

Developing Disciples

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

God is in the business of building His Church. He wants His house to be full, and His way of doing that is by making disciples.

A disciple, by definition, is a learner. This dynamic process, which is governed by the Holy Spirit, involves men and women who receive life from God through His Word and who are willing to pass on that life to others.

Throughout the Bible, we find great demonstrations of this discipling process at work. Jesus Himself spent three years personally investing in people—preaching, loving, and teaching men and women who wanted to learn. Moses spoke face-to-face with God and then shared what he received from God with Joshua. These exchanges prepared Joshua to take the lead as Israel was being prepared to cross into the Promised Land.

This booklet examines God's process of developing disciples through His Word and His

Spirit, and it reveals how He raises up a team of teachable believers who go forward in His purpose and plan—bringing the Gospel to all men, everywhere, to give glory to God.

Chapter One

THE REALIZATION OF DIVINE EXPRESSION

“As the LORD commanded Moses his servant, so did Moses command Joshua, and so did Joshua; he left nothing undone of all that the LORD commanded Moses” (Joshua 11:15).

God raised up Moses, and Moses taught Joshua what God had taught him. Notice that every single thing Moses told Joshua to do, Joshua did. Obedience versus lip service: That was the whole key to Israel’s success in the Promised Land.

This is Christianity at its height, at its best. Making disciples is Christianity in motion, Christianity in action, Christianity in expression. This is divine expression that results in a divine realization and is then followed by a divine manifestation. It leads to an experience of what God had in mind when He commanded Moses.

God said, “This is the way it goes, Moses. Do

you understand?"

"Yes, Lord, I understand," Moses responded.

"Listen very carefully, Moses, and everything I teach you, you are to teach Joshua. Will you do that?"

"Yes, Lord, I will."

"Everything you teach Joshua, Joshua will teach to the people—to Caleb and all the others."

The content of the substance and meaning of God's message was very clear, very precise, and all inclusive. God's purpose for Moses included teaching Joshua and discipling him.

A Realization of What God Has For Us

Our ministry should always be responding to God, the Great Initiator, in appreciation of His expression to us and in the application of His manifestation through us. We want to experience a similar realization of all that God was to Moses, all that He was to Joshua, and all that He became to the people of Israel.

But as we apply this principle, is it enough that we go out and win souls, and that the people we teach also win souls and bring them to church? The answer is no.

Developing disciples involves bringing people to the place of illumination of the Word of

God. Our minds and bodies receive millions of vibrations in the course of a day. The unconscious mind begins to reciprocate these vibrations, grasping words that are hidden in the subconscious mind and bringing them into our conscious minds.

When these are godly vibrations, suddenly, through our faith-obedience, we arrive at what we call a revelation—a supernatural comprehension of some area of truth. The realization of revelation gives us illumination, which is the ability to walk in that truth through the Holy Spirit working in us. As we enter into this glorious place of illumination, we begin to discover God in the glorification of His truth.

The Light and the Glory

“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

“Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you” (John 14:16-17).

“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he

shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

“He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you” (John 16:13-14).

Only God can glorify truth. When truth reaches the subconscious mind, we do not fully comprehend it. We do not fully understand what it means. But as we begin to grasp this revelation of truth, we enter into illumination, and we begin to walk in the reality of God’s nature in us.

Chapter Two

TRAINING PEOPLE ONE BY ONE

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy [Spirit]:

“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Matthew 28:18-20).

When we are saved, we receive the Holy Spirit. As we present ourselves to God daily (Romans 12:1) and purpose to study the Word of God (2 Timothy 2:15), the Spirit fills us and the Word of God dwells in us richly. We are not subjective when we hear the Word preached, therefore we are not detached or distracted from God. Rather, we enter in to the illumination of a realization of a divine expression through a divine

manifestation. This helps our subconscious, subjective mind to understand the revelation given by God through the Holy Spirit.

Think about it!

God wants to show us how we can escape any self-destructive patterns of thinking so that our minds will enter into the truth of the Word. We can reciprocate our potential through the possibility of the revelation of these truths and the consistency of their correlation by experiencing them in our lives.

God taught Moses. It was just God and His man—that's all—and this man had an impediment with his speech. God was very, very thorough in teaching this man, both in His scope and His provision.

"Moses, I am teaching you the best I can right now, considering your limited capacity and limited understanding," God said. "Listen, because I want you to teach everything I am telling you to Joshua. It is really very simple. You simply need to hear Me and then tell him. Hear, tell. Tell him everything, and make sure Joshua understands it. He must understand it. Leave nothing out. None of what I teach you must be left undone with Joshua."

Success Comes with Simplicity

Successfully, and with great simplicity, Moses began to enter into supernatural reception and a supernatural experience of understanding God's plan. Moses taught Joshua, and Joshua taught the people of Israel. It is a beautiful process.

We are called to develop disciples. The way to win in life as a Christian is simply in passing on what God communicates—person to person to person. I disciple Tom, then Tom discipless Joe, and Joe discipless Sam, and on and on it goes. Before we know it, we have a whole group of disciples—fervent learners with godly convictions. And all they are doing is telling others what God told them and helping them to apply it.

One by one—that is how disciples are developed. It goes beyond big crowds. It goes way beyond buildings. It extends beyond all that is superficial. By developing disciples, we enter into a ministry filled with the strength of corporate oneness—the one new man of Ephesians 2:15.

If the fifth man in the chain receives the exact thing from God's Word that was taught the second man (through God's Word), then we all have the same things to fellowship around.

Imagine the effect of this development process when it reaches the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth person!

By this stage, any church can flourish, nourishing others and springing up toward heaven. This is how the New Testament Church of Acts 2 was so beautifully developed.

A strong, fervent local assembly is built when we refuse to fragment God's truth. This is how God builds a ministry—in a region, a nation, or even a continent. It will work anywhere and everywhere—North America, South America, Asia, Africa, Australia, Europe. This is how God builds His Church—by making disciples, one by one.

Chapter Three

HUMILITY, MEEKNESS, AND A TEACHABLE SPIRIT

God's process of discipleship requires concentration by every individual involved in the process. If I misunderstand what is being communicated to me from God's Word, or if I fragment the progression of God's words as they were communicated from God to Moses to Joshua, then part of the ministry will get off. Remember that the words went from God to Moses to Joshua, exactly as God first expressed Himself. But down the road, men perverted the words that they had heard with subjective thinking.

You would be shocked and amazed if you realized the games that Satan has in store to stop fruitful ministries from developing disciples. There are so many schemes and approaches Satan uses to interfere in our lives.

Satan's goal is always to establish the element

of control in relationships. The devil is all about control. He would rather have one man control another man. When that happens, instead of developing a disciple, he makes a person think a certain way, but without the heart and motivation of God.

When someone starts exercising control over another person, introspection often comes in. This person being controlled may think he isn't trying hard enough. He begins to look within and confesses negativity, "I am not a very good disciple."

If this negative relationship continues, you end up with two very legalistic believers. Their entire program will be built on control, not on receiving the truth from God.

Growth Leads to Growth

Here is how God's discipleship process should work.

I share what God gives me, and a man is drawn to it. He is very studious and very sensitive. He observes carefully because he sees results. Our hearts are knit together in the knowledge of God's love. My communication and my teaching build him up. As he is edified, he then goes on to build up someone else in

God's truth.

As he continues to learn in the preciseness of correlation of the Scriptures and the progression of revelation and illumination of God's truth, he passes on what he has learned to someone else, and God makes another great disciple.

It is vital to understand that each man stands alone before God (Romans 14:4). I may be the avenue to teach him and develop him, but he learns to hear from God for himself, with his own vertical relationship. The Holy Spirit leads him in his own walk. We still have a connection because we have the same mind (Romans 12:16), and the origin of our communication came from God. The Holy Spirit teaches this man in the freshness of revelation, and he advances in the same structural truth.

Of course, this happens with women as well. They get hold of this glorious principle, and as they grasp it, they share it, and they grow in it. Some women become spiritually very deep, and their lives and conversation serve to disciple others.

The Lord commanded Moses to speak to Israel for Him, and he said, "But Lord, I have a speech impediment! No one will listen to me."

The Lord commanded me to study, and I

said, "But God, I have no education."

God answers us just as He answered Moses and any man who ever feared the thought of being used by God. "Never mind that—I am going to teach you. All you need is My Word and the Holy Spirit and a contrite heart."

Humility and meekness can bring in a teachable spirit into anyone's heart. God knew everything about our lives before we were saved. He uses men who are broken and who are teachable. God deals with everyone differently; but in every case, His program is to raise up godly men and women. That has always been his program. He builds His Church by developing disciples, using the foolish things to confound the wise (1 Corinthians 1:27).

CONCLUSION

This is the essence of discipleship: We take what we have learned from God and invest it in others. We invest love, and we invest grace. We invest our hearts and minds and souls. We reveal how much God loves us, and we express that love to others.

God needs disciples and He needs His disciples to disciple others, prayerfully and with edification. There may be times when gracious correction is administered. But everything God initiates is in love and in the meekness and humility of the Holy Spirit.

One Christian receives from God, and then he shares what he has received with another believer. That one passes what he has learned on to someone else. That is how this life of God is revealed. This is the only way God has established to develop fervent, active assemblies that will go forward with Him in His plan to reach the world with the Gospel.