

"Picking Up
the **PIECES**
Post Pandemic"

DISCIPLESHIP

in a **Socially-Distant** World

Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 1:8

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Making disciples is the natural process that automatically occurs as a believer matures in the faith. For the believer, maturity means reproduction—[John 15:5](#). It is a natural behavior that many disobedient believers have made unnatural—[Hebrews 5:12](#). What Jesus originally intended to be joyous, fulfilling, and exhilarating for the believer has for many become a chore, a burden, and what most believers never do—[Luke 15:4-7, 10, 22-24](#). This class is designed to show how discipling in a



socially-distant world can be fun, energizing and fulfilling. So as we begin, please make sure that you have settled the obedience question. Discipleship is for those who have made the decision to follow Jesus without restrictions and meet the qualifications of [John 14:15, Matthew 22:37-39](#).



those challenges and produce to an even greater degree—[Exodus 1:12](#). God has

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never or will ever allow times or conditions to become too difficult for believers to obey Him and produce—[1 Corinthians 10:13](#). The Pandemic of COVID-19, when viewed through the eyes of the Scripture, provided more opportunities than obstacles. But to see those opportunities and seize them, one must be focused on accomplishing the assignment Jesus gave the church. Jesus' assignment to the church is a mandate and is not optional. [Acts 1:8](#) and [Matthew 28:19-20](#) are still the requirements in a socially-distant world. Distance has never been a problem for God.

In [Matthew 28:19-20](#), Jesus promises His presence as we make disciples, and in [Acts 1:8](#), He promises His power. When we focus only on our challenges or complications, we ignore Jesus' presence and His power and



therefore become defeated by our circumstances. He never told us to make disciples on our own—[John 15:5](#), [Philippians 2:13](#). Therefore, to make disciples in a socially-distant world, we must be locked into our purpose and know that it is not optional nor are there any excuses for not making disciples—[Matthew 9:38](#). God's purpose for the church has not changed.



Question to consider—What would you say has hindered you over the past 16 months from reaching the lost for Christ?

God has given the church everything needed to complete the assignment to reach the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, but it is largely ignored by believers—[2 Peter 1:3-4](#). Have you noticed that when it comes to our agenda, we find reasons to do, but when it comes to the agenda of Christ, we find reasons not to do? Many times we ignore what is in our hands when it comes to our assignment for Christ. We have gotten to the point that we can't exist without it, yet we seldom use it for Christ.



Therefore, all we need to do is look in our hands. When Moses thought that he was powerless in the assignment God gave him, God asked Moses, "What's in your hands?"—[Exodus 4:2](#). Then, God showed Moses all the possibilities and miracles that could be done with what was in his hands. Then, He tells Moses in [Verse 4:17](#) to take the staff and do what He assigned.

Discipleship has to do with reaching people, connecting with them according to common interest and convincing them to join with you. We do this on a daily basis through social media to accomplish the purpose for our jobs and ourselves. Online shopping and online stores are recording record profits in this socially-distant world. We aid them in their success because we use the tool that is in our hands.



Question to consider—How do you use your cell phone and/or social media to connect people to Christ?








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I believe that God is asking the church the same question that He asked Moses, “What is that in your hand?” The answer is cell phones, ipads, and social media platforms. If we say that we cannot make disciples because of social distancing, we have ignored the obvious. God has provided the tool for us to not only reach Jerusalem but also the uttermost parts of the world—[Acts 1:8](#). We have the means in our hands. All we have to do is now use what is in our hands to complete our assignments. When we are focused on our assignment for Christ, this becomes very exciting and rewarding.



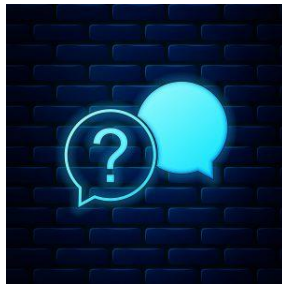
Question to consider— Of the top seven social media platforms, which are you most familiar and utilize the most?

- You Tube 
- Facebook 
- Instagram 
- Twitter 
- Tiktok 
- Pinterest 
- Snapchat 



All of these platforms are designed with connecting people in mind. Note the number of connections that are currently happening and continue to grow with no end in sight.

- Instagram has topped over 1 billion monthly users, Facebook—2.23 billion, You Tube— 1.9 billion, What’s App—1.5 billion, and Messenger—1.3 billion (all of this is obvious).
- Facebook—people use to build community and bring the world closer. People use it to stay connected with friends and family and to discover what’s going on in the world.
- You Tube—it is used to share videos, share, like, comment, and upload videos.
- Instagram—it is entirely visual. It is used to share images or videos with their audience.



Question to consider—What are some other social media platforms not named?

All of these platforms and others have connected people and met needs more than ever before, even in a socially-distant world. Note [Romans 10:8](#) and [Deuteronomy](#)

[30:11-15](#). The Word of God is the most important thing. We have learned how to reach the world and anyone we desire to reach through social media. But



most believers do it for selfish reasons and have ignored the obvious when it comes to making disciples for Christ. Suppose, just suppose, that we, as believers, began to reach those we reach selfishly—reach them now for the Kingdom. Imagine the impact. It is entirely possible for us to use the obvious tools in our hands to make disciples. The world is at our fingertips, yet we are looking for ways to make disciples and ignoring what is in our hands.



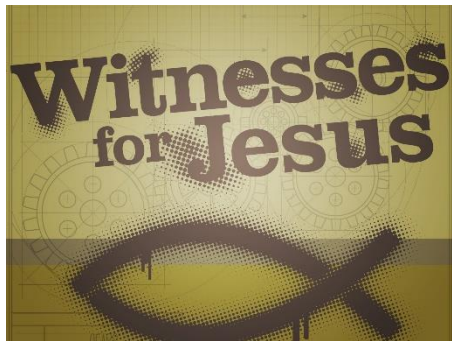
Remember that we are only the vessel that God chooses to use to make disciples—[John 6:44](#). As we obey God, the power of God is at work—[John 12:32](#). Therefore, the

believer must decide to obey and then God does the rest—[Philippians 2:13-14](#) AMP-C. As we obey God, He is working and using the church as His Light and His Salt.

Note what happened in a socially-distant time in **Acts 10** because Peter made the decision to obey God:

1. God works without man being present—**Acts 10:1-7**
2. God works on His messenger—**Acts 10:9-16**
3. God makes the connection—**Acts 10:17-23**

Jesus' mission statement is still real—**Luke 4:18-19**. In a socially-distant world,



there are still human problems and human needs. As a matter of fact, many of those problems and needs were magnified. When problems and needs are magnified, it is easier for the church to witness.

Note the Mt. Zion reality in a socially-distant world:



- Members' meeting attendance increased to levels never seen before the Pandemic.
- We were able to reach individuals through social media who had never responded to in-person invitations.
- We were effective reaching individuals outside of the Kalamazoo area because of our use of social media.
- Our giving was greater and more consistent because members recognized the need.

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- We were able to do everything we did prior to the Pandemic and do most of it more effectively.
- Our members readily reached out to more individuals.
- We added members to our roll.
- We disciplined individuals and many discovered and are now walking in their area of giftedness.
- Special events were viewed as an opportunity to serve and members gladly gave of themselves. This served as a magnet to those not connected to the body.

All of the above were done in a socially-distant world. These socially-distant times have revealed to us how to become more effective in connecting with our members and reaching those who have not yet responded to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We have put in place many things that we will continue to do because it is the most effective way to do ministry.



To effectively accomplish our God assignment requires constant adaptation and change. Quickly adapt to a new reality and then change. Change is most necessary if we are serious about reaching people for Christ. Change is not difficult when you are locked into your purpose.

God has given the church an opportunity to shed some things that were not working and embrace different things that will get greater results. He did this in a socially-distant world. Remember to go with God, we must change—[Isaiah 43:18-19](#).

