

Introducing and Multiplying DNA Groups (Part 3)



Series Goal

To provide an orienting vision and supporting structure with regard to discipleship in hopes that we might develop a “culture of discipleship” here at Mercy Hill. The aim is that it would become a normal thing here for people to be engaged meaningfully in each other’s lives, pursuing Christ together, and inviting unbelievers to join in.



Sermon Text

Matthew 28:16-20



Big Idea

There’s a model for change and renewal put forward in the Bible that stands behind and informs the way Discovering, Nurturing, and Applying Christ really work. It’s been called the Three Trees.

(1) A Biblical Model for Change

The idea for this model really seems to have sprung from Jeremiah 17:5-10. In the vivid imagery put forward by Jeremiah here, we can discern at least six significant elements:

- **Element #1: Heat**—Heat represents the situation or circumstances a person finds him or herself in. Whether things are especially hard or good, there are certain pressures and temptations that we are inevitably facing at all times (cf. Deut 8).
- **Element #2: Thorns**—Thorns represent our initial and ungodly reactions to the heat around us.
- **Element #3: Turning Heart**—There is something beneath the sinful, thorny reactions of people: namely, a heart that has turned away from the Lord. Here is where we begin to talk about things like motivations. Why do people react the way they do. What are they hoping to get out of it? What are they afraid of? What are they believing? Who or what are they trusting? Who or what are they serving? Who or what are they loving? When a person’s heart has wandered from the Lord, it will manifest itself in the person’s life.
- **Element #4: Cross**—God is with us in the heat. And we see this most profoundly in the person and work of Jesus, represented in our model here as the cross—the third “tree,” as it were.
- **Element #5: Trusting Heart**—Through personal engagement with Jesus in His word, through repentance and faith and desperate prayer, the Turning Heart shifts to the Trusting Heart.
- **Element #6: Fruit**—With roots sunk deep into the streams of living water this tree begins to bear new and surprising and good fruit. Because of Jesus we can walk through the exact same situations in a radically different ways—in ways that looks like Him!

(2) Mapping Our Basic Steps onto the Biblical Model

Discover corresponds with the *cross* level in the Three Trees model. We come to learn more of who God is and what He has said and done in Christ.

Nurture corresponds with the *root* level in the Three Trees model. Our hearts need to move from loving, trusting, and obeying false gods and gospels to loving, trusting, and obeying the one true God and gospel as revealed in Jesus.

Apply corresponds with the *fruit* level in the Three Trees model. We are after transformation and renewal in the image of Jesus, and this means our hands need to shift from bearing the fruits of the flesh to bearing the fruits of the Spirit through the cross of Christ (cf. Gal 5:16-24).

Reflection Questions



- Read Jeremiah 17:5-10 once more. Do you see the model and its six elements represented? How does this model speak to you? How does it relate to what you are currently facing? Which tree are you? Why?
- Read Deuteronomy 8 carefully. How can both hard and good situations produce a heat that exposes and tests/tempts the heart? How have you experienced this lately?
- In your attempts to help others grow in Jesus, which reduction are you more prone to (Just Change the *Heat*; Just Change the *Fruit*; Just Change the *Heart*)? How does the full process of Discovering, Nurturing, and Applying Christ provide a better way?