**STAGE 1 - NOT CURIOUS**

NOT HUNGRY FOR THE GOSPEL OR FOR JESUS

WHAT WOULD THE NOT CURIOUS SAY? “I’m convinced of a different truth, generally skeptical, or completely focused on other things in life. I have no real interest in Jesus and his message.”

Unfortunately, the NOT CURIOUS stage involves two sad truths:

* They are the majority of the people we encounter (in most cases).
* They are the most difficult to engage and help move along the path.

There are three major categories of the NOT CURIOUS:

1. Loyal to a non-Christian faith and suspicious of all others
2. Skeptical of all faiths (and maybe Christianity in particular)
3. Completely oblivious to Jesus and faith in general through choice, ignorance, or distraction

**Priorities for this Stage**

1. STIMULATING CONVERSATIONS
2. GENUINE FRIENDSHIP WITH A CHRISTIAN
3. TO SEE A PROVOCATIVE CHRISTIAN LIFESTYLE
4. TO BE ASKED GOOD QUESTIONS

**Next Steps**

### THINGS TO KNOW

* EVERYONE HAS A WORLDVIEW, AND “FAITH” IN THAT WORLD VIEW
  + Where did you come from?
  + Why are you here?
  + What is wrong with you/the world?
  + How does it get fixed?
  + What happens when you die?
* JESUS IS A COMPELLING FIGURE IN HISTORY
* EVERYONE WORSHIPS SOMETHING

### THINGS TO FEEL

* A NEED TO PONDER NORMALLY IGNORED QUESTIONS
  + If God did exist, what miracle would you ask him to do for you?
  + If you were alone in a room with God, what is one question you would ask him if you could?
  + If you were God, what is one thing you would change in the world?
  + If you were God, how would you tell a human who you are?
  + Why are spiritual conversations so awkward?
  + What’s a dumb question you would ask God?
  + Does God owe you anything, if he did exist?
  + Are people born with a tendency to believe in God?
* GROWING CURIOSITY ABOUT JESUS

### THINGS TO DO

* HEAR THE CHRISTIAN NARRATIVE FROM A PRACTICING CHRISTIAN
* ASK GOOD QUESTIONS
* EXPERIENCE A WORSHIP SERVICE

**Tips on engaging**

1. Don’t appeal to the Bible as an authoritative source if they don’t think of it as such (you can and should always appeal to biblical truth and should use your Bible if they ask to see where you are getting your ideas from). Find out what they do consider authoritative and start there (logic, science, pleasure, etc).

2. Make it your goal to arouse curiosity more than proving your point or winning an argument (sometimes this means saying less). Example: “Yesterday, God forced me to do something I didn’t want to do” is more intriguing than it is instructive but it may lead to curiosity.

3. Ask lots of questions about them. Remember the first words ever spoken to fallen man by God were these 3 questions (questions God already knew the answers to but asked anyway):

* Where are you?
* Who have you been listening to?
* What got you here?

4. Ask them if they have ever heard what Christians believe from a practicing Christian (a “no-brainer” question that will most often be answered “no”). Ask them if you could give it a try (give them a big picture version like Creation, Fall, Redemption, Restoration). This is especially useful with people from other faiths as most of them haven’t.

**STAGE 2 – CURIOUS**

HUNGRY FOR JESUS

Almost all the people who came to faith in Scripture would have been CURIOUS (Ethiopian Eunuch, the Woman at the Well, Zacchaeus).  Your goal with a CURIOUS person is to steward their curiosity and help them transition to belief.  The truth is that genuine conversion isn’t fueled by a person’s curiosity but rather by the call of Jesus on their life.  You’ll need to help CURIOUS people discover that Jesus is calling them.

**WHAT WOULD THE CURIOUS SAY?** “I’m curious enough about Jesus to investigate his life & teachings. I have a lot of questions like: How can I know it’s real? How can I experience God myself? What would a relationship with God do for me? I also may have questions about specific Christian beliefs. I’ll look at the Bible but I’d also like other proof that Jesus was really God.”

It’s important to point out that people can confuse “believing” something with “fully understanding” it. That’s a standard that we don’t use for many other beliefs in our life (like believing electricity works even though we don’t fully understand how). Believing also doesn’t mean not having any doubts at all (a virtual impossibility). Simply put, a BELIEVER’s faith involves a person’s **willingness to believe**outweighing their **tendency to doubt**. “Doubt-free” faith probably isn’t very healthy. As long as doubt doesn’t cripple the entire process of belief, it actually can be a useful part of faith (driving both our humility and propelling us to God for answers). When a person gets stuck on a part of the story they simply can’t believe, tell them to ask God to “meet them there” and help them work through it with out shutting down the whole process (“I believe! Help my unbelief!” Mark 9:24).

**Priorities for this Stage**

* EXPLORE THE BIG STORY
* EXPERIENCE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY
* BEGIN A CONVERSATION WITH GOD
* ASK ANY QUESTION

**Next Steps**

THINGS TO KNOW

* GOD EXISTS AND LOVES YOU
* THE BIG STORY
* BIBLICAL VIEW OF SIN
* UNIQUENESS OF JESUS
* THE BIBLE AS GOD’S RELIABLE TRUTH

THINGS TO FEEL

* BECOME GOD-AWARE
* BECOME SIN-AWARE
* TRUSTING GOD’S CHARACTER
* DRAWN TO JESUS
* FEEL GOD’S LOVE

THINGS TO DO

* EXAMINE KEY SCRIPTURES
* PRAY WITH SOMEONE
* ASK QUESTIONS, GET ANSWERS
* INTERACT WITH BELIEVERS

**Tips for engaging**

1. Don’t just default to inviting a CURIOUS person to church or Bible study. Find a way to cultivate their curiosity through a relationship so they get used to a discipleship model.

2. To eliminate unwanted pressure and awkwardness, let CURIOUS people know that if they investigate Jesus with you…

* the speed of their exploration will be up to them
* they can explore without committing (but BELIEVING involves commitment)
* their exploration could either lead to something really special or maybe not

3. Use a combination of sources in your exploration. Curious people should want to know what the Bible says (more than the NOT CURIOUS) but may still want to consider other sources like science, philosophy, intuition or personal experience.

4.  Help them understand that what they are interpreting as their own curiosity could be more of a calling by Jesus to follow him.  It’s easy to confuse the two, especially if you don’t even know that there is a Holy Spirit that draws people to God.

**STAGE 3 - Believer**

# Needs to be Fed

People who identify as a BELIEVER can range from cultural Christians with no personal relationship with Jesus to sincere followers of Christ who have never been discipled. It can be a tricky stage because we don’t always know what someone means by “I believe.”  Do they agree that the Gospel is true and it has already transformed them or have they not experienced that transformation yet?  Working with a BELIEVER over time will reveal where they are.

Here is what a BELIEVER might say…

 “I believe God exists & that He loves me. I believe my selfish thoughts, actions, & attitudes have broken my relationship with God. I believe Jesus was God and came to fix that relationship. I believe Jesus’ death & resurrection restores my relationship to God & enables me to have a new life with Him. I believe this new life with God means I’ll be Jesus-centered from now on. I believe God has called me to a community of Christians (a church) – they’ll help me live like Jesus. I don’t feel very comfortable praying or reading the Bible on my own yet because I don’t know what to do or where to start.”

Some people are uncomfortable labeling someone without a relationship with Jesus a BELIEVER, preferring to label them CURIOUS. But scripture instructs that belief does not always translate into a spiritual rebirth (James 2:19). Cornelius is a great example of someone who “feared God” and obviously “believed” that the God he was praying to existed (Acts 10:1-2). But he was not “born again” until Peter came and presented the gospel to him and his household. Rather than argue whether someone should be classified as a BELIEVER or CURIOUS, take up the role of Peter in their life and fill in all the gaps in their understanding of what it means to follow Jesus.

**Priorities for this Stage**

1. THE BASICS OF THE FAITH
2. PRAYING ON THEIR OWN
3. READING THE BIBLE FOR THEMSELVES
4. GATHERING WITH OTHER BELIEVERS
5. SPOTTING AND TURNING AWAY FROM SIN

**Next Steps**

THINGS TO KNOW 

* THE GOSPEL IN THE AIR AND THE GOSEPEL ON THE GROUND
* HOW TO PRAY
* HOW TO READ THE BIBLE
* IDENTITY IN CHRIST
* THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY

THINGS TO FEEL

* ENJOYING FORGIVENESS
* WONDER AT ADOPTION/RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD
* GRADITUE TO GOD
* HUNGRY TO LEARN
* SENSITIVE TO SIN

THINGS TO DO

* CONFESS AND REPENT OF SIN
* SHARE YOUR STORY
* BE BAPTIZED
* BE IN COMMUNITY
* PRAY
* READ THE BIBLE

**Tips for Helping a Believer**

1. Even if someone identifies as a DISCIPLE, suggest to them that you spend time in the BELIEVER stage since they will soon have to take others through it as a part of their training (it also serves to make sure key steps haven’t been skipped in their own discipleship).

2. Remember to be patient because the BELIEVER stage is one of the most **crucial** for many reasons like:

* The Bible starts to become their primary authority.
* Free exploration transitions into committed following.
* Identity in Christ is not only explained but experienced.
* The first sense of sharing our faith and experience with others is born.
* The curse of sin is broken and the (sometimes painful) process of sanctification begins.
* The integration into a healthy community is never more crucial.
* Connecting with God through personal prayer, study, and worship becomes fuel for life.

**STAGE 4 - DISCIPLE**

BEING FED AND FEEDING SELF SPIRITUALLY

WHAT WOULD A DISCIPLE SAY?  “I can feel God working in my life more and more. I’m learning to hear his voice, I’m trying to obey him. I know following Jesus means lining my life up with Jesus’ teachings and commands, things like being baptized. I’m willing to do that. I’m starting to see my sin more clearly. I ask God to forgive and change me regularly now. I’m spending time on my own in prayer, Bible study and serving others. God has put a desire in me to help others connect with Him like I have. But I’m nervous about this. So nervous in fact, sometimes I don’t say or do the things God asks because I don’t think I’m ready.”

We will never out grown just being a Disciple; however, The DISCIPLE who is spending time in prayer and the Word does not need a lot of convincing that they should be investing in others. What you do need is:

* Confidence that God can use them to help others grow in their faith.
* Encouragement from their leaders/pastor to start discipling others.
* Someone to model for them what discipleship looks like.
* A simple plan of what to do with the person they are discipling.
* A way to find people around them that need to be discipled.
* A reality check that discipling someone is difficult, messy, and sometimes fails.
* A sense of what kind of fruit to look for in those they are discipling.

**Priorities for this Stage**

1. LEARN HOW TO HELP OTHERS EXPLORE JESUS
2. SERVE IN A COMMUNITY
3. KNOW HOW TO DIG DEEP INTO GOD’S WORD
4. DEVELOP FRUITFUL DISCIPLINES

**Next Steps**

THINGS TO KNOW

* HOW TO IDENTIFY AND REJECT IDOLS
* HOW TO FIND GOD’S WILL
* DIGGING DEEPER IN THE WORD – Learning Systematic and Biblical Theology
* LEARN DISCIPLINES
* VALUE FEEDING OTHERS

THINGS TO FEEL

* GET PASSIONATE
* LONG FOR INTIMACY
* DETERMINE TO OBEY
* HATE SIN
* DESIRE DISCIPLINE
* EXPRESS COMPASSION

THINGS TO DO

* WORSHIP JESUS
* BATTLE WITH SIN
* PRACTICE DISCIPLINES
* DO LIFE TOGETHER
* WALK IN THE SPIRIT
* SERVE OTHERS SACRIFICIALLY

**Tips to Help**

1. Try to add someone who is CURIOUS or a BELIEVER to the time you spend with a DISCIPLE so they can begin to see what the DISCIPLE MAKER life looks and feels like.

2. Begin the transition of treating this person as a co-laborer in Christ and not just someone you are mentoring.

3. Train them in Gospel Appointments and Social Field Mapping so they can see their sphere of influence and begin seeing what God wants them to do in it.

4. Push them to take some leadership in one area of service in their spiritual community (even if it is something small and temporary) to help them understand what it takes to make a community work.

**STAGE 5 – DISCIPLE MAKER**

BEING FED, FEEDING SELF, AND FEEDING OTHERS SPIRITUALLY

The DISCIPLE MAKER is following the Great Commission and vital to the Church. They help bear the discipleship load. There is a tendency to be inattentive to their spiritual needs, however, because of their focus on others and maturity.

**WHAT WOULD A DISCIPLE MAKER SAY?**  “I’m being fed, feeding self, and feeding others. I’ve started discipling someone. I’m putting fear aside and obeying God even when I’m nervous. Whether it’s talking about my faith or stepping up to lead, I know God will help when he asks me to do something. I’m getting skilled in how to help others journey through the stages. Now I look for ways to disciple people and pray for opportunities to do so, especially with people around me. I’m far from perfect, but I’m dealing with my sin when I see it. I encourage others to do the same. My appreciation for God’s grace is growing, as is my burden for people who live without it.”

The DISCIPLE MAKER needs encouragement, accountability, training, and refreshing. Consistency and steering clear of burn are two major goals for a DISCIPLE MAKER. Remember to not just focus on other Disciples but still seek to be around Curious and Believers.

**Priorities for this Stage**

1. LEARN HOW TO STAY CONSISTENT
2. SPOT AND CELEBRATE GOOD FRUIT
3. MASTER “ABIDING IN CHRIST”
4. HELP OTHERS TO HELP OTHERS

**Next Steps**

THINGS TO KNOW

* CONFIDENT IN KNOWING STAGES
* LEARN TO INTERCEDE
* HOW TO FEED OTHERS
* HOW TO MAKE OTHERS GOD-AWARE
* HOW TO HAVE GOSPEL APPOINTMENTS

THINGS TO FEEL

* LOVE FOR SINNERS
* EMBRACING MESSY LIVES
* ENJOYING MODELING/TEACHING
* DELIGHTING IN PRAYER
* ENERGIZED BY FAITH
* LIVING BY GRACE

THINGS TO DO

* BE INTENTIONAL
* BUILD YOUR DAILY/WEEKLY/MONTHLY SCHEDULE AROUND DISCIPLING
* HANG AROUND THE CURIOUS
* WALK WITH BELIEVERS
* POUR LIFE INTO DISCIPLES
* GROW LEADERSHIP CAPACITY

# Tips to Help a Disciple Maker

1. Make sure that you are treating the DISCIPLE MAKER as a co-laborer. You are now walking together through STAGES rather than leading them.

2. Monitor that they are not connecting their own personal sense of worth to the growth (or lack there of) of those they are discipling.

3. Take time to celebrate with them all that they have seen God do in their own life and in the lives of those they have discipled.

4. Make sure that they are not stuck in any of their discipleship relationships. Sometimes a DISCIPLE MAKER will be the last to see or admit that someone they are discipling needs a different mentor.