

The four calls of Jesus

READ: Philippians 3:7-16

Memorize: Philippians 3:14

When Jesus was on earth He called people to come to Him and follow Him. It is a wonderful thing to know that He is still calling people today and He is calling you. He calls you by name. He not only calls you to come to Him for salvation, but He also calls you to move onwards and upwards towards the goal for which He has saved you (Philippians 3:14).

In the Great Commission the main command Jesus gave His disciples was to "go and make disciples". This was His call for them and it is also His call for you. The following picture or model will help you see clearly the whole pattern and plan of this disciple-making process that Jesus is calling you to be a part of.

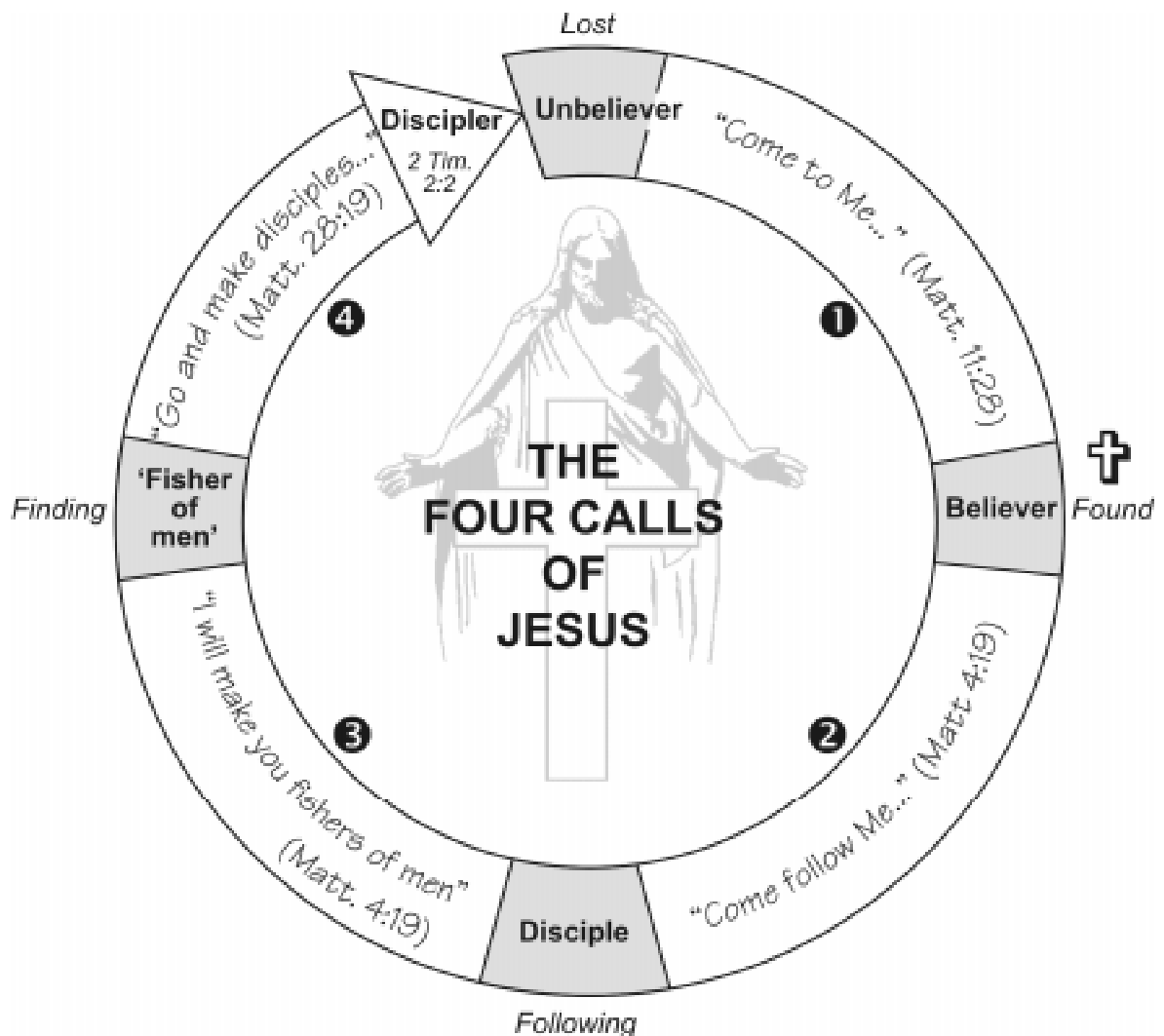


Figure 1. The Discipleship cycle

In this drawing we see four calls of Jesus. Each call is to bring us into closer fellowship with Jesus first of all, and then into a closer partnership with Him in the work of His Kingdom.

1. **First call: Unbeliever to Believer**

We start at the top of the circle with the "Unbeliever" who is "Lost" from fellowship with God. At one stage you were in this position. But Jesus came *"to seek and to save the lost"* (Luke 19:10). He calls to those who are wearied and burdened with life, *"Come to me. Lay down your heavy burden of sin and I will give you rest."* (Matthew 11:28). He never gives up until the lost are found and brought back safely into the Father's arms. When a person hears the call of Jesus and believes and comes to Him in repentance and faith, that person becomes a "believer" and a child of God. That person receives God's forgiveness and changes from being lost to being found. Have you heard and responded to this first call of Jesus?

2. **Second call: Believer to Disciple**

The first call of Jesus is a call to salvation, but the second call, *"Come follow me"*, is a call to discipleship. This means that coming to Christ and becoming a 'believer' is only the start of what God wants to do in your life. The rest of the Christian life has to do with Jesus' call to become a disciple. A disciple is a 'disciplined one', one who submits to Christ as Lord. Do you want your life to count for eternity? Then the condition is discipleship. A disciple is one who has not just been "found", but one who is "following" Jesus. Would you call yourself a disciple? Are you submitting to the loving discipline of Jesus every day and obeying what He tells you to do?

3. **Third Call: Disciple to "Fisher of men"**

When Jesus first called those early fishermen with the words *"Come follow me"*, He also told them His purpose with the words *"...and I will make you fishers of men"*. Just as Jesus reached out to you and found you when you were lost, so He wants to train you to become a part of this same process of reaching out to other lost people and bringing them to Him also. This is still a part of being a disciple. You will always be a disciple and a learner of Christ right to the end of your life. But as part of following Jesus, He wants to put within you the desire to go and find others that you can bring to Him also. Do you want to be a part of helping another person come to Christ? This is the third part of Jesus' call upon your life.



4. **Fourth Call: "Fisher of men" to Disciple-maker**

Perhaps you thought that to bring a person to Christ is the end of the line. Well it isn't! Jesus' final call and command to His disciples was not just to go and make converts, it was to *"go and make disciples"* (Matthew 28:19-20). Of course this will mean first of all witnessing, evangelising and leading people to Christ. But it must go beyond that. There are many people who have been brought to Christ. They have become believers, but they have not become disciples because they have never been properly disciplined. They have been left to find their own way. As a result many have only gone so far, and remain weak, immature and often ineffective Christians.

In 2 Timothy 2:2, Paul urged young Timothy with these words: *"The things you have heard me say.... entrust (or teach) to faithful men who will be able to teach others also"*. As you continue to learn of Christ and follow Him as a disciple, you are then called to go and disciple others in the same way. Don't just be a disciple yourself! Become a disciple-maker! Learn how to multiply and reproduce spiritually! In this way the process continues and multiplies. Isn't this a simple and exciting plan? And God is calling you to be a part of it!

Questions

1. Think about the first call of Jesus, "*Come to me*" (Matthew 11:28). Have you heard and answered this primary call? When and how did this take place?

If you are not sure that you have answered this first call of Jesus, what do you need to do in order to answer 'yes' to Jesus? (See John 1:12 and Romans 10:9). Are you willing to do that now? Write down your response.

2. Now think about the second call of Jesus "*Come follow Me*". Read again this section in the study. How closely do you think you are following Jesus on a scale of 1 to 10? (circle a number)

(distant) 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ 6 ___ 7 ___ 8 ___ 9 ___ 10 (close)

3. Look back at the Discipleship cycle (Figure 1). Where do you think you are on this cycle right now? What stage have you reached?

(choose)
 Just a believer;
 Somewhere between Believer and Disciple;
 A committed disciple;
 Active as a 'Fisher of men';
 Active as a Discippler.

4. Now think of your own church.

- Which of the 4 stages of this cycle are the weakest (with the fewest numbers)?

- Where are most people on this cycle - at what stage?

- Why do you think this is?

- What is needed to strengthen these weak parts of the cycle and to move more people on around the cycle?

5. What do the following references say is needed in order to keep on responding to the onward call of Jesus? What do these verses mean for you personally?

Philippians 3:12-14 _____

Hebrews 5:11-6:1 _____

Hebrews 12:1-3 _____

6. Which of these four calls of Jesus are you hearing most clearly? What do you need to do in order to move forwards from where you are now?

*Learn this week's memory verse (Philippians 3:14). Tick when memorized ☐ .
At your next group meeting, form pairs and check each other. Follow this pattern throughout the rest of this book.*

"Becoming a Christian is only five percent of the Christian life; ninety-five percent is going on with Christ."

- M.E. Dodd