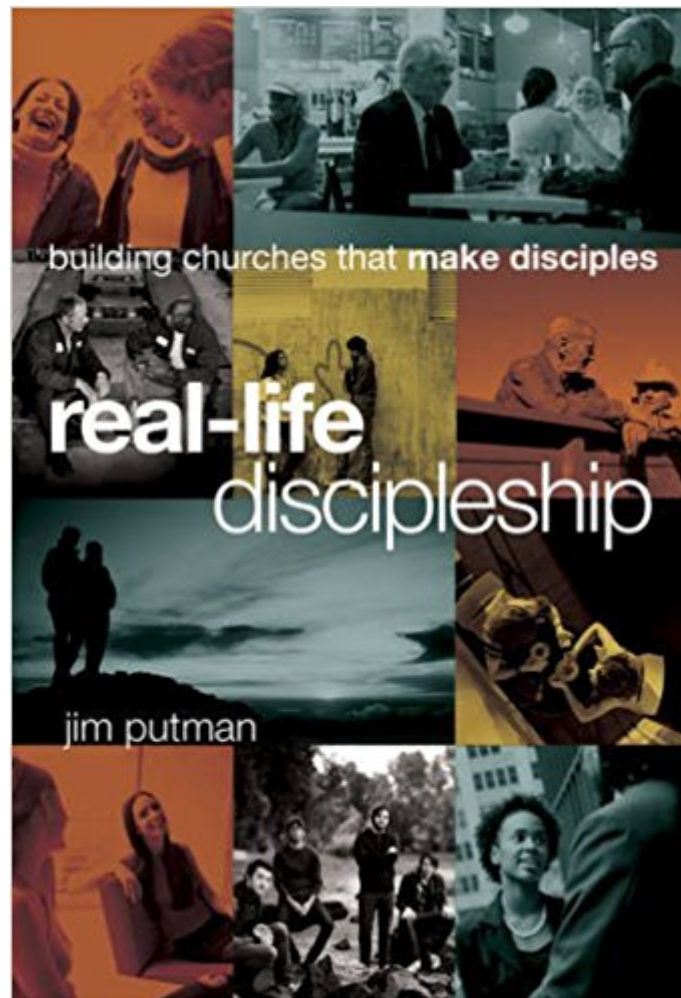




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Real-Life Discipleship: Building Churches That Make Disciples



Synopsis

Real-Life Discipleship explains what should happen in the life of every Christian and in every small group so that the church becomes an army of believers dedicated to seeing the world saved. With the overriding goal to train disciples who know how to make more disciples, this book offers proven tools and strategies from Real Life Ministries, one of America's fastest-growing churches. Discover what the Bible says about true and effective discipleship with these strategies and practices.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Is your church membership dwindling? Are you growing only at the expense of a smaller church? It's time to reexamine your methods of discipleship. But how do you effectively disciple an entire body? It's not about making converts. The responsibility falls to every believer in your fellowship to create intentional followers of Christ, who in turn create other intentional followers. The secret is in your small groups. Discover a new vision for what the church can be by challenging how you create disciples. Also available from NavPress: Real-Life Discipleship Training Manual.

A seventeen-year ministry veteran, author, and national speaker, Jim Putman is the senior pastor of Real Life Ministries, located in Post Falls, Idaho, and listed by Outreach Magazine as one of the fastest-growing churches in America. Jim's passion is discipleship through small groups. With his background in sports, he believes in the value of strong coaching to win and teach disciples for God.

Having read and lead a group through Discipleshift, I would say this book is even better. I love the simple biblical categories that Jim uses, which in turn make for very practical application in real world settings. The leadership principles really challenged me to consider how I as a pastor was really leading people towards full maturity in Christ.

For generations, American churches have been very good at making converts, but few of those converts grow to maturity in Christ. With little fruit to display as evidence of their salvation, those "converts" will one day hear the Lord tell them, "Depart from Me for I never knew you." The Bible is clear that our mission as Christians is to make disciples, not converts. A person does not need to have been a life-long church member to recognize the critical need within our churches to make disciples. With that in mind, Jim Putman's book, *Real-Life Discipleship: Building Churches That Make Disciples*, is a godsend. Putman is the founder and senior pastor of Real Life Ministries in Post Falls, Idaho--not exactly the Bible Belt. But God has used Putman's passion for discipleship to build an 8,000 member church in less than 15 years. The amazing thing is that over 90% of the church's weekly attendance is involved in small groups. Real Life Ministries is not a typical big show driven mega-church. It is a disciple making factory. In the book, Putman introduces his readers to the discipleship methods used at Real Life. Although he frequently illustrates the book with real-life stories from Real Life, the book does not devolve into a self-congratulatory "look at how good we are" book. Instead, it comes across as humble, eye-opening, instructive and encouraging--just like a disciple maker is supposed to. This book is for every church leader or church member who is part of a church that struggles with making disciples. While not coming across like a know-it-all how-to manual, it is detailed enough to make leaders think about how the principles will work in their context. Putman's five stages of disciples' growth and the steps required to move them from one stage to the next bring great clarity to the reader. Especially helpful are the summaries, profiles and resource listings in the appendices. Be sure and have a notebook handy while you are reading--the book is an idea generator. That fact alone makes it invaluable to all who are concerned with the health of their churches.

I'm pretty impressed with the laserlike focus on discipleship that Jim Putnam has implemented in his very fruitful church. This very readable book persuasively shares lots of transferable scriptural principles that many churches should be putting into practice. I generally recommend the book. Few of the other reviewers have mentioned that the small group meetings that are the heart of Real-Life

church confine their study of the scriptures to the STORIES of the Bible (chapter 13). The rest of scripture, the epistles, law, poetic, wisdom, and prophetic literature are, I assume, used for preaching during congregational worship services. Furthermore, the importance of such congregational services and of preaching are minimized several times by Pastor Putnam compared to the importance of the small group meetings. I'm not sure Jesus, Paul, or the other apostles would agree with him on the relative unimportance of non-narrative scriptures and preaching. Effective use of the stories, especially those from the gospels, is vital, but I'm reluctant to make it the predominant focus of discipleship groups. Get the book anyway, church leaders, and find out what you and your church SHOULD be putting into practice.

Jim takes you through step by step the discipleship process. Steps that his ministry has proven to be effective in disciples making disciples who make disciples. As a pastor of a smaller congregation, I see how these principles will work within our community of faith. I'm encourage for the new relationships I will be making as I model this kind of discipleship.

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