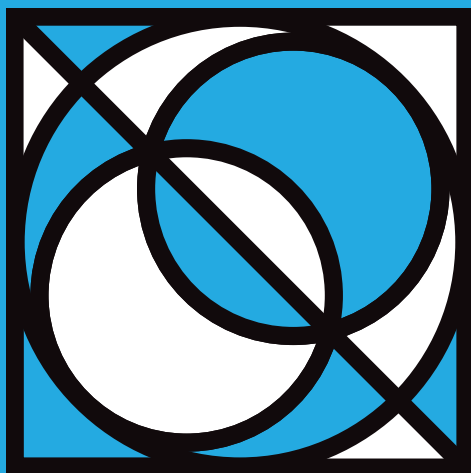


**IX** 9Marks

# How Can I Find Someone to Disciple Me?



**J. Garrett  
Kell**

**Church Questions**

## **Endorsements for the Church Questions Series**

“Christians are pressed by very real questions. How does Scripture structure a church, order worship, organize ministry, and define biblical leadership? Those are just examples of the questions that are answered clearly, carefully, and winsomely in this new series from 9Marks. I am so thankful for this ministry and for its incredibly healthy and hopeful influence in so many faithful churches. I eagerly commend this series.”

**R. Albert Mohler Jr.**, President, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

“Sincere questions deserve thoughtful answers. If you’re not sure where to start in answering these questions, let this series serve as a diving board into the pool. These minibooks are winsomely to-the-point and great to read together with one friend or one hundred friends.”

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“As a pastor, I get asked lots of questions. I’m approached by unbelievers seeking to understand the gospel, new believers unsure about next steps, and maturing believers wanting help answering questions from their Christian family, friends, neighbors, or coworkers. It’s in these moments that I wish I had a book to give them that was brief, answered their questions, and pointed them in the right direction for further study. Church Questions is a series that provides just that. Each booklet tackles one question in a biblical, brief, and practical manner. The series may be called Church Questions, but it could be called ‘Church Answers.’ I intend to pick these up by the dozens and give them away regularly. You should too.”

**Juan R. Sanchez**, Senior Pastor, High Pointe Baptist Church, Austin, Texas

“Where can we Christians find reliable answers to our common questions about life together at church—without having to plow through long, expensive books? The Church Questions booklets meet our need with answers that are biblical, thoughtful, and practical. For pastors, this series will prove a trustworthy resource for guiding church members toward deeper wisdom and stronger unity.”

**Ray Ortlund**, President, Renewal Ministries

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# How Can I Find Someone to Disciple Me?

J. Garrett Kell

 **CROSSWAY**<sup>®</sup>  
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*How Can I Find Someone to Disciple Me?*

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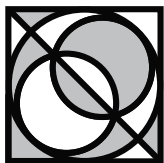
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Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.

1 Corinthians 11:1







*Lord, bring me someone to help me follow you.*

I didn't know what I was asking for, but I needed help.

Jesus invaded my life during my junior year of college and turned my world upside down. Weekends shifted from all-night raves to reading Scripture by myself. I attended church and met new friends. God was changing me, but I was riding a spiritual roller coaster. Sometimes I felt close to God, other times I was confused and uncertain how to follow him. I loved reading the Bible but often didn't understand it. I wanted my old friends to know Jesus, but occasionally

I'd join them in sin. I hated the struggle. I didn't know what to do.

So I prayed, *Lord, bring me someone to help me follow you.*

And God answered.

Shelby heard about my new faith in Jesus and took me out for tacos.<sup>1</sup> He asked questions about my life. He explained the Bible to me. He pointed out Romans 13:14 and challenged me, "Don't give the devil a chance. If you put yourself in tempting situations, you're more likely to fall into sin. Stay close to Jesus, and he'll protect you." I still remember that conversation over twenty years later. We met nearly every week that semester. He showed me how to follow Jesus.

Since that day, God has continually answered my prayer by sending me people who help me follow Jesus. Tommy showed me how to study the Bible. Gene displayed hospitality. Lisa modeled how to sing from the soul. Reid pressed me toward holiness. Mama Ruth embodied thankfulness. John taught me how to apply God's grace to brokenness. Beth showed

me servanthood. Mark modeled humble leadership.

Each of these brothers and sisters, and many more, have taught me how to follow Jesus. Few things have strengthened my walk with Jesus like these discipling relationships.

This little booklet is written to help you find someone to disciple you—and prepare you to disciple others. But before we get too far along, let's answer two questions: (1) What is a disciple? and (2) What is discipling?

### **What Is a Disciple?**

Most simply, a disciple is a follower. Disciples follow, learn from, and imitate someone else.

Christians are disciples of Jesus. He left us an example that we should follow (1 Pet. 2:21). We follow him by learning who he is, imitating his example, and obeying his commands.

Jesus calls us to be his disciple in passages like Luke 9:23–27:

If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily

and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

Jesus's disciples have repented of sin, forsaken the world, and committed their life to follow him by faith. Jesus's disciples deny their sinful desires through the power of the Holy Spirit in order to please their Lord. Jesus's disciples daily lay down their lives for his name's sake. Jesus's disciples know a day of judgment is coming and strive to live every moment in light of that day.

When Jesus calls someone to be his disciple, he isn't simply calling him or her to join a club or be part of a weird religious subculture. He's calling them to turn from their sin and love him every day until they see him face-to-face.

Being a disciple of Jesus isn't a one-time decision—it's an ongoing relationship. Each day we draw upon his grace and strive to live in obedience to him.

## **What Is Discipling?**

Forty days after Jesus rose from the dead, he assembled his disciples and gave this commission:

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. (Matt. 28:18–20)

Jesus instructs his disciples that wherever they go, they must keep it as their main aim to “make disciples.”

There are two aspects to disciple making.

*First*, we make disciples by calling people who don't follow Jesus to follow him. This is

called evangelism. We proclaim the good news that Jesus died on the cross for sinners like us, and three days later he rose from the dead. We assure them that if they turn away from their sin and believe in him, he will forgive all their sins and reconcile them to God. If they respond rightly, they become Jesus's disciples.

*Second*, we make disciples by helping people who already know Jesus to grow in their relationship with him. We purposely do spiritual good to them. We help them obey all that Jesus commanded (Matt. 28:20). We teach people how to obey Jesus with their words, their work, their time, their money, their sexuality, and everything else you can think of. Jesus is the Lord over our whole lives, and everything we do should be aimed at pleasing him (2 Cor. 5:9; Eph. 5:10; Col. 1:10; 1 John 3:22).

If you're a disciple, then you should help others follow Jesus. You should also look for others to help you follow him too.

If you're reading this booklet, I assume you're ready to jump into a discipling relationship. In the pages ahead, we'll consider how you can

find someone—or, even better, several people—to help you faithfully follow Jesus.

### **How Can I Find Someone to Disciple Me?**

Finding someone to disciple you isn't complex, but it requires effort. Often, *you* will need to initiate the relationship. But trust that God will use every part of the discipling process, including finding discipling relationships, to deepen your dependence upon him.

#### *Pray*

God is our heavenly Father. He cares for us and wants us to trust him to supply everything we need. He promises to provide food and clothing (Matt 6:11, 25–33), rewards for good works (Matt. 6:4, 6, 18), wisdom in our suffering (James 1:5), and protection from temptation (Matt. 6:13). Jesus taught that God “knows what you need before you ask him” (Matt. 6:8). If God cares this much about you, don't you think he desires to bring you someone to help you walk with him? Ask God to provide discipling



relationships. Keep asking him. Keep seeking His provision through faith-filled prayer. Because he is good, he will answer you (Matt. 7:7–11).

So what should you pray?

*Pray to meet someone.* Cornelius was a righteous man who desired to know God more (Acts 10). God heard his prayers and arranged for the Apostle Peter to visit him. Peter taught him about Jesus, and Cornelius, along with his entire family, believed the gospel. God is able to set up divine appointments and arrange circumstances so that you meet the right person to help you walk with him.

*Pray for a humble spirit.* It's time to ask yourself "do I *really* want to be discipled?" Following Jesus requires change. If someone is going to disciple you, you're going to need humility. Are you ready to be instructed? Do you want someone to point out your sins? Are you ready for correction and training? Pray for a humble, hopeful, teachable spirit so you can be ready to grow with God.

*Pray to help someone else.* As you seek someone to disciple you, ask God to use you to dis-

ciple others. Be on the lookout for people you can spiritually help. You may not feel you have much to offer others, but that's not true. If you're a Christian, you have God's Spirit and can bless others (Rom. 15:14; 1 Cor. 12:14–19). Who are new believers you can encourage in their walk with God? Who is someone you can read the Bible with? Who is someone you can do evangelism with? Prayerfully ask God to bring you someone you can help—and then go actively look for that person. One thing that you'll learn is, discipleship is almost never one way. The discipler often learns much from the disciple because every member of the body of Christ has something to contribute. Speaking of the body of Christ, the local church is the primary way God intends for his children to be disciplined. Let's consider how.

### *Join a Church*

As a young Christian I viewed church as optional. I was content reading the Bible on my own and attending whatever study or church

service seemed best at the time. But I missed something important. God wants each of his children to grow up in a family—a local church filled with brothers and sisters who love, serve, encourage, and watch over one another. I needed to commit to fellow believers and build up their faith while being built up by them.

If you want to find someone to disciple you, join a church. After all, that's where God's people are. No perfect church exists but healthy churches do. Look for a church that preaches sermons from the Bible, regularly reminds you of God's grace in the gospel, stirs your love for Jesus, is a vibrant community of Christians, and has leadership whose faith is worthy of imitation.

The local church is the primary place you'll learn to obey Jesus's commands. As you lock arms with God's people, you'll learn to serve others, practice hospitality, apply the gospel to others, receive correction, forgive others when wronged, and love others as Christ has loved you (John 13:34–35). The local church is a discipling greenhouse. We gather to help one another fol-

low Jesus better and hold one another accountable as we seek to serve the Lord.

When we join a church, we're *committing* to discipling relationships. The local church provides us with dozens of brothers or sisters who each have something unique to teach us about following Christ. Remember, you don't just need *one* person discipling you, you need an entire community teaching you to follow Jesus. Every part needs every other part (1 Cor. 12:14–26).

Once you join a church, let me offer a few additional pieces of advice about how to pursue discipling relationships.

*First, regularly gather with the church.* Guard your schedule to ensure nothing conflicts with attending church on Sunday. Regularly assembling with the church is an essential part of following Jesus (Heb. 10:24–25). Attend in faith. Expect God to use his word and his people to help you follow him. It may feel uncomfortable at first, but over time, God will increase your love for his church.

*Second, pursue relationships with fellow church members.* Consistently gathering with

Discipleship is an important part of the Christian life. As we follow Jesus, we learn the importance of pointing unbelievers to Jesus and helping believers grow in their relationship with him. But how do you know where to start? In this addition to the Church Questions series, Garrett Kell explores the Bible's teaching on discipleship and how that plays out practically in the context of the local church.

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**Church Questions** is a series that seeks to provide ordinary Christians with sound and accessible biblical teaching by answering common questions they have about church life. Each volume offers biblical answers and practical applications with the goal of nurturing healthy church practice and commitment.

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