

# THE JOY OF BEING A DISCIPLEMAKER

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## INTRODUCTION

I spoke at a conference about 15 years ago with Dr. John MacArthur. I was early in the speaking thing and you get nervous around a big name guy and he comes up to me afterwards and we had a little talk and he says, "Man it was fun watching you up there."

He said, "It was good to see you telling jokes and laughing." And then he goes, "I used to be funny." I'm like, no shut up.

But he went on and he just says, "Ministry, the stories you run into and the pain that people go through. The criticism you start getting over the years. It starts building up and pretty soon nothing's funny anymore." And he says, "Man don't lose what you had up there. Don't stop laughing."

For some reason that incident was in my head recently because I'm starting to feel that now and I thought, man before we get into discipleship you're going to hear so many messages I wonder how many of you hear today are just feeling like, man that describes me man I used



to laugh so much. Man I used to just remember falling on the ground laughing.

And all these things happening, all this pressure, all this criticism and it just feels like nothing's funny anymore.

I was talking to a guy recently about rejoicing and tells me that he honestly doesn't remember the last time he just had joy doing ministry. It's like he had to escape the ministry to have joy, and as I thought about it I just wonder how many of us have just been on this survival mode.

## DISCIPLE MAKING IS NOT EASY

Because it's tough, and making disciples is hard and this focus on discipleship is difficult. One of the most difficult things is that you can spend so much time with one or two people, and then they go off the deep end and you go, "I just wasted two years of my life." And it's not fun.

Where there's other things you can do in ministry that have the appearance of life and fruit. And it's like, "I



didn't fail look, look at how many people are there." And yet discipleship, it's difficult and it can get depressing.

It gets so sad when you see someone you invested so much time in decide to go another direction. So I thought, I just want to pray a prayer over you, this is just something I wanted to do last night, as I was thinking about what to say today.

I thought, man I would love to, I mean I've thought about what to say I've been preparing for months, but last night I was just brushing up, and I was thinking what do I want to say to these guys and I would love to just pray a prayer of joy over you and really believe that that could happen, because God says rejoice in the Lord always, I'll say it again, rejoice.

And sometimes even conferences can feel burdensome because we hear all these messages and how we're just doing everything wrong. And you just leave like, "aw man" and I just go, man I know I'm part of the blame for some of that. I don't want that for you.



## REJOICE IN THE LORD

I want you to rejoice, I want you to rejoice in the Lord. I want this to be a time of joy, because remember who we are. Remember, God put his Holy Spirit inside of us. We're temples of the living God. We're children of God.

Almighty God is up there in heaven looking at us, his adopted children, that he thought about before the creation of the world and we can't walk around with this lack of joy that's not what he wants for his kids.

He wants us so blown away by his truth.

We're all after the same thing, right? I just want to make sure we're all on the same page. Don't we all just want to see someone who is dead in their trespasses and sins, and don't we want to watch as God's Spirit enter that person and just has them come alive.

Where there's just like a joy of life and we're going "no way, look at him, look at her" isn't that just like the greatest joy when you see that happen right before your eyes? That's what we're all after right?



The Spirit of God came in and transformed a person. To where it's shocking. Just as shocking as seeing a dead body come to life.

## THE SUPERNATURAL LIFE

Don't we all want to see, can you imagine going to a funeral and watching a body rise from the grave. You'll never forget that. Right? For those who've seen it you know it's crazy huh?

But it's that picture that God gives those who are dead in their trespasses where you're just shocked like, there's no way that could have happened to her.

It's supernatural, it's unexplainable and when people see that it's shocking.

It's like what Paul says about the Thessalonian church. When he says, in 1 Thessalonians 1:4 he says,

"We know brothers loved by God that he had chosen you. Because our gospel came to you not only in word but also in power and in the



Holy Spirit and with full power, in the Holy Spirit with full conviction you know what kind of men we prove to be among you for your sake, and you became imitators of us and of the Lord.

For you receive the word and much affliction with the joy the Holy Spirit, so you became an example of all the believers in Macedonian.

For not only had the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonian but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere so that we need not say anything.

For they themselves report to us the kind of reception we had among you and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God and await for his Son from heaven whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come."

Paul says to this church, "man I don't even have to talk about your faith. Because everyone saw. They saw you were dead, you're following in us, they saw that change."





And he goes, "I don't even have to tell people about you, you guys are preaching it yourself, your message is known all throughout Macedonia, everyone's hearing about you.

I don't have to beg you to share the gospel. Man you've just come alive, everyone's heard about it." I mean isn't that what we're after? I want to see that happen.

## SUPERNATURAL LOVE

I also want to, I want to be a part of a gathering, where there's supernatural love. Where you walk in to a group of people and everyone in that room loves you. Could you imagine?

Could you imagine if you walked in today and you had a confidence that every single individual in this room loved you? Could you imagine how that would feel?

I'm not just saying this little feeling they have in their heart, no or a general love, but where "what's mine is yours." Like, "I care about you, you're my sister," like that type of love in this room.



Can you imagine?

Have you ever been a part of a group where if an unbeliever walked in they would go, this is impossible. There's no way a group of people could love each other that much.

Seriously, think about it have you ever been a part of a church where love was so evident that it would take the supernatural Holy Spirit to create this type of unity.

Have you ever been a part of that, or aren't most of the gatherings where we go, man I've been tighter with other groups.

And I would love to see the day where those changed lives, the dead coming to life, those loving bodies become our apologetics. Where everyone's drawn to that. We know that would draw people right?

If people are working with a total pagan that has no care for God, all about himself, herself, into their own thing and then suddenly this Spirit comes into them and they're transformed.



People are going to notice, they're going to be attracted to that. And if there was a group of people who really said we're so focused on the mission and eternity that man you are my brother and sister I don't care about my stuff.

Where there's not a single needy person amongst them.

That would attract people.

## DON'T GIVE UP ON THE DREAM

But I feel like some of us have given up on that dream, and we found other ways to attract people. We go, "well I can't really control whether the Holy Spirit comes into a person's life but I can control a service well enough to attract people.

I can control the happenings in that room enough to where it'll get people and fill the room."

But this other part, that's kind of out of our control. See what I dream of and I just want to die pursuing here in this country, is I want the day to come when the world



looks on to the church and they are shocked to the point of fear.

Like in Philippians 1:27:

"Let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come to you and see you or am absent I may hear of you that you're standing firm in one spirit with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel and not frightened in anything by your opponents.

This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation in that from God."

That's what I mean like can we have a gathering where we're so tight we're striving side by side, and it says not afraid of anything.

That's what I mean by can that type of body take place, where the world looks on and it's scary to them.

It says it's that type of unity that's actually going to cause them to recognize their destruction and our salvation. Where they go, "oh man, they're on to



something over there. I've never seen that type of unity, that type of fearlessness, that type of courage.

I've never seen people come to life like that. I'm not ready to do that"; but in their soul there's a fear because they go, "you know what there's something right about that."

## BEWARE OF THE 'SAFE ZONE'

And my concern is I think it's very easy to settle for something else. Because we can't control that. We can't make that happen, it takes a dependence on God, and there's other things we can control and I feel like we make like this, I do this, I do this so I'm not judging anyone here I do it.

Where we have this safe zone right here, where I know I can prepare a service where even if the Holy Spirit doesn't do anything its' still going to be good.

You know what I'm talking about. You know if you got the right singers or the right soloists or the right story to end with you kind of know it's not going to fail.



It can't drop down to here where people walk out and go, "That was so stupid." No way, not after that video, they can't do that. Right?

There's a safe zone, but the problem with that safe zone is you don't get up there either. You know what I mean?

I see the Apostle Paul saying, "Man if you want to reach these heights if you want to see that type of body you gotta take some risk. You gotta put all of your trust in the gospel."

## HOW TO EMPTY THE CROSS OF ITS POWER

That's the whole 1 Corinthians passage what he's saying that Paul made some specific decisions where he says, "I didn't come with words of eloquent wisdom lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power."

Paul's saying, "Look I could empty the cross of its power if I came trusting in these eloquent words." That's the safe zone.



Paul could have come with some wise words so all the Corinthians would go "Man, that guy's smart." You can't lose with that. Just use your intellect, just be smart enough and you won't lose - you're in the safe zone Paul.

Oh Paul's up with these sophists. He's with them. He's brilliant, I think he's the smartest, he's in that safe zone. He goes, "no you know what? I don't want to empty the cross of its' power." He goes, "you know what, I chose, I revolved to know nothing."

Paul chose to do that, because I chose to come down here. And I think, how many of us have ever done that? Went into a situation and purposely made ourselves look dumber than we actually are. When do you ever do that?

Because I can tell you many situations where I've walked in and tried to sound smarter than I really am, sound like I've got it more together than I really do.

I've been in situations where people are having conversations, I have no idea what they're talking about and I'm nodding my head. I do that.



And Paul says, you know what? I'm going to go down here. I just resolve to know nothing except the cross, because I don't want to empty it of its power.

And so I didn't come with this superior speech, which he could have.

He says, "I didn't come proclaiming you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling.

## A DEMONSTRATION OF THE SPIRIT

And my speech and my message were not implausible words of wisdom, but a demonstration of the Spirit and of power that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of God but in the power of God."





Have we given up on that dream? So you seriously still believe in the power that's in the simple message of the cross still?

That would look so foolish to just get up in front of a group of people and say, "Look, you're a created being. This isn't about you.

There is a creator up there who made you and you have offended him, despite what everyone else says. You have broken his laws. You're not a good person.

And yet in the midst of your lifestyle, the rebellion against God, he so loved you and you want to demonstrate to the whole world his love.

And he has his Son came down, the creator of it all came down and took the form of an infant."

I know that sounds crazy but he did. He grew up and was persecuted. And died on a cross. And on that cross he was paying for everything you've done. He was buried and on the third day he rose from the dead.



And he's coming back. He's coming back one day. But for now for those of us who lose our lives, are ready to repent and be baptized and actually die to ourselves he gives us a promise that he's going to put his very spirit in us and give us new life, give us this new power, power to put to death the deeds of the flesh that impact other people.

*To make disciples.*

And one day he's going to return and he's going to judge the world and he is going to separate the sheep from the goats.

And there'll be those he'll say well done, come on in. You're with me for eternity. And he'll wipe away every tear, every sickness, every pain.

And the others he's going to say, depart from me, I never knew you. Into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. But do you believe there's power in what I just said?

There's just a power there and that someone could hear those words and because the Spirit of God would just be



working because God would give them ears to hear, something we can't control right?

## GOD'S REVELATION

Because what he says in the next chapter he goes, "Look no eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him."

But God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. That means your eyes, it's not like you take in this information because your human eyes can just see it.

We get all our information through our eyes and our ears basically, right? You hear something, you see something, you take it in.

But he's saying "look, this isn't something you just take in through your eyes, through your ears, this is something God has to reveal."

And it's not something you'd conjure up on your own. It says, "no mind has ever imagined." This is something



supernatural that has to happen where the Spirit of God enters into a person.

That's why Jesus said in John 6 that it's the spirit who gives life, the flesh is of no help at all. No help at all. Your eye can't see, your ear can't hear. Your mind can't conceive. But the spirit could reveal to you.

There is a wisdom and it's the spirit that has to get into this person. That's why Paul says, look I'm not living in the safe zone.

I'm betting it all on the Spirit, I'm betting it all on the gospel, I'm betting it all on the cross and this is going to look so stupid to some people but I don't like to bet it, I like to stay here.

Because I don't want to look stupid, I don't want to bet it all on the cross, I don't want to trust completely on the Holy Spirit.

There's things I can do in the flesh to keep me in the safe zone, and Jesus that's great but the flesh is no help at all. That does nothing.



And Paul says, actually my flesh can get in the way so I resolve to know nothing. Because I don't want to empty the cross of its power.

## HOW ARE WE SPENDING OUR LIVES?

Look, if we're not careful we could spend our lives justifying why these things don't happen anymore. And I hear it all the time. Well you know you're talking about this transformation but that sanctification's a lot slower now.

And you know a person can be a Christian for years and years and you can't even tell the difference there's no fruit, and then suddenly nine years later you'll see a little fruit. All right, maybe.

You know is there a slight, slight chance of that? I don't think so but maybe.

Are we going to spend our lives going, well you know you're talking about this body that loves each other but we live in a culture that's individualistic.



It's not family oriented, so to expect the church to be this family with this supernatural love for each other, it's just not going to happen in our country.

Really? Are we giving up on this and creating this safe zone we can all live in and make it look like we've got some fruit going on and make it so we cannot fail? It's hard to live by faith.

It's hard to empty yourselves and resolve to know nothing and say, you know what I'm not going to empty the cross of it's power.

I'm going to believe that this is going to be all up to Spirit and I'm going to spend all my time praying and begging and pleading to God and then going up there with a simple gospel, the simple word of God, and not feel like my flesh is going to add something to that.

What I want to be careful to do is, I'm not talking about strategy right now. Sometimes people misinterpret me.

Right now I'm working with smaller house churches but I'm not against the megachurch. I led a big church and I don't know what's going to work best.



I just know right now at this point in my life I'm supposed to pursue this and multiply this. And it might not work.

It might not bring the most glory to God. I don't know I think it is, I go down that direction but if it doesn't work I'll take over a megachurch.

So this is not about OK, is it about the big church, I've done that, small church, there's pros and cons to both I'm trying to figure it out myself. It's not about that. I don't want to make it.

These things we can argue about all day. And it's fine. It's fine to disagree. I disagree with myself. I go, “I don't know, I don't know, I don't know.”

But there are things that are nonnegotiable. And that's hopefully what I've presented to you.

## FUNCTIONING LIKE A BODY?

That it is wrong when the church does not love each other and function like a body. That's a sin. That's just a



breaking of God' command. Like you're not even pursuing that body that he wanted. I heard a guy yesterday say, "I feel like I spent my whole life making a pie that he don't want to eat."

It was just a whole thing of, am I creating this thing where at the end he says, this is the body that I want, this is the church I called you to create.

And we need to fight for that. It's what he wants, it's what we want. Don't you want that?

Wouldn't you just love to be a part of where everyone loves each other, we walk in everyone loves us, loves me, I love them. And it's like, this can only be of God; like that's a nonnegotiable, we gotta pursue that.

I know it's wrong when we elevate people too much, and I don't even know how to address this, I just see it in the Corinthian church.

The Corinthian church was so messed up. You got a guy sleeping with his stepmom, you got prostitution going on, you got people drunk at communion, you got people saying, "ah the Spirit just told me Jesus is





cursed." This type of stuff is going on and the first thing Paul addressees is, "I hear there's divisions among you."

What?! He's with his stepmom, and that's the first thing you're going to say? He goes, "Yeah one guys like I follow Paul, I follow Apollos, I follow Piper, I follow Chandler."

Right? And I do it. I do it. I get so bugged when people lift me up to a position I don't want to be in and yet I do the same thing to other guys. Somehow we gotta figure it out.

We know that's wrong and I just know that the way that we market certain things using some of these people, it's just not right. It's just not right.

I'm not saying I have the answer to it, I'm just saying we gotta figure it out, because that is not honoring the God and that's not what he's going to bless when we lift up people and suddenly the name of Jesus gets muddled in all of that. He hates that and we've got to fight against that.

It's wrong when we don't make disciples when we're ashamed of the gospel. That's just wrong, it's just



wrong. We gotta change that. When we deny him, we know that's sin.

I'm just going to leave you with that. Look, let's change so many things we know we need to change, but let's keep rejoicing in that and let's trust and take the risk down here and say "no, the gospel's still there, the spirit's still there, the body can still be the body I'm going after it I may look stupid but I believe when we trust that, that's when we're going to get here."



**Bio:**

*Francis Chan is the best-selling author of books, Crazy Love, Forgotten God, Erasing Hell and the host of the BASIC.series (Who is God & We Are Church). He has also written the children's books Halfway Herbert, The Big Red Tractor and the Little Village and Ronnie Wilson's Gift.*

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*Currently, Francis is working to start a church planting movement in the inner city of San Francisco and also working to launch a countrywide discipleship movement. Francis now lives in Northern California with his wi*