

## Forming Intentional Disciples - Introduction

What does it mean to form “intentional” disciples? In the introduction to *Forming Intentional Disciples*, Sherry Weddell writes about a startling conversation she had with the leader of a local Catholic women’s group. The conversation was part of a series of interviews to help lay leaders learn how to use their gifts in the parish:

Her stories were so vague that I wasn’t hearing any evidence of how God might be using her. . . . So I asked her a question that I had never asked before: Could you briefly describe to me your lived relationship with God to this point in your life? After thinking carefully for a few moments, she responded briskly, “I don’t have a relationship with God.” Her answer stunned me. My first thoughts were, “That’s not possible. You’re a leader in your parish. You wouldn’t do that without some kind of relationship with God.” By the end of the interview, I realized she had accurately described her spiritual reality.

Sherry goes on to explain that she began asking the question routinely. And here’s what she discovered:

We learned that the majority of even “active” American Catholics are still at an early, essentially passive stage of spiritual development. . . . We discovered, to our surprise and dismay, that many pastoral leaders do not even possess a conceptual category for discipleship. As long as this holds true, the theology of the laity and the Church’s teaching on social justice and evangelization will remain beautiful ideals that are, practically speaking, dead letters for the vast majority of Catholics.

### **Reflection Questions:**

- 1) How would you describe your lived relationship with God to this point in your life?
- 2) What does the word “discipleship” mean to you? Do you perceive a need in the Church today to help lay Catholics become more fervent followers of Jesus Christ?
- 3) How would you describe your parish’s current efforts at discipleship?

### Reading Assignments: Forming Intentional Disciples: Chapter 1 and 2

Scripture	Catechism
Romans 8:14-17	CCC 1
Ephesians 2:4-6	CCC 35
1 John 14:20	CCC 150
Isaiah 43:1	CCC 299
Isaiah 43:4	CCC 2558