

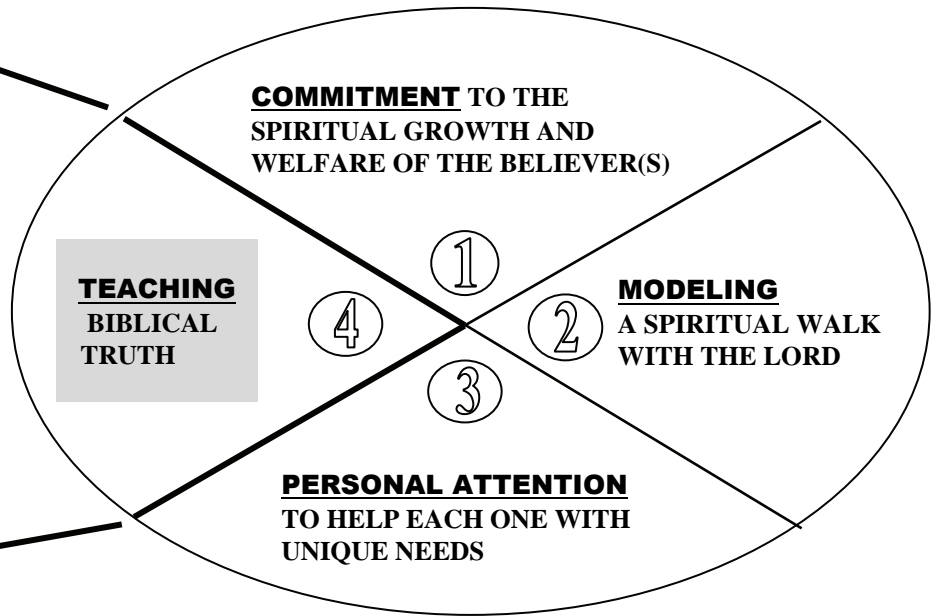
# WHAT IS PERSONAL DISCIPLESHIP?

## **PARTIAL TRUTH:**

To most Christians the term “**Discipleship**” simply equates to “Presenting Biblical Truth”.

## **MORE ACCURATELY:**

We believe the concept of “**Spiritual Parenting**” more accurately reflects the Biblical meaning.



## **“Biblical Model for Spiritual Parenting” (Discipleship)**

**1 Thessalonians 2:3-13 includes all the components of spiritual parenting.**

(from Paul, with Silas and Timothy)

**THEY WERE SINGLE-MINDED IN PURPOSE - :3-6** ... we speak, *not as pleasing men, but God who examines our hearts. For we never came with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed — God is witness — nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, even though as apostles of Christ we might have asserted our authority.*

### **1. THEY CARED FOR THE BELIEVERS AS A MOTHER CARES FOR HER CHILDREN**

**:7-8** But we proved to be *gentle* among you, as a *nursing MOTHER tenderly* cares for her own children. Having so fond an *affection* for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our *own lives*, because you had become *very dear to us*.

### **2. THEY BECAME “ROLE MODELS” TO THE NEW BELIEVERS**

**:9-10** you recall, brethren, our *labor* and *hardship*, how working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. You are *witnesses*, and so is God, how *devoutly* and *uprightly* and *blamelessly* we behaved toward you believers;

### **3. THEY GAVE INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION AND INSTRUCTION AS A FATHER**

**:11-12** just as you know how we were *exhorting* and *encouraging* and *imploring EACH ONE* of you as a *FATHER* would his own children, so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

### **4. THE WORD OF GOD WAS AN ESSENTIAL COMPONENT OF DISCIPLESHIP**

**:13** For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, *the word of God*, which also *performs its work in you* who believe.

① **Paul's concern for the believers went beyond that of just a "teacher". He was committed to their spiritual welfare and growth.**

2 Cor. 11:28-29 ... there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches. Who is weak without my being weak? Who is led into sin without my intense concern?  
2 Cor. 2:4 For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears; ... that you might know the love which I have especially for you.  
2 Cor. 12:15 I will most gladly spend and be expended for your souls. ...  
Col. 1:28-29 ... that we may present every man complete (mature) in Christ. For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.  
2 Tim. 2:10 ... I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, ...

***A goal of the discipler should be to help the disciple (apprentice learner) to mature, function, be fruitful, and to spiritually reproduce. The benefits to the discipler are secondary.***

② **A discipler is a "model" (real, transparent) for the disciple. The goal is for the disciple to emulate the convictions and passion of the discipler.**

1 Cor. 4:15-16 (Paul to the Corinthian believers) For if you were to have countless tutors in Christ, yet you would not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. Therefore I exhort you, be imitators of me.  
1 Cor. 11:1 Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.  
Phil. 3:17 (Paul to the Philippians) Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.  
Phil. 4:9 The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.  
1 Thess. 1:6-7 (Paul to the Thessalonian believers) You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.  
2 Thess. 3:7-9 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example, because we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you, ... in order to offer ourselves as a model for you, so that you would follow our example.  
Heb. 13:7 Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith.  
1 Tim. 4:12 (Paul to Timothy) in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe.  
2 Tim. 3:10-11 Now you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, persecutions, and sufferings, ...  
Titus 2:7-8 (Paul to Titus) in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified, sound in speech which is beyond reproach, so that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us.  
Luke 6:40 (Jesus said) "A pupil (disciple, apprentice) is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher."

3

**A newborn child requires an extra amount of individual attention. As the child matures guidance can increasingly take place in a group setting. Since each child is unique, it should be expected that both group and personal attention would be needed on the road to maturity.**

*When you bring a newborn baby home from the hospital, you don't just set them down and say, "Welcome to the family, Johnny. Make yourself at home. The towels are in the hall closet upstairs, the pantry is right here, the can opener is in this drawer. No crying after 10 p.m. If you have any questions there are lots of people in the family who would love to help you so don't be afraid to ask." You laugh and say that is ridiculous, but that is what usually happens to new Christians. Someone gets saved and starts going to church services, but never gets much personal attention. We devote 18 years to raising our children, but don't even spend six months helping a new Christian get started in understanding the spiritual world. As a result, many people have been Christians for many years, but have not grown very much. Hebrews 5:12 refers to this phenomenon. So, new believers need someone to give them guidance and help them grow.*

(Above excerpt from <http://www.bible.org/reg/toc.htm> - 3/16/96)

*"Until others learn to draw on the life of the Lord Jesus directly, they will have to draw on His life through you. You must literally be their source of supply, until they learn to take their nourishment from God. ..."* (Oswald Chambers - *My Utmost for His Highest* - Feb 9)

Notice what Paul states in 1 Thess. 2:7 *But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children.* Some believe that a new Christian is not in need of individual special attention. If the Holy Spirit had not led Paul to include the idea of *nursing* it could be argued that this Scripture was referring to spiritual toddlers or even older spiritual children. But one must honestly ask, "How soon after birth does a typical baby need to be nursed?" When a baby nurses, as Oswald Chambers has correctly expressed, it is drawing nourishment through its mother. This would normally be expected to continue until which time it is weaned.

**Paul recognized that each believer is unique and needs individual attention.**

Acts 20:31 (Paul to the elders of the church at Ephesus) *"Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears.*  
Col. 1:28-29 *We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete (mature) in Christ. For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.*  
1 Thess. 2:11 *... you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children,*

***Jesus commanded us to make "disciples", not just converts.  
In the Christian community there are many immature "converts",  
but very few disciples. (See also Lesson 2-4)***

4

**Biblical truth is an essential component of Biblical discipleship.**

**A. A Christian cannot be spiritually mature without Biblical understanding, but a Christian may have much Biblical knowledge and yet not be spiritually mature.**

1 Cor. 8:1-2 ... Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies. If anyone supposes that he knows anything, he has not yet known as he ought to know;

Eph. 4:11-16 ... for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. As a result, we are no longer to be children, ...

Col. 1:28-29 We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete (mature) in Christ.

1 Thess. 2:13 For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.

**B. There are inherent problems with the commonly held belief that “presenting Biblical knowledge” equates to discipleship, and that the other components are “optional”. If the other components are not given proper importance in the nurturing process, the Christian being mentored will typically have a difficult time growing to a reproductive spiritual maturity.**

1. If “Biblical Knowledge” by itself were the key to spirituality, we should have the most spiritual generation of Christians in history. Christian Book Stores are filled with books on every Biblical subject imaginable.
2. To propose that “Biblical knowledge” alone is the key to spirituality is akin to saying that “food” alone is the most important need of a child. Undeniably food is essential, but would it be accurate to convey to potential parents that love, commitment, nurturing, modeling, personal attention, etc. are somehow optional? Has God given us the process of raising a physical child as a model for raising a spiritual child? If so, should I not then ask, “how would a physical infant fare if left to tend for itself as the typical new spiritual child is?”
3. Most Christians would agree that as the Holy Spirit draws unbelievers to Himself, He typically uses Christians somewhere in the birthing process. How can the same Christians then conclude that their primary involvement in the new baby Christian’s growth is mostly limited to setting spiritual food on the table, and that the Holy Spirit now prefers to work alone in the other areas where the new believer needs help to grow?

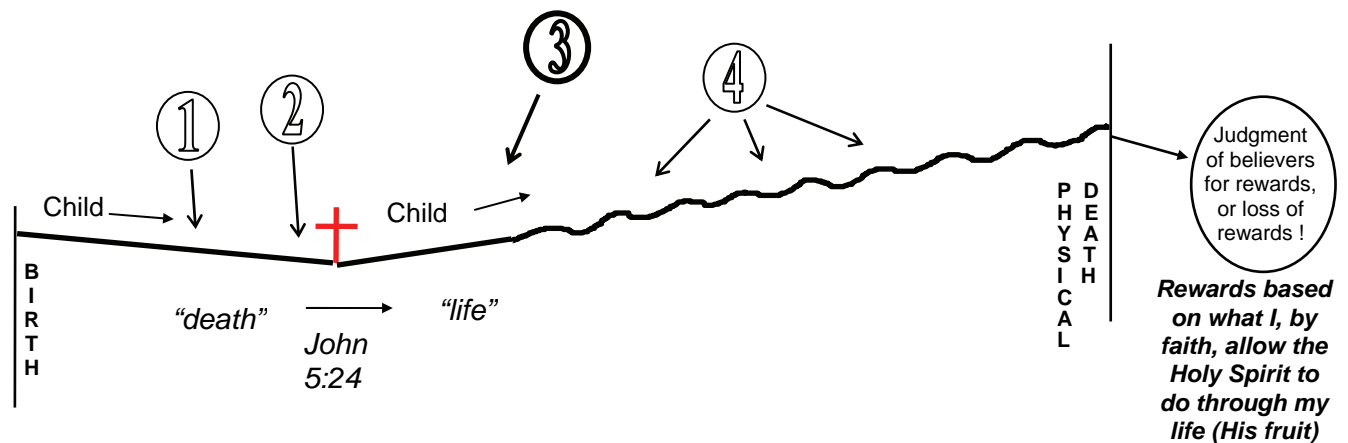
***To love to teach is good, but to love those you teach is better !***

***To know the Bible is good, but to intimately know and understand the One who the Bible reveals is better ! (Jer. 9:23-24; John 17:3)***

## THE GOAL OF PERSONAL DISCIPLESHIP (*Spiritual Parenting*)

To help a believer through the transition from the habit of daily living in “self-dependence” to the habit of daily living in “God-dependence”.

In other words, to make the transition from “leaning on one’s own understanding” to “trusting in the Lord with all one’s heart and in all ways acknowledging Him”. (Prov. 3:5-6)

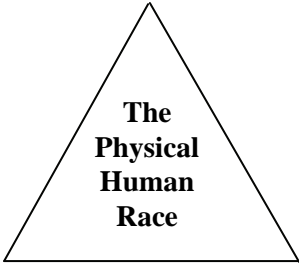


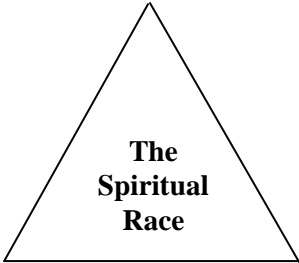
- ① Represents the “unsaved” period of time (spiritually dead to God) in a person’s life, from physical birth to spiritual birth. During this period “self-dependence” becomes a habit of everyday living, a way of life.
- ② Represents the “Evangelism” stage, culminating in the event of salvation, at which time a person passes from being spiritually dead to being spiritually alive to God.
- ③ Represents the “Spiritual Parenting” stage, that is, the critical formative period of time in which a Christian needs to be “spiritually parented” (discipled) through the first steps of learning to increasingly live in dependence on the Holy Spirit.
- ④ Represents the process of “sanctification”, i.e. Having been discipled, the believer now has a basic understanding of the master-servant relationship and the need to follow the Holy Spirit, so as to continue being led and transformed by him.

### ANTICIPATED RESULTS OF DISCIPLESHIP ARE:

- **SPIRITUAL MATURITY**
- **SPIRITUAL FRUITFULNESS**
- **SPIRITUAL REPRODUCTION**

# PHYSICAL & SPIRITUAL MULTIPLICATION

<b>HUMAN RACE</b>
<p><b>Genesis 1:26-28</b></p> <p>:26 Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”</p> <p>:27 God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.</p> <p>:28 God blessed them; and God said to them, “<b><u>Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.</u></b>”</p>
<p><b>Adam (1<sup>st</sup>) &amp; Eve</b></p> 
<p>A medical doctor stated that about <b>90%</b> of normal healthy couples should be able to physically reproduce children.</p> <p>We have sympathy for a couple that is unable to have children, because having children is considered <b><u>normal</u></b>.</p>
<p>Obstacles to <b><u>Physical</u></b> Reproduction:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Physical Immaturity</li> <li>2. A Physical Health Problem</li> <li>3. Lack of Physical Intimacy</li> </ol>

<b>SPIRITUAL RACE</b>
<p><b>Matthew 28:18-20</b></p> <p>:18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.</p> <p>:19 “Go therefore and <b><u>make disciples of all the nations</u></b>, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,</p> <p>:20 <b><u>teaching them to observe all</u></b> that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”</p> <p><b>1 Cor. 15:45-46</b></p> <p>:45 ... “The <b><u>first man, Adam</u></b>, became a living soul.” The <b><u>last Adam (Jesus)</u></b> became a life-giving spirit.</p> <p>46 However, the spiritual is not first, but the <b><u>natural</u></b>; then the <b><u>spiritual</u></b>.</p>
<p><b>Jesus (2<sup>nd</sup> Adam)</b></p> 
<p>Should we not expect the <b><u>majority</u></b> of normal healthy Christians to be able to reproduce <b><u>spiritually</u></b>?</p> <p>Do we have sympathy for the Christian who is not spiritually reproducing? If not, <b><u>why not</u></b>?</p>
<p>Obstacles to <b><u>Spiritual</u></b> Reproduction:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Spiritual Immaturity</li> <li>2. A Spiritual Health Problem</li> <li>3. Lack of Spiritual Intimacy</li> </ol>