

# 1: THE DISCIPLE-MAKER SHARES LIFE, NOT JUST INSTRUCTION

By John  
In Disciple-maker

3 Min read



In Boy Scouts, the instruction that took place before heading to a trailhead was vital—the purpose of the hike, review of the route, safety expectations such as what to do if separated, keeping the group together, proper foot gear, food and water, respecting nature and leaving no trace, and the hiker’s mindset—learn as you go and help one another. The real trail lessons, however, are discovered by *walking* the path—noticing trail markers, changes in elevation, junctions and forks, natural landmarks, wildlife signs, different plant life, approaching weather conditions, and knowing when to slow down or take a break.

Jesus understood this. When He called the twelve, I’m not aware of a Scripture reference that says He first sent them out to teach. It says He “*appointed twelve that they might be*

*with Him.*” Before instruction, there was presence. Before the assignment, there was shared life. Disciple-making began not with sermons, but with time spent walking together.

## APPLICATION

Men can only absorb so much sitting in chairs. Conversation and instruction have their place, but formation rarely happens at a table alone. After a while, words stop landing—not because they’re unimportant, but because they’re disconnected from movement, experience, and lived context. Men learn through motion—by walking side-by-side with another man.

Chairs are suitable for orientation—but transformation takes place on the trail.

When a disciple-maker spends time with others—formation can take place. Demonstration is one of the best teaching tools. Instruction may describe the trail, but walking it is where obedience takes root, faithfulness is tested, and commitment is proven. Maps and explanations can point a man in the right direction, but they cannot carry him through uneven ground, steep climbs, or long stretches where progress feels slow. Movement seals the deal on the way to becoming a disciple-maker.

## LIVE IT OUT

Along the trail, deliberate presence quietly shows up. A disciple-maker keeps pace instead of rushing ahead. He listens as much as he speaks. He shares meals, conversations, struggles, and decisions—not as a project, but as a fellow traveler.

Over time, this shared life becomes the lesson. Disciples see how a man responds when plans change, when fatigue sets in, or when obedience costs something. The trail becomes visible not through explanation, but through example. The disciple-maker doesn’t just point to the path—he walks it close enough for others to follow.

*Consider this: “In your walk with others, are you sharing information from a distance—or sharing life closely enough for the path to be seen?”*

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**Traits describe the man God desires—  
Paths develop the man God uses.**

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