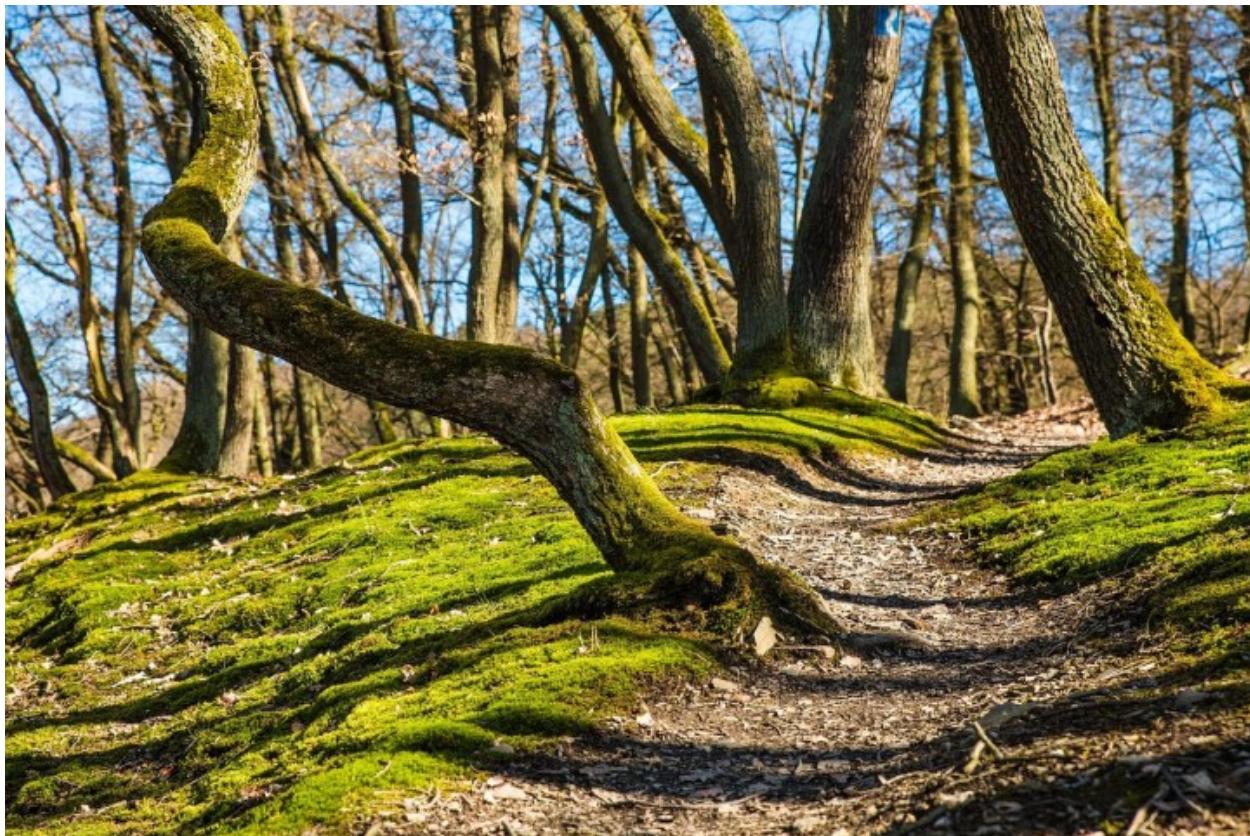


2: THE DISCIPLE-MAKER'S FIRST TOOL: A CONSISTENT EXAMPLE

By John
In Disciple-maker

3 Min read



"Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ." — *1 Corinthians 11:1*

When approaching a new trailhead, the posted map highlights a quick lay of the land by identifying the trail's core features: lakes, streams, and creeks, elevation, and visual cues such as ridge lines, valleys, and switchbacks. As you start your trek, those visual clues are left behind. You now have to rely on trail markers, signs, posts, and natural landmarks. When you step onto an unfamiliar trail, the map helps—but it's not what you watch most closely. It's the worn path of those who have passed the way before you. Those steady sets of footsteps tell you where to place your next steps.

Church life works the same way. Sermons, programs, and leadership structures provide orientation, but disciples are formed by what's lived out week after week. The disciple-makers in a church aren't always on stage or in visible roles, but they're easy to spot if you know what to look for. Their lives have created a worn path—steady faith, consistent obedience, and quiet faithfulness—that others naturally begin to follow. Their schedule always seems to have an opening for lunch or a sit-down at a local cafe. They share time-tested, held up under pressure, walk-out wisdom. Disciple-makers share the wisdom of the

trail — insight shaped by the distance walked, mistakes learned, and faith proven over time.

APPLICATION

Ordinary moments forge a disciple-maker's credibility in how he speaks to his wife, how he handles frustration, and how he shows up when it would be easier not to. Consistency doesn't mean perfection—it means availability.

Consistency is what turns belief into credibility. Men may respect conviction, but they trust repetition. When words and actions align over time, uncertainty is removed. A disciple-maker's faith is not fragile when plans change, or things start to fall apart. When conflict arises, he first listens and then responds in love. He doesn't look to place blame. A disciple-maker receives correction without becoming defensive. Recognition does not determine his participation. He continues serving at the same pace. He anchors his conversations in God's Word. When another man is struggling, he doesn't rush in to fix things; he prays with him and walks alongside him. He demonstrates what faith looks like under pressure.

A disciple-maker's consistency is revealed not by what he says when things go well, but by how he responds when they don't.

LIVE IT OUT

The experienced paperhangers in your church won't always be obvious. They're rarely the loudest voices or the most visible leaders. Look for the men who take the long view, serve without needing credit, handle Scripture with care, show patience with people, and submit quietly to authority.

Then don't just admire them—move closer. Watch how they pray, how they speak, how they respond when plans change, or pressure rises. Pay attention to the small, ordinary ways they walk with God when no one's watching.

And when the opportunity comes, be willing to ask a question, receive counsel, and follow it through. A teachable spirit isn't formed by observation alone—it's formed when a man lets another man help set the plumb line for his life.

Consider this: "If the men around you followed your example this week, what would their walk with Christ begin to look like?"

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A trail system with wisdom baked in.

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