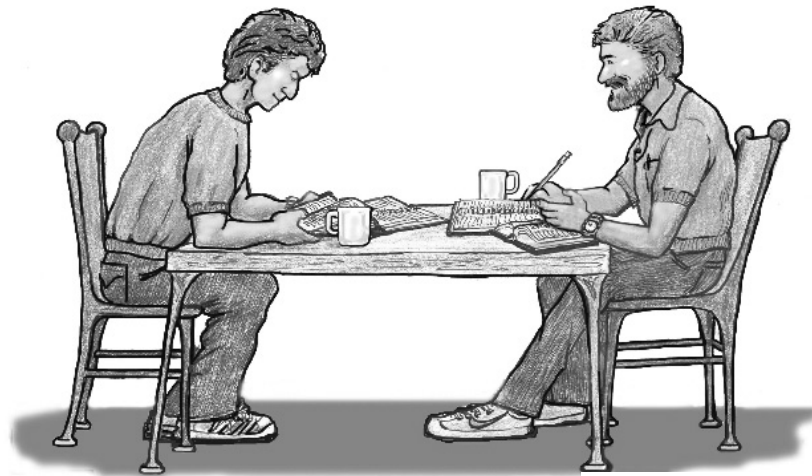


A Tool For Personal Discipleship

PHASE 2



"Bill Pittenger - NTM"

DISCIPLER TRAINING

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PHASE 2 DISCIPLESHIP CURRICULUM

“Discipler Training”

Lesson 2-1 10 Reasons Why We Believe Personal Discipleship is Needed

Lesson 2-2 What is Personal Discipleship?

Lesson 2-3 Thoughts On Growing New Believers

Lesson 2-4 What is a Biblical Disciple?

Lesson 2-5 Guidelines for Discipling Others

Lesson 2-6 Discussion Points Related To Discipleship

NOTES: Phase 2 of these discipleship materials is an attempt to define “Biblical Discipleship” and to present a logical case for incorporating “Personal Discipleship” as an essential component of the Body life of every Christian congregation.

10 Reasons Why We Believe that Personal Discipleship (Spiritual Parenting) is Needed, in Addition to Corporate Discipleship

1. The generally accepted definition of “discipleship” is distorted.

Generally speaking, in the Christian community the term “discipleship” has become synonymous with “teaching”. Thus anyone who “teaches” is thought by many to be fulfilling the mandate to “make disciples”. Biblical discipleship carries the thought of a deeper interaction between the discipler and the believer being disciplined than that of simply teaching. While teaching is a crucial component of the discipleship process, discipleship needs to be understood to comprise other essential components as well. The typical practice of group teaching requires little or no interaction, since many times one person spends an entire session speaking, while others spend the entire session listening. We would not want to imply that there always has to be a dialog between the speaker and listeners. However, for a believer to mature as a disciple (apprentice), he must be given opportunities to express and discuss unique needs and understanding. In other words, discipleship needs to be redefined to include the idea of “spiritual parenting”, “spiritual tutoring” or “spiritual mentoring”. The apostle Paul’s example of Biblical discipleship, as described in Lesson 2-2, should be compared with the current typical pattern of church practice.

2. There is an attempt to develop “teachers” rather than “disciplers”.

A by-product of the common misconception of how to define Biblical discipleship (point 1. above) is a tendency to focus special attention on believers who seem to have a “gift” for teaching. Since teaching is a gift of the Spirit*, we must conclude that most believers will not have the gift of teaching. But “discipling” is not a gift. Therefore, while we should only expect a few believers to become teachers, almost all believers should be seen as potential disciplers. If asked, very few believers would say their gift is teaching. Let’s be generous and say that 10% of believers are gifted in teaching. **Then how are the other 90% supposed to minister?** Many believers if asked would respond by saying their gift is “to serve”, which can mean anything from serving meals at a homeless shelter to painting a widow’s house to innumerable other means of “serving”. By no means do we want to imply that these “services” are not good things. Hopefully it will be seen that we need to redefine “discipleship”. God designed a system of multiplication whereby humans have populated the earth. We think it is sad and unusual if a married couple is incapable of having children, yet there is little surprise in most churches when typical believers are not parenting spiritual children (making disciples). *Rom. 12:4-8, 1 Cor. 12:28-29, James 3:1

3. To influence many people simultaneously is generally considered the method of choice. Personal one-on-one discipleship appears to be too time-consuming, energy consuming, and inefficient.

The concept we want to demonstrate is that the Biblical method of multiplication is much more productive over the long term. This is very important, because the seeming short-term ineffectiveness of personal discipleship has led many to the illusion that it really is not the best method. To be honest, many Christian leaders measure success by numbers. We believe this is one of the reasons there is such an emphasis in the Christian community to hold events and activities, which give the impression of short-term success if attendance is the measure.

Church Growth through Spiritual Multiplication (rather than "addition")

Number of "CONVERTS" (1 converted each day)		Number of "DISCIPLES" (1 discipled each 6 months)
1	To start	1
183	½ year	2
365	1 year	4
548	1½ years	8
730	2 years	16
913	2½ years	32
1,095	3 years	64
1,278	3½ years	128
1,460	4 years	256
1,643	4½ years	512
1,825	5 years	1,024
2,190	6 years	4,096
2,555	7 years	16,384
2,920	8 years	65,536
3,285	9 years	262,144
3,650	10 years	1,048,576
4,015	11 years	4,194,304
4,380	12 years	16,777,216

The figures in the **left-hand column** represent the number of **converts** that could be attained if a Christian were able to win one person to Christ each and every day of the year. The figures in the **right-hand column** represent the number of fruitful **disciples** that could be attained to if each Christian would be faithful during each 6 month period to disciple just one other new convert to a level of spiritual maturity whereby the newer Christian could be used by the Lord to in turn disciple another convert. The figures in the right-hand column are less impressive at the beginning, but as can be seen, have a much greater long-term benefit.

And what you (*Timothy*) have heard from me (*Paul*) in the presence of many witnesses, commit to **faithful men** who will be able to teach **others** also. (2 Tim. 2:2)

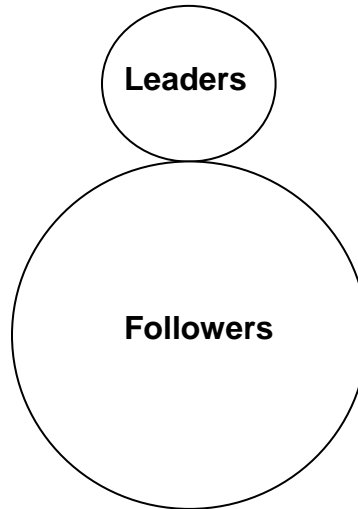
4. Most believers consider themselves inadequately trained, or ungifted.

Leaders are presumed to be trained, but lack the time for personal discipleship. Many followers may have the time, but **don't feel they're adequately trained**. **Who** then is most likely to spiritually parent the new believers?

Typical Modern Church Congregation

Leaders typically are perceived to be "**trained**", but don't feel they have the necessary **time** to devote to individuals.

Followers usually have more **time**, but don't feel they are adequately **trained** to meet the needs of new believers.



“And He personally gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, **for the training** of the saints in the **work of ministry**, to build up the body of Christ, until we **all** reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son, growing into a **mature** man with a stature measured by Christ's fullness.

Then we will no longer be little children, tossed by the waves and blown around by every wind of teaching, by human cunning with cleverness in the techniques of deceit. But speaking the truth in love, let us **grow** in every way into Him who is the head—Christ. From Him the whole body, fitted and knit together by **every** supporting ligament, promotes the growth of the body for building up itself in love by the proper working of **each individual** part.”

Ephesians 4:11-16

- ✓ **Should it not be the goal of the leaders to see that the typical member of the congregation is equipped and functioning as a reproductive follower of Christ?**
- ✓ **In what capacity should the individual believers be functioning?**
- ✓ **How are we to measure if the saints have been successfully “equipped”?**
- ✓ **Can we claim success if spiritual reproduction is not an end result?**
- ✓ **Should not “personal discipleship” (spiritual reproduction) be the “norm”, rather than the exception? Should we not expect every believer to be in the process of being disciplined, or to be actively involved in the spiritual growth of other believers?**

Is a Spiritual Gift Required to Disciple?

MISCONCEPTION: There is a common misconception that the average Christian cannot effectively disciple another Christian unless they are “spiritually gifted”. Is there a scriptural basis for that belief? We think not. Most Christians correctly believe that they should be available to the Lord for the purpose of being a witness to the unsaved, even though there is not a “witnessing” gift. Likewise, there is not a “discipling” gift. This misconception can be a convenient rationale to excuse the lack of discipleship, but it has no scriptural basis. Church leadership ought to convey to congregations that every Christian should be available to the Holy Spirit as a witness and as a discipler.

▶ **God has not intended for every believer to be gifted as an “evangelist”.**

Eph. 4:11 And He personally gave ... some evangelists,...

But God has intended for every believer to be available to Him as a “witness” (not a spiritual gift.)

Matt. 5:16 In the same way, let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses ...

1 Peter 3:15 but honor the Messiah as Lord in your hearts. Always be ready to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.

▶ **God has not intended for every believer to be gifted as a “teacher”.**

Eph. 4:11 And He personally gave ... some pastors and teachers

Rom. 12:6-8 According to the grace given to us, we have different gifts: ... if teaching, in teaching;...

But God has intended for every believer to be available to Him as a “discipler” (that is, a “spiritual parent”), not a spiritual gift.

1 Thess. 2:7-13 ... instead we were gentle among you, as a nursing mother nurtures her own children. ... like a father with his own children, we encouraged, comforted, and implored each one of you ...

John 12:24-26 I assure you: Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains by itself. But if it dies, it produces a large crop....

Matt. 28:18-20 (*Command to the Church*) Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations,

Both the command to be witnesses, as well as the command to make disciples, were given to the Church at large, not just to those that were physically present at the time.

(Matthew 28:18-20 & Acts 1:8)

5. The practice of mentoring, or spiritual parenting, is not being modeled by many older believers.

The typical newer believer will imitate older believers who they look up to, or with whom they associate. Thus every believer is a role model for other believers, even if they don't want to be.

6. “Personal discipleship” (“spiritual parenting”) is not promoted and modeled by the leadership in many churches.

In 1 Peter 5:1-3 leaders are told, ... *I exhort the elders among you: Shepherd God's flock among you, ... not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.*

Not just tell people what to do, but rather, show them what to do. Can Christian leaders realistically expect followers to imitate what they themselves are not modeling (by example)?

7. There is an assumption by many that the appropriation of biblical knowledge by itself will lead to spiritual maturity. (This will be covered in greater detail in Lesson 2-2)

8. The church community typically focuses on making converts rather than making disciples.

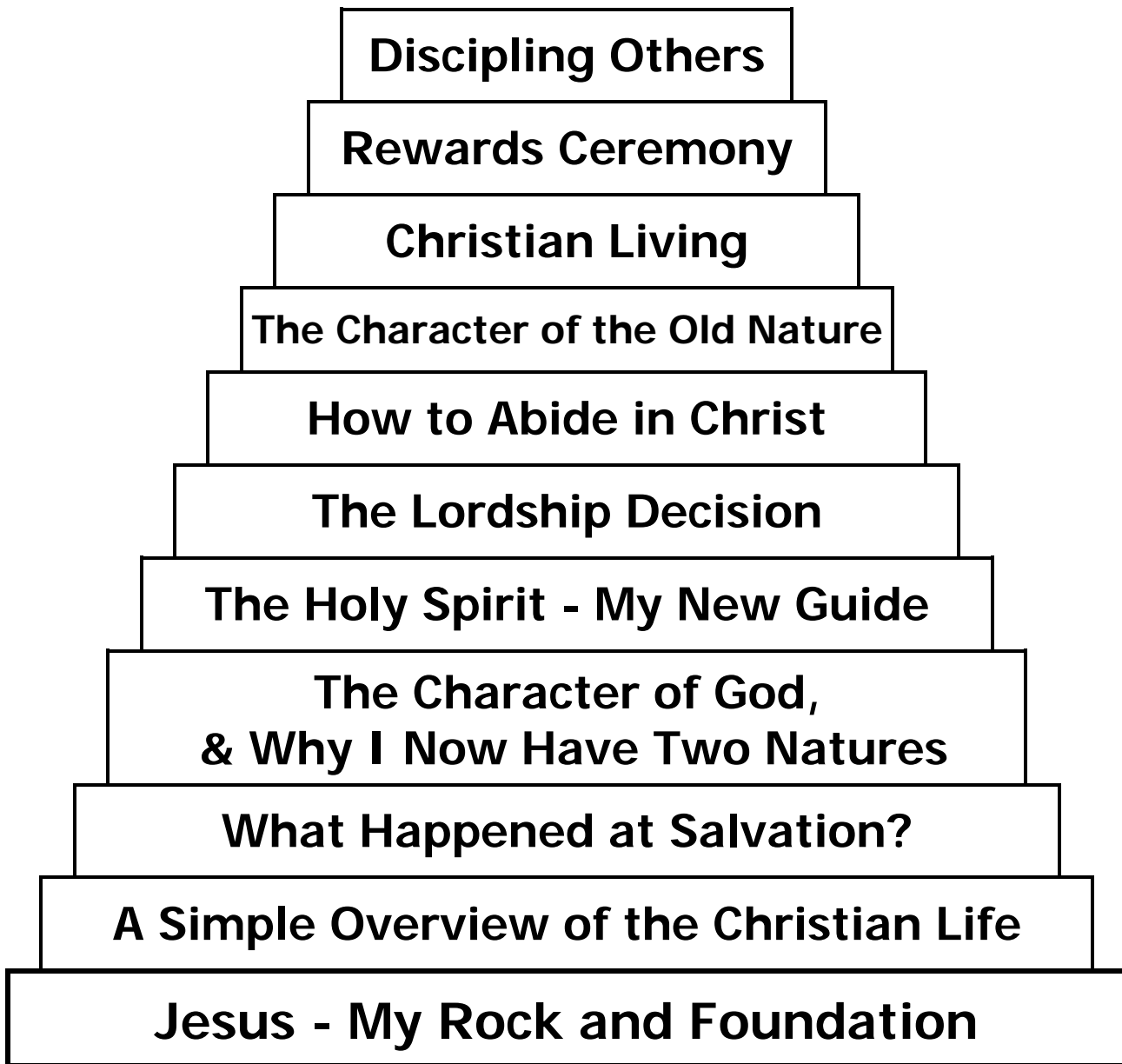
Jesus, in giving us the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20), said to go into all the world and make disciples, not just converts. This then brings up the need to distinguish between a “disciple” and a “non-disciple”. We believe it is true to say that not all believers are disciples, from the Biblical standpoint. What then is a proper definition of the term “disciple?” We believe it will help us to consider a disciple to be an “apprentice.” (See Luke 6:40) (See also Lesson 2-4)

9. Many believers are reluctant to make a commitment that they perceive may interfere with or limit their lifestyle or plans.

10. Biblical truth is often presented in isolated (topical) form, without a good understanding of how it fits into the Christian life as a whole. This leads to the believer's life becoming compartmentalized.

Imagine that you're about to view a Power Point presentation of a “project”, a “medical procedure”, or someone's “vacation trip.” You would normally expect such a presentation to begin with an “objective”, or an “overview”, and then proceed in a progressive and sequential manner. But what if the order of the presentation was “random?” The person making the presentation would probably be able to explain each individual picture, but would generally have difficulty trying to present a progressive picture. The more complicated the material, and the greater the unfamiliarity of the viewer, the more difficult it would be to try to make sense out of the presentation. Many times the Christian life is presented in a similar random order. Thus the newer believer will probably have a difficult time trying to fit the isolated pieces together in a sensible way. That is why we usually recommend that the discipleship process begin with a visual overview (see Lesson 1-1), followed by a progressive and systematic presentation of what will be encountered by the typical newer believer.

*It Is Helpful to Progressively Present Concepts in the Order in Which
They are Typically Needed by the New Christian
(Read from bottom to top)*



Note: The above sequence is meant to serve as a “guide”, not as a strict order of presentation.

CAUTION: *Lesson 2-1 is not intended to promote a critical, or judgmental attitude, but rather to identify areas of spiritual need, in order to prayerfully seek God’s solutions.*

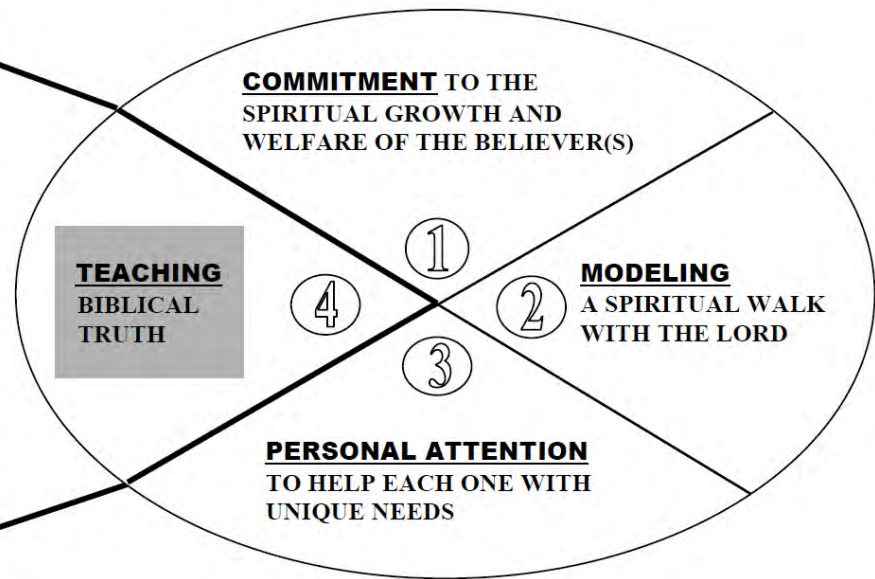
What Is Personal Discipleship

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 of discipleship.



A Biblical Model for “Spiritual Parenting”

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 ... so we speak, not to please men, but rather God, who examines our hearts. For we never used flattering speech, as you know, or had greedy motives—God is our witness—and we didn’t seek glory from people, either from you or from others. Although we could have been a burden as Christ’s apostles,...

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

:7-8 ... instead we were gentle among you, as a nursing MOTHER nurtures her own children. We cared so much for you that we were pleased to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us.

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

:9-10 For you remember our labor and hardship, brothers. Working night and day so that we would not burden any of you, we preached God’s gospel to you. You are witnesses, and so is God, of how devoutly, righteously, and blamelessly we conducted ourselves with you believers.

3. THEY GAVE INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION AND INSTRUCTION AS A FATHER

:11-12 As you know, like a FATHER with his own children, we encouraged, comforted, and implored EACH ONE of you to walk worthy of God, who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

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

:13 This is why we constantly thank God, because when you received the message about God that you heard from us, you welcomed it not as a human message, but as it truly is, the message of God, which also works effectively in you believers.

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: my care for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation?
2 Cor. 2:4 For I wrote to you with many tears out of an extremely troubled and anguished heart—not that you should be hurt, but that you should know the abundant love I have for you.
2 Cor. 12:15 I will most gladly spend and be spent for you....
Col. 1:28-29 ... so that we may present everyone mature in Christ. I labor for this, striving with His strength that works powerfully in me.
2 Tim. 2:10 ... I endure all things for the elect:...

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 you can have 10,000 instructors in Christ, but you can't have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. Therefore I urge you to imitate me.
1 Cor. 11:1 Imitate me, as I also imitate Christ.
Phil. 3:17 (*Paul to the Philippians*) Join in imitating me, brothers, and observe those who live according to the example you have in us.
Phil. 4:9 Do what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.
1 Thess. 1:6-7 (*Paul to the Thessalonian believers*) And you became imitators of us and of the Lord when, in spite of severe persecution, you welcomed the message with joy from the Holy Spirit. As a result, you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia.
2 Thess. 3:7-9 For you yourselves know how you must imitate us: We were not irresponsible among you; ... to make ourselves an example to you so that you would imitate us.
Heb. 13:7 Remember your leaders who have spoken God's word to you. As you carefully observe the outcome of their lives, imitate their faith.
1 Tim. 4:12 (*Paul to Timothy*) ... you should be an example to the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.
2 Tim. 3:10-11 But you have followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, and endurance, along with the persecutions and sufferings ...
Titus 2:7-8 (*Paul to Titus*) ... Make yourself an example of good works with integrity and dignity in your teaching. Your message is to be sound beyond reproach, so that the opponent will be ashamed, having nothing bad to say about us.
Luke 6:40 (*Jesus said*) A disciple (*apprentice*) is not above his teacher, but everyone who is 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://bible.org/seriespage/stewardship-god's-truth-through-discipleship>)

"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." (Taken from My Utmost for His Highest by Oswald Chambers – Feb. 9 (c) 1935 by Dodd Mead & Co., renewed (c) 1963 by the Oswald Chambers Publications Assn., Ltd., and is used by permission of Discovery House Publishers, Box 3566, Grand Rapids MI 49501. All rights reserved.)

Notice what Paul states in 1 Thess. 2:7 ... we were gentle among you, **as a nursing mother** nurtures 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 **three years** I did not stop warning **each one** of you with tears.

Col. 1:28-29 We proclaim Him, warning and teaching **everyone** with all wisdom, so that we may present **everyone** mature in Christ. I labor for this, striving with His strength that works powerfully in me.

1 Thess. 2:11-12 As you know, like a father with his own children, we encouraged, comforted, and implored **each one** of you ...

***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 inflates with pride, but love builds up. If anyone thinks he knows anything, he does not yet know it as he ought to know it.
Eph. 4:11-16 ... for the training of the saints in the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ, until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son, growing into a mature man with a stature measured by Christ's fullness. Then we will no longer be little children,...

Col. 1:28-29 We proclaim Him, warning and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

1 Thess. 2:13 This is why we constantly thank God, because when you received the message about God that you heard from us, you welcomed it not as a human message, but as it truly is, the message of God, which also works effectively in you believers.

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?

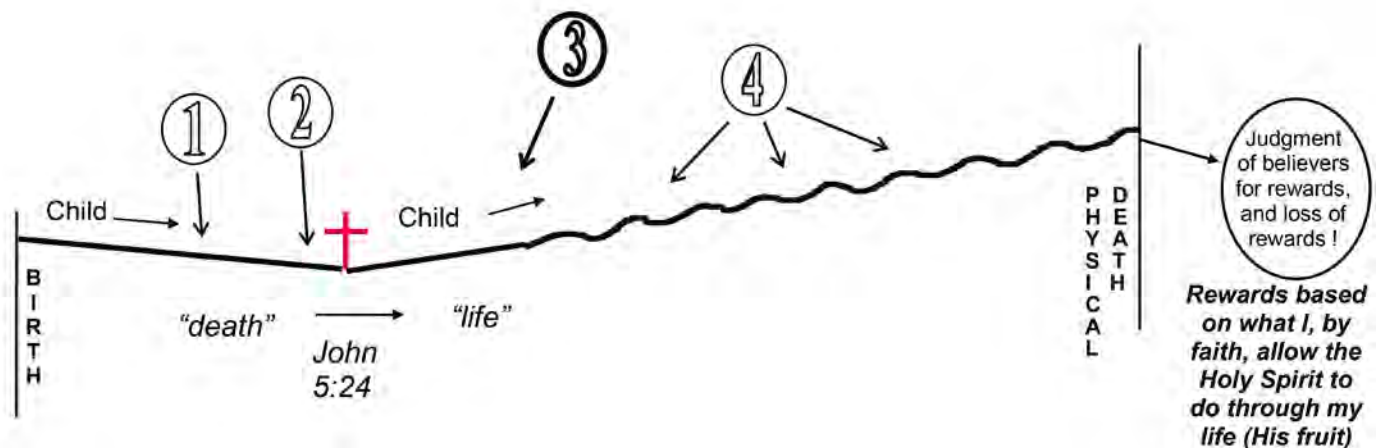
To love to teach is good, but to love those you teach is better !

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 “relying on his/her own understanding” to “trusting in the LORD with all his/her heart, and thinking about (acknowledging) Him in all his/her ways.”



- 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 believer 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, to continue being led and transformed by Him.

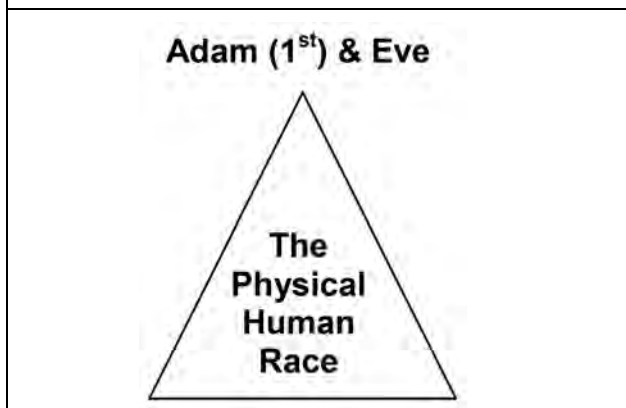
ANTICIPATED RESULTS OF DISCIPLESHIP ARE:

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

Physical & Spiritual Multiplication

HUMAN RACE

Genesis 1:26-28
 :26 Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, all the earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth.”
 :27 So God created man in His own image; He created him in the image of God; He created them male and female.
 :28 God blessed them, and God said to them, “**Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth,** and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth.”



A medical doctor stated that about **90%** of normal healthy couples should be able to physically reproduce children.

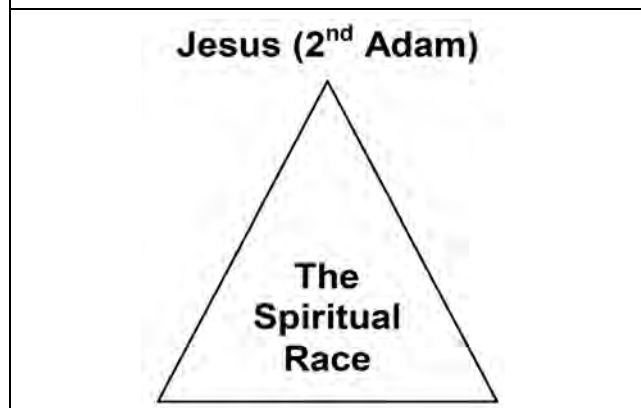
We have sympathy for a couple that is unable to have children, because having children is considered **normal**.

- Obstacles to Physical Reproduction:**
1. Physical Immaturity
 2. A Physical Health Problem
 3. Lack of Physical Intimacy

SPIRITUAL RACE

Matthew 28:18-20
 Then Jesus came near and said to them, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and **make disciples of all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **teaching them to observe everything** I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

1 Cor. 15:45-46
 :45 ... The **first man Adam** became a living being; the **last Adam (Jesus)** became a life-giving Spirit.
 46 However, the spiritual is not first, but the **natural**, then the **spiritual**.



Should we not expect the **majority** of normal healthy Christians to be able to reproduce **spiritually**?

Do we have sympathy for the Christian who is not spiritually reproducing? If not, **why not**?

- Obstacles to Spiritual Reproduction:**
1. Spiritual Immaturity
 2. A Spiritual Health Problem
 3. Lack of Spiritual Intimacy

Thoughts on Growing New Believers

How Does A New Believer Acquire Spiritual Understanding?

If a new believer is not instructed otherwise, he will typically appropriate the values and convictions of the Christians that he associates with during the formative first period of his new spiritual life, just as a child will tend to adopt the values and convictions of his family and peers.

Let's say that a new Christian is brought into association with a group of Navigators (Navigators.org), who we would rightly expect to immediately begin to challenge the believer's former values and convictions. That believer is either going to adopt the Navigator's values and convictions, or he will become so uncomfortable that he will seek a more "friendly" and less intrusive environment.

But what happens if there is not such a group of relatively mature mentors who will take the new believer under wing? Typically the newer believer will be introduced into a congregation, where it is often assumed that "sitting under the preaching of the Word" will be sufficient to lead that new believer into a spiritually mature walk. It is hoped that the negative traits observed in the congregation do not distort the new believer's understanding. Is that realistic? We believe it is safe to say that most new believers will be impacted more by what they "**see**" other believers do, than what they "**hear**" them say. If it can be said that a particular congregation is more spiritually mature, then it would be realistic to reason that the combination of "hearing" Biblical truth from a pastor/teacher, together with "seeing" Biblical spirituality modeled from the congregation, would be a tremendous help in the healthy spiritual growth of a new believer. Leaders need to realistically evaluate the spiritual health of the congregation, asking themselves, "**Do we want a new believer to become like the 'typical' member of this congregation?**" If the answer is no, then arrangements need to be put in place to impart Biblical values to new believers.

Example – Modeling affects how newer believers interpret the Bible. A one-day workshop was taught on Discipleship and the Christian life. A lady attended, and later that evening shared with her husband some of the spiritual concepts that had been discussed. The next day the husband mentioned that after his wife had talked with him, he had taken another look at the Great Commission in Matt. 28:18-20. He had always interpreted it as saying, "go and make **converts**", but now realized that it indeed said, "go and make **disciples**." He was surprised that he hadn't been reading it correctly. Why had this happened? We believe what is emphasized or de-emphasized (for instance, by omission or neglect) will bias the listener's interpretation of the Bible (especially an impressionable newer believer) as to what has Biblical importance. This Christian man had read the word "disciples", but in reality the term had little significance, since what he was "hearing" and seeing "modeled" around him conveyed to him that what was really important was "making converts." In his mind the term "disciple" simply came to mean "convert" as a result of the definition presented to him by what he "heard" and "saw."

Ideally, we should be able to place new believers into a congregational environment and have healthy spiritual growth with Biblical values and convictions. Should a new believer not have the "**right**" to assume that older Christians have Biblical values and convictions? Are you satisfied with the spiritual values and convictions of the congregation with which you are associated? In many cases the answer would be "no." When a newer believer is simply placed in the congregation without personal mentoring, will that believer probably feel "**free to adopt**" the spiritual values and convictions of that congregation? Why should we expect otherwise? Would I expect my child to acquire acceptable values and convictions if I allow him or her to associate with children whose values and convictions are

unacceptable, yet I don't object? By not saying anything to the contrary, am I conveying to my child that the association meets my approval?

We should not expect the newer believer to understand much about the Christian walk. It is only natural for newer believers to be mainly concerned with **doing** the right things, which means their focus is on **external** behavior. As stated previously, a newer believer **should** be able to make the assumption that if he behaves like "older" Christians, then logically he'll be behaving in an acceptable Biblical fashion, since those older Christians have "obviously" styled their behavior on Biblical patterns. Right? **NOT!** Unfortunately, many older Christians have adopted their behavior from **previous** older Christians who they similarly "assumed" to be spiritual. And so one generation follows the next. Unwittingly, many Christian leaders are "conveying" **approval** of this natural human process, by not insuring that each new believer is personally helped through the first formative and critical period of the Christian walk.

While it is totally natural for new believers to begin their Christian walk focusing on "**external behavior**", we believe it is God's purpose for those believers to quickly begin to focus on living by "**Biblical principles**." Probably more than 90% of typical daily external behavior is not addressed specifically in the Bible. The typical Christian will not "**transition**" from focusing on external behavior to focusing on Biblical principles, **unless** another Christian is willing to put the time and energy into helping them to understand God's purposes and His process for producing spiritual growth.

Let's look at several examples of adopting "external behavior" patterns:

How does a new believer evaluate the **spiritually acceptable car** to drive? Clearly it is not a question addressed specifically in a Bible verse. While the Bible doesn't say, "thou shalt not drive a car valued at more than \$45,000", most Christians wouldn't feel comfortable driving to church meetings in a Rolls Royce. But who can find a verse that says it's wrong? A new believer walking through the church parking lot cannot avoid noticing that most affluent believers drive more expensive vehicles and less affluent believers tend to drive less expensive vehicles. Imagine that, just like the world!

How about **spiritually acceptable houses**? Same as for cars. Most believers choose their houses, using the same principles as unbelievers do. Unless a new believer is personally instructed as to Biblical values, why should we think they'll come to any other conclusion than, "it must be okay, since older, wiser Christians have made that determination. They know the Bible better than I do. I'm just a new believer, what do I know?"

How about **spiritually acceptable eating behaviors**? How obese is obese? Is it 19% over normal? How about 20% over normal? Who decides what is "normal?" If there are so many overweight believers (just like in the world), then obviously the new believer has to assume that Bible verses referring to obesity were really meant for believers in a different era, since the subject is not addressed in most congregations.

What about **smoking, drinking alcohol, wasting time, excessive working, neglect of spouses and family, financial investment in possessions, the stock market**, etc.? And the list goes on. If the new believer is allowed to continue focusing on outward external behavior, rather than on Biblical principles, there is a high probability that the believer will grow into a "self-dependent" and "worldly-minded" Christian, practicing an externally acceptable spiritual life on the one hand (acceptable to Christian peers), while at the same time pursuing worldly goals of possessions, pleasures, power and popularity (to the extent they're not offensive to Christian peers).

What do we mean by the terms “self-dependent” and “carnal?”

In the Bible we see a contrast between “**spiritual believers**” and “**self-dependent (carnal) believers**.” This, we believe, is the contrast brought out in Proverbs 3:5-6, ‘**Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.**’ (NKJV)

We also need to distinguish between “**disposition**” and “**acts of behavior**”. What we “**do**” is an expression of what we “**are**.” One of the best examples is the contrast between King David and King Saul (see also Lesson 3-3). **King David** was described by God as a “**spiritual man**” (referring to the disposition of his heart). Acts 13:22 – ‘After removing him [*king Saul*], He raised up David as their king and testified about him: ‘I have found David the son of Jesse, a man loyal to Me, who will carry out all My will.’

But nobody would suggest that David's behavior was pleasing to God when he committed adultery and murder. On the other hand, **King Saul's** heart disposition was characterized by a pattern of “**self-dependence**.” As a result, when faced with decisions related to behavior, King Saul consistently “leaned on his own human understanding”, rather than walking by faith in God's leading. It is important to note that Spiritual believers do not always trust God in every situation (see Paul in 2 Cor. 1:8-9 and 12:7), and “self-dependent” (“carnal”) believers often call upon the Lord in times of distress and crisis.

Another example is the clear contrast between **Joshua and Caleb** and the other **ten Israelite tribal leaders** (see also Lesson 3-4). All were sent by God to survey the Promised Land. All twelve men saw the same things, but only two men, Joshua and Caleb, had a “**faithful**” heart disposition that led them to trust God's promise. The other ten had a disposition of **trusting in their own human reasoning**, which led them to forfeit God's intended blessings. In Joshua 14:7-8, Caleb relates, ‘*I was 40 years old when Moses the Lord's servant sent me from Kadesh-Barnea to scout the land, and I brought back **an honest report (according to my convictions - NIV)**. My brothers who went with me caused the people's hearts to melt with fear, but I remained **loyal to the Lord my God (wholeheartedly - NIV)**.*’

In Numbers 14:24, God says of Caleb, ‘... *since My servant Caleb has **a different spirit** and has followed Me **completely**, I will bring him into the land where he has gone,...*’

In these discipleship materials, we use the term “spiritual” to describe believers who have chosen to acknowledge God as the One who can best oversee and manage their lives, and who view themselves as “**servants of God their Master**” (Lordship). We use the terms “self-dependent” and “carnal” to describe believers who have either willingly, or ignorantly, **not chosen to acknowledge and accept the authority and Lordship of Christ over their life**. Unfortunately, we believe the Biblical concept of “self-dependence” would characterize about 70-80% of believers found in the American evangelical Christian community.

Again, we need to be careful to apply the terms “spiritual” and “self-dependent” (carnal) to “heart attitude” (disposition) rather than to “external behavior”. If we convey to others that the terms “spiritual” or “self-dependent” refer mainly to external behavior, then we will be unconsciously promoting the misconception of focusing on external behavior, rather than the Biblical concept of focusing on the “**internal transformation**,” from which external behavior is derived.

Romans 12:1-2 Therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your spiritual worship. **Do not be conformed** to this age, but **be transformed** by the renewing of **your mind**, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.

Matthew 12:34 ... For the mouth speaks **from the overflow of the heart**.

POINTS TO CONSIDER!

Has God designed congregational meetings for the “equipping” of the saints so that He can then use each saint to impact the lives of other people?

And He personally gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, **for the training of the saints in the work of ministry**, to build up the body of Christ, until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God’s Son, growing into a **mature** man with a stature measured by Christ’s fullness. Then we will no longer be little children, tossed by the waves and blown around by every wind of teaching, by human cunning with cleverness in the techniques of deceit. But speaking the truth in love, let us grow in every way into Him who is the head—Christ. From Him **the whole body**, fitted and knit together by **every** supporting ligament, promotes the growth of the body for building up itself in love **by the proper working of each individual part**.

Ephesians 4:11-16

Why is it that many children of believers become resistant to the values of their parents?

We suspect that in many cases what the child sees modeled in the home has more impact than what the child is told. In other words, a parent will typically make declarations of Biblical values and convictions, but the child will not adopt those same stated values and convictions unless there is a **consistency** in the everyday living out of those stated values. If I tell my child about the importance of living for eternity, but then demonstrate by my life that this temporary life on earth is of great importance, which will they believe, my words or my life? It is relatively easy for a Christian to portray a consistent spiritual life to those with whom they only have short periods of contact each week, but it is very difficult to hide **the real life values and convictions** from children who are continually watching, and imitating.

The newer believer understands the foundational doctrine of salvation by grace through Christ. Now he wants to build on that truth, but isn’t quite sure how to go about it. Is it reasonable to simply give him a Bible and expect him to effectively grow to spiritual maturity?

It is possible, but we think it is the exception. Because some new believers do seem to grow spiritually with little individual mentoring, **a false impression** can be given. We are tempted to ask, “Why can’t more Christians grow like that?” In the secular world there are those who excel without much help from others, but they are the exception. For instance, we can hand a **computer manual** to 100 people who have no prior computer understanding. A few will manage, with difficulty, to eventually figure things out. But the vast majority will become frustrated and decide that a computer really isn’t worth all the hassle. Many Christians, left on their own, reach the same conclusion regarding the Christian life. Which would you prefer, to be given a computer manual to learn on your own, or to have someone take the time to personally tutor you through the beginning phases and answer your questions? We could truthfully state that the manual has **all** the knowledge you’ll need, and it is **clearly** presented. How about building a house on a foundation? How many inexperienced men would enjoy being handed blueprints and a manual for building a house, and be expected to do a decent job? Not many.



Some might argue that the Holy Spirit alone should be the new believer's Teacher. The Biblical analogy of a new believer being like a "baby" carries little meaning if we don't accept the analogous implications. Does the command to "make disciples" simply convey the idea of handing someone a Biblical manual? Does the Holy Spirit expect older Christians to be **available** for His use in the process of spiritual parenting, just as He wants them to be available as witnesses when He chooses to convict an unbeliever?



If a computer illiterate person were just handed a computer manual without personal tutoring, how well would most people do?



Yet many Christians are told, "here's a Bible, just read it, it has all the answers."

Perhaps one guide for measuring the true spirituality of a congregation would be the **level of conviction** that an unbeliever experiences while in the presence of the believers. Should 1 Cor. 14:24-25 lead us to believe that if the congregation is truly spiritual and an unbeliever happens to enter, that the unbeliever should feel uncomfortable? 'But if all are prophesying and some unbeliever or uninformed person comes in, **he is convicted** by all and is judged by all. The secrets of his heart will be revealed, and as a result he will fall facedown and worship God, proclaiming, "**God is really among you.**"'

In a spiritually healthy congregation should **spiritual reproduction** be **observable** and **measurable**? Should spiritual parenting (spiritual tutoring) be the norm, rather than the exception?

Parable of the Sower (One interpretation)

Matthew 13:3-8, 18-23 & Luke 8:4-8, 12-15

Lk. 8:4 ... He (*Jesus*) said in a parable:

Lk. 8:11 This is the meaning of the parable: **The seed is the word of God.**

U N B E L I E V E R S	GRP. 1	<p>“ALONG THE PATH”</p> <p>Lk. 8:5 A sower went out to sow his seed. As he was sowing, some fell <u>along the path</u>; it was trampled on, and the <u>birds</u> of the sky <u>ate it up</u>.</p> <p>Lk. 8:12 The seed along the path are those who have heard and then <u>the Devil</u> comes and <u>takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved.</u></p>	<p>NOTE: Obviously “unsaved” people who have <u>rejected</u> the message of salvation.</p>
	GRP. 2	<p>“ON ROCKY GROUND”</p> <p>Mt. 13:5-6 Others fell <u>on rocky ground</u>, where there wasn’t much soil, and they sprang up quickly since the <u>soil wasn’t deep</u>. But when the sun came up they were scorched, and since <u>they had no root</u>, they <u>withered</u>. (Lk. 8:6 ... <u>lacked moisture</u>)</p> <p>Mt. 13:20-21 And the one sown on rocky ground—this is <u>one who hears the word</u> and <u>immediately receives it with joy</u>. Yet he has <u>no root</u> in himself, but is short-lived. When pressure or persecution comes because of the word, <u>immediately he stumbles</u>.</p>	<p>NOTE: It appears that these people “<u>intellectually</u>” accept the message of salvation, but then reject the implications of a relationship with God, once they realize that it is not what they had originally anticipated. (Perhaps John 6:60-66 is an example?)</p>
B E L I E V E R S	* GRP. 3	<p>“AMONG THORNS”</p> <p>Lk. 8:7 Other seed fell <u>among thorns</u>; the thorns sprang up with it and <u>choked it</u>.</p> <p>Lk. 8:14 As for the seed that fell among thorns, these are the ones who, when they have heard, go on their way and are <u>choked with worries, riches, and pleasures</u> of life, and <u>produce no mature fruit</u>. (Mt. 13:22 making it <u>unfruitful</u>).</p>	<p>NOTE: These people evidently receive Christ as Savior, but either through lack of understanding or willingly, <u>some do not acknowledge His lordship over their life</u>, while <u>others simply allow the distractions of this world to choke off the Holy Spirit’s fruit</u>, thereby forfeiting the associated blessings and rewards that God had intended for them.</p>
	* GRP. 4	<p>“ON GOOD GROUND”</p> <p>Mt. 13:8 Still others fell <u>on good ground</u> and <u>produced a crop</u>: some 100, some 60, and some 30 times what was sown.</p> <p>Mt. 13:23 But the one sown on the good ground—this is one who hears and <u>understands</u> the word, <u>who does bear fruit</u> and yields: some 100, some 60, some 30 times what was sown.”</p>	<p>NOTE: These people are saved, <u>have acknowledged His lordship over their life</u>, and are to varying degrees <u>allowing the Holy Spirit to produce His fruit through their life</u>, resulting in blessings here on earth and rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ.</p>

* Note: If personal discipleship were the common church practice, we believe the number in Group #3 would be greatly diminished, and the number in Group #4 would be greatly increased.

The Common Perspective of Christian Congregations Vs. the Biblical Perspective

(Spiritual Maturity is Typically Graded "on the Curve")

Common perspective		Biblical perspective
"Spiritual"	<p>These Christians appear to have wholeheartedly acknowledged His Lordship over their lives, have a healthy growing relationship with the Lord, and seem to be bearing spiritual fruit.</p>	"Spiritual"
"Acceptable"	<p>These Christians don't exhibit excessive negative outward behavior. These Christians may regularly attend church services, give financially, and be involved in other Christian activities. They will quickly acknowledge God's presence in their lives, but do not exhibit much passion for the Lord, or understanding of wholehearted surrender to His Lordship.</p>	"Self-dependent" (carnal)
"Self-dependent" (carnal)	<p>These Christians tend to exhibit questionable negative outward behavior, such as on-going marriage, relational or financial problems, addictions, etc. They may or may not regularly attend church services, or consistently give financially. They may be involved in some Christian activities. They will quickly acknowledge God's presence in their lives. Counseling is often seen as the recommended recourse. Their salvation may be in doubt.</p>	
"Unsaved"	<p>These individuals are usually recognized as being unsaved.</p>	"Unsaved"

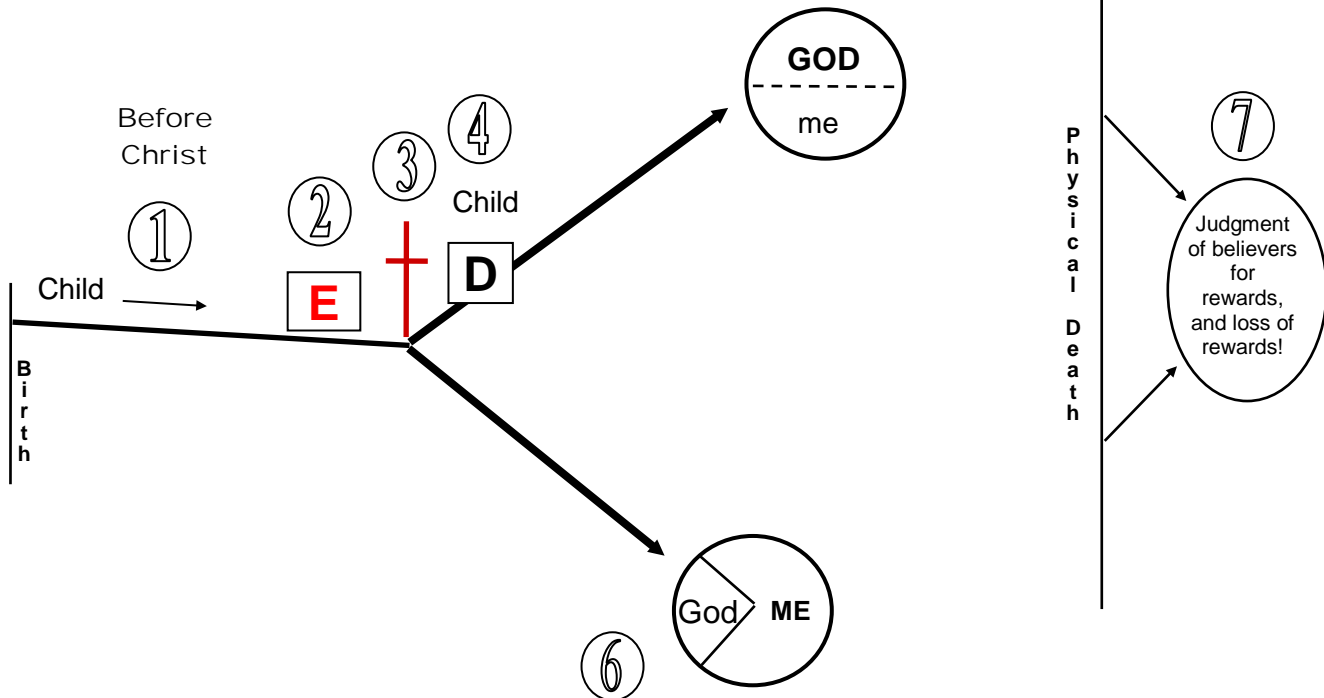
Typical Disciplined and Undisciplined Believers

Typical "Disciplined" Believer

5

- Increasing dependence on God (Master-servant)
- Increasing God-reliance (Faith walk)
- Focus on inward transformation (producing Godly behavior)

"It's about God!" ("dog attitude")



Typical "Undisciplined" Believer

- God is my "Junior" Partner (up to 49% control)
- God is my "Co-pilot" (God is on standby)
- Focus on behavior modification
- Self-dependent

"It's about me!" ("cat attitude")



I (Paul) **planted**, Apollos **watered**, but God gave the **growth**. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but **only God who gives the growth**. Now the one planting and the one watering are one in purpose, and **each will receive his own reward** according to his own labor. For we are God's **coworkers**. You are God's **field**, God's **building**. (1 Corinthians 3:6-9)

Lesson Guide

Typical Disciplined and Undisciplined Believers

Note for discipler: The purpose of this lesson is to present the **typical** results that can be expected when a new believer is given personalized individual attention during the critical formative development period of their Christian life, and the **typical** results that can be expected if the new believer is not given the needed attention during that time. Obviously there are those who grow and have a reasonable fruitful spiritual life in spite of having received little personal attention – but they are the exception.

① **Physical Birth to Spiritual Rebirth**

② **Evangelism phase** – This represents the period of time during which the Holy Spirit is revealing to the unbeliever his lost condition before a holy God. Generally, the Holy Spirit will use a combination of His Word, a believer(s) and circumstances as instruments to draw the unbeliever to Himself.

John 12:32 (Jesus said) “As for Me, if I am lifted up from the earth I will draw **all** people to Myself.”

John 16:8 “When He (the Holy Spirit) comes, He **will convict** the world about **sin**, **righteousness**, and **judgment**.”

③ **The Cross** – This event is the most important single event in a human’s life. The person has passed from “death” (separated from God) to “life” (in which the Lord indwells the believer).

John 5:24 (Jesus said) “I assure you: Anyone who **hears** My word and **believes** Him who sent Me **has** eternal life and will not come under judgment but has **passed from death to life**.”

④ **Disciplineship phase (**Spiritual Parenting**)** – (For a biblical model of discipleship, see **1 Thess. 2:3-13** in Lesson 2-2) – The typical new believer will never be more open to being personally disciplined than at this stage of his Christian life. Hence there is a window of opportunity in which the believer’s worldview can be greatly impacted. As can be attested to by many experienced believers, the personal attention and guidance afforded the new Christian during this period can have a huge influence on later spiritual development. Conversely, many Christians who have not had the needed personal spiritual guidance early on in their Christian life will lament having had to go through much avoidable confusion, struggles and fruitlessness.

5

Discipled believer – The new Christian who receives personal attention and guidance in their new walk with the Lord will typically find the transition to a Master-servant relationship relatively natural. At this stage the issue of who will manage the direction of their life will not be overly threatening to them, as they become increasingly aware of His love and care. As the Lord oversees this process of growth we would typically expect the new believer to be filled with anticipation, not dread, as he begins to witness God’s sovereign involvement in his life. The believer who understands and yields to His lordship will increasingly perceive the Lord as the One around whom their life revolves, in contrast to the believer who still thinks that they’re the one around whom the world revolves. It has been suggested that most dogs display a loyalty to their master in a way that could serve as a model for believers, in that they tend to understand their role as submissive and obedient servants. They typically don’t expect to be served by their master.

6

Undisciplined believer – If a new believer is not given adequate personal attention and guidance during this important first phase, but is simply placed into corporate settings with other Christians, they can usually be expected to display spiritual traits that are characteristic of the peers with whom they associate. Left on their own they will typically adopt a lifestyle in which they will attempt to balance their spiritual and secular lives in an acceptable way, resulting in a compartmentalization of their life, as they strive to rationalize and reconcile values and behavior that they recognize are not compatible with the Bible. This of course is the product of unsuccessfully attempting to manage the direction of their own life and spiritual development.

Many older Christians honestly yearn for a closer relationship with God, but have never had that relationship clearly explained to them. Many incorrectly conclude that God simply wants them to do their best, or that the Christian life is just too difficult for them to clearly understand. A distorted “partnership” mentality is often the outcome of a failure to receive proper biblical guidance as to what the normal Christian life should look like. It has been suggested that a cat could represent these believers who have not yet yielded to His Lordship, in that the typical cat tends to display an attitude of indifference, unsubmitiveness and independence.

7

Rewards Ceremony – The Judgment Seat of Christ should not be seen as a threat, but rather as a motivator for allowing the Lord to manage the direction and spiritual development of one’s life, which will result in a maximizing of fruitfulness. If the Holy Spirit is allowed to manage the spiritual construction in a Christian’s life, He will produce the best possible eternal outcome.

***“The system you have in place is perfectly designed
for the results you are getting.”***

(from a *Man In The Mirror* seminar – 2004)

What Is a Biblical Disciple?

1. To many Christians the term “disciple” speaks of a believer who exhibits an acceptable level of observable Christian behavior. Since one’s behavior is a product of one’s convictions (values), we believe being a “disciple” should more accurately be understood to reflect a believer’s disposition and relationship with the Lord. In this lesson we seek to focus on a disciple’s heart attitude, rather than just what a disciple “does.”

... *Man does not see what the LORD sees, for man sees what is visible, but the LORD sees the heart.*”
(1 Sam. 16:7)

Godly Behavior is an Outcome of Godly Convictions

2. The pivotal issue that a disciple has dealt with is that of Christ’s lordship over his life. In other words, the believer has considered the claims of Christ, and has concluded that the best workable relationship is for the Lord to be in charge of his entire life. One of Christ’s claims is that of ownership (having authority over that which is owned).

1 Cor. 6:19-20 Don’t you know that your body is a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought at a price. Therefore glorify God in your body.

1 Cor. 7:23 You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men.

God’s ownership of the Christian is a factual truth, which is not dependent on the believer’s acknowledgment of it. I do not bestow ownership, I can only acknowledge and act upon what He states to be already true. New believers will typically not be resistant to this truth, because they don’t have preconceived ideas of God’s expectations. In contrast, older believers tend to accept this truth intellectually, but be resistant to the implications. What are the implications of ownership? What rights or authority are generally understood to be conveyed by ownership? Does an owner not have the right to do whatever he wants with his property?

He Owns Me (Whether I Believe It or Not). His Ownership s Not Dependent on My Acceptance

It (being a disciple) involved personal allegiance to Him, expressed in following Him and giving Him an exclusive loyalty. In at least some cases it meant literal abandonment of home, business ties and possessions, but in every case readiness to put the claims of Jesus first, whatever the cost, was demanded. Such an attitude went well beyond the normal pupil-teacher relationship and gave the word ‘disciple’ a new sense. (The New Bible Dictionary)

*Every Disciple is a Convert,
But Not Every Convert is a Biblical Disciple*

3. Another issue that a disciple has dealt with is that of Christ's command for His followers to accept a Master-servant relationship with Him.

Luke 14:25-33 Now great crowds were traveling with Him. So He turned and said to them: "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, and even his own life—he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. ... In the same way, therefore, every one of you who does not say good-bye to all his possessions cannot be My disciple.

(see NOTE below.)

Rom. 6:19 ... so now offer them as slaves to righteousness, which results in sanctification.

1 Cor. 7:22 ... he who is called as a free man is Christ's slave.

1 Peter 2:16 As God's slaves, live as free people, but don't use your freedom as a way to conceal evil.

NOTE ON LUKE 14:25-33 The stress here is on the priority of love (compare Matt. 10:37) "*The person who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; the person who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.*" One's loyalty to Jesus must come before his loyalty to his family or even to life itself. Indeed, those who did follow Jesus against their families' desires were probably thought of as hating their families. (Walvoord, John F., and Zuck, Roy B., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, (Wheaton, Ill: Scripture Press Pub., Inc.)

4. A disciple of Jesus is more than just a student, he is an apprentice.

Unfortunately, many in the Western Hemisphere have adopted the secular teacher-student method for growing believers. There are significant factors that would seem to favor this approach, such as busyness and perceived efficiency. However, what appears to be most efficient is not necessarily what is most effective.

The teacher-disciple model demands a greater commitment, and much more personal attention, but we believe it is the Biblical method as modeled by Jesus Himself, and the model that will result in the greatest individual spiritual growth and impact on the world.

A Student – Typically the goal of a student is to learn knowledge (information), that is, to learn what the teacher knows. The student may not even respect or like his teacher.

A Disciple – A disciple on the other hand is a student who has the goal of becoming like his teacher. This model requires personal interaction, and a personal commitment by the teacher (mentor, spiritual parent) on behalf of the apprentice learner.

*A Student Wants To Know What the Teacher Knows,
A Disciple Wants To Become Like the Teacher*

Luke 6:40 (Jesus said) “A disciple (*apprentice learner*) is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be **like his teacher**.”
Matthew 10:24-25 (Jesus said) “A disciple is not above his teacher, or a slave above his master. It is enough for a disciple to become **like his teacher** and a slave **like his master**...”

*All Disciples are Students,
But Not All Students are Disciples*

5. A disciple has a desire to know God, not just know “about” Him.

Jer. 9:23-24 This is what the LORD says: ... But the one who boasts should boast in this, **that he understands and knows Me**—that I am Yahweh, showing faithful love, justice, and righteousness on the earth, for I delight in these things. This is the LORD’s declaration.
Luke 10:38-42 ... He (*Jesus*) entered a village, and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who also sat **at the Lord’s feet** and was **listening** to what He said. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks, and she came up and asked, “Lord, don’t You care that my sister has left me to serve alone? So tell her to give me a hand.” The Lord answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but **one thing is necessary**. Mary has made **the right choice**, and it will not be taken away from her.”
John 17:3 This is eternal life: **that they may know You**, the only true God, and the One You have sent—Jesus Christ.
Romans 12:2 **Do not be conformed** to this age, but **be transformed by the renewing of your mind**, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.

6. A disciple has the attitude of one who follows the Lord, not one who “leads” the Lord.

Luke 5:10-11 ... “Don’t be afraid,” Jesus told Simon. “From now on you will be catching people!” Then they brought the boats to land, **left everything, and followed Him**.
Luke 9:23-24 Then He said to them all, “If anyone wants to come with Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily, and **follow Me**. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but **whoever loses his life because of Me will save it**.”
John 12:24-26 “I assure you: Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains by itself. But if it dies, it produces a large crop. The one who loves his life will lose it, and the one who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves Me, **he must follow Me. Where I am**, there My servant also will be. If anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.”

7. What has been described in the previous points should not imply that a disciple of Jesus is super spiritual or beyond the capacity to sin. Although the disciple's acceptance of Christ's yoke has given the Holy Spirit the freedom to mold him, he still has a capacity to disobey, and he can submit to the sinful human nature for varying lengths of time.

The fact that the disciple has made the choice to acknowledge the lordship of Christ over his life has set the general direction of his Christian life. The everyday application of assimilated convictions will depend on the disciple's continual willingness to yield up areas of his life to His authority. The battle has been won, but there are many skirmishes.

Because being a disciple has more to do with one's disposition than with behavior, even a wholehearted disciple can find himself in a quagmire of defeat if he does not understand how to consistently abide in fellowship with the Lord.

One of the responsibilities of Church leadership is to convey to the congregation that each believer should aspire to be used by the Holy Spirit as a "witness," and also as a "discipler" (spiritual parent)

One characteristic that is typically evident in the life of a disciple of Jesus is a discernible "passion for the Lord"

"... He (*God*) raised up David as their king and testified about him:

**'I have found David the son of Jesse,
a man loyal to Me, who will carry out all My will.'**
(Acts 13:22)

Guidelines for Discipling

1. What is the purpose of discipling? (See lesson 2-2)

Every person is born with a predisposition toward independence from God. That disposition tends to harden as the child grows into an adult. If the person accepts His gift of salvation, God then begins a process of inward transformation (sanctification). The pace and depth of that transformation process is affected by the understanding and openness of the new Christian. The intent of discipleship (mentoring, “spiritual parenting”) is to help the new Christian to understand **what God is doing**, in order to significantly influence and accelerate that process.

Romans 12:1-2 ... *brothers, by the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this age, but **be transformed** by the renewing of **your mind**, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.*

Colossians 1:28-29 (Paul wrote) *We proclaim Him, warning and teaching everyone with all wisdom, **so that we may present everyone mature in Christ**. I labor for this, striving with His strength that works powerfully in me.*

2. Targeting (Seeking God's choices as to whom you should disciple)

A. If you want to be an effective spiritual parent (discipler), you need to prayerfully seek God's wisdom for discernment as to which Christian(s) will benefit from your investment of time, energy and possessions. Jesus let His Father make the decision.

Luke 6:12-16 ... *He went out to the mountain to pray and spent all night in prayer to God. When daylight came, He summoned His disciples, and He chose 12 of them—He also named them apostles.*

Note: Sadly, **many** Christians, especially those who have found a comfortable and acceptable Christian lifestyle, **are not overly interested in being mentored** on toward spiritual maturity and fruitfulness. If you are considering mentoring a Christian, look for the characteristics in Point 3. If they are not evident, then prayerfully look to the Lord for **His confirmation**, or to provide you someone else who does have a hunger to grow spiritually. There are Christians who would love to have someone take them under their wing to help them grow. **Trying to disciple a disinterested person will usually lead to frustration! If you spend your limited time with a disinterested person, you may be neglecting someone else who sincerely wants to grow.**

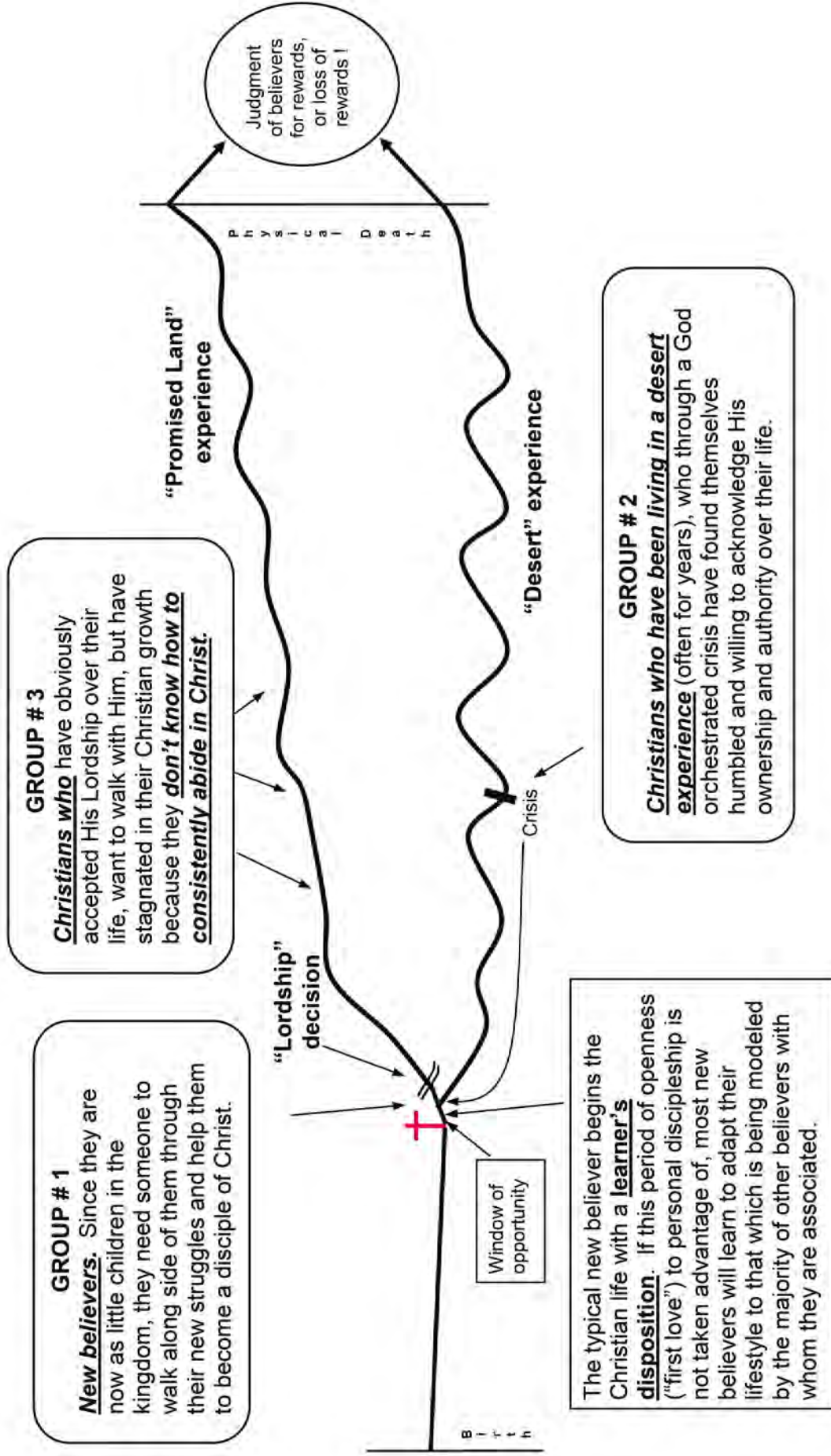
Note: **Timing is important. Someone not interested today may be interested at a later time.**

B. Where should we look for Christians to disciple?

- 1. New believers** Since they are now as **little children** in the kingdom, they tend to be spiritually hungry, and need someone to walk alongside of them.
- 2. Christians who have been living in a desert experience** (often for years), who through a God orchestrated **crisis** have found themselves humbled and finally willing to acknowledge that He can manage their life better than they can.
- 3. Christians who** have obviously accepted His Lordship over their life, want to walk with Him, but have either stagnated (or plateaued) in their Christian growth or **don't understand how to consistently abide in fellowship with the Lord.**

THE 3 TARGET GROUPS IN WHICH TO FIND POTENTIAL DISCIPLES

And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, commit to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. (2 Tim. 2:2)



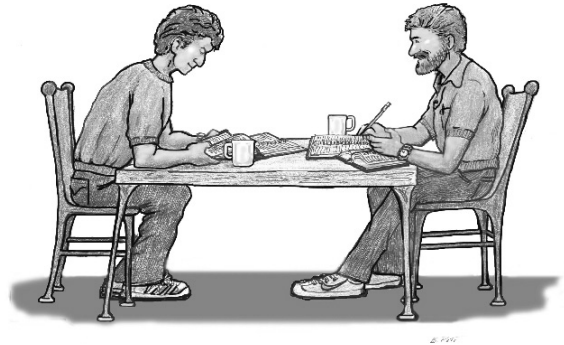
3. What characteristics should we look for in a disciple-to-be?

1. **A spiritual hunger.** Are they hungering and seeking after God? (Jesus said) *those who hunger and thirst for righteousness are blessed, for they will be filled.* (Matt. 5:6)
2. **A teachable attitude.** Do they have an openness to Him? Do they see themselves as a learner, apprentice?
3. **A RELIABILITY (DEPENDABILITY).** (Paul told timothy) *And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, commit to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.* (2 Tim. 2:2) Do they want to apply his truth to their life? Is spiritual growth a priority?

Caution: It is not good if they think they're doing you a favor.

4. Suggested guidelines for discipling another person.

- A.
- Arrange to meet together at least once each week for about 1½ hours or so. The time can vary depending on their spiritual hunger, assimilation of Biblical concepts, and maturity level.
 - Plan on spending at least 3 to 9 months with a disciple, meeting regularly.
 - The purpose of the meetings is to explain Biblical truth and principles, and to give the disciple opportunity to ask questions, share spiritual struggles, and discuss related topics.
 - It is important for you to be a thoughtful listener; it's the best way to identify gaps in their spiritual understanding.
 - Be flexible enough to allow the Holy Spirit to change the direction of the study or conversation, yet orderly enough so the time is not squandered on less significant matters.
 - Teach at the disciple's pace.
 - The disciple should be encouraged to look to the Lord to apply Biblical principles to his life.
 - A goal is for the disciple to increasingly understand and be able to clearly explain those Biblical principles to others. At some point the disciple should be ready to start mentoring another person, with your assistance.

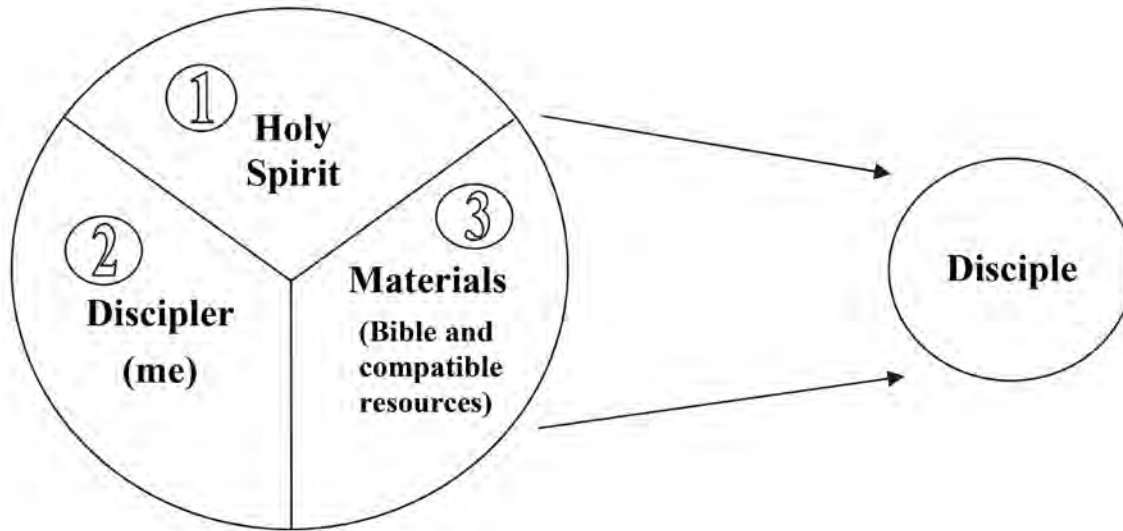


NOTE: We don't want to imply that these lessons are the only valid ones. Christians have been disciplined over the centuries using different portions of Scriptures. The mentoring and nurturing aspects are crucial. We believe the concepts presented in these discipleship lessons need to be understood by the disciple if you expect healthy growth and maturity.

- B. Seek to teach them Biblical principles to live by, not just Biblical knowledge. We don't want to simply convey an academic perspective of these discipleship materials or the mentoring process.
- C. Make sure the disciple understands that you are available through the week. Even after your formal discipleship time is completed, you should plan to continue being available for the disciple, as you regularly monitor their spiritual growth.
- D. Regularly pray for the disciple, and with the disciple.
- E. Remember you are a role model for the disciple. Include the disciple in your spiritual life when appropriate.
- F. Your goal is to lead them into dependence on the Holy Spirit, and independence from you. We should expect the typical Christian, if correctly disciplined, to become a "spiritual reproducer".

*The Disciple Won't Care How Much You Know,
Until They Know How Much You Care!*

Essentials for Discipling (Role descriptions)



① **The discipler needs to count on the HOLY SPIRIT to:**

- a. Orchestrate encounters with others who need to be discipled.
- b. Create spiritual hunger in the person to be discipled.
- c. Guide the discipleship process.
- d. Give wisdom, discernment and clarity to you as a discipler.

② **The DISCIPLER is responsible to:**

- a. Pray and look to the Lord with expectation.
- b. Continue in fellowship (abide) with the Holy Spirit.
- c. Study the Word and seek to be prepared as a usable vessel. (2 Tim. 2:15)
- d. Be available to be used as a vessel by the Holy Spirit.
- e. Cooperate with the Holy Spirit as a partner in His work.

③ **The MATERIAL that is used should:**

- a. Emphasize the disciple's need to be looking to the Lord to reveal Himself through His Word, the Bible.
- b. Progressively address the needs of a new Christian (as in building a house). (See 2-1, Point 10)
- c. Focus the disciple's attention on his/her relationship with the Lord, rather than on external behavior.

➤ **In the human physical realm there are three OBSTACLES TO REPRODUCTION:**

- a. physical immaturity,
- b. a health problem, and
- c. lack of physical intimacy.

➤ **Dawson Trotman, founder of the Navigators (navigators.org), has suggested that the same three obstacles can hinder spiritual reproduction.**

- a. Spiritual immaturity – Due to being a newer Christian, or due to lack of spiritual growth.
- b. Spiritual health problems – Due to unresolved issues between the Christian and the Lord, and/or lack of correct spiritual understanding.
- c. Lack of spiritual intimacy – Due to busyness and/or other activities or things that infringe on the Christian's intimacy with the Lord.

Recommendations for Effective Discipleship

A disciple has the goal of becoming like the teacher.

(Jesus said) *A disciple* (apprentice learner) *is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher.* (Luke 6:40)

1. For the newer believer there is usually a significant emphasis toward **behavior modification**. Therefore, we should focus the believer's attention on his relationship with the Lord, since **inward transformation will produce the behavior that pleases the Lord**. Our goal is for him/her to learn **to habitually seek God's approval**, rather than man's approval. (Rom. 12:1-2) (John 12:42-43)
2. As a spiritual baby, every new believer should be given personalized individual attention during the **critical formative period** of their new life with the Lord. **CAUTION:** Be careful **to not interpret the new believer's enthusiasm as an accurate indicator of spiritual well being**, since this initial openness and hunger has a tendency to fade if not developed during this window of opportunity.
3. Biblical training should be **orderly and progressive** in nature, rather than random. Due to the new believer's unfamiliarity with the Christian life, random information **tends to be archived** rather than applied. It is also very easy for the newer believer to unknowingly have gaps in their understanding of essential concepts. (Illustration: steps in building a house) (1 Cor. 3:10-15)
4. Disciples should be treated as **apprentices**, rather than as students simply seeking Biblical knowledge. As in any purposeful apprenticeship, there is a need for a significant amount of committed time and energy. **Individual training is slower but tends to be deeper**.
5. One-on-one training (spiritual parenting) should be **balanced** with corporate training, just as in any normal family. **Neither one should be considered optional**. One weakness of corporate settings is many times there is **no requirement** for serious interaction or dialog that addresses the individual spiritual needs of the disciple.
6. Serious consideration should be given to the inclusion of the following major components of discipleship, namely: **1) Commitment, 2) Modeling, 3) Individual Attention, and 4) Teaching**. Use **1 Thess. 2:3-13** as a model for personal discipleship. It incorporates the major components of "spiritual parenting".
7. Every believer should be seen as a **potential discipler**, and trained toward that end. There is no special spiritual gift for discipling, just as there is no special gift for witnessing. The command to make disciples was given to the universal church, not just to a few specially trained or gifted individuals. If human couples raised offspring at the same ratio as Christians spiritually parent new believers, the human race would probably be considered an endangered species.
8. At minimum, the disciple should **understand and be able to explain to others** an Overview of the Christian life, as well as the concepts of "lordship", "sanctification", "abiding" (walking in the Spirit), "the Rewards Ceremony", etc.
9. The spiritual health of a Christian church should not be measured primarily by the activity of its leadership. A better indicator is the **spiritual reproduction and growth** that is occurring as a result of the main body of believers being equipped for the work of service. One should ask, "if the leader(s) were removed, **would the body of believers be spiritually mature enough to continue to grow and spiritually reproduce?**" (Eph. 4:11-16)

***A Measure of Success is Indicated When the Believer
You Are Discipling is Functioning as a Discipler.***

Discipleship - Discussion Points

1. Our desire is to present the concept of discipleship as a **commitment to “spiritually parent”** a disciple-in-the-making, in contrast to the prevalent idea that discipleship is simply a “transfer of Biblical **knowledge**” that takes place, usually in a classroom or group setting. We believe that group meetings do play an important part in healthy Christian growth, but **they cannot take the place of personal one-on-one mentoring**, which includes individualized teaching, modeling, encouragement, exhortation, etc. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of corporate meetings such as in a classroom setting, or a small accountability group. What are the advantages and disadvantages of one-on-one meetings?
2. Discuss the importance of each of the **four major components** of personal discipleship. Why is the initial period in a new Christian’s life so important for spiritual development?
3. If we see new believers as “spiritual babies” in Christ, then it seems logical to look at the **characteristics** of a typical human baby. There are at least three notable traits:
 - 1) They’re **hungry**
 - 2) They’re **dependent** on others
 - 3) They are **self-centered**.

Are these characteristics also true of the typical new believer?

4. Often new believers are not presented with essential spiritual concepts because there is a fear of overwhelming them with too much complex Biblical information, concluding that the Christian life can really only be understood by **advanced believers**. None of the spiritual concepts presented in this discipleship curriculum are overwhelming if clearly explained. However, if left to their own, many newer Christians will conclude that God’s provision for a healthy Christian life is totally dependent on their **outward behavior** and/or **Biblical understanding**. That **is** overwhelming.
5. Some reasons for which many Christians are **reluctant to make a commitment** to mentoring a new believer are:
 - (1) **I don’t feel adequate**
 - (2) **That’s not my gift**
 - (3) **I don’t have enough Biblical understanding**
 - (4) **I don’t want to be a hypocrite**
 - (5) **I’m too busy, over committed; etc.**

These reasons are usually based on one’s appraisal of personal capabilities, rather than faith in God’s capabilities. Many such Christians would greatly benefit from being trained as disciplers. How many Christian parents would have kids if they had waited until they felt their parenting skills were adequate? Have any of these reasons affected you either in the past or present? If so, has God given you victory, or are you presently seeing God’s victory in your life?

6. How have you been personally impacted by the **modeling** of other Christians? Has it had a positive or negative impact on your life?

7. The excitement commonly observed in a new Christian's life is often **mistakenly** taken to indicate a measure of spiritual understanding. They hear that they are "new creatures in Christ," yet soon find themselves with temptations similar to what they experienced as unbelievers. Is it any wonder that so many Christians find themselves living like unbelievers after a few months of **trying** to live the "new" life that seems to be expected of them? Many continue to attend church services, and may be involved in Christian events and programs, but inwardly are defeated and struggling, "doing their best!" Does this resemble your personal experience in any way?
8. Personal discipleship serves **to acquaint** the newer believer with the general goals that God has for their life and with the **process** by which God typically accomplishes spiritual growth. Because each Christian is unique, **only** the Holy Spirit can be in charge of the spiritual growth process. Through personal discipleship, our intent is to shorten the time required for the newer believer to learn **how to cooperate** with the Holy Spirit in the process of spiritual growth. What do you believe should be the anticipated spiritual results of healthy discipleship? Why?
9. Ideally every new Christian should be **individually** discipled in order to help them in the **transition** from self-reliance to an increasing God-reliance, as clearly contrasted in Proverbs 3:5-6. "Persecution" is one instrument that God uses to accelerate that transition. Often **older** Christians, who have not yet acknowledged His Lordship, will have an increasing measure of **resistance** to changes, since they typically will have become accustomed to a somewhat manageable Christian lifestyle. God often uses "crisis" to bring about that transition. We need to be alert for Christians who have recently passed through such a crisis and are now ready to acknowledge His Lordship over their life. It is the Holy Spirit's job to coordinate crisis, and **my** responsibility to be **available** to Him when He wants to use me in the life of another who is responding to Him. If someone were to ask you to describe a "**biblical disciple**", how would you respond?
10. Do you believe that you know what **spiritual gift(s)** you have been given by the Holy Spirit? If so, how have you drawn this conclusion? From observing the Lord's involvement in your life? How has He been using you to spiritually benefit others? Has anyone else commented to you regarding your spiritual engiftedness? (See also Lesson 1-6, pt. 8)

***Jesus did not tell us to go into all the world and just make "converts,"
He told us to go and make "disciples."
(See Matthew 28:18-20)***

***Every believer should be seen as a potential witness, and every
believer should be seen as a potential discipler ("spiritual parent").***

