

LIFESTYLE DISCIPLESHIP



This introductory material is a companion to the larger module of discipleship materials that has been developed as a lifetime effort of the author. This introduction gives the theological and philosophical rationale for such a task, as well as practical instructions and encouragement for anyone anywhere who desires to take seriously the task of training laborers for the evangelization of an area, as well as the world.

Writing with the basic rationale that anyone can grow and become a discipler, this author has attempted to speak to those issues that are necessary in helping an individual grow spiritually, and know the joy of seeing a spiritual genealogy develop through personal ministry.

I will attempt, in this introduction, to help you understand the use of the materials, as well as to develop a foundation which will enable you as a maturing person to continue to grow.

You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how will it be made salty again? It is good for nothing anymore, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.

Matthew 5:13

Introduction

In 1985, I visited my old ship in Houston. She rolls slightly in a bayou outside Houston and exists now as a war memorial. The USS TEXAS was once the pride of the American Navy, but after almost 70 years of steaming, guarding, fighting, and now decay, she seemed about to expire. A sturdy old super-dreadnaught, she has unique meaning for me. Indeed, meaning beyond that of most naval personnel who served aboard her. My trip to Texas was a pilgrimage—a trip back to the place of my spiritual birth. As I walked her decks again, perused the old bag alleys and areas where I once stood watch, I couldn't help but feel the same emotions I felt so long ago. Here was the place where I first saw the beauty of Jesus, experienced the love of God, and honored the Scriptures. It was here, sitting on bean bags, I first conceived of and felt the call to Christian ministry.

Forty-three years later, those surroundings, much less familiar, were speaking to me again. I was reminded that many men came aboard her, served in hurried frenzy and quickly returned to their meaningless world of empty tasks. For others, lives were interrupted by their naval duties. They returned to their familiar surroundings and involvements, soon brushing from their memories the time spent on the old ship. There were those too who went for long treatment for their bodies broken by the savage nature of war, and then Chris, our helmsman went into eternity.

This was my place of learning to love and study the Scriptures. Looking into the old "blower room," where we used to meet because it was away from the well-beaten track of the crew, I could almost hear Bob playing his trumpet as we sang "O Happy Day," and "Amazing Grace," "When we've been there ten 'trillion' years, bright shining as the sun."

Because of the experiences of those days aboard that old battlewagon, my destiny was altered—my life shaped. The content of this introduction portrays the rationale for the use of the study materials in this ministry and is, in many ways, the culmination of the gathering of ideas for ministry that began long years ago aboard that ship. I still have, and occasionally look at the materials that I put together then. Their heartbeat is yet present because the Scripture was central. My regret is, that I didn't develop an ongoing style of "one-on-one" ministry and continue it without interruption from then until now.

This doesn't mean I have done no discipling. When pastor of a church in Northern California in the 1950's, I did nothing else for two years. The church burgeoned and young men left to study for the ministry. Again in the 1960's I disciplined several young men in Phoenix, two of whom are pastors today in Arizona.

Through the years, I have thought about attempting discipling on a

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grand scale, but because of the clutter of educational programs, teaching involvements, long-distance commuting, or maybe just because I was disobedient, I never did too much more with the idea. Dawson Trotman had challenged me...I had thought about it...which today tells me that the Lord never let it leave my thinking. From time to time it came into the forefront of my thought life, and I would muse over the possibilities of doing something more specific with long-range objectives.

It wasn't my lack of awareness of the workability of the principle that kept me from doing this. Looking back at this point and wondering why I haven't developed a style of doing this, I see there were perhaps two things involved. I was struggling with making money for my retirement. Money (mammon) became somewhat of a god to me. I wanted to secure my future, and most of my calculations were directed toward how I could make the most money in the least amount of time. The first reason was simply a matter of priorities, and I want you to know that I did well. When I went to the seminary faculty at Western, I was in good financial shape, and I could have retired. But all of that changed. Our time in Oregon was a financial disaster, and we literally lost everything we had put together over the previous 15 years. The second reason I now understand was my lack of willingness to make a long commitment in the same direction. To produce quality disciples is a slow, patient, meticulous work. I felt I had done enough of that in psychotherapy and perhaps unconsciously was unwilling to continue to invest my time in that way.

An unusual group of involvements seemed to cast me back into the role of a *paraclete* (one called to the aid of another). I have always wanted to reinvest my life into the ministry in order to help hurting and broken pastors. Several years ago, three young pastors appeared on the horizon of my life and asked for help. They were a disheveled group, weary of ministry and on the verge of forsaking their calling. Dutifully, I took them on as patients. But as time went by, I felt somewhat disheartened with their lack of progress.

In my effort to be with them in significant ways, I pulled some of the old discipling ideas out and went to work "discipling" them. Almost immediately, I sensed response. What these men needed was not "professional psychotherapy" (whatever that is), but a patient, loving "encourager" who would be with them in a significant way. The months spent with them in this kind of involvement were precious helpful months for both myself and these men.

The summer of 1985 proved to be a crucial time for us. We had just about finished what we were involved with and as we discussed what had happened, it seemed as if the Lord opened spontaneously to each of us a vision we had never had or even considered. We could systematically, with long commitment, work toward the total evangelization of an area—a state. Prayerfully and thoughtfully we laid the groundwork for using our discipling ministry to evangelize these islands in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. That day, "Hawaii, 1995" was born, and commitment made to finish the task of total evangelism in a solitary, remote, and isolated area in the Pacific Basin.

The materials I have written form the core of the materials contained in the main section of this manual. I want to give instruction on how this can be used, as well as the biblical rationale for attempting such a grandiose journey in the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

Lifestyle Discipleship is the theme of this group of studies. It is the author's goal that you might catch the vision of an old principle taught in Scripture, and utilized in the early church, that you might integrate it into your life for ministry until the day you go to be with the Lord.

DISCIPLE

The Biblical Imperative

“And Jesus came up and spoke to them saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore, (as you are going) and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’” Matthew 28:18-20

Usually the last words one utters to loved ones as he is about to die are words that most express what is important to him. Jesus wanted us to know what was closest to his heart as He was about to leave this earth. Matthew 28:19-20, are the words expressed from His heart of love. He had great concern for the world. He wanted all to know of His death and resurrection and what this would mean.

Because the imperative is not “go,” but “make disciples,” it is important for the reader to understand the meaning of the word *disciple* and how we are using it in these materials and this manual. We want you to know that “believer” and “disciple” are not seen as synonymous. Jesus made clear His purpose for us was that of making disciples. A disciple is a teachable, disciplined learner. If there is one attribute that most characterizes a true disciple of Jesus Christ, it is **faithfulness**, rather than enthusiasm. Surely there is room for enthusiasm when we contemplate learning of the great King of Kings. We might naturally respond with enthusiasm when we remember that the God of the universe is behind the involvement we have in discipling another or in becoming a disciple. Not that enthusiasm is a poor quality for a disciple, but **faithfulness** is the bottom line. In Luke 9:62, Jesus says, *“No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for in the kingdom of God.”* There have been many enthusiastic believers who have begun to follow Jesus, only to look back or away. We must not surrender or leave out the truth that there is a cost that is involved in the making of a disciple. Again, the apostle Paul states that confessing Him as Lord is explicitly involved in knowing Him as Savior, Romans 10:9-10. Lordship implies unabated willingness to follow and to be a servant. Thus these qualities are to be found in a disciple as we “disciple” all nations.

Jesus also said that we were to baptize and teach these new disciples. This involves follow-up. Elsewhere Christ said *“I chose you and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit and that your fruit would remain,”* John 15:16b. These words imply at least that it is the will of God that we learn how to help the unbeliever who first comes to Christ, and then there is a responsibility on our part to see that the fruit, the brand new baby believer, ultimately flourishes in the faith. When we become natural parents, we certainly do not park our baby on a neighbor’s doorstep, nor do we take it to church and say, *“Here, take care of this new kid of ours.”* We assume responsibility for the child. Should it be otherwise when we help a new spiritual baby come into the world? Of course not! We take the position that discipleship is learning to *“follow-up”* a new believer and help him learn to walk effectively. Discipling is teaching him to walk effectively, to nourish himself, and to become a *“laborer.”* To disciple a believer is to help bring him to a place where you will never have any doubt about his continuing on. You will never fear that a disciple will stumble, fall, and cease to be productive in his life.

A Biblical Basis for Discipling.

We have already seen in our brief introductory discussion, the importance of discipling. This command of our Lord was understood by the disciples and the apostle Paul as well as others in the early church. It was provided for the effective spreading of the gospel.

A model is seen in Acts 19:9,10 where Paul had daily discussions in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. This was something that occurred on a continuing basis for about two years, and as a result, all Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the Word of the Lord. One wonders in a day of no modern communications, no radio or television, how an entire province could hear the Word of God when Paul didn’t even leave the school where he was on a daily basis. No other answer seems likely than that he was modeling his instructions to Timothy found in 2 Timothy 2:2: *“The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”*

It would be difficult to explain the success of Paul and those with him at this place unless he was using the principle of training men one-on-one; men who were faithful and committed to becoming reproducers. Another supporting passage for this approach is 1 Thessalonians 2:7-9:

“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. For you recall, brethren, your labor and hardship, how working night and day so as not to be a burden in any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.”

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A significant aspect of Paul's method in this portion of Scripture was that Paul was gentle among them; not one who used abrupt obtrusive methods. He was like a mother caring for her little children. I have friends who have been blessed with triplets--two girls and a boy. For them, the blessings of parenthood have descended in multiples. Each of these children demands individual attention. Cathy is unable to offer group feedings or diaper changes. Burt gets up at night to care for them when each of the babies cries. And this isn't usually at the same time. Each is unique, his own person, and each requires individual help. Understanding this, and listening to Paul speak of his involvement with the Thessalonians as a gentle nurse, we see the need of individualized involvement, like that of any gentle caring mother.

Again notice that he shared with them not only the gospel, but his very life. It seems to me that the reference to the gospel involves seeing the gospel in a larger global sense, rather than simply that of salvation alone. Surely the good news does not end with the presentation of the way one comes to Christ, the understanding of grace and the free gift of eternal life. The entire consideration of superior life and how it is to be experienced is also involved. A new Christian is not equipped to understand the entire structure of his new life simply because he has trusted Christ. It must have been in the elaboration of those principles that he also shared his life with them. In the sharing of his life, he became a true paraclete.

What is involved in the sharing of life with another? First there would naturally be a willingness to spend ongoing time with him/her. One's "life" involves things that are critical — what is very central. It must include aspects of my humanness. They undoubtedly learned that Paul was an impassioned dedicated person with one goal in mind—that of being a faithful servant to the one true God and spreading the message related to Him. They got to know him well enough to see genuine aspects of his humanness. The gentleness is mentioned in the text: the compelling care that encircled them as he taught them their first spiritual lessons and how to handle the Scriptures. They knew of his willingness to share their burdens and the support and comfort he provided in their sorrow.

And then, in 2 Thessalonians 2:11, I see that he personalized what he did. He says "We dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children." The individual "one-on-one" focus is surely spoken of here. A father encourages, comforts and urges his children onward. He draws alongside of the discouraged, saddened child and whispers words that make a child feel worthwhile and capable again. He offers a gentle reminder to the child that he is learning and is not expected to be perfect. He speaks truths that perfect the walk of the child, and although this is usually done in larger groups by most people today, Paul seemed to give individual focus to each Thessalonian believer.

These examples from the ministry of the apostle Paul seemed to be his method of hearing and acting on the words of Jesus when he said that he purposed that the fruit would last, John 15:16.

Then there is the aging disciple John, the beloved pastor of the church in Ephesus. Hear him as he speaks in 3 John 4, “I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth.” Such feelings of elation were unlikely if they were without actual action on the part of this concerned spiritual father of younger Christians. Surely John demonstrates an active concern for believers that goes beyond simple entrance into the Christian life.

Now let’s look back and summarize what we have stated in this chapter. Also, let us remember that “discipling” as used in these materials, also refers to helping a person come into unique relationship with the God of the universes through His Son, Jesus Christ. This is a relationship in which he not only experiences eternal life, but the Lordship of Jesus, and as such, he becomes a servant to Him.

Being a disciple is an ongoing process in which one becomes a disciplined learner and demonstrates **faithfulness**. And it seems apparent from Scripture that this is best done on a “one-on-one” basis. More will be said about the individual approach later in this manual. But let’s emphasize again that the Great Commission is not only to preach the Gospel to every person, but to make disciples and teach them to observe all things. We are to teach them in a way that will assure their continuance until the day they are with the Lord!

REVIEW

1. We are to bear fruit that lasts.
2. Being a faithful disciple is a “costly” matter.
3. There is a biblical basis for the process of discipling.
4. Discipling involves gentle personal attention.
5. It is best done on a “one-on-one” basis.
6. You share your life until the whole world knows.

GOALS FOR DISCIPLING

What is Involved in Effective Training?

“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,” Ephesians 4:13.

Shelly was a successful young school administrator. She was a woman whose position would be envied by many her age—financially secure, owning her own condominium, and well-traveled. But the darker side of her life rang of meaninglessness and depression. Weary of the struggle that had characterized her life, she was ready to throw in the towel. She despaired of the lack of purpose in the ritual of her religion, and had lost contact with anything that

could give her a reason for life.

The Holy Spirit moved gently and methodically in Shelly's heart and she responded to His persistent moving. She ultimately received Christ as her Savior. As I observed her, I wondered what she needed—what would help her grow, what would establish her and help her to maturity. The materials involved in the teaching part of this manual are the tools that enabled Shelly, one year later, to become not only a true disciple, but a discipler of others. Shelly has experienced the joy of sharing her faith with others.

What are goals for someone like Shelly? The part of this introduction will attempt to elaborate what is involved in helping a disciple come to the place where they are functioning without ongoing dependence on us. Of course, we will never reach the place, nor would we ever desire to be where we would no longer need other Christians. But children eventually become independent in their relationship with their parents, and we want our spiritual children to learn how to walk and run the race.

Commitment is Paramount

As I meet with people every day, I see more and more need to help individuals understand and validate the commitments in their lives—particularly the commitments they have made to Jesus. Commitment involves more than simple mental assent. In relation to Jesus, it is a clear, once-for-all turning of one's life in the direction of Him. It is putting our hand to the plow and never looking back. It is placing ourselves in a position where we experience Him as Lord. It is a willingness to be absolutely obedient. It is becoming His servant. A turning to Him that does not involve surrender is no commitment at all. Shelly made such a commitment to the Lord Jesus, and only with such a commitment can one be a true disciple.

We have built into these manuals information on the nature of commitment. You are urged to look at your own commitments carefully—especially your commitment to the Savior.

Growing Relationship With the Scriptures

As we think of the needs of a new Christian—a disciple, there is nothing more important than active, systematic involvement with the Scriptures. Someone has said, “the Word makes the difference between mediocrity and productivity.” Babies become men by the milk and meat of the Word. Without the Scripture, there is no basis for growth in the new Christian life. Therefore, Shelly needed a systematic plan for reading, study and memorizing in the Scripture. Seeing Shelly today, after involvement in her own discipling and her involvement in Bible study, Shelly is no longer a babe. She is a developing, maturing, young Christian adult, with a heart for God and a testimony that rings

true to her position in Christ. Shelly is filled with joy.

Unlike some, I have never found the Scripture difficult to read. But for some there may be a need to “taste and see,” to drink deeply to “prime the pump” a bit. However, without dispute, the Word will bring both joy and usefulness for the person who is truly committed to its knowledge and instruction.

These materials for discipling will enable the new Christian to grasp very early in his walk the knowledge of the gospel, assurance of salvation, positional truth and practical truths related to justification and sanctification. There is nothing we do in the Christian life that does not have an essential involvement with the Scriptures. The Bible becomes the basis for everything. Without it, the life of the new babe can wither and become spiritually unproductive.

Because of this reality, the worksheets in the teaching manuals are biblical, and they demand familiarity with Scripture and an open Bible in order to adequately finish them. Nor have we tried to make them so simple that one will not have to think. We want every disciple to be able to think somewhat critically and determine for himself what the Scriptures say to him. Although the Bible is of “no private interpretation,” its message is individual and unique to the needs of each one who studies it. The emphasis upon Scripture memory is very crucial. Being a professional educator, I have always felt it was a waste of time to memorize information when you know where it is found. I remember my seventh and eighth grade teacher in Eastern Oregon who made us stand with our backsides close to a hot radiator until we could recite our lessons perfectly. Even today, I can still quote in order all of the presidents of the United States through Franklin D. Roosevelt, because I learned to memorize well in order not to have a scorched seat. But the only true value I have accrued from that learning has come from being somewhat of an exhibitionist. I know of no one else in my circle of friends who can do that.

But such is not the case when it comes to Scripture memory. There is nothing more profitable in the walk we have with Christ than systematic memory of the Word of God. Nothing can transform life in quite the same way.

The psalmist says the Word will “convert the soul” and “make wise the simple.” Why are we often mute when we are confronted by one who scorns the God of heaven? Why is there no answer when we are reproached by an ungodly person? Why are we hesitant when the Lord opens a door sufficiently wide for us to share Christ with a person? In most cases, it is simply that we are not equipped and do not have confidence because our own words are not sufficient. Concerning the Scriptures...they are life. They are living, powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword. They are energized by the Holy Spirit and His power, and there is nothing I need do but to have them in me, weak as I am. I can speak out boldly and with confidence. But this does require having them *in me*. Hear Proverbs 22:17-21:

“Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise, and apply your mind to my knowledge; For it will be pleasant if you keep them within you, that they may be

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ready on your lips. So that your trust may be in the Lord, I have taught you today, even you. Have I not written to you excellent things of counsels and knowledge, to make you know the certainty of the words of truth that you might correctly answer him who sent you?"

This is a remarkable passage that illustrates the importance of Scripture memory. Let me help you look at it more carefully. First it states that we need to incline our ears to hear the words of Scripture. With hearts given to humility, we need to receive it. It is then stated that keeping them within us is a **pleasant** thing. Pleasant is a mild statement. They both burn within us, as well as bring peace. The Scripture brings joy and confidence. Having the Word within us can bring self-assurance and help create a more positive outlook on our lives. It provides a ready answer to immediate contemporary questions. Surely it is a pleasant thing to have them within us.

The next statement is a logical progression from what would be expected when one integrates the Scripture into his life. It says, *"that they may be ready on your lips*, or in the King James Version, *"they shall withal be fitted in thy lips."* What else might we expect? I memorize Scripture. I reach the place where that passage literally becomes a part of me. It is in my mind and my heart. Soon it is on my lips without effort.

I was listening to a new Christian speak of her struggles this week, and as she spoke she quoted Philippians 1:6 just as naturally as other words fell from her lips. She was assured that the Father would keep her from falling, from being overcome by the pressures she is now experiencing. Over against the turmoil in her life, she is confident that *"He who began a good work (her new birth experience) will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ."* How natural that seemed. They were simply perfectly "fitted" into her speech and lips.

And we might think of the countless times we have opportunity to share Christ and struggle with what to say. I recently listened to a group of people who were talking about the difficulty they had in witnessing when doors were open. One man said that his physician had given him at least four opportunities to say something in the way of a testimony, and he wasted them all. Why is this? I have come to feel it is because we do not have the Word within us, and therefore we don't have anything but our own weak and paltry words to use when we are confronted with men whose destiny is uncertain. Hide God's Word in your hearts and see how much greater your usefulness will be.

You will also notice that the words "know" and "certainty" are used in this text. I think of Romans 10:17 which says, *"faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ."* When I hide the Word in my heart (memorize it), I am in a place where my faith and confidence grows. There is something about keeping them in us that brings assurance and encourages faith. Faithlessness retreats! Confidence mounts! I lose those nagging fears and doubts that can become a weight to my "running the race" with efficiency.

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My final observation has to do with giving specific answers to those who send to us...those who approach us with their need, in contrast to our going out after people. This is a companion passage to 1 Peter 3:15 which urges us to be ready always to give an adequate answer to those who send to us. It seems that the central idea is that the Holy Spirit not only prepares the one who needs to believe and receive Christ, He also seeks prepared men who will be able to give adequate answers as His mouthpieces. It is His business and work to bring these people together. My memory takes me to Sixth Street in downtown Los Angeles half a century ago. It was night and I was waiting to witness to the desk clerk in the hotel where I was living. A drunk marine came staggering down the sidewalk and as he moved along, he was first on one side and then on the other. It “happened” that as he passed me, he was on my side of the sidewalk. He stopped directly in front of me, looked me in the eye and said, “hey, buddy, do you know where I could get a drink?” I was caught off balance for a moment...talking to him was the last thing I wanted to do. Then quietly, God brought some Scripture to memory from John’s gospel. I spontaneously replied, “not the kind you are looking for, but Jesus said, ‘whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but the water I give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into eternal life.’ Do you believe this?” The marine was startled. He recoiled for a moment, opened his eyes wide and looked at me. He swayed back and forth in front of me, and I proceeded to elaborate. Within about a half hour, this drunken man had opened his life to Jesus and become a child of God. God also sobered him up and he walked a straight line with an even gait as we parted.

I have often wondered what I would have said...what my response to his question might have been...if I had not memorized that verse. Surely the verses were “fitted into my lips” when the marine spoke to me. What could more clearly illustrate the value of memorizing Scripture?

These then are a few of the reasons we feel significant involvement with the Scripture (which includes systematic memorization) is paramount in importance. Maximum usefulness cannot be experienced without such involvement. In this discipleship ministry, one is expected to memorize systematically, and make a commitment to do this as his ongoing lifestyle. To truly be a disciple involves this kind of a systematic commitment to the Scriptures.

Understanding of Basic Practical Christianity

It is unlikely that a new Christian will become productive and stable in his walk without a foundational base that will provide fiber in his life and make it operational. When we speak of “relationship with the Scripture,” the thinking is more general than specific. Daily contact with Scripture, a quiet time, Scripture memory of some sort—these are the thoughts. Certainly these are necessary for growth and for the putting together of an information pool from which one can draw for every day life situations, as well as an ongoing

avenue of communication with the Father.

When we speak of basic practical Christianity, we are referring to specifics. The time in which we live is a specific time in history. There are particular situations every new Christian must face in our culture. What we have tried to do in this module of materials is supply for each believer some basics at the beginning of this ministry that will be foundational for his life.

It would seem that there is nothing as important as clearly knowing and understanding the plan of salvation. Not only knowing it, but being able to communicate it effectively for one's self gives additional confidence that one has an effective grasp of it. Therefore, the first section in the materials deals with the plan of salvation—the gospel. The basic thing for any new or older Christian is to understand what God has done for us and how we can appropriate it in our own lives. In fact, this is so basic that without this understanding, nothing else is really understood. There are literally scores of groups that do not have that understanding. Basic discipling requires imparting an understanding of this, both to instill spiritual fiber in the new believer, as well as to help insulate and give him answers to cultist teachings that pervert the grace of God.

From a clear understanding of the simplicity of the gospel, we move to the truths regarding assurance. Again, this is basic Christianity that seems to be of ultimate importance. After all, if I do not know for sure I have eternal life, I am going to be concerned about myself and become self-centered. This is not the way the Christian life is lived effectively. In the use of this material, effort is made immediately to help an individual who has made a profession of faith in Christ reach the place where he **knows** that this is true. Then he can move on to the effective living of the life. What a joy to hear a nun say (after working through the worksheet on assurance) “I didn't know you could be sure!” It therefore seems that the second most important thing to help a person learn is truth that has to do with assurance. Then he can move to what is actually involved in living the life.

Where would one go from this point in relating foundational truth? A leap to like “how to grow,” to “how to walk in the Spirit,” to “witness effectively?” Not yet! These things are surely important, but to know where I am as far as the Father is concerned is next in importance. It is crucial that I understand the doctrines of justification and sanctification. And this we attempt to teach with the biblical teaching relating to “positional truth.” To understand that I am innocent and righteous in the Father's sight, and that this is a permanent position I have in Christ, is a source of peace and confidence for the rest of my life. It, too, is foundational.

This theology is central to the basic Christianity we need in order to complete this section. After positional truth, spiritual maturity, spirituality and laws for effective choice of behavior are considered. There is yet an area that seems crucial. This is the practical area relating to the misuse of the tongue. This is perhaps the chief way we sin today. Its practicality makes it too important to ignore as basic, thus it concludes the section on basic Christianity.

Effectively Sharing Christ With Ease

With goals broad as the evangelization of a state, it is important to train individuals to witness and share Christ effectively. It is one thing to make a commitment to another Christian and spend time pouring my life into his. It is quite another thing to help someone who doesn't know Jesus Christ come to Him and know the life we have found. A region will never be evangelized without a commitment to learn how to lead another person to the Lord Jesus—and then to do it. Beyond this, the joy of taking that person and instructing him in the faith is necessary if we are ever to see an entire region evangelized.

We have endeavored to build into the section called “The Wheel,” helps that would give such encouragement. Taking a Christian through these materials is a beginning. We also desire that each of us have many spiritual children whom we help along this journey—those we have the joy of bringing to Jesus ourselves. Not only is the rationale for personal work included, but we provide in these studies several sessions on how one can effectively witness. Learn the “Bridge” well. Then we want to help each individual become versatile and learn to effectively handle the Scripture so that every person might be won to the Lord Jesus. We feel we should aim for total evangelization!

A Commitment to Personal Reproduction and Multiplication

Usually people think of “mass evangelism” when they think of reaching a region. This is not the rationale of these materials. Evangelism — YES! But not an evangelism that adds to what has already been done. This ministry is a ministry of multiplication. We want to teach continual reproduction of ourselves. It is our desire to help you develop a lifestyle of discipling and reproduction of yourself that becomes so much a part of you that you will from this point in your lifetime be concerned with, as well as be active in, the ongoing reproduction of your faith in others.

A Growing, Active Relationship with the Local Church

It has never been the intention of those involved in this ministry to develop an “organization” that ends up outside the local church. The writers of this ministry recognize and actively teach the importance of the local church. After all, the church is the expression of the Body of Christ, and we would fail as a ministry if what we did was in opposition to His Church.

We want everyone involved in our ministry to be involved in a local church where his gifts are being utilized to the fullest. We feel the ultimate task of evangelism is committed to the church. The Great Commission is given to the local church. The local church is where we band together for fellowship and service. It is where the Scripture is preached regularly—where we encourage and support one another. Lifestyle Discipleship is interdenominational, and we

encourage those who are with us to be involved in a church where the gospel is preached and the Scriptures are accepted as the inspired Word of God. It is our purpose to do what we do in a way that helps the local church become more effective.

Mature, Spiritual, Fully-Functioning Believers

In summary, the goals of this ministry are summed up as the development of mature, spiritual, fully-functioning believers. This includes seeing each individual actively involved in personal ministry himself. It involves his walk with the Lord in a way that speaks of the presence of God in his own life. It includes a style for life that will glorify Him in all that is done. In the words of the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 4:13, “...until we all reach unity in the faith, and in the knowledge of the Son of God, and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” This is what we want for every man!

An Environment for Effective Discipling

Discipling can be done anywhere in the world. There are, however, a few conditions that must be met if it is to be effective. Jesus disciplined constantly; beside the sea...on the side of a hill...in the streets of the city. This unique, personal involvement is something that can go on...indeed it must go on in many places. During the course of my pouring my life into another, there will be many situations and settings involved. Geography is not a crucial thing. But there are things that are important, and the following are actions that can be created by the discipler in any situation.

The Process is Very Personal

No process called discipling is going to be very effective unless it becomes personal. Because of this, it is important to understand what being personal is. Perhaps human is a better word. One of the characteristics of many Christians is the “lost art of being human.” I am not talking about sinfulness or our old natures. We certainly have not lost those. Sin takes its toll in our lives on a daily basis. But the ability to be honest, recognize our limitations, and accept our personal weaknesses are all involved in what it is to be human. Only as we do this does the process begin to become personal.

We have found in experience thus far that deep friendships are very likely to develop as a result of the interaction of discipling. This is not only true on the part of the discipler, but also for the disciple. The process is not only one of spiritual, theological, and intellectual growth, but it is also therapeutic. But for it to be any of these, it must be very personal.

For this reason, we strongly recommend that there be same-sex discipling. It is best done male-to-male and female-to-female for obvious reasons.

Let's understand at this point, that discipling is more than a teaching and learning situation. It certainly includes that. But it is a relationship that develops and is likely to continue for life. It is so very personal!

The Process Must Include Flexibility

We have put together materials that extend the formal discipling process for about eighteen months. It may take longer, depending upon vacations and other breaks (including illness) that invariably must be taken. None of us knows the future, or even the next 12-18 months. But with a firm commitment to disciples, this ministry can be successful in shaping a life. I need to have understanding and flexibility in order to grow and maintain this relationship.

On the other hand, it is necessary for me to help the disciple with his accountability and be certain that other things do not gain a priority in his life and hinder the process of discipleship. Jesus said in Luke 9:23, *"If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me."* In these words there is a reminder that there must be self denial on a daily basis. It is easy to let ordinary things intrude into my daily time with the Lord, as well as time for active service and meeting with my discipler.

The Process Involves Acceptance

Acceptance is a wonderful quality to experience. It is a secular word having to do with grace. It means that one accepts me as I am. When I talk of self-acceptance, it means that I am willing to allow me to see myself as I am at that moment in my personal history.

There is no quality to be infused into the discipling process that is more important than acceptance. Nothing will be more enabling, more helping, than acceptance. Acceptance says "I will take you where and as you are. You are not a completed product, but you are prized right now." Somehow this unconditional "prizing" will set the climate for marvelous growth. And the ability to grow as a human freed from inhibitors is one of the most glorious realities in the entire saga of learning processes. Without it, discipling does not have a proper atmosphere for development. Unless acceptance is there, failure will cause effort to collapse into ruin. We must create an effective and optimum atmosphere for learning.

The Characteristics of a Timothy

It is important to carefully select one who is to be a Timothy. In the

words of Paul to Timothy, we find at least two qualification mentioned. 2 Timothy 2:2 says, “*And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.*”

Faithfulness and a Willingness to Serve

Perhaps the most basic criteria of selecting a disciple we have used are these two. We do not believe we should take on a person who needs to learn faithfulness. Rather a Timothy—one into whom I invest and pour my life—should be one who readily demonstrates faithfulness and reliability. Nor should one be engaged in discipleship immediately, unless it is a rare and unusual situation, and one involving someone well known to us. I will let a person who desires to be discipled contact me and then consider it a while. It is easy to get on the bandwagon when many others are doing it. If the person continues to be interested, I feel much better about taking them on. It demonstrates a real desire to do what they are asking me to help them do.

Another consideration suggested in this text in 2 Timothy is the expectation that a Timothy will also become a discipler. There will be a willingness to learn how to disciple and work to make discipling part of his lifestyle for the rest of his life. Unless one is willing to learn how to disciple and begin to do it, he simply will not fit into what we are attempting to do. Continual encouragement and adequate help will be given to make this a reality, but the willingness must be there. No willingness means no involvement in this ministry.

There Must Be Personal Compatibility

As it is in any other interpersonal relationship, those we disciple need to be people with whom we have a heart and personal compatibility. In friendship we expect certain similarities. In marriage and other loving relationships, we would look for those with whom we are compatible. The same is true of discipleship.

It is good for emotional compatibility to be present. If one is a continuous talker, it will be more difficult to find anyone who can disciple him. And while this may at first seem to imply one who is outgoing, it will eventually wreck an effective discipling relationship. Don't take such a person for a disciple unless one seeks help for this problem. Excessive talking is a misuse of the tongue (Ephesians 4:29).

With goals to evangelize an entire region, we will encounter people at many and varied educational and professional levels. It would be wise to try to choose a disciple somewhat similar to yourself with respect to these variables. In keeping with this, it might be unwise for a Ph.D. to disciple one who is a high school graduate, unless the circumstances are unusual. It would be

especially difficult for a high school graduate to disciple a nuclear physicist.

Economic levels might also be a problem. As much as we wish it were not true, partiality is a problem that the church has always had to deal with. There is an overemphasis on the place of wealth in the lives of many Christians to the extent that many have intrinsic feelings of inferiority when they are those of simple circumstances. Compatibility is important in this area, and we must deal with it in realistic ways. Choose someone somewhat like yourself in this area as well.

Spiritual Hunger Should Be Demonstrated

Although study will often produce spiritual hunger, it should not be expected that involvement in discipling will produce this. Parsimonious use of time is important. We are told in Scripture to “redeem the time.” In this ministry, there is really no place for those who do not give evidence of spiritual hunger and a desire to grow.

This hunger is demonstrated by some effort to study systematically that is already happening in the life. It is probably demonstrated by faithfulness in hearing the Word of God preached, and a general indication that the individual truly hungers for spiritual things.

Personal Availability is a Must

One absolute necessity for the Timothy is availability. This involves, of course, adequate arranging of priorities in the life of the individual. If the person is to be discipled, he must be willing to arrange a compatible schedule with the discipler. We all have only 24 hours a day. If one is unwilling to work out a time schedule which allows regular time with the discipler, he probably isn't ready to be discipled. Even if one is terribly busy, a true desire for discipling will be demonstrated by working schedules so this can take place. It should be a time that will not need to be rearranged from week to week.

The Disciple Must Be Teachable

In many ways it seems ridiculous to have to include this aspect of a disciple. After all, the very meaning of the word is that of being a learner, and being discipled by someone else implies learning from them. Yet it is important enough to reemphasize. If the disciple does not have a teachable spirit, little can be accomplished and time will be wasted. In the appendix of this discipleship material(Book A) there is a writing on being teachable. Perhaps it would be helpful to read this several times.

Availability and Desire for Ministry

When we invest time over many months with another person, we desire to know that that person will in turn make himself available and be this involved in ministry. This will mean that he has been involved in some way, or at least demonstrated a heart to be involved in some way, prior to my involvement with him. It is important that he have a heart for people—that he cares and has a degree of sensitivity. And above all, that he will make himself available to his discipler and to others.

Each of these characteristics is important. Those we disciple should be chosen wisely. If we don't exercise discretion, we will spend much time spinning our wheels and going in circles. There is inadequate time for this. Choose wisely and pray for direction. There are many people awaiting help who are yet not working with anyone.

One Exception to all of These

After having said all of this, it seems like there is an exception to the guidelines discussed above. This would relate to those we personally help come to Christ. It is our responsibility primarily to help that one have a closer walk with Christ—to grow—to being followed up. In some unusual sense we are responsible for the one we help come to Christ. That one is our own spiritual child in the faith and we are to see that the fruit “lasts,” (John 15:16).

A Description of an Adequate Discipler

We have described a Timothy in the previous section. What is a “Paul” like? Who can become a discipler? What are the qualifications of one who begins a spiritual journey with another with a goal to help that person have an efficient and productive walk with the Lord? In this section we would like to answer some of these questions.

Can Any Believer Become a Discipler?

I have thought a lot about this question. Is the position of being a discipler of others restricted to only a very few? The answer is “no” and “yes.”

Any believer who is willing to meet the demands and pay the price is able to disciple another person. After everything is discussed, the Great Commission is given to disciples themselves. There doesn't seem to be any restriction concerning those who disciple. In fact it would seem that we are disobedient if we don't engage in this ministry.

On the other hand, not every believer is able to disciple. The following qualifications are necessary for a Paul.

A Grasp of Scripture and a Life That Models

In order to begin to be a discipler of others, the individual must have a growing knowledge of the Word of God. This means that he will have a grasp of the fundamentals and will be seeking to enlarge his understanding of the basics.

The modeling of the life is crucial. We cannot expect our disciple to live a life with quality greater than ours. What we model is crucial. Water never runs higher than its source. If we are not actively involved in study and daily increasing our understanding, we can never expect our disciple to do it. If we are not memorizing regularly, we can never expect or hold our disciple accountable for those aspects of our work together. And if we're constantly rearranging meetings or finding ourselves late for our sessions, we are modeling wrong behavior for him. In 1 Corinthians 4:16, Paul says, *"I exhort you therefore, be imitators of me."* When we function as a Paul or discipler of another person, we are in reality saying to that person the same thing Paul said. If I am an adequate discipler, my life will be one that can be imitated.

There Must Be Availability

It would seem that emphasizing this again is redundant. Perhaps this is so. But in the busy world in which we live, it is hard for many people to find time to spend with another person on a continuing basis. Our schedules are loaded with demands that make it difficult to find time for our work, families, and a little exercise which we all know we need. How then can I find time to spend on a continuing basis with a person who is not even a family member? Yet this is crucial if one is to be a discipler of others. There is just no way to do this apart from rearranging our priorities and making the time necessary to do what our Lord has commanded us to do..

A Life of Prayer and Devotion

Attention to one's spiritual life is terribly important. The discipler who has a growing prayer life and spends much time with the Lord will be the person who becomes the most effective discipler. With a heart for his person and the Divine Person, the individual will become an effective discipler.

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Group vs. "One-on One" Discipleship

In this section, we will look at the importance of both group and individual discipling. We will attempt to give the rationale for "one-on-one" discipling and show its efficiency in the long run. We will seek to show that it is the most efficient way to effectively evangelize the world when the population is exploding as it is today.

The particular society in which we live is one that is in a hurry. People seek instant "fixes" in psychotherapy, quick relief from medical problems, hurried solutions to problems in interpersonal relationships. The slow plodding of individual discipling runs crosscurrent to the functioning of society in general. But we feel it is superior, and we will attempt to show you why.

Where Group Work is Most Effective

There are some advantages to group teaching and learning. The first of these is the diversity of ideas that emerge from a group, as opposed to the more limited ideas that are exchanged in a "one-on-one" setting. This is a valid consideration and there is no doubt about the superiority of groups with respect to this. This can promote effective interchange and can stimulate thinking.

The social aspects of the group are also important. A certain support comes from a group where more numbers of people are involved as compared with the singular relationship. Groups are fun! Getting to know many people is often a good thing and will increase our interpersonal skills.

There is also the idea of getting more word to more people in a quicker amount of time. Fifteen persons instead of one seems better. If we can impart skills to a group, that would appear to be better than doing it for just one.

Then there is the problem that many pastors face who would like to pour their lives into people. If they single out just one or two and do it on an individual basis, they open themselves to criticism and accusations of showing favoritism. Group discipleship is a way to avoid such criticism.

The Advantages of "One-on-One" Discipling

What we are doing in this discipleship ministry is discipling on a one-on-one basis. We are urging our disciples not to use the materials we have developed for group purposes. The materials we have put together are not for that kind of ministry. We feel that "one-on-one" is superior and we want to discuss that with you now.

There is power in a singular focus on another person. When we devote our full attention to a disciple, he is experiencing something he has probably

not experienced in his entire learning experience as a human. Total focus for an hour or so a week...what a gift!

With total focus, individual problems both personally and spiritually can be dealt with. The help is not general but specific. What is done can be tailored to individual need. The opportunity for exchange is present. Many problems that would not be discussed in a group will be shared individually within this context. Let me illustrate. There may be a problem with Scripture memory that relates to some minimal organic difficulty. Many individuals would not discuss that in a group regardless of how well they know the group members. But with an individual discipler, this is different. There are ways to help a person who otherwise might give up and no longer attempt to learn.

Or perhaps an individual has a nagging problem in his life from which he has not been able to gain freedom. In which setting would he be most free? Perhaps discussing it with an individual with whom he has genuine rapport will bring the ultimate help he needs, whereas he may not have ever raised the problem in a group setting.

There is also the difficult and almost universal problem of how to get one who is disciplined to disciple someone else. Usually at the conclusion of a group discipling class the participants are urged to go and disciple others. This is less likely to happen, than in a one-on-one setting. Here it is relatively easy to give supervision for some months while the disciple himself is getting started as a discipler. And if there were no other superiority to individual discipling, this would certainly be sufficient to push us in that direction. Because of this, and because of the desire ultimately to evangelize the world, it would seem that one-on-one discipling is certainly superior.

In a one-on-one setting the commitment is far greater, and the work is more thorough. The time involved seems longer, but through the multiplication process, evangelism of an area moves rapidly.

No other method for total evangelization is feasible. None will reach the world in quite the same time or with such assured efficiency. The method has power because it is biblical and because it involves the Word of God which is the life-giving agent of the Spirit of God. *“The words I have spoken to you are Spirit and they are life.”* John 6:63

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this section of this introductory manual, we will consider some practical aspects of this discipleship ministry. We want these to be helpful suggestions that will enable you to handle the materials as effectively as possible.

How to Get Started

The following suggestions are for your assistance as you are beginning this ministry. Some are reiterated in the assignment sheet. But we do not feel that stating them more than one time will do any harm. Repetition aids learning.

1. Set a time to meet that will be free most of the time.
2. Try to locate a place for your meeting that will be comfortable and free from interruptions.
3. Meet weekly. It is important that you have ample space between your meetings to give maximum effectiveness for growth and change. Don't overwork your disciple!
4. Be sure you have the materials you need. This includes the choice of the version of the Bible you plan to use (we recommend the NASB). It also includes any assigned reading (small Intervarsity or NavPress books).
5. Be sure to assign the preliminary reading as assigned in the first assignment sheet.
6. And of course, all this presupposes you have a disciple to work with. If you do not, everything is just theoretical. This leads to the next question.

Where Do Disciples Come From?

Many feel that it will be difficult to find disciples. It is unusual for this to be a problem. Yet it is a point that would be good to discuss.

We have already discussed some of the things necessary when we try to pair people together as disciple and discipler. But where do they come from? Logically they come from the particular group of people we relate to on a regular basis. Those people are called our "oikos." Remember that word! But let's look at the sources in particular.

1. We can find people to disciple from among our friends who would like to grow and learn how to minister.
2. There are those we ourselves win to Christ. These are ideal and there is no more natural way to bring people into this relationship than through winning them ourselves. Most of us will learn to do this.
3. Our pastors would often welcome our being able to help someone they know about who would truly respond to this kind of ministry. We can check out that source with good success, as a rule.
4. Our friends may know those who need discipling. Often simply talking about what you are willing to do will bring many people into your view as prospects. Your discipler, if you have been disciplined yourself, will often be aware of someone you could work with.

At this point in our discipling ministry, we have had no difficulty helping people get together with disciples and disciplers. There is no reason to believe you will have difficulty with this.

Fitting Personal Discipling into My Busy Schedule

Occasionally I will talk with someone who professes to really want to be involved in a discipling ministry but just does not seem to be able to work out the time for this? What can we say to a person like this? It is true that some may find it impossible to find time on a regular basis for involvement in personal ministry? What about the four hours a week (approximately) that are required for this kind of involvement?

Reprioritize Your Schedules Drastically

I have learned not to make sweeping statements that include everyone. There will always be a few exceptions. But there are some realities that can be considered at this point.

The first is that each of us has a 24 hour day. We all move with the same calendar of time, and how we fill that calendar is a choice we make. We need to look at our calendars and see if they have balance. What is there in my calendar that is out of balance? What could I rearrange if need be? What is really not all that important? But you say, "Everything in my calendar is important." Then there is a need to weigh the value of things and perhaps do some culling. I would remind you that there is really nothing more important in the lives of each of us than personal ministry and seeing a fledgling Christian grow. John says in his third epistle, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in truth."

The second reality is this: If I look at the things that keep me from actively discipling another person, and working this into my lifestyle, I may well find that these things are those involved in the godless world system. It is probably my job and my desire to earn as much as I can in order to buy more things, etc. Or it may be some pleasurable activity such as golf, bridge, or maybe even my going to the beach.

As legitimate as these may be, they are not as important as the reason for which we are in the world in the first place—the purpose of sharing the Gospel of the Lord Jesus. I must seriously evaluate my life in terms of "loving this world system" if I don't have time. I am commanded to "not love the world or anything in the world (system)." Surely I am breaking this commandment if I am unwilling to give a little of my time to the Lordship of Jesus and the purpose for which He has brought me to life!

Finding the Time

I have found that lunchtime is a prime time for discipling. It is also very convenient to meet for breakfast or even before breakfast. If I cannot do this, I cut time out of my busy schedule for discipling. It can be done on Saturday in conjunction with other things that are more recreational. Basically, all I have to do is find a time for about an hour and make it quality time to share with another person. Time for discipling is accomplished through trimming and adding. Anyone can do it if adequate importance is put on the process.

How to Use the Materials in This Module

We hope that with these helps you will be able to use the materials with maximum effectiveness. They have been prepared sacrificially and with great care over approximately thirty years. They certainly are not perfect, but we feel with adequate commitment on the part of disciple and discipler, you will find that they meet your particular need for growth in your development.

The Bible and Various Translations

Any translation of Scripture can be used for work in this material. We are recommending, however, the use of the latest edition of the New American Standard Bible. The worksheets are basically compatible with this translation. And then there are those of us who have grown up with the King James Version and have memorized it for years. It would probably be best, if you have done considerable memorizing from one translation not to change to another. In respect to memory, changing would interfere with your ease of memory...unless you are an unusual person. But then, do whatever you deem best for you, and whatever you are comfortable with. Memorizing and studying in any version is acceptable.

Topical Textbooks and Other Helps

It is good to have the use of a good topical textbook. This should be added to your library immediately as you begin to be disciplined. One of my favorites that I have used much is *The New Topical Textbook* by R.A. Torrey. This book has just been updated and published by Revell. It can also be obtained from the Sword of the Lord Publishers. A compatible concordance is also a must for a disciple! The *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* by Elwell, published by Baker, would also be invaluable. Beyond this, the disciple needs to build and develop his own theological library in order to increase his foundation for growth. There are many practical books on every subject of the Christian life available today. Books purchased and used are never wasted money.



The Worksheets

The central teaching device as far as the materials are concerned are the worksheets. These have been put together in a way that becomes self-instructional and you can learn from them on your own. Absolutely correct answers to every question, or filling in blanks with exact wording is not crucial. Because of this, **there is no answer manual**. The discipler and disciple can adequately work out the responses that will be appropriate.

Many of the worksheets are based on SR learning theory with reinforcement built into the actual text. This approach to learning has been developed especially for independent study programs. It is not always necessary for the discipler to go line by line through the worksheets.



Questions for Review and Discussion

The discussion questions generally following the worksheet are crucial. We urge both the disciple and the discipler to go through these questions together. They will assist in tying important concepts together.



Summary and Key Concepts

Another feature is frequent summaries of important and key factors that occur in the session materials. After the worksheets are finished, it will be helpful to read carefully the sheets containing the key concept. These are located at the end of that particular study section.



Life Applications

Usually there will be a life application that will be closely related to the material in the worksheet. These will usually included an assignment. Occasionally, however, you will see something that can be assigned that will be very practical and will fit into the material and content you are studying. It is important that you feel free to do this. It would also be helpful if many of the projects could be done jointly with the discipler showing the disciple “how” to do the things that are assigned. Be versatile and creative! Work to make things as practical as possible. Use your own ideas, and if they work well, share them with the rest of us so we might use them too. Remember that nothing is really learned **without changing behavior**, and as we practice what we are attempting to learn, we will learn with more efficiency.

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The Readings

Many of the sessions have separate readings that have been written to clarify understanding of the material. The appendix of readings is included in the first manual of Lifestyle Discipleship. These should be read carefully and reread often. There are some readings that have been developed apart from the worksheet topics. It is important that these be used in their proper places. One such paper is on “Commitment.” This can be read and reread as often as one needs to remind himself of the importance of commitment. Every discipler and disciple should read these additional writings many times.

The Organization of the Manuals

There will be space provided in the margins for note-taking and other things you wish to include in your work. Think of your manual as a tool for life. Your observations as you move through the materials will be important to preserve for your own discipling of others.

The Scripture Memory

My Scripture memory predated the Navigators and their emphasis of doing it. My father was a firm believer in the importance of Scripture memorization and taught each of the children in the family its central place in our lives if we were to handle life in a superior way.

Before I came to know Jesus as my Savior, I had tasted the joys of large portions of the book of Romans. And it was the memory of passages in the Gospels that helped me in my struggle that black night in the North Atlantic. From that time till now, the Scripture has been the “joy and rejoicing” of my heart.

We consider Scripture memory to be a central and very significant aspect of all we are doing in this ministry. It is necessary if one is to become a discipler of others and an effective witness. In fact, it is so important that we feel we should not go on with a person if he does not memorize in some minimal way by the time we reach the section called the Hand.

Scripture memory passages are included in each session. You may want to write them on a card and carry them with you. It is especially important to learn the verses that help you in the presentation of the “bridge.”

It is possible, however, for an individual to choose his own system and this can follow any method for choosing that one might desire. What’s important is that there be systematic effort toward memory and review. In time, there will be a collection of verses written upon the table of your heart that will equip you for specific ministry.

Process and Its Dependence upon Regularity

If an individual begins to miss regular discipling sessions, this should be seen as a danger signal that something is going or has gone out of the discipling relationship. For maximum effectiveness, there must be process. It is basically through process that change takes place. We meet. Ideas are exchanged, applied to our lives, we think them through and consider how we have applied them. We exchange thoughts about them again, and apply them to our lives. This process goes on and on. Therefore, I would explain process as “that on-going movement in my life and experience in which there is interaction between my learning and my behavior that eventually results in a change in my style of life.” This is process. Without process, very little can be accomplished that will be worthwhile. Process only happens over time. It is facilitated most efficiently when I meet on a regular basis with my discipler.

Mutual Accountability

A benefit that emerges from “one-on-one” discipleship is the mutual accountability that is built into such ongoing ministry. It mutually affords the opportunity to be accountable to each other. This does not mean that we act like policemen in each other’s lives. Rather, there is another person to whom we commit ourselves for the efficient study of our materials, prayer and the memory work we do. It is helpful to me to know that there is someone to whom I am accountable who will listen to me quote my verses that I have learned. That person can become an encourager to the one who is accountable to him. Personal accountability is crucial when we consider improving our walk with the Lord.

Making the Materials Versatile

When one works to prepare materials for any discipleship ministry, it is immediately a reality that everyone cannot be pleased doctrinally. Efforts have been made, however, to prepare these materials in a way that will be usable to almost everyone. The materials tend to be “middle of the road” materials — evangelical —and usable by almost everyone regardless of their denominational stance. It is all right to amend some of the materials and worksheet to fit one’s own idiosyncratic doctrinal approaches. We know we cannot please everyone, nor do we have all of the truth. We urge you, however, to preserve the emphasis upon the Scriptures as the inspired Word of God and the general evangelical approach to the materials. Some areas where differences of opinion exist might relate to teachings on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and gifts, certain aspects of prophetic teaching concerning the return of Christ, covenant as opposed to dispensational approaches, and the mode of baptism. Perhaps there will be honest differences related to the security of the believer as well. These areas can be adjusted where pastors or disciplers might feel a desire to make them more compatible with their own doctrinal positions. But never water down the

necessity of blood atonement, salvation by faith, and teaching concerning the deity of Christ. These are absolute essentials and their dilution will never be tolerated in this ministry.

Building Reproduction into Discipleship

There are many books and “programs” that involve discipleship. This is a very popular topic in Christian literature today. The Navigators have a “Discipleship Journal.” One will find programs of discipleship that attempt to teach principles of discipling and train believers to become laborers who disciple other people.

The major flaw in most programs of this sort is not in the inability to instruct the believer in the basics, but almost universal inept ability to get Christians to do what has been done for them. The course or program will finish and the participants will be urged to “go and do likewise.” Almost all “go,” but to very few “go and do likewise.” Even groups dedicated to discipling end up with only a few ever catching the vision after being taught how to do it. Usually there is a fading back into the woodwork by the participants and little or nothing relating to discipling ever happens. They go, but not to disciple.

This has been a major concern of mine over the years. How can we get people to do this? It is something almost all of us who are dedicated to this kind of ministry have been concerned with. Nor is it simple. In plain language, it is perhaps the hardest kind of ministry to get people involved in. Let me try to explain why.

It is difficult because it takes a different kind of commitment...almost the same kind of commitment needed to bring children into the world. But even with children, there is a time when we bid them good-bye and we are free. Commitment to discipling as a lifestyle is a commitment for life. Not many are willing to make that kind of a commitment and continue to stick with their spiritual children.

It requires patience. It is not a hurried process that can be accomplished in one academic term. It may take time that becomes years to bring a baby to maturity.

Because each individual is different, there is no mold or set pattern we follow. Most are not willing to allow another to develop over time in this way. We are simply not flexible or versatile ourselves.

Discipling is not “limelight” business. I remember the words of James 1:27...it is like visiting the orphans and widows. Not the kind of thing that makes the front page of USA Today. To minister as a discipler is to choose to minister out of the way, out of sight, in the rural areas of Christian notoriety. Hardly anyone ever notices. And most people are unwilling to do what will go

unnoticed over time.

Finally, one of the chief reasons it is difficult to get Christians to do this is because they simply are not theological students and they don't know what to do.

We feel we have solved these problems relatively well. Through the use of these materials, scores of people are discipling and God is using them.

The first reason is that we truly believe everyone will end up a discipler. We do not expect failure in becoming a discipler as we work with an individual. Many studies show the importance of expectations when we work with people. So . . . when I begin working with Martin or Jim, I never lose that vision of them. We are so confident that God will make disciplers of them that we talk to them about it before they ever get started. In fact, if they say categorically that they will never disciple anyone, we will put them aside and let some growth take place before we work with them further.

When we begin with a person, we have them start praying for a disciple immediately, and we pray with them for this. We talk about it in almost every session. We let them know that this is an active on-going concern that we expect them to give attention to. In short, we keep it in front of them in order that they never lose sight for even a moment that theirs will be the privilege, too. This will become their "lifestyle." A chief help in getting one started is that we have built into their sequence of study the point at which it becomes necessary for them to begin with a new disciple. The section "Preparation for Discipling" is the point at which one begins with a disciple, and for approximately six months I will be able to help with whatever problems are encountered as the meetings begin with his person. By the time I am ready to let him go, I am actually a spiritual grandparent. Their disciple is in the process of picking someone up.

And last, but certainly not least, we give them materials which one learns to use not only for what there is for them but also for involvement with a disciple of their own. This has certainly been a problem with discipleship ministries in the past. Only a short time ago, someone wondered about his own ability to be committed to a discipleship ministry because everything ran out of steam in such a relatively short time. But with the materials, one has more than a full year of materials that can be used for solid teaching, as well as other exercises that can be assigned.

Using these approaches, we have been able to solve in relatively solid fashion, the problems involved in getting someone who is being disciplined to himself disciple. We feel you will find that the principles work for you as well.

SUMMARIZING FOR SUCCESS

In this introductory part of the materials, we have endeavored to give enough background of the materials, their workability and rationale, to enable you to understand and successfully use this module with others. These are some things that must be said in summary...without which success would yet be elusive. The following things we discuss are not choices, they are absolutely necessary.

Our materials and efforts may be superb, and our intentions impeccable, but without the Holy Spirit there will be disaster.

The Active Involvement of the Holy Spirit

Psalms 127:1 says, “*Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain.*” We recognize that any discipling ministry, individual or corporate, must have the Holy Spirit central if it is to be effective. Our materials and efforts may be superb, and our intentions impeccable, but without the Holy Spirit, there will be disaster. With Him involved, there can be no real failure. One plants the seed. Another waters. God alone gives the increase! His involvement and leadership is an absolute necessity.

The Effectiveness of Prayer

Perhaps the two most difficult things in this ministry are Scripture memory and prayer. Between the two, prayer seems to be the most difficult aspect of this ministry for most of us. God has given us this way of sharing in His ministry to men, and when we are discipling, we need to cover each disciple and all we do with them with the canopy of “prayer without ceasing.”

Prayer is an absolute necessity. We should be diligent and fervent in remembering those we are ministering to, as well as remembering ourselves. Our disciples need our prayers. We can give them great support in this way. Disciples need to pray for those who are their disciplers. We need to pray for our entire spiritual genealogical tree. Prayer is important for the ministry to be healthy and prosper. “*With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all...*” (Ephesians 6:18.)

Learning From Mistakes

The demand for perfection is a sure way to kill the process of discipling. Imagine our Lord involved with Peter on the shores of Galilee. Here is a crusty fisherman who decided to follow Jesus. He responded to the call to “take up his cross” and follow Jesus. Even in the latter days of our Lord’s ministry on earth, Peter was failing regularly. Nor did he have all of his personality problems worked out then. It is beyond me to imagine that Peter did not fail the Lord many times.

Each of us is human. Being human, we are imperfect. One of the best ways to learn is through “trial and error.” I try something and it fails to meet the standards set for that behavior. I don’t give up. I try again, perhaps altering somewhat how I did what I did. Perhaps something takes repeated effort in many directions and only after many attempts I am successful. I need to allow both myself as a discipler, and my disciple, to fail and try again. Patience is a superlative! It is wonderful in its encouragement and healing. We can learn by our mistakes.

Consider Each Person Unique

We need to marvel in the uniqueness and potential of each individual we work with and allow them to develop in their own right. There is no more favored and beautiful place one can be than in the place of being allowed to be who he is in the creative splendor of the Father. We have no need to shape a person into anything we might conceive. We need only facilitate his growth in the direction he has been ordained to move.

Throughout the New Testament the uniqueness of each individual is stressed. We are uniquely gifted at our spiritual birth. Even identical twins are often very different in their personalities. This is further underscored because we develop uniquely in our own environments. No two of us experience exactly the same circumstances growing up. And then there is the special gifting that takes place when we are placed into the body of Christ. The unique gifts of the Spirit become ours and we all fit into the body in ways He has determined. We have no right to dictate, as a discipler, exactly what our disciples will become. Our Father is able to develop each person and we should facilitate that development and allow it to proceed in its own direction. We will surely reach a place where the beauty of the handiwork of God will be seen in each person He shapes as we disciple. This should be more than enough for us.

Learning from Our Disciple

There is a reading in the section called “Preparation for Discipling” that deals with being unteachable. You are urged to read this again and again. It is important for the discipler, as well as the disciple that we be teachable. In fact, some of the most profound things that I have ever learned have been from the people I have worked with...things they talk about...what they bring to our time together from their own learning. We must always remember that the Holy Spirit is the ultimate teacher of us both and very special things are often communicated to the disciple apart from us. We want to be a participant in their learning as well as sharing with them our own. One of the necessary attitudes for effective learning must be humility, and this openness of mind will enable us to learn from many sources.

Never Tolerate Discouragement

Experiencing lows emotionally during the discipling process is a common happening. This is related to our being human and can be viewed without alarm. Several causes might be noted in relation to this.

1. Ordinary things that bring discouragement will take place at any point in my life. It is never possible to be “up” all of the time. Things totally unrelated to my discipling may very well be involved. I might be very tired. I haven’t gotten the rest I need from ordinary tasks of life. Perhaps something is wrong physically. I may not be eating correctly or getting the proper exercise. These things should be attended to carefully so they not interfere with my service of discipling. Elijah, as great a man of God as he was, fell victim to discouragement and considered “throwing in the towel.”
2. The commitment to discipling is long, and often it is difficult to see much fruit from what we are doing unless we take a longer look. I have experienced this myself a couple of times during the past few years, but have found it helpful to remind myself of the goal of complete evangelization and what it will be like when my spiritual genealogy is highly developed. Certainly the joy of this will offset the present struggles.
When down, take the long look!
3. I can expect my disciple to have problems from time to time. After all, what I am trying to do in spending time with him, is to help him come to maturity. He is not there yet, and I can expect slumps in his walk. That need not cause me to have a sagging spirit. My ability to remain optimistic will be an encouragement to him.

What if My Disciple is Hurting

The relationship I build with someone I am discipling is very much like a counseling relationship. Such a relationship is trusting, open, non-evaluative and accepting. In this kind of an atmosphere, it will be common for feelings that contain hurt and distress to be brought out and into the open.

If my person is hurting, it will be good to take special time and simply be with him. It may be that I can share something from the Scripture that is helpful. I can pray with him concerning those things that have brought him distress. But more than anything else, I can get alongside of him and listen.

Remember, there is nothing more personally helpful for someone who needs to talk, than having a caring person who will accept him, come alongside and simply listen. Be very, very careful about giving lots of advice. Remember, you facilitate the work of the Holy Spirit in his life by being with him—by being more passive than active, and by simply praying for him and listening to him.

In the organization of my prayer life, I need to remember faithfully those needs of my disciple. If there are tangible ways I can help I need also to give such assistance. There is nothing more encouraging to someone far behind on a job than help from another who comes to assist in finishing the task. My relationship with my disciple does not end after my session is finished.

It might be your responsibility to help your disciple get special help from a Christian professional. If you feel there might be a need for this, don't hesitate to suggest a name of someone who could render effective service on a different basis than he is presently receiving.

After My Formal Work is Finished

The question arises somewhere during our involvement with another person concerning what relationships will be when the work of discipling is formally finished.

The sessions as outlined in the module of material, if followed weekly as assigned, will take a person about a eighteen months to finish. It is unlikely, however, that it will proceed with no interruptions. Vacations, unscheduled illnesses, and other interruptions will extend the time we have planned to finish the work.

But what about then? The sessions are finished. There is nothing left formally to do. Now what? Some things have developed that necessitate continued contact on a somewhat regular basis. For one thing, the fellowship has caused a lifelong friendship to develop. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to have no contact and encouragement from time to time. Friends and fellowship are some of the most meaningful aspects of our Christian life, and we will want to perpetuate this.

Another reality is the need to relate to your disciple as a continual resource. The individual is actively involved in, and helping his disciple to become an effective disciple. From time to time, that person will need help. It is like a parent bringing children to adulthood. Even though the children may be on their own, there are still happy gatherings and occasional help provided by the parents. As time goes by, the children end up providing assistance for their parents as well! This kind of mutual interaction and help will characterize the relationship of disciple and discipler.

Finally, there will always be the encouragement and help that comes through praying for the disciple that needs to continue as the formal discipling begins to taper off. Every discipler's prayer list should include praying actively for those who are now mature adult disciplers. In this way, we give encouragement and support for many years.

CONCLUSION

This introductory writing is a companion to the larger module of materials developed for the discipling of the world. It has been written to introduce the rationale for this discipling ministry which we believe is unique. It will also aid in the use of the materials.

All questions are obviously not answered. This ministry is not an aging ministry, but rather is relatively new. As we move along, things will be more clear. As you use the materials, you will be able to answer many of your questions yourselves. We would like you to write a personal evaluation of the materials upon your completion of them and send it to Lifestyle Discipleship, Box 26, Morgan Hill, CA. 95038. Your suggestions may be the reason some of these materials are amended. God bless you and give you many disciples as you build for eternity.