



SEE ALL THE PEOPLE

Discovery



WRITTEN BY
Jeff Campbell

THE MISSION OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

The mission of the church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

THE VISION OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

The United Methodist Church forms disciples of Jesus Christ who, empowered by the Holy Spirit, love boldly, serve joyfully, and lead courageously in local communities and worldwide connections.



- **Love Boldly:** We passionately love God and, like Jesus, embrace and include people of every age, nation, race, gender, and walk of life (Matthew 22:37–39; John 13:34–35).
- **Serve Joyfully:** With the heart of Christ, we journey alongside the most vulnerable among us, offering care and compassion with joy (Psalm 100:1; Nehemiah 8:10; John 13:14–15; 1 Peter 4:10).
- **Lead Courageously:** Following Jesus' example, we resist and dismantle all systems of evil, injustice, and oppression, striving for peace, justice, and reconciliation (Joshua 1:9; Ephesians 6:10).

This vision also articulates a missional framework:

- Form and Grow Disciples,
- Develop Christ-like Leaders,
- Stand in Solidarity with the Poor and Most Vulnerable, and
- Seek Health and Wholeness for All

The following resource, ***See All The People: Discovery***, was created to help local churches and ministry settings with the first element of the missional framework: **Form and Grow Disciples**.

For a worship and small-group resource that unpacks the vision of the United Methodist Church, please go to:

<https://www.UMCdiscipleship.org/articles/miracle-sunday-worship-study-resources>

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DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRIES
The United Methodist Church

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*To Caroline, Alex, Mason, and Emma,
Your kindness makes
the world a better place*

*In honor of Junius B. Dotson,
Your legacy lives on.*

SEE ALL THE PEOPLE

See All The People is not a program or strategy to grow church attendance, but a movement that keeps the focus on the heart of the church's mission: making disciples of Jesus Christ. This movement calls congregations to follow the example of Jesus by truly being disciples who are growing and maturing, and seeing and engaging all the people around them through authentic, organic, and consistent relationships that create a natural space for discipleship to begin. Rather than prioritizing buildings, budgets, or institutional survival, "See All The People" emphasizes intentional discipleship processes that invite all into a life following Jesus and a practical faith that engages our communities and the world in meaningful ways daily.

More resources can be found at
www.SeeAllThePeople.org

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INTRODUCTION

See All The People

A Path of Discovery

1 CORINTHIANS 13:12 NRSVUE

For now we see only a reflection, as in a mirror, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known.

A Path of Discovery

dis•cov•er

verb [*with object*]

Find (something or someone) unexpectedly or in the course of a search.

dis•cov•er•y

noun (*plural discoveries*)

The action or process of discovering or being discovered.

(Oxford Languages, <https://languages.oup.com>)

I was raised as a Southern Baptist and later in life became a United Methodist. I share this because the origins of my discipleship start here.

As I sat toward the back of the sanctuary, I remember the pastor sharing the good news of the gospel; something like, if I invited Jesus into my heart, I would find peace. I don't remember all the details of that message, but as an eight-year-old, I was moved. And as was our tradition, during the closing hymn, I came forward to tell the pastor I wanted to invite Jesus into my heart and be baptized. Although God had been working in my life since the day I was born, this was a unique moment for me. I was moved in my head and heart, and it moved my feet to walk me past all the people to the front of the sanctuary to have a conversation with the pastor.

I wanted to know more. I did not know much at that point, but I knew I wanted the peace of which he spoke. I also knew I wanted to claim the identity as a disciple of Jesus. I wanted to follow him based on everything that was being shared about what that means. I wanted the abundant life that Jesus spoke about. This was an important moment which began a life-long journey of learning about what it meant to follow Jesus.

That was over forty years ago, and I still want to know more. I still claim identity as a follower of Jesus, and following his call on my life has brought me lasting peace and guided me to many places, meeting many people.

Although I have grown to deeply respect other faiths and other Christian denominations, being a disciple, and being United Methodist in particular, has been life-giving—a path that draws me closer and closer to God and Jesus Christ as I follow the daily guidance of the Holy Spirit. And it is this fullness of life which I have experienced, that I want for those around me and for anyone God places on my path. Each day God is inviting me to discover and see people who are searching for God, searching for healing and peace, searching for what I found beginning decades ago in that Southern Baptist church. To see all the people means to discover who God might be calling me to encounter so I can share what has been shared with me.

**TO SEE ALL THE
PEOPLE MEANS
TO DISCOVER
WHOM GOD MIGHT
BE CALLING ME
TO ENCOUNTER,
SO I CAN SHARE
WHAT HAS BEEN
SHARED WITH ME.**

I have also learned over the years that God uses the people I encounter each day to help me grow spiritually.

Through relationships with others, I learn more about myself, more about God, and more about the world around me. Seeing all the people also means discovering what I have yet to learn, which I will experience in and through my relationships with others. Seeing all the people means I will discover what others might share with me that I do not yet have or understand—things God wants for me.

I have also learned that churches or ministry settings, where disciples have chosen to gather, have the potential for creating spaces and opportunities for people to encounter the healing presence of God through Jesus, and that these spaces and opportunities could not exist without both the people gathered and the people God is calling into those spaces and opportunities. *Seeing all the people*, for our churches, means discovering what

God is guiding us to learn about ourselves as a community and about the people in the community around us. *Seeing all the people* as a church means creating spaces and opportunities (many times, outside the church walls, in the community) where people can experience God's presence in and through community.



Lastly, I have learned that there are many things that keep us as disciples and churches from *seeing all the people*. Some are actually good things—ministry-related things, but things that can distract us from our mission of forming and growing disciples; some are mental blocks that keep us from sharing our faith with others, while others are idols—excuses or harmful understandings that keep us from *seeing all the people*. In the last chapter, we will start a list of things that distract us (and you will be invited to add to that list), so we can begin to unpack them, learn from them, and move through them toward where God is calling us in our discipleship.

A FEW ASSUMPTIONS:

- As the holder of this resource, you are a disciple of Jesus who cares about how you live out this journey of discipleship and how the church can better fulfill its mission to make and form disciples.
- God's grace is already at work in all the people we are called to see even before we encounter them.
- Making and forming disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world is the mission of the church.
- Each disciple is invited into a lifelong journey of growth and discovery about themselves and about the people and world around them.
- The church can grow and improve in making and forming disciples.
- The church and disciples often fail to see all the people God calls them to see.

- God calls us to see all the people and engage with them for the transformation of ourselves as disciples and the transformation of our communities.
- Many things distract us and keep us from making and forming disciples. Naming and working through these things are the only ways to move us forward in our mission of making and forming disciples of Jesus Christ to *see all the people*.

If any of this sparks something within you as you read, I invite you to take a day or two to journey through this resource to discover or rediscover your discipleship journey and reflect on the importance of discipleship within your context. Throughout this resource, you will be invited to reflect personally, as a disciple, and corporately, with your ministry context in mind, on what it means to be a disciple and what it means for the church to form and grow disciples.

You are invited to discover why seeing all the people can change us, change our communities, and change the world.





CHAPTER 1

Discovering Discipleship

**Remembering Who We Are
and What God Calls Us To**

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17 NRSVUE

*So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old
has passed away; look, new things have come into being!*

GOAL OF CHAPTER 1

Discover (*or rediscover*) your discipleship story and articulate God's collective call or purpose for your church or ministry setting.

We start by reflecting on the thing that perhaps we take for granted the most: our own discipleship.

In ancient law, we find a core legal principle: "*Nemo dat quod non habet*"—*No one gives what they do not have*—or, in legal terms, one cannot transfer title or property to someone else if they do not possess it legally.

Think of your local used car market:

For Sale: 1969 Bronco, rust in the usual spots, *title in hand*.

If we are selling or giving away something, we must first know that it belongs to us.

When it comes to our discipleship journey, do we know who we are as a follower of Jesus and whose we are as a child of God? Do we remember why we said we wanted to follow Jesus in the first place? Take a moment to reflect and share the moment or moments when you first decided to follow Jesus.



PERSONAL REFLECTION

Share your first memories when you made a conscious decision to follow Jesus.

Why did you decide to follow Jesus? What were the circumstances?

How long ago was this experience? What transformation (if any) has occurred in your life since?

The idea that you can't give away what you don't have is also true for a church or a group of disciples. Does this gathered group know or remember why they first began gathering? For what purpose or purposes? Take some time to reflect on your church or the community where you gather. If possible, invite reflection from other disciples as well.

When did you first start going to this community gathering/church and why?

What made you decide to stay or keep coming back?

What do you think are the primary purposes for this community gathering/church?

1.

2.

3.

When I have asked these reflection questions in group settings, some common responses I receive are:

- “I’ve never thought about this.”
- “I’m not sure why or even when I became a disciple.”
- “I know why I love my church, but I have never articulated it.”
- “My grandparents and parents went to this church, so I did too. I never thought about why.”

If you shared some of these sentiments, you are not alone. So often, life just happens to us, but we rarely carve out time to reflect on or articulate the most important moments or why they are important to us.

But there is something very important that starts to happen as we discover or rediscover and articulate what God has done for us. What I have witnessed is that as disciples share about their first remembered story of following Jesus, the energy in the room changes. As people remember and share their first discipleship moments, they experience a renewal.

As we reflect on these moments, we are articulating that thing that we often take for granted—that thing that we were given. Speaking the words and sharing the stories makes the thing appear in our hands once again. And reflecting intentionally or remembering what God has done for us manifests what we hopefully would want for others. This last part is important, because we must remember that what God has done for us, was not just for us as individuals, but is meant for all people.

If we are honest, this thing that we claim to have as followers of Jesus—call it grace, call it peace, call it transformation—whatever you want to call it—when we stop reflecting on it, tends to go away—it disappears from our hands and from our awareness. Remember: “Nemo dat quod non habet”—No one gives what they do not have.

Sometimes when we find that are not sharing this life in Jesus with others, it may mean that our awareness has slipped away and we have forgotten why we ourselves follow Jesus.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

After reflecting on your faith story, is what you have found through following Jesus something you want for others who may be searching?

What are some reasons why you are sometimes reluctant to share your faith journey with others?

What would help you to be more likely to share your faith journey with another person?

Sometimes, we also find that churches or groups of gathered disciples are no longer sharing this life in Jesus with others. Sometimes our collective awareness has also slipped away, and we have forgotten why we gather and why we follow Jesus; collectively we have forgotten that the salvation we have found in Jesus was not meant only for our church community. When we stop reflecting on what God has done for us as a gathered community, often our purpose fades and we are unable to see anything beyond ourselves. When this happens churches often replace this important part of our mission with activity – busyness. Activity can make us feel good and productive, but it often replaces our primary mission of forming and growing disciples. We lose the purpose God has for us and we are unable to see people that God places on our paths. But as the church remembers and reflects together on their gathered purpose, and begins to articulate with one another, God’s Spirit begins to move

and inspire once again. Discovering and rediscovering our “why” for being disciples as a gathered community also helps us remain passionate about the gift we have received and help us to focus on our mission of discipleship and transformation in our communities.

REFLECTING ON YOUR CHURCH OR PLACE OF MINISTRY

How does your church regularly reflect on its mission/purpose internally and externally?

How clear is your church about why it exists beyond maintaining programs or activities?

What might help your church live out its mission/purpose in more effective ways?

How might your church better connect your ministry activities with forming and growing disciples?

DISCOVER ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

To discover more about discipleship as it relates to membership vows and the sacraments of Holy Communion and Baptism, check out our *Belong* series:

www.UMCdiscipleship.org/YouBelong



CHAPTER 2

Discovering a Lifelong Journey

Growing Closer to Christ

2 PETER 3:18 NRSVUE

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

GOAL OF CHAPTER 2

Discover the importance of growth in Christ for a disciple and for a congregation.

I began this resource sharing a particular story in my own journey. At that time, I was eight years old and just beginning my journey following Jesus. In this first example shared, it was a moment of wanting to belong to Jesus when I began to articulate my identity as a disciple. But there were also other important moments that lead me to that beginning. Before this moment, I was searching for general spiritual meaning for my life and then began exploring whether or not Christianity might help in this search.

I recall one childhood memory when I was hanging out with a few friends. We had finished playing basketball and we were resting by the garage. The sun had gone down, and the stars were beginning to come out. Over the next hour or so my friends and I began asking big searching questions about life as we looked at the stars. We wondered if there was a God who created all that we saw. We wondered if we were the only ones in this universe. We were all asking big questions of our own existence and its meaning. It was a searching moment.



I can also recall a childhood moment at Christian summer camp. All the kids around me seemed to already be followers of Jesus and seemed to know and understand what that meant. I, up until this point, was just going along with the crowd, and going where my parents sent me. But as camp counselors shared about what it meant to follow Jesus, I found myself engaged and asking questions. Who was this Jesus? What was Christianity about? I was beginning to explore Christianity specifically.

Here I invite you to feel free to edit the wording to fit your understanding and context, but “Searching”, “Exploring”, and “Beginning”, are basic spiritual stages of growth. From my 8-year-old baptismal moment (until now) I would say I have been in the “Growing” stage. Over the years I have realized that being a disciple and becoming a follower of Jesus is actually a life-long journey. When I decided to follow Jesus, everything I needed to be a disciple and live as a disciple was still opening before me; there was much that I still needed to experience and learn for my journey as a disciple. Although I have learned a great deal over the years, I realize I still have much to learn.

For me, growing as a disciple entails reflection and prayer, study and devotion, daily worship, opportunities for service, generosity, and support of others. Each of these practices contribute to my learning what it means to be a disciple, and with each day, helps me grow closer to what Jesus wants for my life.

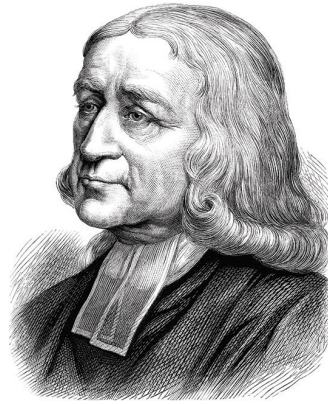
But what happens if we stop growing?

What happens if a community of gathered disciples stops growing?

As individuals, when this occurs, we slowly stop acting like a follower of Jesus. The characteristics we developed as a disciple begin to disappear. You could say we begin to think and act more and more like the world, and less and less like Jesus. And when churches stop growing collectively, they also begin to reflect the world instead of Christ.

When we act as the world acts, either individually or collectively, we go inward. We become self-centered and self-absorbed. Decisions are made for “my” or “our church’s” internal benefit. When a group within a community begins to act this way, the church becomes nothing more than a service provider catering to the perceived wants of individuals, rather than to what God wants for us and our communities. The church might continue to look and feel like a church, but when the people gathered are no longer growing closer to Christ, it affects every part of the organization.

And if we are honest, many disciples and churches have a misunderstanding of what it means to be a disciple. Some think that it all happens in that “beginning” moment as I described when I was eight. For some, that is the only moment that matters. But in the United Methodist tradition, we understand that our growth as a disciple only starts there, and that God’s purpose for our lives from that moment on becomes increasingly clear.



John Wesley might say something like, “It is wonderful that you have been saved, but for what purpose?” With this idea, Wesley offers a counter to the notion that salvation ends when we ask to be baptized. Some Christian contexts have personalized salvation so much that they forget about the ongoing salvation and redemption of creation, into which we are also invited. John Wesley offered a much broader view through his concepts of grace:

- **Prevenient Grace (*Searching & Exploring*):**
The grace that comes before, leading us to Jesus.
- **Justifying Grace (*Beginning*):**
The moment or moments when we experience the salvific grace of God through Jesus.
- **Sanctifying Grace (*Growing & Maturing*):**
The ongoing growth as a disciple as we live out our faith following where God and the Holy Spirit lead.

The inattention to *sanctifying grace* in the disciple’s journey causes many disciples and churches to lose their focus and purpose. If disciples and churches stop growing and maturing in faith, they often lose their ability to see and love all God’s people on a daily basis and miss the Holy Spirit’s guidance toward what God is calling them to.

This is why becoming a lifelong disciple of Jesus, a disciple maturing in faith by the Spirit's guidance, is vital for our journey and purpose, both individually and collectively.

When disciples commit to a lifelong journey of growth, we step on a path where Jesus can guide us daily for our own good and for the good of those around us. As we grow closer to Christ, we begin to see the world and the people we encounter differently. We begin to see people as God sees people. This is the last stage of spiritual growth called "maturing." As mentioned earlier, John Wesley called this ongoing part of our journey "sanctifying grace," the idea that people can continue growing closer to Christ, with the ultimate goal of representing or imitating Christ in everything we do. John Wesley called this "going on to perfection." (For those who struggle with such language, I quote my late professor Chuck Yrigoyen, who said, "If you are not going on to perfection, what are you going on to?") Maturing in Christ means we are moving in the right direction, always drawing closer to Christ on our journey.

When a group of disciples commit to a life-long journey of growth and maturing, it changes both how we interact with one another, and how and for whom we make decisions, shaping the daily details of the mission Jesus calls us to. Disciples collectively growing closer to Christ become more selfless, more aware of those around them, and begin putting all the people that God cares so much about at the center of all that we do. As we grow closer to Christ, God's love for all people becomes our love for all people. And this love begins to drive everything we do.

**AS WE GROW
CLOSER TO
CHRIST, GOD'S
LOVE FOR ALL
PEOPLE BECOMES
OUR LOVE FOR
ALL PEOPLE.**

John Wesley said it like this: "We feel the 'love of God shed abroad in our heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us,' *producing love to all humankind...expelling the love of the world...in a word, changing the 'earthly, sensual, devilish' mind into 'the mind which was in Christ Jesus.'*" (Wesley, Sermon 43, "The Scripture Way of Salvation").



Wesley would offer that the reason we have been redeemed by grace through faith is so that we might see more clearly as we journey through this life, in order to love all people as God loves. When we are growing closer to Christ daily, we become more outward-focused, and our concern and love for all people begins to increase within our daily attentions. We begin to see and care for others as much as, if not more than, we do ourselves. We also begin to realize that the people God places on our path can help us grow in our discipleship. Each encounter with another becomes a means of grace for mutual blessing.

As we grow closer to Jesus we begin to pay more attention, asking things like:

- Who am I not seeing?
- Who is hurting and how can I help?
- Who will I learn from today?
- What is God through another person trying to teach me today?

Growing closer to Jesus each day means seeing the world and people more clearly. So, the first question is: “Are we on a path to lifelong growing and maturing in Christ?” The second question is, “Is our church aware of the stages of growth of a disciple, and are we actively helping people grow and mature in faith so that all are growing closer to Christ to see more clearly?”

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Where am I on this journey of growth as a disciple? Am I still *searching*? *Exploring*? Have I taken on the *identity* as a follower of Jesus? Am I a disciple *growing* in Christ? What patterns in my life reflect God's ongoing work of grace and formation? Am I a disciple who has done a lot of growing, so that I am in a *maturing* phase of my discipleship?

Searching Exploring Beginning/Belonging Growing Maturing

Reflect below:

REFLECTING ON YOUR CHURCH OR PLACE OF MINISTRY

Where would you chart the majority of the disciples in your ministry setting in terms of their growth? (Remember, age does not necessarily correlate to maturity; you can be any age at any stage of growth as a disciple.)

Within your church, approximately what percentage of people are still *searching*? (What percentage of visitors do you have each week?)

Approximately what percent of are still *exploring* Christianity?

What percentage are new followers of Jesus who would *identify* as such?

What percentage are *growing* in their discipleship?

What percentage are *maturing* in their discipleship?

(Hold this information for reflection after the next chapter, as it should influence your intentional discipleship systems/pathways in your church.)

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Reflect on times in your life when you felt like you stopped growing as a follower of Jesus. How did it affect your life? Your relationships?

REFLECTING ON YOUR CHURCH OR PLACE OF MINISTRY

Reflect on times when you felt like your faith community was actively growing in faith. What did that look like? How was it supported and encouraged?

Reflect on times when you felt like your community was not growing in faith. How did this affect the ministries and purpose of the church? What contributed to those moments?

DISCOVER ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

To discover more about the *why* of being a disciple and the importance of intentional discipleship systems for churches, check out ***Developing an Intentional Discipleship System: A Guide for Congregations.***



<https://store.UMCdiscipleship.org/product/developing-an-intentional-discipleship-system>

CHAPTER 3

Discovering Intentional Discipleship

Creating Systems (Pathways) of Discipleship

EPHESIANS 4:12-13 NRSVUE

“...to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.”

GOAL OF CHAPTER 3

Discover specific characteristics of discipleship and how the church can work holistically to create more intentional spaces for disciples to grow closer to Christ.

Growing in Christ as a part of a lifelong journey requires regular self-reflection and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It also requires humility, assuming that there are still things God wants me to learn and still new people God wants me to encounter for my growth. Churches or ministry settings must also periodically take time to reflect on where God is guiding the body through the Holy Spirit, articulating both what we do well and where we struggle in discipleship.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

As you think about what it means to be a disciple, take a moment to write down some of the characteristics of discipleship that you believe are most important:

Take a moment to reflect on how the church helps you grow in these areas or could help you grow more intentionally in these areas:

Creating intentional discipleship systems or pathways begins by articulating what a disciple is for your ministry setting. To do this, the leaders of the church must determine the specific characteristics of discipleship that are true for their context. Once these characteristics are named, leaders can work to make sure regular opportunities are offered within the church discipleship system, to help disciples grow and mature. Once articulated and shared more broadly, leaders can encourage disciples to self-reflect and own their own growth as disciples. In our personal journey, many of us have a basic idea of what a disciple is, but we rarely pause to think about what is most important for our own growth. Churches that are intentional about helping disciples grow, will experience disciples growing closer to Christ, becoming more outward focused, seeing more clearly the people around them, and more aware of how God is calling them to live out their discipleship.



When you shared earlier about what you think is most important as you grow as a disciple, chances are you shared some variation of the following characteristics: worship life, community life (belonging), spiritual practices, generosity, and service. (You may have used different words, but the basic concepts are probably similar.)

Now add to this the stages of growth that we explored in chapter 2: searching, exploring, beginning, growing, and maturing. For each characteristic, you should be able to articulate progression toward maturing in that area.

Take a moment to reflect on where you are personally in the following areas (feel free to substitute using the language you shared earlier—the characteristics you feel are most important for the life of a disciple. If you shared a completely different characteristic, think about and articulate what it looks like to grow from searching to maturing).

Worship Life:

- Attend once or twice a year
- Attend sporadically (define sporadically: _____)
- Attend regularly (define regularly: _____)
- Attend regularly and recognize daily moments of worship
- Begin to worship every day at work and play; invite others into worship

Community Life:

- Searching for community
- Drawn to experience the community of disciples
- Move from receiving hospitality to offering it
- Regularly look for ways to show love to others
- Seek to build relationships with others and invite them into community

Spiritual Practices:

- Wondering about what might draw me closer to God
- Drawn to explore God's love through scripture and prayer
- Begin to pray and read scripture regularly
- Explore spiritual disciplines on a daily basis
- Practice spiritual disciplines daily and begin to help others explore

Generosity:

- Realize there is more to life than selfish gain
- Begin to give occasionally
- Begin to give regularly: time, talent, money
- Start to tithe time, talents, and money
- Tithe and occasionally give beyond a tithe as God leads

Service:

- Focused on my needs, but interested in serving others
- Seeing other people serving regularly and deciding to serve more often
- Begin serving others; discover how God has gifted me to serve
- Explore ways to use gifts and talents to serve others regularly
- Begin to restructure life around how to serve others, where God is calling

In what areas of my discipleship would I like to see growth? Take a minute to reflect on each:

Worship Life

Describe current worship life:

Describe next steps for growth:

Community Life

Describe current community life:

Describe next steps for growth:

Spiritual Practices

Describe current spiritual practices:

Describe next steps for growth:

Generosity

Describe current generosity:

Describe next steps for growth:

Service

Describe current service:

Describe next steps for growth:

Now let's think about the same characteristics, but with your church or ministry setting in mind. If the church is one of the primary places where opportunities for self-reflection and growth are offered to disciples, how can the church become more aware of how disciples are growing in each area? In Chapter 2, you were asked to reflect on how many disciples within the church would fit into each stage of growth: searching, exploring, beginning, growing, and maturing. With that in mind, how do you think your church can be more intentional about what it offers to help people grow in each area?

Example: In one of the churches where I served, the leaders decided that God was calling us to add more contemporary elements to worship to help a broader group of people grow as disciples through worship. We did not abandon the existing worship style but added new elements that might speak to people in new ways. We wanted to create more space for more disciples to grow in this area. To do this, we started a worship band to complement the organ and the choir. Creating a worship band was such an amazing experience, and many of those who came together are still friends today.

What opportunities for growth would we like to focus on first as a church in order to help disciples grow on their journey?

As Vaughan Fleischfresser, teacher of music, shares:

“People never forget being in a band. People never forget being in a choir. People never forget being in an orchestra. You never forget the music, friendships, feelings, concerts, laughter, emotion, or the sense of belonging. There’s nothing like making music with other people.”

If your church were a band with a choir, an orchestra, and all the possible instruments and singers, what song would it be playing or singing? Is everyone working together on the same song, or are they all doing different things? As a church, our primary song is to form and grow disciples who go out and love the world and all its people. We must work together to make sure we are singing and playing the same song!

What we are invited to discover through a more intentional approach to discipleship, is how we might get all the pieces of our church working together in harmony—like a band—in order to form and grow disciples.

As you think about your church and those who gather there, and as you reflect on what you currently offer to help people grow closer to Christ, what might God be calling you to expand or adjust?

Worship Life

Describe current worship life:

Describe next steps for growth:

Community Life

Describe current community life:

Describe next steps for growth:

Spiritual Practices

Describe current spiritual practices:

Describe next steps for growth:

Generosity

Describe current generosity:

Describe next steps for growth:

Service

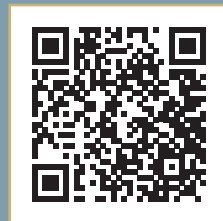
Describe current service:

Describe next steps for growth:

DISCOVER ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Browse our selection of resources
for strengthening elements within
your intentional discipleship system.

UMCdiscipleship.org/SeeAllThePeople



CHAPTER 4

Discovering God's Guidance

Seeing All The People

ACTS 9:8-9,17-18 NRSVUE

"Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing..."

So Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul and said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.' And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored."

GOAL OF CHAPTER 4

To discover how to see more clearly and help our churches
see all the people.

The ultimate goal of discipleship is to help people encounter Jesus, be transformed and healed by grace, begin a lifelong journey growing closer to Jesus, and—through the guidance of the Holy Spirit—begin to see more clearly as they walk through life.

Learning to see more clearly often begins when clarity interrupts the familiar.

There is an adorable set of videos online showing toddlers as they receive their first pair of glasses. At first, they fight the doctor or parent as the glasses are placed over their heads. The glasses wrap all the way around the head, so it is a little uncomfortable (I assume). But the discomfort quickly shifts to pure joy as the toddlers begin to see clearly for the first time. It is precious. Their faces break into the biggest smiles you can imagine as the toddler looks around, first seeing their mom or dad clearly, but then seeing everything clearly. What a miraculous moment!

Think for a moment about those first times deciding to follow Jesus. What did you experience God doing in your life in that moment? Was it like seeing clearly for the first time? Was it like seeing your loving parent, guardian, or best friend smiling back at you for the first time? Seeing more clearly changes everything.

When we see people and the world clearly, we gain a glimpse into God's desired future for us. But as psychiatrist M. Scott Peck says, "The truth will set you free but first it will make you angry." As we grow closer to Christ and see more clearly, we see the things that break God's heart. In these instances when the Holy Spirit is moving us deeply, we can assume that God may be calling us to use our hands and feet, our gifts and graces, our time and talents to contribute to the change or transformation God calls us to see.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Find and watch a video of children getting glasses for the first time. Compare children seeing clearly for the first time with your own discipleship journey.

REFLECTING ON YOUR CHURCH OR PLACE OF MINISTRY

When the children see clearly for the first time, you can see pure joy on their faces. Does my church or ministry setting regularly express joy as we journey together? Why or why not? What could we do together to begin to see more clearly?

As humans we often complicate things that are simple—the same is true for discipleship. One of my favorite phrases that my wife and I share together is, “Are you overthinking what I am overthinking?” But Jesus kept his instructions consistent and simple (paraphrasing): Love God and love your neighbor—this is the most important thing...do this and you will have life. Our simple goal as disciples, our simple goal as a gathered group of disciples, is to wake up each day asking how do we grow closer to Jesus and how do we love our neighbors better? And I would add, how do we see the people God calls us to see?

One of the best ways to practice loving God and loving neighbor each day is by praying without ceasing. “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 NRSVUE). Or as Frederick Buechner offered, “Go where your best prayers take you.”

In order to see clearly in our day-to-day lives, we must pray without ceasing, asking the Holy Spirit to guide us. Try starting each day with some version of this prayer:

“God help me to see the people and things you want me to see and help me to better understand how my journey interacts with theirs. And if I am to act in some way, speak to me through your Holy Spirit and move me where you want me to go.”

Both in your individual discipleship and within your ministry setting, consider adding prayer walk opportunities. To keep it simple, consider two types of prayer walks. In the first type, an individual or a group walks through the neighborhood in a spirit of discernment. As the members walk, they pray for God’s vision for the area. They pray for the people in the neighborhood and for God’s vision for their ministry with their neighbors. The second type of prayer walk is more hands-on. Church members gather for



a short, informal training session. During the walk, they introduce themselves to their neighbors, offer to pray for specific needs, and collect prayer requests and contact information if people wish to continue receiving prayer. Whatever variation of the prayer walk you try, keep it simple: gather a group of disciples, pair up, make sure your church name or logo is clearly visible, and go out into the community with the hope of seeing it with new eyes.

As you walk through your neighborhood, pray that you might see what God wants you to see. Bring paper and a pencil to jot down street names or make notes about what you are seeing (or use a notes app on your phone). Take pictures along the way, particularly of anything that takes you by surprise. Engage people in conversation if they seem open to it. Ask open-ended questions about them and their view of the community: How long have they lived here? How has the community changed over that time? What do they love most about the community? What do they like least? What could be improved? If they seem open, ask: “Is there something we could pray for today?” “May we share this prayer request with the people where we serve?” With permission, jot down their names and addresses for future follow-up. After the prayer walk, gather at a central location at a given time to reflect on your experience and discuss together how you felt the Holy Spirit moving.

“

You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.

JANE GOODALL

”

Wesleyan Way

When we are intentional about helping disciples grow in faith and grow closer to Christ, we will notice more and more disciples drawn outward into our communities. More and more followers of Christ in your ministry setting will see people and the world in new ways and discover that God is calling them into new ways of being.

In the Wesleyan tradition, we have historically helped disciples live out their faith through “works of mercy” or “works of piety.” Wesley understood these opportunities as a means of receiving God’s grace individually and through our interactions with others.

Works of Mercy:

- Feeding the hungry
- Clothing the naked
- Caring for the sick
- Visiting those in prison
- Sheltering the homeless
- Welcoming the stranger
- Peacemaking
- Serving the common good

Works of Piety:

- Public worship
- Reading God’s word and searching the scriptures
- Holy Communion
- Family and private prayer
- Fasting or abstinence
- Christian conferencing



As your church becomes more focused on helping people intentionally grow closer to Christ, you will also want to be increasingly intentional about the opportunities you offer to see all people, as disciples live out their faith.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Review the Wesleyan examples of works of mercy and works of piety on the previous page. Prayerfully pick one in each category to explore further. Where might you explore opportunities within your church or community to grow in these areas?

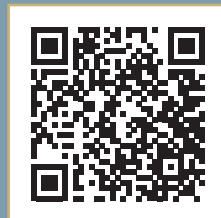
REFLECTING ON YOUR CHURCH OR PLACE OF MINISTRY

From the works of mercy and works of piety lists, is there one that you feel God is calling your church or ministry context to grow in? Is there a specific place within the community that God is calling you to see and love in practical ways?

DISCOVER ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Find resources about living out your discipleship and helping your church better engage the community.

UMCdiscipleship.org/SeeAllThePeople



CHAPTER 5

Discovering the Barriers to Discipleship

Naming What Keeps Us From Seeing All The People

2 CORINTHIANS 4:16-18 NRSVUE

“So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For our slight, momentary affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen, for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal.”

GOAL OF CHAPTER 5

To discover some of the barriers that keep us from forming and growing disciples and *seeing all the people* and to discover new paths forward.

When I visit churches and ask for leaders to tell me a little bit about the church and its ministries and its overall purpose what is often shared is a list of wonderful things. I hear about worship times, feeding ministries, who meets at the church—lots of activities. All good things, but rarely does a church lead with “our church forms and grows disciples”. And as we look at statistics across the denomination, church by church, district by district, conference by conference, this appears to be true. Baptisms and professions of faith, two key indicators of discipleship, are low to non-existent. There are many possible reasons for this. Let us explore and discover some of the barriers that keep us from forming and growing disciples and Seeing All The People. This is not an exhaustive list, but rather a starting place. You are invited to make your own list—those things that you observe in your context—and then begin to discover a path through the barriers once they are named.

As we look at these examples, I invite you to name the barrier, unpack the possible reasons why it is a barrier, and then begin to offer solutions that would help you and your church find a new way forward.



EXAMPLES TO BEGIN THE CONVERSATION

Barrier: Not enough people; same people doing all the tasks.

Possible Reasons & Possible Paths Forward:

- As Arthur Ashe said, “*Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can.*” Jesus started with twelve people. Create a small group for learning, growing, and maturing together. Disciples are formed one person at a time. Focus on the people in front of you and the people you encounter each day. As a small group, find a way to bless your community and serve together. Go on prayer walks together. Follow where God leads and trust that it is enough.
 - Disciples can be formed and grow closer to Christ in any-sized church.
 - At least once a year, offer a time for spiritual gifts teaching and reflection. Invite disciples to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit on where they might be able to serve and support discipleship within the church.
 - Contemplate smaller, more streamlined structures to organize differently.
 - If you have a limited number of people, answer the question: “What are the most important things we should be doing?” Focus on where God is calling you and being faithful to the call.
 - Keep supporting disciples as they grow in faith and keep praying that they will answer when God calls them to some part of the ministry.
-

Barrier: We don’t feel equipped or confident enough to share our faith/form disciples.

Possible Reasons & Possible Paths Forward:

- Write down your faith journey and highlight the key places where you have experienced God moving in powerful ways, places where you experienced grace, healing, redemption, and God’s presence. In a small group of disciples, share some of those stories out loud and invite others to ask questions. (*This will add to your story; jot down things that this recalls in your journey.*)

- Work to improve your listening skills. Listen to how God is at work in the lives of others. When appropriate and authentic, affirm the grace of God in their lives and share what God is doing for you.
 - Focus on relationships. Love people just to love people—the way God loves them—with no ulterior motives.
 - Deep respect for other faiths/denominations. Regardless of another faith/denomination, people are hurting and in need of grace across the world. As followers of Jesus, we can authentically share what has been true for us without negating what has been true for others. All we are asked to do is share authentically how God is moving in our lives.
-

Barrier: We don't have the resources, the right building, the finances, and so on.

Possible Reasons & Possible Paths Forward:

- The early Methodist Church grew the most when there were no formal buildings, people gathered in homes, clergy traveled on horseback, and all they had was a Bible and maybe a hymnal. We need the will to follow God's call and the love for our neighbor more than we need any resources. We don't even need a building to love our neighbors.
- Scarcity on a personal level: I don't feel like I have the time, talents, or resources to give. God did not give you gifts, talents, and resources only for your good, but rather for the good of others. Start small, but start somewhere: give 2% percent of your time, talent, resources, and energy, then increase to 3%, 5%, 10%. Grace and generosity grow the more you use the muscle. Perhaps your life is out of balance: reflect on how much time you spend in each area of your life; perhaps God is calling you to adjust some things for the good of others and for the mission of your church.
- It takes zero dollars to start seeing and loving people.

Barrier: Leaders in our church are unwilling to try new things.

Possible Reasons & Possible Paths Forward:

- This usually indicates an unhealthy, self-centered, or inward-focused discipleship. Disciples have stopped growing.
 - Trying new things implies wanting to reach new people, and love of all people should be at the center of everything we do.
 - Help disciples grow and mature in their faith, grow closer to Christ, and help leaders become more outward-focused.
 - Fear of failure. Trying new things and failing is also how we learn and grow. We only fail if we failed to learn something. Try something new on a short-term basis—say, “let’s try it for 3–6 months, then evaluate how it is going and where God might be leading next.”
 - A fundamental misunderstanding of the gospel message. Leaders feel as if this good news was just for them personally, rather than for all humanity. Help people reflect on their early discipleship journey and discover that what they received God offers to all.
-

Barrier: Leader Burnout

Possible Reasons & Possible Paths Forward:

- You cannot give what you do not have. Perhaps leaders need time away, time for renewal, to discover or rediscover why they became followers of Jesus in the first place. If we, as leaders, are not caring for our own souls, how can we care for others? If we are not growing as disciples, how can we help others grow? If we don’t have anything to share, how can we encourage others to share? If we are not sharing our story, our faith, how can we expect others to share theirs?
- You cannot teach someone to swim while they are drowning, and you cannot make disciples if you are struggling. Name the stresses and struggles (financial, depression, relationships, church systems, etc.) that hinder you from your own growth as a disciple or keep you from helping your church be intentional

about discipleship. How might time and attention be given to each to help with healing or improvement?

- The leader feels alone in ministry. Start by sharing this with other leaders (Staff/Parish Committee or the Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development). Perhaps you are in the wrong place within ministries? Perhaps there is a better place that aligns with your gifts and passions? How can the church help raise up and equip new leaders around you? If the leader who is feeling alone is the pastor, how can the laity share this burden and assist in helping other leaders grow and be equipped to better support the pastor and the ministries of the church?
 - Perhaps God is calling you to something different. Prayerfully reflect on your gifts and current place of service and see if God is calling you to make a shift.
 - Consider creating intentional space for renewal together. A short-term church or leadership study of *Soul Reset* by Junius B. Dotson can help leaders reflect on rhythms of rest, identity, and calling, creating shared language around spiritual health and reminding leaders that caring for their souls is part of faithful discipleship, not a distraction from it.
-

Some other barriers often named:

- Discomfort across cultures, languages, socioeconomic divides, and racism.
- Arrogance—*“I need to bring what I have to others.”* Such an attitude turns people away from what you are offering, or worse, turns them away from God. How do we help people adopt healthy approaches to seeing all the people and serving and loving our communities? Offer more humble approaches that help disciples understand that their growth as a disciple hinges on relationships characterized by mutuality.
- Lack of intentionality—*“We don’t really know how disciples are formed and grow in our context.”* How can we help our churches be more intentional about naming the ways disciples grow closer to Christ through various opportunities, including acts of mercy and piety?

PERSONAL REFLECTION

What are some of the things that keep me from my own personal growth as a disciple or my ability to see the people around me each day? (Name the barrier and then name possible reasons why, and possible paths through.)

Name it:

Possible Reasons and Possible Paths Forward:

Name it:

Possible Reasons and Possible Paths Forward:

Name it:

Possible Reasons and Possible Paths Forward:

REFLECTING ON YOUR CHURCH OR PLACE OF MINISTRY

What are some of the barriers that keep our church from making and forming disciples and *seeing all the people*? (Again, name the barrier, then list possible reasons and possible paths forward.)

Name it:

Possible Reasons and Possible Paths Forward:

Name it:

Possible Reasons and Possible Paths Forward:

Name it:

Possible Reasons and Possible Paths Forward:

Thank you for journeying through this resource. We hope you discovered insights along the way that were helpful for your own discipleship growth and for intentional discipleship in your ministry setting. May God, guided by the Holy Spirit, continue to help you journey through this life seeing more clearly. May God continue to inspire the church to focus on our mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world and truly See All The People. Blessings in your continued discovery.



To Go Deeper

To discover additional resources to assist you on your journey to *See All The People*, scan the QR code or visit the Discipleship Ministries website at:

www.UMCdiscipleship.org/SeeAllThePeople



SUGGESTED READING:

- *Belong Book Series*
- Bishop's Vision Statement: Worship and Small-Group Resources
- *Developing an Intentional Discipleship System: A Guide for Congregations*
- *Developing an Intentional Discipleship System: A Guide for Youth Ministry*
- *Developing an Intentional Discipleship System for Children*
- *Disciples Living Generously*
- *Disciples Making Disciples: A Guide for Covenant Discipleship Groups and Class Leaders* by Steven W. Manskar
- *Engaging Your Community: A Guide to Seeing All the People* by Junius B. Dotson
- *Engaging Your Community with Cultural Sensitivity*
- *Everyday Disciples: Covenant Discipleship with Youth* by Chris Wilterdink
- *Forming Disciples Through Worship* by Cynthia Wilson, Diana Sanchez-Bushong, Derek Weber, and Jeff Campbell
- *Growing Everyday Disciples: Covenant Discipleship with Children* by Susan Groseclose, Melanie Gordon, and Gayle Quay
- *New Member/New Disciple Orientation*
- *How to Start Small Groups*
- *The New Job Descriptions: Organizing Leadership in the Local Church to Enhance Discipleship, 2025-2028*
- *Online Discipleship* by Jeff Campbell et al
- *Soul Reset* by Junius B. Dotson
- *Thriving Small Groups* by Scott Hughes and Motoe Yamada Foor

“Seeing all the people is not a technique. It is a way of living the love of Christ.”

What would change in your church, your neighborhood, and your everyday routines if you truly learned to see people the way God sees them?

See All The People: Discovery invites us to return to the heart of the church’s mission: forming and growing disciples of Jesus Christ. It begins with reflection on what we have found as followers of Jesus, and then invites us to slow down long enough to notice the people in front of us, the people we overlook, and the people whom God loves. Then we ask questions such as: Who is God through the Holy Spirit moving me to encounter and what will God reveal to me for my growth as a disciple?

This book helps individuals and congregations reflect on our discipleship: our identity in Christ, the grace we have been given, and the daily practices that help us continue to grow as disciples. Remembering and living these things, and making them more intentional, help us to grow closer to Jesus and help us begin to see all the people.

See All The People: Discovery will help you foster a culture in which disciples wake up each day ready to love God and love their neighbor in practical, specific ways.

WHAT’S INSIDE:

- A discipleship framework rooted in growing in grace
- Attention to the barriers that keep us from seeing and loving well
- Practices and reflections that can be used personally or with a group

Ready to Begin?

Start your journey at www.SeeAllThePeople.org to discover related tools and companion resources.



DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRIES
The United Methodist Church

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