiritual maturity.

Christological Point: Jesus humbly initiated with sinners (e.g., Levi, Mark 2:14), modeling transparent discipling.

Ecclesiological Focus: The church is a voluntary community of regenerate believers where discipling thrives through mutual accountability. Initiating within the congregation (p. 4) supports the emphasis on members committed to Christ, fostering teachability.

Bonhoeffer Quote: “The first service one owes to others in the community involves listening to them.” (*Life Together*, 1939) **Exegetical Questions:**

1. How does v. 9 distinguish the “wise” from the “righteous” in accepting teaching?
2. Why is “fear of the Lord” (v. 10) foundational for wisdom? **Theological Questions:**
3. Why does God require humility in discipling?
4. How does teachability reflect sanctification?

Application Questions:

5. How can you model humility in a church discipling relationship?
6. Who in your church is teachable, and how can you approach them?

Daily Assignment: Reflect on a time you received correction in church. Journal how it grew your faith, and pray for humility to initiate discipling with a teachable member.

Day 3: Discipling Through Evangelism

Scripture Reading: Acts 8:26–40 (ESV)

Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” This is a desert place. And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. And the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over and join this chariot.” So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” And he said, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this: “Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he opens not his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth.” And the eunuch said to Philip, “About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?” Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?” And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus, and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

Context and Commentary: Acts 8:26–40 depicts Philip’s Spirit-led encounter with an Ethiopian eunuch, illustrating the gospel’s spread beyond Israel (cf. Acts 1:8). The eunuch, a God-fearing Gentile, is reading Isaiah 53, which points to the Suffering Servant, fulfilled in Jesus. Philip’s explanation of the passage as the “good news about Jesus” (v. 35) shows evangelism’s Christocentric focus. The eunuch’s baptism (v. 38) signifies faith and incorporation into God’s people, fulfilling Old Testament promises of Gentile inclusion (Isa. 56:3–8). The Spirit’s guidance (vv. 26, 29) underscores divine initiative in salvation. Hermeneutically, this passage connects evangelism to discipling, as conversion leads to covenantal commitment. Dever links this to discipling’s evangelistic foundation (p. 4).

Illustration: A guide leads a lost traveler to safety, as Philip’s evangelism begins the eunuch’s discipleship, culminating in baptism (p. 4).

Reflection: In Chapter 3, Dever argues that discipling often starts with evangelism, as seen in Philip’s ministry, calling non-Christians to repentance and faith, leading to baptism and church membership (p. 4). He views this as a model for all believers, emphasizing that sharing the gospel initiates a lifelong journey of following Jesus. Dever’s focus on baptism as entry into the church (p. 4) highlights the importance of integrating converts into a community for ongoing discipling. He challenges us to trust God’s Spirit in evangelism, noting that discipling extends beyond conversion to nurture new believers in the church, where they learn obedience to Christ. This process strengthens the church’s mission to proclaim and disciple.

Christological Point: Jesus, the Suffering Servant (Isa. 53, v. 32–35), is evangelism’s heart and discipling’s goal.

Ecclesiological Focus: The church emphasizes believer’s baptism as a public faith profession

and entry into the community (p. 4). Evangelism incorporates converts into a congregation where discipling continues through teaching and fellowship, reflecting the covenant community of believers.

Bonhoeffer Quote: “The Church is the Church only when it exists for others.” (*Letters and Papers from Prison*, 1944) **Exegetical Questions:**

1. How does the Spirit’s guidance (v. 29) shape Philip’s evangelism?
2. What does the eunuch’s baptism (v. 38) signify about conversion? **Theological Questions:**
3. How does evangelism initiate discipling?
4. Why does God use human witnesses?

Application Questions:

5. Who outside your church needs the gospel, and how can you share it?
6. How can your church support your evangelism?

Daily Assignment: List three non-Christians you know. Pray for a chance to share the gospel with one, and ask a church member to pray for boldness.

Day 4: Teaching God's Word

Scripture Reading: Colossians 3:16–17 (ESV)

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Context and Commentary: Colossians 3:16–17, part of Paul's letter to the Colossian church (circa AD 60–62), urges believers to let Christ's word shape their community life. The "word of Christ" likely refers to Jesus' teachings and the gospel, which should "dwell richly" (enoikeō plousiōs) among them, indicating deep, pervasive influence. The corporate nature of "teaching and admonishing one another" reflects mutual edification, while "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs" suggests worship as a teaching tool. Verse 17 emphasizes living for Jesus' glory. Hermeneutically, this passage underscores Scripture's centrality in discipling, fostering a community where the gospel transforms all actions. Dever ties this to discipling through teaching God's Word (p. 5).

Illustration: A family shares stories at dinner, like Dever's call for conversations about sermons or God's work (p. 6).

Reflection: In Chapter 3, Dever asserts that teaching is discipling's core, encompassing all of Jesus' teachings and Scripture (p. 5). He describes his church's expository preaching, alternating between Testaments, and a multi-year curriculum to equip members for teaching (p. 5–6). Dever encourages spiritually meaningful conversations, like discussing sermons or personal growth, to foster mutual edification (p. 6). This builds a church where Scripture shapes interactions, as Colossians envisions. Dever's emphasis on corporate and interpersonal teaching challenges us to prioritize God's Word in discipling, whether in small groups or casual talks, ensuring the church equips believers to teach one another.

Christological Point: The "word of Christ" (v. 16) is Jesus' teachings and the gospel, discipling's focus.

Ecclesiological Focus: The church is the primary teaching context, where elders preach the Word and equip members to teach one another (p. 5). This reflects expository preaching and the priesthood of believers, enabling mutual edification through Scripture.

Bonhoeffer Quote: "The Word of God is the source of all life in the Christian community." (*Life Together*, 1939)

Exegetical Questions:

1. What does "dwell richly" (v. 16) describe about the Word's role?
2. How do "psalms, hymns, spiritual songs" (v. 16) enhance teaching?

Theological Questions:

3. Why is Scripture central to discipling?
4. How does teaching reflect God's authority?

Application Questions:

5. How can you incorporate Scripture in a church conversation this week?
6. How can you deepen your Scripture knowledge?

Daily Assignment: Choose a verse from Colossians 3:16–17. Share it in a church small group or with a member, discussing its meaning, and pray together.

Day 5: Correcting with Love

Scripture Reading: Galatians 6:1–5 (ESV)

Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor. For each will have to bear his own load. **Context**

and Commentary: Galatians 6:1–5, part of Paul's letter to the Galatian churches (circa AD 48–49), addresses restoring sinners within the community. "Caught in any transgression" suggests someone overtaken by sin, requiring "spiritual" believers to restore (katartizō, "mend") them gently, reflecting Christ's law of love (John 13:34). The warning to "keep watch" (v. 1) and avoid self-deception (v. 3) emphasizes humility. "Bear one another's burdens" (v. 2) contrasts with "bear his own load" (v. 5), balancing mutual care with personal responsibility. Hermeneutically, this passage frames correction as a loving, communal act, essential for discipling. Dever links this to discipling's corrective role (p. 6).

Illustration: A doctor sets a broken bone carefully, like loving correction in discipling (p. 6).

Reflection: In Chapter 3, Dever explains that discipling requires correction, as sin deceives us, necessitating others to reveal blind spots (p. 6). He advocates gentle correction in private relationships, which may escalate to congregational discipline if unheeded (p. 7). Dever's metaphor of joining a church as "throwing paint on the invisible man" (p. 6) illustrates how relationships expose sin, fostering growth. He encourages inviting correction, modeling humility, as seen in his call to fear God more than man (p. 7). This strengthens the church's holiness through discipline. Dever's focus on correction as a loving act challenges us to confront sin courageously yet compassionately.

Christological Point: Jesus' gentleness in restoring Peter (John 21) models corrective love.

Ecclesiological Focus: The church emphasizes discipline as a congregational duty, rooted in regenerate membership (p. 7). Private correction in discipling precedes formal discipline (Matt. 18:15–20, p. 7), ensuring purity and care in the covenant community.

Bonhoeffer Quote: "Nothing can be more cruel than the leniency which abandons others to their sin." (*Life Together*, 1939) **Exegetical Questions:**

1. What does "restore gently" (v. 1) reflect about correction's attitude?
2. How does "bear burdens" (v. 2) fulfill Christ's law? **Theological Questions:**
3. Why does God entrust correction to the church?
4. How does correction promote holiness?

Application Questions:

5. Is there a church member you need to correct lovingly, or are you open to correction?
6. How can you cultivate gentleness in addressing sin?

Daily Assignment: Reflect on a time you were corrected in church. Journal a prayer for humility to give and receive correction, and thank a member who corrected you.

Day 6: Modeling the Christian Life

Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians 11:1 (ESV) *Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.*

Context and Commentary: In 1 Corinthians 11:1, Paul concludes his discussion on Christian freedom and idol food (1 Cor. 10), urging the Corinthians to follow his example as he follows Christ. Written around AD 54–55, this verse reflects Paul’s role as a model of sacrificial love (1 Cor. 10:33). The Greek “mimētai” (imitators) implies active emulation, not mere observation, with Christ as the ultimate standard. Hermeneutically, this passage highlights discipling through modeling, as believers observe and replicate Christlike behavior in community. Dever uses this verse to emphasize modeling in discipling (p. 7–8), connecting Paul’s example to the church’s call to live transparently.

Illustration: A carpenter shows apprentices how to craft, as Dever likens discipling to an apprenticeship (p. 8).

Reflection: In Chapter 3, Dever stresses that discipling involves modeling obedience, not just teaching, comparing it to an apprenticeship or parenting (p. 8). Elders in his church model faith, inviting members to imitate them, as Paul did (p. 8). Dever’s metaphor of discipling as “fashion modeling” a way of living (p. 8) emphasizes transparency, inviting others to watch our strengths and weaknesses. His reference to Hebrews 13:7 (p. 8) underscores imitating godly examples, pointing to Christ. Dever challenges us to fold others into our lives, as elders do, building a church where members emulate faithful lives.

Christological Point: Christ’s life and death are discipling’s pattern, as Paul imitates Him.

Ecclesiological Focus: The church sees elders as models (p. 8), but all members, as priests, model faith. Discipling fosters a culture where members imitate elders and each other (Heb. 13:7, p. 8), reflecting regenerate, active membership.

Bonhoeffer Quote: “A Christian is someone who shares the sufferings of God in the world.” (*Letters and Papers from Prison*, 1944) **Exegetical Questions:**

1. How does “imitate me” (v. 1) relate to Paul’s Corinthian example?
2. Why link imitation to Christ? **Theological Questions:**
3. Why use human models in discipling?
4. How does modeling glorify God?

Application Questions:

5. What faith aspect can you model for a church member?
6. How can you invite someone to observe your Christian life?

Daily Assignment: Invite a church member to an activity (e.g., prayer, serving). Model a Christ-like attitude and discuss its faith reflection.

Day 7: Mutual Love in Discipling

Scripture Reading: Hebrews 10:24–25 (ESV)

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Context and Commentary: Hebrews 10:24–25, part of a letter (circa AD 64–68) to Jewish Christians facing persecution, urges steadfastness in community. “Stir up” (paroxysmos) implies intentional provocation to love and good works, while “not neglecting to meet together” addresses the temptation to abandon gatherings amid hostility. The “Day” refers to Christ’s return, adding eschatological urgency. Hermeneutically, this passage emphasizes mutual encouragement as essential to discipling, preventing spiritual drift. Dever sees this as mutual love in discipling (p. 9), highlighting the church’s role in fostering reciprocal edification.

Illustration: Runners pace each other, like Dever’s mutual blessing from discipling (p. 9).

Reflection: In Chapter 3, Dever describes discipling as mutual love, where both parties spur each other toward Christ, as seen in Hebrews 10:24–25 (p. 9). He shares being blessed by those he disciples, showing reciprocity (p. 9). Citing Colossians 3:16 (p. 9), Dever highlights teaching and admonishing one another, fulfilled in church gatherings like small groups or casual meetups (p. 5–6). He envisions a church where love displays Christ (John 13:34–35, p. 19), challenging us to see discipling as a two-way street where younger believers strengthen us.

Christological Point: Jesus’ love (John 13:34–35, p. 19) is reflected in discipling’s care.

Ecclesiological Focus: The church is a covenant community where members encourage one another (p. 12). Mutual love thrives in gatherings, reinforcing congregational responsibility to edify through shared practices.

Bonhoeffer Quote: “The community of the saints is not an ideal community consisting of perfect people, but a community of sinners.” (*Life Together*, 1939) **Exegetical**

Questions:

1. What does “stir up one another” (v. 24) imply about community?
2. Why is regular meeting (v. 25) tied to encouragement? **Theological Questions:**
3. How does mutual love reflect God’s Trinitarian nature?
4. Why is community vital for discipling?

Application Questions:

5. How can you encourage a church member toward love or deeds?
6. How can you prioritize church gatherings?

Daily Assignment: Meet a church member to pray and set mutual encouragement goals. Share a faith objective.

Day 8: Embracing Weakness

Scripture Reading: 2 Corinthians 4:7–12 (ESV)

But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you.

Context and Commentary: In 2 Corinthians 4:7–12, Paul defends his ministry (circa AD 55–56) against critics valuing strength. “Jars of clay” (v. 7) contrasts human frailty with the gospel’s treasure, emphasizing God’s power. The series of contrasts (afflicted but not crushed, etc.) reflects Paul’s hardships, which mirror Jesus’ death to manifest His life (v. 10). “Death in us, but life in you” (v. 12) shows how suffering serves others’ faith. Hermeneutically, this passage underscores weakness as a vessel for God’s glory, applicable to discipling. Dever cites Erin Wheeler’s story to illustrate this (p. 10–11).

Illustration: A cracked pot nourishes plants, like Erin’s struggles showing God’s strength (p. 11).

Reflection: In Chapter 3, Dever uses Erin Wheeler’s story to illustrate that discipling thrives through weakness, not just strength (p. 10–11). Erin felt inadequate amid family chaos but learned God used her frailty to teach others to love God in tough times (p. 11). Dever’s “jars of clay” reference (p. 4) highlights that transparency displays God’s power. He calls discipling the work of “one beggar pointing another to bread” (p. 10), encouraging us to share struggles, as Erin did, to model reliance on Christ. This builds a church where weakness fosters authenticity.

Christological Point: Christ’s power in weakness (2 Cor. 12:9) models discipling.

Ecclesiological Focus: The church is a community of imperfect believers united by grace. Discipling through weakness (p. 12) fosters humility and Christ-dependence within the congregation.

Bonhoeffer Quote: “God loves human beings. God loves the world. Not an ideal human, but human beings as they are.” (*Letters and Papers from Prison*, 1944) **Exegetical Questions:**

1. What does “jars of clay” (v. 7) reveal about frailty versus God’s power?
2. How does “death in us” (v. 12) produce life in others? **Theological Questions:**
3. Why work through weakness in discipling?
4. How does weakness reflect the gospel?

Application Questions:

5. What weakness can you share to encourage a church member?
6. How can you trust God to use your imperfections?

Daily Assignment: Write a testimony of God’s strength in your weakness. Share it in a church group or with a member.

Day 9: Overcoming Objections

Scripture Reading: Philippians 2:3–8 (ESV)

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. **Context and Commentary:** Philippians 2:3–8, from Paul’s letter (circa AD 60–62), urges humility amid disunity and persecution. The “mind of Christ” (v. 5) is exemplified in His selfemptying (kenosis), taking a servant’s form and dying on the cross. This Christ-hymn (vv. 6–8) contrasts divine glory with human humility, serving as the ultimate model for selfless love. Hermeneutically, the passage calls believers to prioritize others, overcoming selfish objections to service like discipling. Dever uses this to address objections to discipling (p. 16–18), emphasizing Christ’s humility as the antidote.

Illustration: A reluctant teacher trusts the curriculum, as Dever focuses on Christ to counter objections (p. 17).

Reflection: In Chapter 4, Dever lists objections to discipling, such as feeling inadequate or prideful, arguing they stem from misunderstanding its biblical nature (p. 16–18). He counters that discipling follows Christ, not self, emphasizing it as a mutual, agreed-upon relationship (p. 17). Dever’s response to the “Lone Ranger” objection (p. 18) stresses Christianity’s communal nature, requiring church involvement. His call to humility, as in Philippians, challenges us to overcome fears like rejection or being “too young” (p. 18) by serving others, trusting God’s sufficiency. Dever’s insight that “anyone truly following Jesus can disciple” (p. 18) empowers every believer.

Christological Point: Christ’s servanthood demonstrates humility in discipling.

Ecclesiological Focus: The church sees discipling as a congregational call where all believers serve (p. 19). Overcoming objections reflects the priesthood of believers, contributing to mutual growth under Christ.

Bonhoeffer Quote: “The church is the community of those who are called by Jesus Christ.” (*The Cost of Discipleship*, 1937) **Exegetical Questions:**

1. How does “count others more significant” (v. 3) shape discipling?
2. What does Christ’s obedience (v. 8) teach about objections? **Theological Questions:**
3. How does humility address discipling objections?
4. Why is discipling mandated?

Application Questions:

5. What objections hinder your discipling, and how can you address them?
6. How can you show Christ’s humility in church?

Daily Assignment: List a discipling objection. Pray for courage and discuss with a church elder or member.

Day 10: Guiding Toward Eternity

Scripture Reading: Hebrews 13:7 (ESV)

Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.

Context and Commentary: Hebrews 13:7, part of a letter (circa AD 64–68) to Jewish Christians, concludes with practical exhortations. “Leaders” likely refers to past or present elders who preached God’s Word. “Consider the outcome” suggests evaluating their faithful lives, while “imitate their faith” (*mimētai*) calls for active emulation. The context of persecution and eschatological hope (“the Day,” 10:25) frames discipling as preparation for eternity. Hermeneutically, this passage emphasizes modeling and imitation in discipling, pointing to Christ. Dever likens this to guiding others toward eternity (p. 13–14).

Illustration: A guide leads pilgrims, as Dever sees discipling as imitating examples for Christ (p. 13).

Reflection: In Chapter 3, Dever compares discipling to Spurgeon’s Mr. Great-heart, guiding others to heaven (p. 13–14). He emphasizes living imitable lives, as elders do (p. 8), and releasing disciples with open hands amid transience (p. 13). Citing Hebrews 13:7, Dever calls members to imitate faithful leaders, pointing to Christ (p. 8). His vision of discipling as preparing for glory (p. 12) challenges us to focus on eternity, not temporal results, fostering a church where members, as priests, equip each other for Christ’s return.

Christological Point: Jesus, our leader, guides to heaven, reflected in discipling. **Ecclesiological Focus:** The church emphasizes elders as models (p. 8) in a regenerate community where members disciple for glory (p. 12), reflecting autonomy and eternal preparation.

Bonhoeffer Quote: “The goal of all Christian community is to meet Christ in eternity.” (*Life Together*, 1939)

Exegetical Questions:

1. What does “consider the outcome” (v. 7) guide leader choice?
2. How does “imitate their faith” relate to discipling? **Theological Questions:**
3. How does discipling fulfill God’s eschatological plan?
4. Why imitate church leaders?

Application Questions:

5. Who disciplined you in church, and how can you emulate them?
6. How can you disciple with eternal focus?

Daily Assignment: Write a gratitude note to a church member who disciplined you. Pray for a discipling opportunity, focusing on eternity.