

BRANDON GUINDON



**DISCIPLE
MAKING
CULTURE**

*Cultivate Thriving Disciple-Makers
Throughout Your Church*

Foreword by Bill Hull

A DISCIPLESHIP.ORG RESOURCE



Disciple-Making Culture: Cultivate Thriving Disciple-Makers Throughout Your Church
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INTRODUCTION

Why write a book about disciple-making culture? My answer starts when God called me into full-time ministry almost twenty years ago. I had the opportunity to be part of an incredible movement of God at Real Life Ministries in Post Falls, Idaho, led by Jim Putman and the rest of the team. I mention Jim here because he led the church plant that provided the first disciple-making culture I ever experienced. We followed God on an incredible journey—one that continues to this day—where thousands of people have come to Christ and are being discipled. As a result, we impacted an entire community. We watched the Holy Spirit begin a movement of disciple-making that continues to plant churches, impact pastors, and inspire leaders all over the globe.

Fifteen years after joining Real Life Ministries in Idaho, my wife and I planted a church in Tomball, Texas (just north of Houston). As we prepared to plant, I wondered if the miracle that happened in Post Falls could be reproduced in a church plant in Texas. Was that an isolated event that God did in the Pacific Northwest? So often during my time at Real Life Ministries in Idaho, I had heard other pastors say to me, “What happened in Post Falls was just a freak thing.”

But was it unique to that location? I really sat back and thought about this question. Everything in me rebelled against that notion, but I had to find out for myself. I knew that God calls all of us to go and make disciples, but I didn’t see that happening. So rather than view what happened in my early years of ministry as a miracle,

I thought, *Shouldn't we view it as the norm?* As a result, we took the plunge and planted a church in Texas.

Because of my previous experiences, our new church plant was committed to building a disciple-making culture from day one. This meant that we sought to live out the Great Commission as if it had been imprinted in our DNA. Taking all the principles I had learned in Scripture and the practical lessons I learned at Real Life Ministries in Post Falls, Idaho, we launched Real Life Ministries Texas.

What I discovered in making the transition from Idaho to Texas was the critical necessity of establishing a disciple-making culture. I'm writing this book to pass on to you the hope, ideas, and practical tools I have learned that can help you transform the culture of your church into a disciple-making culture. No matter what stage your church is in—whether brand new or very old—it carries within it the potential, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to become something new.

*Your church carries
within it the
potential to become
something new.*

Planting Real Life Ministries Texas

Our church started out as a small group meeting in my back yard, but we quickly began to grow. Now, after three years, our weekly attendance is over 800 people and growing every week. We believe that fulfilling the Great Commission is not an impossible task or a rare once-in-a-lifetime miracle. It's a regular, everyday journey that we all can join. But it's more than just a journey: it's a commitment to *being* something rather than merely *doing* something. Fulfilling the Great Commission is about cultivating a culture of disciple-making, where following Jesus is our natural practice, not just something we do through a program. Those who participate in a culture like this understand that they are disciples who make disciples—and they know how to do it. It's a culture that calls people to

The background features a light gray, detailed illustration of ivy leaves and vines, which are partially enclosed by a thin gray rectangular border. The text is centered within this border.

Key Component 1

**BIBLICAL
FOUNDATION**

*How to Establish a Biblical Foundation
for Disciple-Making Culture*

1

DISCOVER IT

*Discover what the Bible says about
disciple-making culture.*

Over the years, I have had the opportunity to attend dozens of conferences, and I've had hundreds of conversations with pastors about disciple-making. One thing that leaders rarely talk about or seek after in their church is *the culture Jesus created*. Jesus' culture is an interesting thought, isn't it? The truth is that Jesus didn't just make disciples in a vacuum; he developed a culture of disciple-making among his disciples, and that culture transferred directly to the early church. This reveals the reproducible process at work in the early church as they received disciple-making culture from Jesus' disciples.

“Sniff the Dirt”

To truly experience something, one must get out and do it. My grandfather, a farmer, used to say, “If you want to do something, boy, you gotta go sniff the dirt.” He was telling me to go get my hands dirty with whatever it is I wanted to do. Get close to it and

experience it. To discover and create a disciple-making culture we must do the same.

When I talk with pastors or leaders who serve in a church, most of them lack a hands-on, practical understanding of how to make disciples, let alone a whole culture of making disciples. Many leaders—more than I can count—have said to me, “I have never been discipled and I do not know how to make a disciple.” Reflect on that statement for a moment. When have you been there, even as a leader? If I asked you how to disciple someone, would you know what to say? How can the church, which is the people of God, ever succeed at the Great Commission if we, especially those of us in leadership positions, have never seen how to live it out or replicate it in someone else? We need a biblical foundation in order to experience lasting change.

The Original Coach

I had the opportunity to play football in high school and during a short stint in college, before a career-ending injury dashed my hopes of NFL stardom. Despite my disappointment about that, playing football has afforded me the opportunity to use my experiences in sports as I coach my kids in the sports they love. While coaching my boys’ football team, for example, I made some observations about the importance of understanding the foundational concepts and goals of a task. They were in sixth grade at the time, and the range of maturity, talent level, and understanding among their team members was drastic. Some boys demonstrated high-competency levels, and others, well, not so much. Yet each boy knew the basic rules of football, the general objectives of the game, and how to win. They may have differed in skill level, but they all had a fundamental understanding of how the game worked.

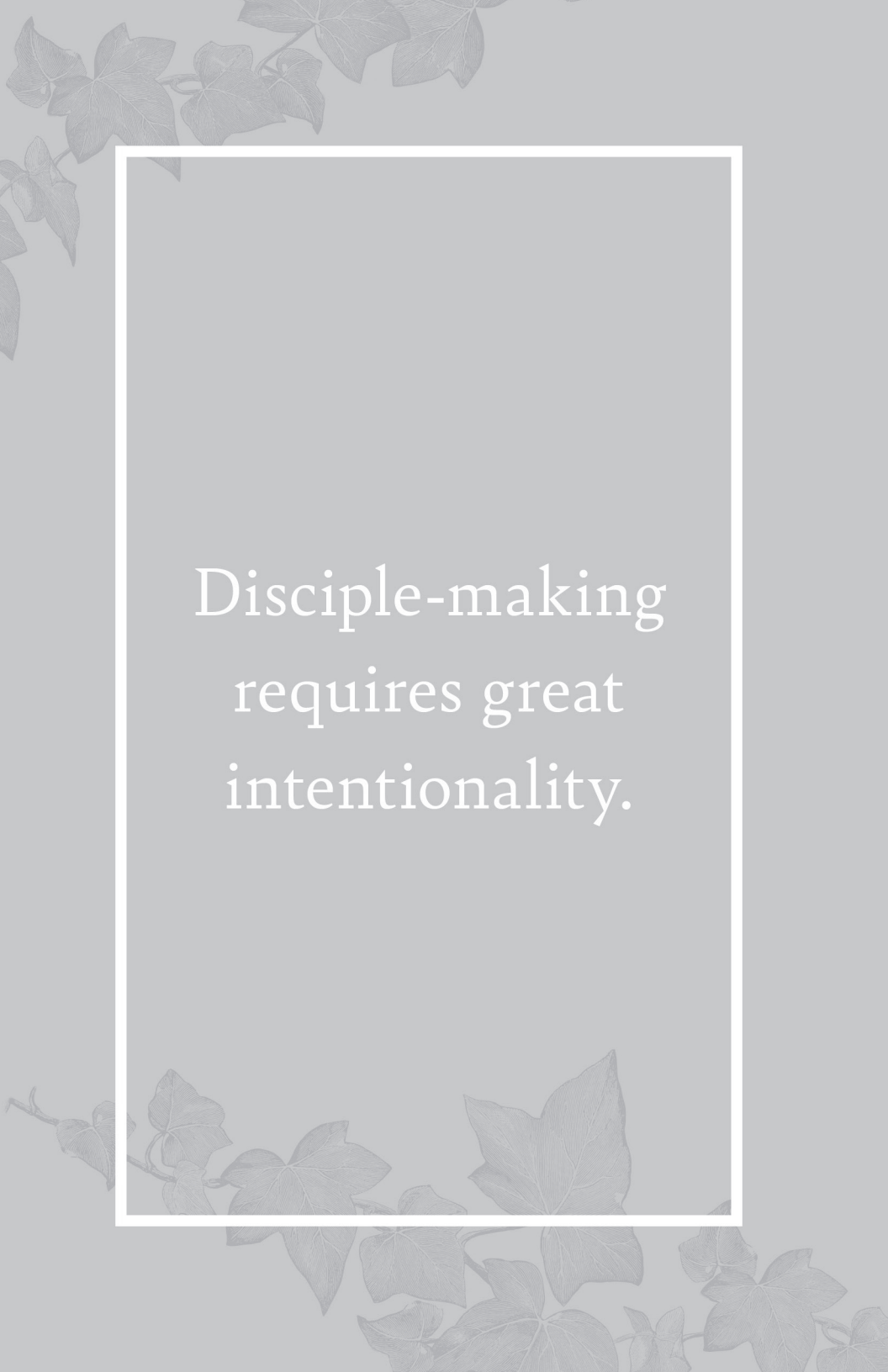
Imagine for a moment an entire group of players wearing jerseys and standing on the field but having very little knowledge of

practices are how we frame it, and the result, by the grace of God, is a successful disciple-making culture with people who function as a team. It's not just framing it that counts, though; it's also sticking to how we frame it, which can be even more challenging. Over the long haul, framing it only matters if you adhere to it, which is what I cover next.

Key Definitions for a Disciple-Making Culture

As you finish this chapter, I recommend you utilize a worksheet we created called “Key Definitions for a Disciple-Making Culture.” This worksheet contains a sample list of critical words with definitions to help you and your team create your own definitions of critical terms. Visit **himpublications.com/culture** to download this document.

By now, you should better understand that rarely do people offer clear definitions of key terms. To intentionally keep your church's focus on disciple-making culture, you must frame the words you use in a way that people can easily understand and repeat them. Your people must know how you define terms. This can be difficult to do! That's why we created this worksheet with sample definitions for important terms. This exercise goes beyond doctrinal statements and helps you and your team get practical about clarifying definitions. Visit **himpublications.com/culture** and download this document that will help you create clear definitions for your church or ministry.



Disciple-making
requires great
intentionality.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

BRANDON GUINDON is the lead pastor of Real Life Ministries Texas. Brandon holds a master's degree in church leadership and New Testament theology from Hope International University. Ordained at Real Life Ministries in Post Falls, Idaho, he is the author of *Stay the Course*, is a co-author of *Real-Life Discipleship Training Manual*, and serves on the board of directors of the Relational Discipleship Network.