



J. Lee Grady

Follow Me



Make DISCIPLES the
Way JESUS Did

This is the most impacting book Lee Grady has ever written. It has been exciting to watch Lee become a full-fledged disciple maker, like Jesus. *Follow Me* is not about theory—it's about lifestyle. Lee's journey is real, hands-on, heart given, time invested, and emotions exposed. This book is about how to reproduce Christ's life in others. You will never again question, "Should I make disciples?" I challenge you to read and then live this book. It is a game changer for the global church.

—NAOMI DOWDY
FORMER SENIOR PASTOR, APOSTOLIC LEADER,
TRINITY CHRISTIAN CENTRE
SINGAPORE

This book is a gift to this generation. It represents the life work of a man of God who has lovingly, selflessly, and authentically poured his life out into many others—me included. Lee's experiences and wisdom, described in *Follow Me*, will ignite an infectious passion in you to fulfill the Great Commission. Lee's book will also give you practical tools to disciple others to do the same. I believe this book will be used around the world as a healthy model of how to multiply a new discipleship movement.

—JOSH LINDQUIST
EVANGELIST, GLOBAL REVIVAL HARVEST
ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

I've known Lee Grady for several years, and I know everything he has written in this book is a lifestyle for him. His discipleship and mentoring have impacted many, including me—all the way to a distant island in Asia. If you've been stuck in the same place spiritually for many years, or if you've had a hard time influencing others for Christ, this book is for you. *Follow Me* will help you shift relationally, and it will impact your life spiritually in ways you cannot imagine.

—DINESH MICHEL
PRESIDENT, HISTORY MAKER GENERATION
COLOMBO, SRI LANKA

Today as never before we need laborers for the end-time harvest. Lee Grady reminds us in this book about the importance of making disciples the Jesus way. He takes us on a journey of his own experiences and through biblical history, giving examples of many great men and women who became followers of Jesus and then raised up other disciples who changed history. Lee makes one thing clear: mass evangelism is not effective unless there is also mass discipleship. True disciples are made through deep, devoted, and sacrificial relationships with those whom God has entrusted to you. This timely book is a great equipping tool for leaders who want to be effective in fulfilling the Great Commission.

—NATASHA SCHEDRIVAYA
EVANGELIST, VILLAGE GOSPEL HARVEST
MOSCOW, RUSSIA

From the first time I met Lee Grady, it was easy to recognize that his whole life centers on discipleship. Lee is the real deal. He doesn't just talk the talk; he walks the walk. And you will find this oozing from the pages of this book as you read story after story of his passion. The church needs to go back to the central command of our Lord Jesus, which is discipleship. It must be the principal work of the church.

—REV. YANG TUCK YOONG
SENIOR PASTOR, CORNERSTONE COMMUNITY CHURCH
SINGAPORE

I can't think of anyone more qualified to write a book on discipleship than Lee Grady. Everywhere Lee goes, young men drive hundreds of miles to be near their trusted mentor. He is a Paul figure in my life too, as he is to hundreds of others across the globe. Lee believes in discipleship and has committed his life to it, and this book is the by-product of that commitment. Don't just read the information; catch the heart behind the message. Go and make disciples!

—DANIEL WEEKS
SENIOR PASTOR, BETHEL CHURCH
GOLDSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

As one who has been called to preach the gospel to terrorists in conflict zones, often at great risk to my personal safety, I have benefited greatly from Lee Grady's practical approach to discipleship over the course of seventeen years that we have maintained a close friendship. We have ministered together in Africa, Europe, and North America. Many Christians struggle when communicating the gospel to others. Most believers are unsure of how to share the love of Jesus or how to help people grow in the Christian faith. This important book will change the way you follow Jesus by providing practical steps on how to communicate the love of God and help believers thrive and grow spiritually. I highly recommend this transformative book, written by a seasoned man of God who consistently practices what he preaches.

—REV. KELECHI OKENGWU

EVANGELIST

UMUAHIA, ABIA STATE, NIGERIA

I have benefited greatly from Lee Grady's visits to Singapore, where I have pastored an Indonesian congregation for ten years. I have watched how he invests sacrificially in others as a disciple maker. And I learned an important lesson from Lee when he washed the people's feet while he was preaching here. I began to boldly do this too. This book will show you the power of servant leadership.

—PETER SAM

PASTOR, CORNERSTONE BAHASA INDONESIA FELLOWSHIP

SINGAPORE

You may think you've picked up a book to read, but you have way more than that with *Follow Me*. In this book you have a window into the life and ministry of my friend Lee Grady. He has lived his message first and written it second. I pray you will be encouraged, blessed, and graced by God to live a life of relational discipleship!

—CHRIS FRIEND

NATIONAL LEADER, IPHC MINISTRIES

PERTH, AUSTRALIA

Lee Grady has made it his mission to purposely follow Jesus while also inviting others to follow in his footsteps with true intentionality. Lee has refused to do the work of God's kingdom alone. He's not trying to be a superstar in the church; he is seeking to model true servanthood. Even before this book was written, I was a ripened fruit of this message because Lee's commitment to discipleship has impacted me so personally.

—ANTIONE ASHLEY
SENIOR PASTOR, ARISE CHURCH
DELAND, FLORIDA

I've waited for a book like *Follow Me* for twenty years. But more importantly, I waited many years for the Lord to send me a mentor like Lee Grady, because I needed discipleship as a leader. I needed a safe place to be vulnerable; I needed a friend who would not judge or reject me because of my weaknesses. I know Lee is just a man, but he is a surrendered man who makes himself available to invest in others. Lee's heart bleeds relational discipleship because he wants to see men and women healed, strengthened, and mature so they can make more disciples.

—MICHAEL CORETTI
SENIOR PASTOR, EVANGEL PENTECOSTAL CHURCH
BRANTFORD, ONTARIO

Not only does Lee Grady write powerful insights in this book, but he lives this message. My leadership style and mindsets have changed as a direct result of the life message Lee carries so well. I absolutely recommend *Follow Me* for any believer who wants to mature. This book has helped me, and I know it will help anyone who wants to become a relational and intentional disciple maker.

—MEESH FOMENKO
EVANGELIST, BE MOVED
VENTURA, CALIFORNIA

Follow Me is a book that is relevant to the twenty-first-century church. I believe it should be in every church leader's library. Lee has written a readable, practical, inspiring book that brings us back to the Great Commission as it was carried out in the Book of Acts. The contrast between Jesus' call to make disciples of all nations and the current church model is brought into sharp focus. I thank God for Lee Grady's humility, emphasis on relationships, and living what he preaches.

—FIONA DES FONTAINE
FORMER SENIOR PASTOR, HIS CHURCH
DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA

Lee Grady is a humble Bible teacher whose books and messages have impacted people globally. His life and teachings speak volumes about his character and passion for Christ. *Follow Me* will take people through an important process: they will shift from being fans of Jesus to being true followers of Jesus—and then to becoming true influencers. This book will take your personal walk with the Lord to a whole new level.

—RATNA KUMAR SAJJA
SENIOR PASTOR, MESSIAH FELLOWSHIP CHURCH
VIJAYAWADA, INDIA

Follow Me is loaded with gems of truth. It is a must-read for every Christian—especially those who are called to expand their influence. Lee's teachings on discipleship and effective mentoring are not just textbook subjects. He is a man who walks the walk and imparts from his wealth of knowledge and experience. This book is a super-rich manual worth sharing with all churches.

—HAZEIL MIÑOZA
PASTOR, CHURCH PLANTER,
CORNERSTONE COMMUNITY CHURCH
SINGAPORE

If you are looking to make a life-changing impact in the lives of people through relational discipleship, this is the book to study. *Follow Me* is filled with faith-lifting stories, fresh

revelation, and practical steps that will empower you to become an effective disciple maker. Over the years, I have watched Lee not only passionately teach on this subject but most importantly live it out daily. You and all the people you will influence will benefit from this important book.

—PAUL HANFERE
PASTOR, OVERFLOW CITY CHURCH
SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND



Follow Me

J. Lee Grady



CHARISMA
HOUSE

Most Charisma Media products are available at special quantity discounts for bulk purchase for sales promotions, premiums, fund-raising, and educational needs. For details, call us at (407) 333-0600 or visit our website at www.charismamedia.com.

FOLLOW ME by J. Lee Grady

Published by Charisma House, an imprint of Charisma Media
600 Rinehart Road, Lake Mary, Florida 32746

This book or parts thereof may not be reproduced in any form, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or otherwise—without prior written permission of the publisher, except as provided by United States of America copyright law.

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are taken from the (NASB®) New American Standard Bible®, Copyright © 1960, 1971, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. All rights reserved. www.lockman.org.

Scripture quotations marked AMP are from the Amplified® Bible (AMP), Copyright © 2015 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. www.Lockman.org

Scripture quotations from the Contemporary English Version are copyright © 1995 by the American Bible Society. Used by permission.

Scripture quotations marked MEV are from the Modern English Version. Copyright © 2014 by Military Bible Association. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked MSG are from *The Message: The Bible in Contemporary English*, copyright © 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002. Used by permission of NavPress Publishing Group.

Scripture quotations marked NIV are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com. The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.®

Scripture quotations marked NKJV are taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked NLT are from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2007. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, IL 60189. All rights reserved.

Copyright © 2022 by J. Lee Grady
All rights reserved

Back cover photo by Vadim Paripa

Visit the author's website at <https://leegrady.com>.

Cataloging-in-Publication Data is on file with the Library of Congress.

International Standard Book Number: 978-1-63641-058-6

E-book ISBN: 978-1-63641-059-3

While the author has made every effort to provide accurate internet addresses at the time of publication, neither the publisher nor the author assumes any responsibility for errors or for changes that occur after publication. Further, the publisher does not have any control over and does not assume any responsibility for author or third-party websites or their content.

22 23 24 25 26 — 987654321

Printed in the United States of America

*To the men and women I have mentored over the years.
I carry you in my heart always.*

*I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always
offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all.*

-PHILIPPIANS 1:3-4

Contents

Author's Note	xv
Foreword by Barry St. Clair	xvii
Chapter 1 "Follow Me"—the Call of the Savior	1
Chapter 2 God Wants You to Be an Influencer	13
Chapter 3 Whatever Happened to Close Relationships?	29
Chapter 4 Three Vital Relationships Every Christian Needs	45
Chapter 5 You Are Called to Reproduce	65
Chapter 6 The Four Roles of a Disciple Maker	83
Chapter 7 The Six <i>I</i> 's of Discipleship	105
Chapter 8 A Disciple Maker Is a Servant	129
Chapter 9 Practical Tips for Effective Mentoring	143
Chapter 10 Returning to the Book of Acts Model	161
Chapter 11 It's Time to Get Out of Your Boat!	177
Chapter 12 Don't Try This Without the Holy Spirit!	189
Appendix Renew Your Mind With God's Word	201
Notes	205
About the Author	215

Author's Note



The Ichthus Symbol

THROUGHOUT THIS BOOK you will notice a symbol that was used by early Christians during the time of the Roman Empire. We call it the *ichthus* or *ichthys* symbol because it is based on the Greek word for *fish*, which in the Greek is spelled *ιχθύς*¹ (also IXOYΣ). This fish symbol, composed of two simple arcs, reminded believers that Jesus called His disciples to “become fishers of men” (Mark 1:17).

But the ichthus has a much deeper meaning. It was actually a mnemonic tool used to teach the gospel message. When spelled out, the letters for the word *fish* formed an acrostic—*i* (iota) stands for “Jesus,” *χ* (chi) stands for “Christ,” *θ* (theta) stands for “God,” *ύ* (upsilon) stands for “Son,” and *ς* (sigma) stands for “Savior.”²

Christians during the first, second, and third centuries AD put this symbol on doors, tombs, and meeting places to remind people that they worshipped Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Savior of the world. If a Christian in those difficult times met a stranger on the road, he or she might scribble one of the arcs in the sand or on a rock, and the other person—if a

Christian—would complete the picture to prove he or she was also a follower of Jesus.³

The ichthus is a somber reminder of the price early Christians paid to follow the Messiah in a hostile culture. It is also a powerful symbol of discipleship. Since the day that Jesus invited His disciples to become fishers of men, millions of people have “left their nets” (Matt. 4:20) to follow the Savior—and after being disciplined themselves have in turn disciplined others. This is the reason the gospel continues to spread throughout the world today. My prayer is that we will take up our crosses and follow Him fully. May we complete the task of discipling all nations in our generation. Come quickly, Lord Jesus!



Foreword

By Barry St. Clair

MORE THAN ANYONE else in my life experience, Lee Grady has understood and practiced the way of Jesus in making disciples. The global influence Lee has had in doing this astounds me, both in the depth of his relationships with his disciples and the breadth of the number of disciples in whom he has invested. They are all over the world!

Though I can take no credit for how the Lord has used Lee to make disciples, I can tell you how it began. Years ago, though a novice in youth ministry, I had discovered that teenagers did not need entertainment and events to follow Jesus but rather relationships in a small-group setting. Yet I had no idea how to do that.

On my first attempt at a discipleship group in 1973, I gathered six fifteen-year-old guys from my church and taught them Bible lessons in my basement in suburban Atlanta. When I asked for questions, all I heard was crickets. After ten weeks of these awkward lessons, I knew my approach was not working.

That insight became very evident when I heard that one young man in our group—Lee Grady—had decided to drop out of church. That was not the outcome I had in mind! When I met with Lee and asked him about his spiritual struggle, he answered, “I am confused.” That conversation led to a closer relationship

between Lee and me, a fresh restart of our discipleship group, and the beginning of Lee's personal relationship with Jesus.

For the next three years Lee and the others met with me every week to explore who Jesus is and how to follow Him. From then until now Lee and I have shared life together. We did ministry trips, I was a groomsman in his wedding in Florida, and I preached at his ordination in Georgia. He was also visiting me at my house the weekend my first wife, Carol, died.

I also spoke at several of Lee's Bold Venture men's retreats. Recently he and I did tag team speaking at a summit on discipleship, and we offered ourselves as living illustrations that affirmed Jesus' words, "Go and make disciples of all nations." Lee and I spend time together at every opportunity. We laugh and cry, talk and pray, and experience friendship at its deepest level. And I revel at hearing the personal stories of the astounding number of people Lee disciples around the world.

Throughout the years, I have watched Lee follow in Jesus' footsteps as He mentors people. Jesus' course of action led His disciples to experience significant life changes—until they became life changers themselves. I see this four-step pattern in the New Testament:

1. **"I do it."** Jesus never asked His disciples to do anything that He had not done first. He set the pace.
2. **"I do it, and they are with Me."** Jesus always had His disciples with Him except for times when He slipped away to spend time with His Father.
3. **"They do it, and I am with them."** Eventually Jesus sent His disciples out to do what He had been doing, yet He was always close by.
4. **"They do it, and I am in the background to encourage."** When Jesus ascended to the Father, He left the Holy Spirit to give His disciples all they needed to keep on doing what He had been doing.

This kind of reproducing, multiplying disciple making is what changed the world in the first century, and it remains the only way to reach the world with the gospel and change it in the twenty-first century. Lee's book *Follow Me* will give you what you need so that you too can engage in Jesus' ministry of producing life change and life changers!

Investing in Lee Grady's life and Lee's investing in mine stand out as one of my greatest life privileges. What you will read in these pages will convince you to do what Lee Grady has done. Better yet, reading this book and then investing your life in disciple making as Lee does will cause you to spend your time doing exactly what Jesus did!

Barry St. Clair was the founder and director of Reach Out Youth Solutions, an Atlanta-based ministry focused on training youth pastors and leaders. An expert on youth discipleship, he now serves as vice president of Global Youth Engagement for East-West Ministries, based in the Dallas area. St. Clair is the author of numerous books, including Jesus No Equal, Influencing Your World, Following Jesus, Making Jesus Lord, and Talking With Your Kids About Love, Sex, and Dating.

DISCIPLESHIP TIP

Be Relational, Not Professional



Imagine the apostle Paul in a cold, dark prison in Rome. His feet may have been chained. His cell may have had rats or mildew. He knew he could die any day, so he thought a lot about heaven. Yet in that awful place he wrote to his disciples in Philippi: "I have you in my heart" (Phil. 1:7). He also said: "How I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus" (v. 8). I imagine Paul wept as he penned those words. Yet when we read them today in our Bibles, we don't see the tearstains.

What motivated Paul to pour out his life "as a drink offering" (Phil. 2:17) for others? He had God's deep love for people. This same love is what fuels my passion for discipleship. I feel love and affection for those I mentor. I have their photos in my phone, and I pray for them daily. I call, text, and chat with them on Zoom calls. I meet with them for face-to-face conversations. And yes, the goodbyes are painful. Discipleship isn't clinical, programmatic, or professional. It is warm, relational, and stained with tears. If you want to make disciples as Jesus did, ask Him to put His gigantic heart of love inside you.



CHAPTER 1

“Follow Me”—the Call of the Savior

IN EARLY 2020, two months before I ever heard the word *coronavirus*, I stopped at a convenience store near my home in LaGrange, Georgia, to fill up my gas tank. When I went inside to purchase a few items, I noticed the clerk at the cash register had a thick Indian accent. “What part of India are you from?” I asked the man, who looked as if he was in his late forties.

The man seemed surprised that I knew his ethnicity. He asked: “You know India?”

I told him I had visited there four times and that I had good friends in several cities in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra, Bihar, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala.

“I am from Hyderabad,” he told me as he handed me my change.

“Oh, so you speak the Telegu language,” I said. Now I had the man’s full attention. He couldn’t believe a guy from a small town in Georgia knew anything about his country or his regional dialect. He seemed surprised that I cared. He smiled and bobbed his head from side to side in typical Indian fashion.

In that moment all the other customers left the store, and I was able to have a focused conversation with my new friend. I learned that his name is Mahipal, that he has a wife and family back home, and that he grew up in a nominal Christian family.

When I explained that I'm a minister and that I have some close disciples in Hyderabad, he asked me point-blank: "Would you disciple me?"

I can promise you I had never heard those words before while standing at a store counter!

That began a fascinating friendship that grew more interesting when the coronavirus pandemic shut down all my travels and forced most businesses to close. Fortunately for Mahipal, his store was considered an essential business, so it stayed open. And since he worked seven days a week, I started visiting him on most mornings to help him grow in his faith.

A few weeks later he realized he had never actually been born again. Like so many nominal Christians in India, Mahipal went to church only once or twice a year and did not take his faith seriously. He followed a dead religious tradition. So we prayed together at a table in the rear of his store, near the video poker machines. He invited Jesus to take over his life.

Thus began my journey of discipleship with Mahipal. He wore a mask and gloves on the job, and we stayed six feet away from each other to comply with pandemic rules. We greeted each other with elbow bumps instead of hugs. But Mahipal's smile got brighter each day as I shared Christ's love with him as a mentor and friend.

Every morning I would stop at the store to have a coffee and an informal Bible lesson with Mahipal. We talked about prayer, the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and the differences among Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. (When we first started our Bible studies, he assumed that John the Baptist wrote John's Gospel.) Mahipal often had to run to the counter to sell cigarettes, beer, or lottery tickets to customers, but then he rushed back to read another Bible verse or to ask another question. This went on for months.

One day we began talking about the importance of water baptism, and Mahipal asked if he could be baptized. Most churches weren't having in-person services at that time, but a pastor I knew offered to fill the baptismal tank in his church on a Sunday afternoon. I

invited about ten friends, and they distanced themselves all over the sanctuary and wore masks. I got tearful when Mahipal stood in the water and testified that Jesus Christ is the only true God. His boss, who was a Hindu, was watching from the back of the church.

I call this my “pandemic miracle” because I never would have expected to take on such an important ministry assignment when the world was in total lockdown. Mahipal helped me understand that even during a world crisis when people were sheltering in place, God was still drawing people to Himself. The Holy Spirit is never in quarantine.

After Mahipal’s baptism, I shared with him about the importance of being baptized in the Holy Spirit. Being unfamiliar with the biblical term, he thought we needed to fill up the baptismal tank again with water for a second dunk! I explained to him that we only needed to pray and that God would fill him with the Holy Spirit and anoint him for ministry. We prayed together the next week in his backyard on a hot Georgia afternoon, and Mahipal was gloriously filled with the Spirit’s power and boldness as he sat in a lawn chair.

The next day I got a text from Mahipal. He said: “Can you follow up with this person? I just prayed with him to receive Jesus.” He had led a man to Christ in the gas station!

Over the course of the next few months, Mahipal prayed with eleven people to become Christians. In each case they were paying for cigarettes or other items, and he started a conversation with them about faith while they were standing at the cash register. One lady who was buying cigarettes even began crying as she prayed with my friend.

A few more months went by, and Mahipal realized he needed to go home to India to tend to his family there. Before we said our goodbyes, he told me his plan. “Pastor Lee, when I get back to Hyderabad I am going to invite all my nominal Christian friends and my Hindu friends to my house for a meal. I am going to share my testimony with them and tell how I was born again in America. I want to lead many people to Jesus when I return,” he said.

I encouraged Mahipal to watch some old Billy Graham sermons on YouTube so he could learn how to present the gospel message clearly. And the day I took him to the Atlanta airport to fly home, I prayed with Mahipal's Hindu boss to become a Christian. The man who had watched the baptism from the back of the church in May decided to follow Jesus too.

A chain reaction of grace had started before Mahipal arrived home on the other side of the world.

It is impossible for me to fully express the joy I feel when I see how this dear Indian brother is following Christ today. We talk often on video calls. He got connected to a healthy church in Hyderabad, and he is growing spiritually.

I didn't know I would meet him when I went into a gas station in early 2020 to purchase a bottle of water. I had no idea that this chance encounter at Exit 14 off Interstate 85 in Georgia would lead to hours and hours of discipleship meetings in his store. And I had no clue that this seemingly soft-spoken man with a thick foreign accent would end up going back to India to lead others to Christ.

This story demonstrates the power of relational discipleship. When you influence one person for Jesus, it triggers a domino effect. It starts small, but the impact builds over time. It's possible that hundreds of people in India will find Christ because I spent time studying the Book of Mark with one Indian convert in the back of a convenience store in Georgia. After God uses you in a situation like the one I've just described, you will want to spend the rest of your life making disciples. His using me in this way is the reason discipleship has become my passion. And the need for every believer to make disciples is the reason the message of this book is so important.

Jesus Began With a Few

My wife and I had the opportunity to tour Israel with a small group of friends in 2018. I'll never forget walking along the rocky shore of the Sea of Galilee, looking out at the small fishing boats

and imagining what it would have been like to see Jesus and His small group of disciples in that place, just a few miles south of Capernaum.

When I got close to the water I rolled up my pants to my knees and waded in. I noticed some fishermen throwing their nets into the blue waters. I closed my eyes and tried to visualize a young Peter and his brother, Andrew, as they dragged their boat out from the shore and threw their nets on the waves. Fishing had been their daily routine for a long time. But one special day Jesus showed up and called to them from the water’s edge, *“Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men”* (Mark 1:17, emphasis added).

Peter and Andrew didn’t fully understand what Jesus meant when He issued that strange invitation. But they knew He was a rabbi, and they understood that He was inviting them to leave their mundane jobs on the water and begin a new spiritual adventure. They didn’t hesitate. Mark 1:18 says, “Immediately they left their nets and followed him.”

That same day Jesus invited James and John, the sons of Zebedee, to join His small group. The four men went with Jesus to the local synagogue, where Jesus’ sermon was suddenly interrupted by the tortured cries of a demon-possessed man. The demon screamed at Jesus: “I know who you are—the Holy One of God!” (Mark 1:24). Then Jesus commanded the evil spirit to leave, and the man was thrown into convulsions before the demon screamed again and left the man’s body (vv. 25–26).

Can you imagine what Peter, Andrew, James, and John were thinking during this chaotic scene? “What are we doing here? Is every day going to be like this? How did Jesus do that?” But the four men stayed close to Jesus as they left the synagogue and walked to Peter’s house nearby.

Everyone in Capernaum was talking about Jesus that day—and the four young disciples were now part of the action. The townspeople were saying, “He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him!” (Mark 1:27). But Jesus didn’t do this

amazing feat alone—He had His four friends with Him. His new companions were a part of this bold mission.

That evening at Peter's house, Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law from a fever (Mark 1:29–31). Jesus' powerful ministry became very personal to Peter that day. As soon as word got out about that miracle, everyone from the city was at the door. Family and friends brought their sick loved ones to be healed, and others were delivered from demons (vv. 32–34).

Peter's house suddenly became ground zero for something wonderful. The next morning, when Peter went to tell Jesus that more people were looking for Him, Jesus said these words: "Let us go somewhere else to the towns nearby, so that I may preach there also; for that is what I came for" (Mark 1:38).

Notice Jesus did not say, "I need to go to some other towns" or "People need *Me* over in Nazareth or in Samaria." He said to Peter, "Let *us* go." Jesus did not see the mission as His alone. *He wanted His followers to join Him.* They were His team. He had every intention of including them in His quest.

These beautiful scenes show us the essence of biblical discipleship. Jesus came to save the world, and He invites us to join Him in His work. Of course we don't have the power to save people from sin. We are flawed vessels of clay. Yet He calls us to be His coworkers—to walk with Him, to feel what He feels, and to be a part of His audacious mission to change the whole world.

He wants to do His work through us.

When Jesus issued His original invitation to Peter, He said: "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men" (Mark 1:17). Jesus' mission is to "catch" as many "fish" as possible—but He does this by training men and women to be His workforce. If we choose to follow Him, we must go through a process of growth and training.

You don't become a fisher of men overnight. Jesus said, "I will *make you become...*" (emphasis added). He invites us to enroll in a supernatural process of spiritual formation. When we submit to that process we become more like Him, and we begin to do

His work in His way. We become true disciples who carry His heart, reflect His character, and complete His mission.

Peter went through quite a process. From the moment Jesus moved into his house, this fisherman had a front-row seat as the gospel story unfolded. He watched the healing of paralytics, lepers, and bleeding women; he listened closely to Jesus’ teachings as the disciples walked along the dusty roads; he heard the Pharisees question Jesus and listened in amazement as Jesus rebuked them.

At one point Jesus even called Peter out of the boat to walk with Him on the water (Matt. 14:28–29). In another instance Jesus told Peter to go and find a coin in a fish’s mouth (17:27). And after Jesus fed a multitude with just a few scraps of food, He asked Peter: “But who do you say that I am?” and Peter gave the right answer: “You are the Christ” (Mark 8:29). Peter was well on his way to becoming a leader among Jesus’ followers. He was probably the first of Jesus’ followers to realize that Jesus was the Messiah.

The training got more rigorous after Jesus called the three men in His inner circle—Peter, James, and John—to see His heavenly glory on the Mount of Transfiguration. Peter stared in awe as Moses and Elijah conversed with Jesus and a cloud of shining glory covered them. The three uneducated fishermen, with their jaws dropping, were given the chance to see things that angels have longed to see for ages. They beheld the Messiah in His heavenly glory and realized He is the focal point of all history (Matt. 17:1–8).

All this was part of a divine preparation process. But Jesus didn’t allow these lofty revelations to puff Peter up with pride; before Jesus’ crucifixion, Peter came face to face with his own soul-crushing weakness. In a moment of intense temptation, Peter almost crossed over to the dark side.

The night Jesus was arrested, Peter was stressed to the breaking point and fearful of the crowd. When the high priest’s servant girl accused him of being a disciple of Jesus, he denied it (Mark 14:66–68, MEV). When the girl repeated her accusation to some

bystanders, Peter denied knowing Jesus again (vv. 69–70). When others questioned him, Peter “began to invoke a curse on himself, and to swear, ‘I do not know this Man of whom you speak’” (v. 71, MEV). The brave disciple who had promised Jesus he would follow Him anywhere turned into a pitiful wimp. He caved under the pressure. When the rooster crowed, Peter remembered Jesus’ words: “Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times” (v. 72, MEV).

This could have been the end for Peter. He wept bitterly and disappeared (Mark 14:72). No words beyond his denial are recorded in Matthew’s and Mark’s Gospels. In the Gospel of Luke, we read that Peter went to Jesus’ tomb and found it empty. John’s Gospel is the only one that describes how Peter found full restoration after his failure.

Sulking, lonely and dejected, Peter went back to what he knew—his boring fishing job. He had fished all night and caught nothing (John 21:3). Perhaps he feared that God had rejected him forever. But then Jesus appeared on the shore and invited His friends to cast their nets on the right side of the boat—and they hauled in a full net of fish (v. 6).

This was a divine sign that their Master still had plans to use Peter in spite of his cowardly denials. Peter must have been curious when he saw the smoke from the charcoal fire Jesus had made on the beach. How could this be? Jesus wasn’t frowning or scowling. Nor was He waiting to deliver a stern rebuke. He didn’t scold Peter or even remind him of his cowardly denial. This amazing Savior simply invited Peter to sit with Him and eat a hot breakfast. Jesus wanted to eat grilled fish with His friend and chat with him by the warmth of that fire (John 21:9–13).

Before that breakfast conversation ended, Jesus repeated some important words that Peter had heard a few years earlier on that same rocky shoreline.

Jesus said again, “Follow Me” (John 21:19).

Jesus had not disqualified Peter! He was renewing His invitation. The broken, unstable man whom Jesus nicknamed a “rock”

was not sent away (Matt. 16:18). He was back in the game. Jesus had taken His beloved friend through a rigorous training process that included an embarrassing failure. But on that day He reaffirmed that He would use Peter to “catch” many souls and reproduce the life of God in people.

What is even more amazing is the way the shaky, impetuous, insecure Peter was transformed after he was baptized in the Holy Spirit a few weeks later in the Upper Room in Jerusalem. This weak man, who crumbled under pressure when his Master was arrested, then preached the gospel to a huge crowd—and three thousand people made decisions to follow the Messiah (Acts 2:14–41).

Jesus did exactly what He said He would: *He made Peter a fisher of men.*

This is what God wants to do to you—and to every follower of Christ. Just as Peter had to be transformed, so you too must go through a process to become a disciple maker. Don’t focus on your flaws or failures; grace will change you. When you read Peter’s first epistle you see that he became an apostle and a strong spiritual father to his followers (1 Pet. 1:1). Peter wrote this letter to “newborn babies,” and he challenged them to “grow” (2:2). Jesus had miraculously changed Peter from a weak man into a powerful influencer who nurtured and mentored others.

I have seen this pattern unfold in my own life. As I grew spiritually, God began to bring people into my life, and I helped them grow.

Many years ago I met a young man named Paul Muzichuk at a conference in Florida. Paul was born in Ukraine, but he came to the United States as a young boy and grew up in Russian-speaking churches. He had a huge passion for God, but he lacked direction because mentoring and discipleship are rare in the Slavic Christian context. When Paul talked to me I could sense he had a hunger to be trained.

I invited Paul to breakfast during that conference, and he admits to this day that he couldn’t believe I wanted to meet with him. In fact, when I invited him, he didn’t think I was serious. No leader in

his circle ever paid much attention to young people. I saw potential in this young man, and I wanted to encourage him. Little did I know that our friendship would grow and he would eventually travel with me on more than two dozen trips to many cities in the United States as well as to Hungary, Romania, and Colombia.

Eventually Paul came to work for me as my ministry administrator while he was working part-time for his church in Florida. When we were together, Paul would pick my brain constantly for leadership tips or insights into Scripture. We would stay up late during ministry trips talking about how God moved in the meetings and what we learned from various challenges. I knew Paul was watching me, not only while I was preaching but also when I experienced disappointment or criticism or when I was facing financial challenges.

Before long I found myself giving Paul the microphone and letting him preach in my ministry events. I will never forget the night he preached to a group of men in Maryland about how God taught him to forgive some people who treated him unjustly. There is no greater feeling of fulfillment than when you see your spiritual children growing up and acting like Jesus!

I can't take credit for Paul's maturity, but I know the Lord allowed me to play a small role in helping him grow as a leader. Paul eventually was asked to take a full-time pastoral position with his church in Florida, and I had to cut the umbilical cord and release him to bless others. This is one of the most difficult things about discipleship—we must let people go. They can't stay in the nest forever. But my friendship with Paul remains strong to this day.

During the past few years I have had the amazing privilege of mentoring many young leaders like Paul: there's Clem, a Chinese guy from Australia who shares his faith with students as well as members of the medical community; Robert, a pastor in Uganda who has established a thriving school for needy kids as well as a women's shelter; Billy, a young Filipino living in Singapore who is now leading a congregation of Filipino immigrants; Khuram,

a Pakistani American who has founded an Urdu church in Baltimore; and Alex, a businessman who leads the men’s discipleship ministry in his church in Romania.

Jesus made me a fisher of men, just as He did Peter. My influence has expanded beyond my wildest dreams simply because Jesus showed me how to invest in people. I believe this is what Jesus was referring to when He promised us abundant life in John 10:10. There is nothing more rewarding than meaningful relationships.

Peter had a special bond with the people he mentored. And at the end of his first epistle he mentions his “son,” Mark (1 Pet. 5:13). This is the same Mark who wrote the Gospel of Mark! Peter had the privilege of discipling a young man who gave us one of the four Gospels. God can give you disciples who will reach far more people than you do. When you choose to follow Jesus, He will make you a person of *transforming influence*.



LET’S **PRAY** ABOUT IT

Lord, make me a fisher of men. You did it with Peter two thousand years ago. Do it again with me. Take me through Your holy process so I can reproduce Your life in others. Direct my steps so that I will meet people who need Jesus. Give me the boldness to share the message of Christ with them and the patience to mentor them in the faith. Amen.



ONE **FINAL** THOUGHT

Every true believer born into the family of God has the potential of being a reproducer.¹

—DAWSON TROTMAN, FOUNDER, THE NAVIGATORS

God has placed the next generation into our hands.

Who will raise them up if the church does not?

Jesus' final mandate to His followers was "Go...and make disciples"—yet today most of the church is oblivious to what discipleship is and few Christians are actually investing their lives in helping other believers grow spiritually. A vast paradigm shift is needed in the church today in order to reach the next generation and advance the gospel in the twenty-first century.

Using many New Testament examples as well as his own experience in mentoring dozens of young leaders, J. Lee Grady offers a clear strategy for discipling others that can be used by individuals and churches. Christianity was never intended to be a spectator sport where huge crowds sit and listen to one preacher on a Sunday. Rather, Jesus intended for all believers to engage in ministry—and this includes the work of discipling other believers.

So many Christians today live in a box of limitation. We must understand that the Christian life is an adventure with the Holy Spirit working through us. This book will help believers get out of this box and begin the exciting adventure of spiritual multiplication. There's a whole world outside your comfort zone—discover what God wants to do with it!

.....



J. Lee Grady is an author, award-winning journalist, ordained minister, missionary, and director of The Mordecai Project, an international ministry that confronts the marginalization of women globally. He is the author of several books, including *10 Lies the Church Tells Women* and *Set My Heart on Fire*, and he invests much of his time mentoring and discipling young Christians. He and his wife, Deborah, have four daughters and three grandchildren.



Cover design by Justin Evans