

The Missional Model of Jesus



Harrington Emerson, a well-known American engineer and efficiency expert, once said, **“Methods are many, principles are few. Methods always change, but principles never do.”**

When it comes to discipleship, there are countless methods—and they’re always evolving. But the principles? Those stay the same, grounded in the life of Jesus and the truth of Scripture. Christians have great tools that help believers grow at different stages of their journey, but it’s the principles Jesus modeled, and our understanding of them that can bring clarity to our lifelong calling to know Christ, make Him known and help others to do the same.

I’ve walked alongside many people using different discipleship materials, and I’ve seen real transformation—lives changed, obedience to Jesus, and solid spiritual habits forming. Some even start discipling others. But at some point, the same questions come up: What’s next? Where do I go from here? How do I keep helping the person I’m discipling?

Here’s the thing—when we really grasp how Jesus approached discipleship, we realize it’s not a program with an end date. It’s a lifelong, ongoing process that naturally multiplies. And it’s actually pretty simple. Jesus modeled it, and Scripture reinforces it. **Ephesians 4:11-13** makes this framework especially clear by spelling out the roles that Christ has given within the Body. We refer to this overall framework as the Missional Model of Jesus and it naturally creates a funnel shape, which we call the Equipping Funnel. Here’s why it matters:

- **Intentionality:** Jesus didn’t just pick random people and hope for the best. His approach was deliberate.
- **Sustainability:** His model wasn’t a one-time event; it ensured the Gospel would keep spreading for generations.
- **Depth and Breadth:** It wasn’t just about reaching a lot of people—it was about investing deeply in a few.
- **Clarity for the Church:** It provides a clear framework to avoid confusion and stay focused on what really matters.
- **Obedience to Jesus:** At the end of the day, discipleship isn’t about our preferences—it’s about following His lead.

The Equipping Funnel

In this phase...

People experience...

PRE-EVANGELISM: (PROPHET)	Wrestling with Repentance (Sin, Death & Judgment – The Bad News)
EVANGELISM: (EVANGELIST)	Wrestling with Believing & Receiving the Gospel (The Good News)
DISCIPLESHIP: (TEACHER)	Wrestling with Personal Obedience to Jesus & Teaching Others to Obey
APOSTLESHIP: (APOSTLE)	Wrestling with Living as an Ambassador for Christ (Pioneering New Places and Reaching New People.)
SHEPHERDING: (SHEPHERD)	Wrestling with Leading, Developing & Caring for Others in the Church

