

SIMPLE TRUTH: The five G's of discipleship

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The Mississippi Baptist Convention exists to assist churches in making disciples in Mississippi and around the world. I doubt that anyone would argue with this statement, but we're still left with questions to answer about what this means. For instance, what exactly is a disciple? While discipleship is hard to quantify, certain qualities are somewhat standard. Over the course of ministry, I've come to believe in what I call **5G Discipleship**.

– The first **G** stands for **Grace**! A person simply cannot be a disciple of Jesus Christ unless they have experienced His grace that results in transformation. We are saved by grace and sustained by that same grace throughout our life of faith.

– The second **G** stands for **Groups**! I mean by this a small group of believers committed to the Word of God and resolved to hold each other accountable. Lifeway Research reported a few years ago that a person is five times more likely to be involved in church five years later if they engage in an ongoing small group within the church. While discipleship begins with grace, a significant step of growth is engaging in a group for study and accountability.

– The third **G** stands for **Gifts**! The New Testament clearly teaches that the Holy Spirit gifts us for Christian service (cf. 1 Cor. 12.1-11; Rom. 12.3-8; Eph. 4.7-14; and 1 Pt. 4.10-11). A key in growing discipleship is utilizing spiritual giftedness for the purposes of God. If we simply hide our gift or leave it on the shelf, we can be assured of stunted spiritual growth.

– The fourth **G** stands for **Giving**! Healthy discipleship is characterized by a lifestyle of stewardship. Both the Old Testament and New Testament emphasize the importance of using our material resources for the glory of God. Many people who come to Christ are excited about plugging into a group and using their spiritual gifts for the good of the kingdom, but only the most mature are willing to trust their material resources into the hands of a loving God.

– The final **G** stands for **Going**! The highest level of spiritual maturity is sharing the Gospel with others who pass our way. This is the fulfillment of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20) and the capstone of Christ's expectation of us.

One way we do this is through giving to such causes as the Cooperative Program to support the work of missions here and around the world. That giving, however, should not replace actually sharing the message of the Gospel with others we know through both our treatment of them and our conversation with them.

Our world needs **5G** disciples. A **2G** disciple is better than nothing, but they represent only a fraction of the faithfulness to which we are called. The Mississippi Baptist Convention Board is committed to assisting churches in growing **5G** disciples for the glory of the Lord. If you are a pastor, is your church producing **5G** disciples? If you're a church member, how many **G**'s are you pulling?

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