

A Discipling Guide

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A Priority:

Discipling is first and foremost a relationship: We understand this from the life and ministry of Jesus:

Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. He appointed twelve—designating them apostles—that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach.
Mark 3:13-14

Note: “**be with him**” before sending them out.

The same is true for Paul with Timothy (cf. Acts 16:1-5; Rom. 16:21; Phil. 2:19-22; 1 Tim. 1:18). In conjunction with this Lee Grady, former editor of *Charisma* recently wrote: *most ministries today focuses on crowds. Yet the most effective way to make disciples is up close and personal.* It’s what many call the Timothy Principle and it’s found in Paul’s words to his spiritual son in 2 Tim. 2:2. *And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.* “Paul discerned long ago that the most effective way to expand the reach of the Gospel was to invest **deliberately** and **personally** in younger disciples (emphasis mine).”

Grady concludes the article with these words...*Discipleship requires sacrifice and genuine love. And it focuses on individuals. As much as I enjoy speaking to crowds, I have learned that often the most effective ministry in the Kingdom of God is to the one, not the multitudes. Please don’t ignore the Timothy’s you are called to encourage.* (Fire in my Bones, Oct. 6, 2010)

This is our plea to our Missionary Church pastors. To disciple means to teach and train through words and deeds. It is not just, “notes to your notebook” but “my life upon your life.”

So whatever instruction would come—whatever “on the job training” occurred—it would flow out of relationship with Christ. Therefore, regardless of our “Myers-Briggs or DISC’ tests” configurations, discipleship must be strongly relational in order to be significantly effective.

Having said that—our church surveys revealed that a variety of methods are incorporated: one to one; triads; small group by gender; small instructional classes where the relationship of the pastor/leader is already in place with the class participants.

A Process:

1. Pray—ask God for a few individuals you can begin to disciple (teach/train through “life upon life”).
2. Invite those (one or more) whom God puts on your heart to join you in this life-learning adventure.
3. Establish set meeting times (weekly is preferable).
4. Decide (mutually if possible) what material(s) you will read, discuss and pray into your lives. In addition to whatever you may decide (books are often a good place to start) these are some resources available (listed below). They differ in their content as to a person’s spiritual maturity and familiarity with Scripture.
5. Include your “disciples” on mission trips, sermon preparation, hospital visits, ministry lunches, leadership conferences you attend/speak at. In other words get as much “life upon life” time as your schedule permits and is appropriate to the occasion. Also include them in some of your family events (your son’s baseball game, your daughter’s piano recital, a night of games with your spouse/family, etc.).
6. **Appropriately** share your own life/ministry needs and ask for prayer. It seems Jesus was somewhat transparent in the Garden of Gethsemane (cf. Mark 14:32-42; Heb. 5:7-8). But be very careful not to share marital issues that dishonor your spouse or children.
7. Live by grace and humility in these relationships. Most likely you will be more spiritually mature (at least a step or two ahead in your journey with Christ); but this is not the same as being “superior.”
8. Finally—see this as an enjoyable opportunity to impart Christ’s life—not as an unenjoyable obligation; you will be blessed and the Kingdom advances.

Resources:

- A. Obviously, **Scripture** itself can be a keystone for theological-doctrinal understanding of what it means to follow (keyword) Jesus Christ as “The Son of the Living God.”

- B. **Faith—Exploring your Relationship with God**, a 21 page booklet for those seriously considering Jesus or new converts. Six sessions—conducive to one to one or small group discussion—cover biblical principles about God, our relationship to Him, and our relationship with others. The six sessions are: *Being Secure in Your Relationship with God; Experiencing God’s Forgiveness; Knowing Who You are in Christ; Experiencing God’s Presence & Power; Growing in Faith; and Next Steps.*

These six sessions involve mostly reading with frequent “Reflect” questions.

- C. **The Purple Book—Biblical Foundations for Building Strong Disciples**, a 125 page booklet with twelve chapters dealing with foundational principles for believers: *Sin & Salvation; Lordship & Obedience; Repentance & Baptism; The Holy Spirit & Spiritual Gifts; Spiritual Hunger & God’s Word; Discipleship & Leadership; Spiritual Family & Church Life; Prayer & Worship; Faith & Hope; Biblical Prosperity & Generosity; Evangelism & World Missions; and Resurrection & Judgment.*

Each chapter contains four or five lessons that require numerous ‘fill in the blank’ questions (for information) and an Application & Reflection question at the end of each lesson. Basically, *The Purple Book* is a Bible Study guiding one into a solid understanding of the Bible.

- D. **Destined**, a four booklet series is a one-to-one or small group experience in which “you will develop lasting friendship and learn to live out your faith.” The four booklets are: *Destined for Security; Destined for Intimacy; Destined for Ministry; Destined for Eternity.*

Each booklet is 70-80 pages with six or seven lessons on each one. The format is attractive; each lesson involves, fill-ins, journaling, Scripture memorization, and a half page of “Before You Finish” application. Much of the material was adopted from materials Dr. Bill Bright of Campus Crusade developed.

- E. **Mentoring 101**, a series of four books—very similar in content to *Destined*—both having been developed by the same (or former) Life Builders Staff from Campus Crusade. Each booklet, numbering 70-80 pages, contains five lessons with information questions to answer as well as ones for discussion. In addition the first two booklets have a supplement section that is heavily doctrinal.

Recommendations:

1. For pastors and lay leaders to develop their own approach based on their strengths relationally and Biblically. Keep the material Scriptural, Simple and Personal—concluding with Prayer.
2. Use ***Faith—Exploring your Relationship with God***—for shorter, simpler, sessions with early entry disciples.
3. I prefer the ***Destined***, series over the ***Mentoring 101*** series. It is more attractive in format and less prone to “wear & tear.”

Works Cited:

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