

Why:

1. Ekklesia Kingdom

Matthew 16:13-19, 18:15-20 Jesus said He will build His *ekklesia* – His called-out ones. *Ekklesia* means called out from...to... for a purpose. The *ekklesia* is His people who are called out of the kingdom of darkness into His Kingdom of light for the purpose of being His body. His *ekklesia* is the citizens of His Kingdom. *Church* – the English word comes from old German and means the house of worship. We **are** the church, not a building. We cannot “go to church” because we *are* the true church, His *ekklesia*, His called-out ones (Colossians 1:3; Ephesians 2:19-22). (Exodus 19:6; Deuteronomy 7:6; Revelation 1:6, 5:10; Isaiah 62:12; 1 Peter 2:5, 9). Every aspect of what we do is an expression of being Jesus’ *ekklesia* – His called-out ones who follow King Jesus.

2. New Kingdom Laws – Our Motive

- New Commandments – In His new covenant, Jesus gave His disciples two new laws of love that supersede the old covenant laws: Love one another and love your enemies (John 13:34; 15:12, 17; Matthew 5:43-44). *Agape* love means to prefer and choose others over self and to want their well-being more than self-interest. *Agape* is the greatest law in the Kingdom. However, Jesus never commands us to love Him or the Father. Instead, Jesus said if we love Him, we will keep His commandments, just as He loved the Father and kept His commandments. We express our love for Him by keeping His commandments and loving our fellow believers and our enemies. (*Phileo* love means affection, to like someone. *Eros* love is physical desire and gratification.)
- Great Commission – having gone, disciple the nations (Matthew 28:18-20). Jesus sends us to the world as the Father sent Him (John 20:21) to make Him known and to express Him. We must be a disciple in order to disciple others. We become His disciples by denying self, taking up our cross and choosing to follow Him (Luke 9:23). His disciples keep King Jesus’ commands.

What:

3. Commands

We base everything we do on Jesus’ commands. Jesus said to His disciples that the way we disciple the nations is to baptize them and to teach them to observe (keep, guard) all that He commanded them (Matthew 28:18-20). In support of this final commandment, Jesus repeatedly states that His disciples keep, observe, do His commandments. (2-3 witnesses, Deuteronomy 17:2-6, 19:15; Hebrews 10:28). There are nine witnesses that this is Jesus’ way, the ancient way:

Matthew 7:24, 27	Matthew 28:20	Luke 6:46, 47
John 8:31	John 14:15, 21, 23, 24,	John 15:7, 10, 14
1 John 2:3-6	1 John 3:22, 24	2 John 6, 9

Everything we do is centered on Jesus and on His commands – our personal time with Him, our DNAs, and our *ekklesia* gatherings. We pair a command with a Bible story that illustrates the command and makes it easier to see how to keep it in everyday life.

How:

1. Me and Jesus:

Every day, individual disciples spend personal time abiding in Christ and listening to Him, meditating on the command and story for the week (John 15:4-5).

2. Me and you:

Our discipleship groups (2-4 people) are called DNA groups – Discipleship, Nurture, Accountability. DNAs meet weekly and use a basic tool/ guideline that takes them through review and accountability for the previous

week's command and time and relationship with Jesus; discussion and application for the current week's commands; and personal needs, prayer and accountability for time and thought life. (Matthew 28:18-20)
DNAs are part of an ever-growing, ever-expanding network of disciplers.

3. Me and us:

When the local ekklesia gathers, the commands of Jesus can be lived out in fellowship, where Jesus is free to be the Leader and Head, and where everyone can potentially participate as the Spirit of Jesus directs. (Matthew 16:16-19; Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Corinthians 14:26)