

Disciple making

**Preparing hearts and minds to
fulfil the Great Commission of
Jesus**

Duncan Watkinson

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By Duncan Watkinson

This booklet has been written to help fulfil the Great Commission of making disciples of all nations. We believe that you will benefit from studying this book by yourself, but that you will be blessed even more if you do it in the context of a discipling relationship with another Christian, or together with a small group of believers.

Before you start a new lesson, please do not forget to go over the assignments set in the previous lesson.

In the process of writing this book, we have drawn from a wide cross section of God's church. We are extremely grateful for the many insights we have received from different sources.

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Duncan has also written a full-length book on Spiritual parenthood, entitled 'Making your Mark'. Details on this and the other study booklets can be obtained by visiting www.makingyourmark.org or contacting the address on the back cover of this booklet.

1. The Importance of Discipling

A. What is a disciple?

A disciple is a person who follows another and learns to be like his master. The Gospels record how a number of men started this journey with Jesus. Look up the following references and write down whom Jesus spoke to and what he said:

Matthew 4:18-20 Whom did Jesus address?

What did Jesus say?

What did they do?

Mark 1:19-20 Whom did Jesus address?

What did Jesus say?

What did they do?

Luke 5:27-28 Whom did Jesus address?

What did Jesus say?

What did he do?

John 1:43-46 Whom did Jesus address?

What did Jesus say?

What did he do?

Jesus spoke words that changed the lives of these men forever. They were invited to follow Jesus and were called to be his disciples. For the next three years, these men (and others) observed Jesus very closely, spent most of their time with him and learned much from him. In fact, they received so much that Jesus was able to entrust the building of the first century church to them. Jesus is still inviting people to follow him and be his disciples.

Do you feel that Jesus has called you?

YES

NO

Discuss the reasons for your answer.

B. The Great Commission

Matthew 28:18-20 records some of Jesus’ final words to his disciples. Everything Jesus taught them had been important, but these instructions were given just before he left them for heaven and they have special significance for God’s plans for his Kingdom. Throughout church history they have been known as the Great Commission

because they are so important. Write what Jesus said: All

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

1. Jesus gave this command to make disciples, when he had just been given all authority. Why do you think this is important?

2. Discipling was the way to impact all nations. It was not just something for Israel or particular cultures. Do you think it is relevant today, to you, in your nation? YES NO
 Discuss why you think this.
3. The discipling process involved baptism and teaching, and these basics have not changed. A disciple must be baptised and willing to learn. How have you responded to the Bible’s teaching on baptism? What did you feel when you first heard it? Please be open.
4. Although the first twelve had been Jesus’ disciples, he now expected them to go and make disciples by sharing what they had

learned through their time with him. Every Christian is firstly a disciple of Jesus, but God’s plan is that each Christian will be disciplined by a more experienced Christian.

- 5. What did Jesus expect a disciple to learn?

.....

Note that important word ‘obey’! Discipling is not a matter of learning theories but something which will change the disciple’s life as he (or she) learns to put into practice what Jesus taught. Make a note of something other than baptism, where you have

obeyed Jesus:

Notice that Jesus chose men to disciple. To avoid any danger or suggestion of ungodliness, men disciple men, women disciple women, and, sometimes, a couple will disciple another couple.

- 6. The end of verse 20 gives a wonderful assurance for those involved in the discipling process. Jesus promises to be with such people ‘always, to the very end of the age.’

C. Paul’s ‘Commission’

Just before he died, Paul wrote to Timothy, a younger man whom he had disciplined and described as his ‘dear son’. This was Paul’s last letter, so he must have been even more careful about its contents.

Read **2 Timothy 2:1-7** and then write down verse 2:

.....

Paul was probably the most widely traveled Christian of the early church and was committed to discipling people. He saw it as a way of impacting future generations. Write down the four generations he refers to in **2 Timothy 2:2**

- 1. 2. 3. 4.

The primary quality which Paul advised Timothy to look for was reliability. Write down some of the characteristics which you think a reliable person would have:

Christian discipleship is a teacher-student relationship, based on the model of Christ and his disciples, in which the teacher reproduces the fullness of life he has in Christ in the student so well, that the student is able to train others to teach others.

Keith Phillips, The Making of a Disciple

Please note that Paul told Timothy to ‘entrust’; teaching to such men. In the financial world, this word would be translated ‘invest’ and it describes the heart of discipling. If a person invites you to be disciplined by him, he is offering to make an investment of his life and experience into you. Paul used three pictures to illustrate the importance of discipling - a soldier, an athlete and a farmer. These show that discipling is the way to:

- a) please the Lord - the soldier’s commanding officer
- b) win the prize - the athlete’s purpose in running
- c) bear fruit - the farmer’s reason for working hard

Paul emphasised that it would be hard work that certain disciplines would have to be followed, but that discipling would produce results - into the generations to come.

Assignment

1. Read the whole Gospel of Mark and make a note of each paragraph when Jesus was primarily with:
 - ❖ The crowds – Put a C next to these paragraphs
 - ❖ His disciples – Put a ‘D’ next to these paragraphs
 - ❖ His enemies – Put an ‘E’ next to these paragraphs
 - ❖ Others – Leave these paragraphs unmarked

Now add up and record the total number of C's, D's, E's and Others in the whole of Mark’s Gospel.

2. Arrange and keep your appointment for Lesson 2

2. The Purpose of Discipling

The Great Commission is to make disciples who obey everything that Jesus commanded. Paul described his goal in **Colossians 1:28** – to *present everyone perfect in Christ*. Paul was concerned for both the quantity (everyone) and the quality (perfect) of those who followed Jesus. In the short term, discipling focuses on quality whilst evangelism makes quantity a priority. In the long term, making disciples in a biblical way will produce both quantity and quality.

What quality standard is God looking for in a disciple? Write out

Luke 6:40 in full to see what Jesus said:

.....
.....

The standard for all Christians is to be like Jesus and the God-ordained way to achieve this standard is through the process of discipleship. We all need to be ‘fully trained’ to be like Jesus, and none of us is there yet. Read **Philippians 3:12** to see how the great apostle Paul regarded himself even after many years of following Jesus. The way to be trained is through the process of discipleship.

The word ‘disciple’ simply means ‘learner’, so Christians should always be walking around with big ‘L’ plates. Because of Jesus, we don’t go to hell, but to ‘L’!

A. The marks of a disciple

1. Freedom

Read **John 8:31-32**. A true disciple not only hears teaching but also lives it out in day to day life. Sometimes, we are so unaware of a problem within us that we do not see the need to apply a particular teaching to our own lives. We can be blind, like the Pharisees in **John 9:40-41**. A wise disciple will assume that the teaching applies to him and will ask his discipler for help on how to work it out in his own life.

Please note that teaching must not just be learned, but also held on to - at times of pressure, temptation or difficulty.

In **Mark 7:21-22**, Jesus listed a number of things from which we need to be set free. Read the list and write down any such thoughts (or actions) which still grip you

.....

When we have been discipled well, we will know the truth, and we will be free to live for Jesus.

2. Love

Write out **John 13:35** in full:

.....

.....

Christianity is about love, and discipleship should train us to love. Many of us have a limited understanding of what is really involved in loving in the way God does. Read **1 Corinthians 13:4-8** and consider each of these qualities of love. Now write down the areas where you feel you need to grow, with your ideas on how you could make specific changes:

.....

.....

Thankfully, God doesn't expect us to work up this love on our own, but pours it into our hearts through the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5). So ask him for more of it, and for his power to change in the areas you've listed. Please also note that the love which disciples have for one another will make a big impact on people around.

3. Fruitfulness

Read **John 15:8**. The third mark of a disciple is that he bears much fruit. The Lord does not expect our lives just to drift by without accomplishing anything, but he expects them to make an impact.

There are two kinds of fruit:

a) Internal

This fruit grows inside us as we allow God to change our character.

Read **Galatians 5:22-23** and write down the fruit mentioned by Paul:

.....
.....

b) External

This fruit grows in people around us because Jesus is making an impact on them through us. This kind of fruit includes:

- ❖ sharing the Gospel so that people get saved
- ❖ helping the poor and needy so that they know God’s love
- ❖ influencing people to live righteously
- ❖ visiting the sick and those in prison and blessing them
- ❖ discipling others so that they become strong Christians

However long you have been a Christian, there should be some fruit in your life. In fact, John the Baptist expected the simple act of repentance to bear fruit (See **Luke 3:8**) Write down some of the fruit

you have seen in your life since becoming a Christian:

.....

Where do you think there could have been more fruit in your life? Discuss the reasons for your answer.

B. Some hindrances to a disciple

Read **Luke 14:25-33**. Here Jesus lists three areas which can stop a person being a true disciple:

a) Family (v26)

This verse shows how radical the call to discipleship is. Jesus wants our commitment and love for him to be greater than for any member of our family. Many people give up on discipleship because of pressure from their families.

Have you ever felt such pressure?

YES

NO

If you answered 'yes', how did you respond to this family pressure?

.....

Jesus faced similar pressure. Read **Mark 3:31-35** to see how he handled it. Do you feel you need his help to do the same?

b) Self-life (v27)

Jesus told us to carry our cross if we want to be his disciples. A person with a cross was one who was about to die. He had given up all personal ambitions for his life as well as his hopes for comfort and satisfaction. Most of us are too concerned for ourselves, what we like and what we don't like. A disciple must be willing to let go of all such things. Think about your life for a few minutes and write down what would be the most difficult thing for you to give up for Jesus:

.....

Read **Matthew 10:39** and summarise what Jesus means - in your own words:

.....

c) Everything (v33)

Jesus included this to cover anything not mentioned above. You may remember from Lesson 1 that each of Jesus' first disciples left something to follow him. Can you think of anything else which still has such a grip on your life that it hinders you from being a true follower of

Jesus?.....

<p>Assignment</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Write a letter to a Christian friend explaining what you have understood about Jesus' teaching on discipleship 2. Memorise Matthew 28:18-20 3. Arrange and keep your appointment for Lesson 3

3. Benefits of Discipleship

The Bible emphasises the importance of discipleship strongly because God knows that it is so good for those involved in it. If you are discipled in the way described in this course, you will experience being **FATHERED** and can expect to receive the following benefits:

Friendship

Jesus Christ died to restore man’s relationship with God and we are now reconciled to God the Father through the Cross. The Lord also wants people to have loving relationships with each other. When you start a discipling relationship, you can expect to make a friend.

Paul called Timothy *‘my true son in the faith’* (1 **Timothy 1:2**) and *‘my son whom I love’* (1 **Corinthians 4:17**). The person who discipled you will be concerned for you, and will want to rejoice with you in your successes and share your heartaches when things go wrong. They will try to be alert to your physical, financial and spiritual well-being - in short, to love you!

Make a note of a few things you would appreciate in a friendship:

.....

Affirmation

Paul excelled at encouraging Timothy. Read **2 Timothy 1:4-6** and write down the encouraging things which Paul wrote to Timothy:

1.
2.
3.

Such comments must have made Timothy feel good! And Paul also praised him to others. In **Philippians 2:20**, Paul even said, *‘I have no one else like him.’* Your discipler will seek to encourage you - face to

face, through phone calls, letters, emails and cards, or in public. This will strengthen you and build you up to serve the purposes of God.

Have you received any encouragement recently? YES NO

Have you encouraged anybody recently? YES NO

Please discuss your answers.

Teaching

Timothy must have heard Paul preach many times as they travelled together, but Paul still packed his letters to Timothy with teaching - reminding him of four ‘trustworthy sayings’ and much more. As a disciple, you need to be taught much. Many Christians think they have learned all that they need to know in the first few months or years. The Christian life is a lifetime of learning. Write down something you believe you have learned in the last month:

Even if you are familiar with certain teachings, **2 Peter 3:1** tells us the benefit of being reminded of truth we already know:
.....

Honesty

Romans 14:12, and many other Bible verses, teach us that.... *each of us will give an account of himself to God*. This will happen to everybody – Christians and non-Christians - on the Day of Judgement when we meet Jesus face to face. Look up **Hebrews 9:27** and fill in the blanks:*man is*, *and after that*

To prepare for that day, it is a great help to have honest relationships where we can share our hearts with others and hear what they think about us. A discipling relationship is the ideal setting for this kind of openness as your discipler will notice things about you which you are unaware of. His honesty with you will help you move on in the ways of God. You will also have to be honest with him to make this effective.

You would be wise to open up about any difficulties or challenges you face. Sometimes your discipler can only listen and then pray for you. On other occasions, he may be able to offer wisdom from the Bible or from his experience.

The more transparent you are, the more help you will receive. Of course, your discipler knows that you are sharing things in confidence and will not gossip about what you have shared.

Open sharing of where you have gone wrong will also be a great help to you. Please read **James 5:16** and answer these questions:

What should we confess?

What else should we do?

What is the result of these two things?

Envisioning

Paul gave Timothy clear direction and stirred him to become all that he could be in Christ. God has also called you with a purpose and your discipler will help you to find vision - firstly of God, but also of his purposes and where you fit in. Don't use vision as an excuse for selfishness and doing your own thing. Godly vision comes from God and must be worked out in his way. Love is the message and the method of the Kingdom, so vision should always embrace loving and loyal relationships, and godly vision is always for the benefit of people. When we read that God so loved the world, he is referring to the people who live here! Write down your ideas and dreams about how the Lord might use you in the future:

.....

Your discipler will also help you to hear the Lord. If you think that the Lord is speaking to you about something, you would be wise to talk it over with your discipler before taking action. Sometimes you will be right but there may be times when you misunderstand the Lord's voice. The wisdom and experience of your discipler can encourage your steps of faith and also protect you from mistakes.

When you spend time with your discipler, the unseen spiritual activity of impartation is taking place. Read **Romans 1:11**. In this process, some aspect of what God has put into a person gets ‘rubbed off’ on another. Ask your discipler whether other men or women of God have imparted something to his life. If he feels they have, ask him about them, the impartation and the long-term effect it has had on him.

Release

As time goes by, your faithfulness, gifting and anointing will be recognised and you will be given opportunity to grow and carry increasing responsibility. You will not be stifled by your discipler, but neither will you be abandoned. Paul continued to care for Timothy - praying for him, keeping in touch, communicating and loving him - even when they were a long way apart.

The first letters of the points in this lesson spell the word **FATHER**. This word captures the heart of the discipler towards his disciple. He wants to see you grow into a mature Christian. In **Matthew 28:18-20**, Jesus tells his disciples what he expects them to do – make disciples. In **John 20:21**, Jesus tells them, ‘As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.’

As Jesus was making his disciples, his disciples could feel his fatherly love for them. The spirit of disciple making is the spirit of fathering. Please write down what you think this fathering spirit is like:

.....

Now write out the first half of **1 Corinthians 4:15**:

.....

There was a shortage of spiritual fathers in Paul’s day and there still is. If you are given the opportunity of being spiritually ‘fathered’, you would be wise to grab it!

<p>Assignment</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Memorise 2 Timothy 2:2 2. Write down as many reasons as you can think of why a person would not want to enter into a discipling relationship. Look at your list and see if any apply to you.
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4. Requirements of a Disciple - A

If you have not already been asked, you could soon be invited to be discipled. Do not expect a ‘super-star’ or prominent leader to ask. That is possible, but it is far more likely to be an ‘ordinary’ person like you who has gone a little ahead of you in the ways of Christ and has sensed that God wants them to ‘invest’ in you. You will gain most from the discipling relationship if you:

Do what you are asked to do

You probably remember that Jesus included the word ‘obey’ in the Great Commission. A disciple can learn to obey Jesus by simply obeying his discipler. We’ve already seen that Paul recruited Timothy as his disciple in **Acts 16:1-5**. Read this again and write down what Timothy had to **do** to be accepted as a disciple:

.....

It is unlikely that you will be given such a stern test! And remember that Timothy was only about 20. However, you could be asked to:

- ❖ read a chapter of the Bible or a specific book
- ❖ establish a disciplined daily routine for prayer and Bible-reading
- ❖ run a small errand or join your discipler in a specific activity
- ❖ be involved in prayer or evangelism with your discipler
- ❖ exercise hospitality with or on behalf of your disciple
- ❖ meet a visitor at the railway station or airport
- ❖ prepare a short study on a specified topic
- ❖ visit a person on behalf of your disciple
- ❖ help your disciple in his office or workplace
- ❖ go on a journey with your discipler

Whatever your discipler asks you to do, try and make sure you do it. Read **John 7:17** and write down in your own words the principle of spiritual learning which Jesus is teaching:

.....

Now read **John 13:1-17** where Jesus gave a wonderful demonstration of serving. Write down the two requirements in **verse 17** for a person to be blessed:

What Jesus is saying is that teaching is not to be considered just academically or theoretically. The Christian life is a practical way of living and so the disciple must choose to do what he is asked to do. Your discipler wants to see if you are reliable, which means, ‘Will you do what you’re asked?’ Although he will encourage you to ask questions if you’re unsure of something, don’t waste his investment by arguing, debating or ignoring his advice. You will be blessed if you do what he says.

Of course, this does not mean that you must always obey a leader - or the person taking you through this course. If you feel that you are being asked to do something sinful, or which offends your conscience in some way, you must question him about what he has said. If you are still concerned about the matter, you must speak about it to another mature Christian whom you trust.

Imitate

The New Testament is clear that much can be gained by simply imitating a mature Christian. After all, it is the way most of us learn our bad habits! Can you think of any bad habit in your life, which you learned primarily by imitation? Write it down here:

.....

Imitation is just as effective for learning godliness! Read **Hebrews 6:12** and **Hebrews 13:7** and note the key instruction is to ‘imitate’.

Now write out **1 Corinthians 4:16**:

Paul was urging the Corinthians to imitate him and in the next verse he explained that he had sent Timothy to them because ; *‘he will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus’*. Paul knew that most people learn things quickly and well by imitation, and so he boldly exhorted people to imitate him. It was also a tribute to his discipling of Timothy that he could be so confident in Timothy’s example.

Read **Philippians 3:17** and **4:9** and, in your own words, summarise what Paul was urging and expecting disciples to do:

.....

Think for a few moments about the person who is taking you through this course. Then, write down any aspect of his or her life which you would like to imitate:

Serve eagerly

The Bible does not tell us what Timothy actually did as he traveled with Paul, but it probably involved the menial tasks of carrying bags, running errands, washing up etc. Read **2 Timothy 4:13** and you will see that Paul had no reservations about telling Timothy to bring his cloak and scrolls when he came to visit him. Paul knew that Timothy had a serving heart in practical areas as well as so-called ‘ministry’. You will find that some of the best discipling times are when you come alongside your discipler – to prepare a meal, repair a scooter, wrap up gifts or paint a wall. The Lord always seems to raise issues along with the actual project.

We have already seen Jesus’ example of serving in **John 13** and the importance he placed on it. If you are unwilling to serve, you will miss out on a key aspect of discipleship. Serving not only involves eagerly doing what you’re asked to do, but also thinking imaginatively and sensitively about other areas where you can serve and help your discipler. Serving is not just something ‘nice’. Read **Mark 10:42-45** and write down four reasons why Jesus regarded serving so highly:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Now list some practical ways you could serve the Lord and his people:

.....

The disciple maker must be careful not to take advantage of the disciple's serving heart for his own personal benefit. One way to ensure this is to 'deflect' the serving heart so that other people are receiving the benefit.

Commit yourself

A disciple needs to be committed to the discipling relationship both in heart and in time. Do not think that you can drift in or out of it - recognise that this relationship is something provided by God for your growth and give yourself fully to it. If your heart is set on making it work, your discipler will also give of himself. This heart commitment will show in your making sure you get time together. If he invites you to go on a trip with him, like Paul did with Timothy, make yourself available if you possibly can. Be punctual and consistent at any activity or meeting which you have agreed upon.

The discipling relationship is not just for a few weeks, but is intended by God to be long-term. As we have seen, Paul first met Timothy in **Acts 1:6**, which was around 49AD. Paul was also with him in about 51 AD (see **1 Thessalonians 1:1**) and in 60 AD (see **Colossians 1:1**). Even allowing for breaks, this indicates a long period of time.

This does not mean that you are bound to a discipling relationship. If you feel that the relationship is not being used by God, then talk with your discipler and you can end it, though you can still be friends at whatever level you wish. God's heart is that such a relationship will never really finish, even though it may change in nature. Jesus was committed to his disciples forever! (See **Matthew 28:18-20**).

Do you feel that you are ready to make a long-term commitment to being discipled if you are invited? YES NO

Discuss the reasons why you have answered in this way.

Assignment

1. Read Luke **6:46-49** and meditate on this passage. Make a note of any points which you feel the Lord impresses on you.
2. Write a short letter to a Christian friend explaining why Jesus puts such a strong emphasis on obedience.

5. Requirements of a Disciple - B

We have seen the first four points for a disciple who wants the maximum benefit from his discipling relationship. They were:

Do what you are asked to do

Imitate

Serve eagerly

Commit yourself

The following points will also help you:

Invite correction

Sometimes your discipler will feel the need to talk to you about things you have done or attitudes he has detected in you, and will take initiative to show you how an area in your life could become more godly. Correction or admonition is a vital, though sometimes uncomfortable, aspect of discipling. Look up **Colossians 1:28** and write down the three things Paul did to raise many mature disciples:

1.
2.
3.

Your discipler may have to admonish you at times. However, you can make it easier for him and faster for you if you ask him to bring specific correction into your life. ‘Is there any area of my life which you feel I need to pay attention to?’ or ‘I would really appreciate your comments on the way I spoke last week’ are simple ways of getting the ball rolling.

Asking the right question will not guarantee that you react rightly, but it is a bit like fastening the seat belt in a car. It will help to restrain your emotions and reduce the risk of serious injury! Nobody really likes correction but look up **Proverbs 12:1** to see what God thinks

about that. Then write it out in full:
.....

Hebrews 12:5 shows two other ways of responding wrongly to correction. Look up this verse and write them down:

1.
2.

The Lord is looking for people who heed correction - that is they hear it and change because of it. Would you not like to be like that?

Pray

In your discipling relationship, you will see your discipler pray and will also be asked to pray with him. More than that, you should also pray much for your discipler that God would give him wisdom and insight and increase his anointing. Pray also for his protection from all the wiles of the evil one. The enemy knows the havoc he can cause if the shepherd or discipler is hit. You should also pray for yourself in the areas which are being brought to your attention. Change is never easy, but prayer helps a lot!

It would be wise for you to make a commitment to pray daily for the one who disciplines you. Why not pray now for the person who is doing this course with you - he is introducing you to discipleship.

Learn at all times

Disciple is a fancy word, but, as we have seen, its root meaning is 'learner' and that should be your posture in every situation. The disciple is not above his master. Even if you think you might be, make sure you never leave the seat of learning. Observe your discipler and see how he responds to different situations. Don't just learn from 'teaching sessions', but learn in your everyday times together. Be quick to pick up from his heart as well as from what he speaks.

Learning means changing our behaviour. Unfortunately, some of us are fooled into thinking we do not need to change in one area or another. The New Testament calls this 'deceiving ourselves' and lists

a number of things which can deceive us. Look up the references below and write down against each of them what the issue is which could stop a person learning:

- 1 **Corinthians 6:9-10**
- Galatians 6:3
- Galatians 6:7
- Colossians 2:4
- James 1:22
- 1 **John 1:8**

Look at the list and decide whether any of them could hinder your learning. Share your thoughts with your discipler and also ask them what potential obstacles they can see in your life.

Enquire frequently

The easiest people to disciple are those who ask lots of questions - not to undermine or challenge the discipler, but questions which show a real desire to learn. Jesus’ disciples chatted with Jesus as they walked along, asking about things and seeking explanations about what he was doing. Sometimes their questions were immature, but the Lord used them to teach Kingdom principles. Be imaginative and write down some of the areas which you would like to ask your discipler about:

Now have a practice run and ask the person you are doing this course with a question about one of these topics.

Reproduce

Being disciplined is not an end in itself. Timothy gave himself to Paul to be disciplined by him, but **2 Timothy 2:2** shows him being commissioned to deposit into other people’s lives the things which he had learned from Paul. The Lord expects every Christian to be a

disciple, but also to come to a place where he or she can reproduce. The **R** at the end of DISCIPLE makes you a DISCIPLER!

The aim of every disciple should be to disciple others. If you are learning well, you should be able to disciple another person soon after becoming a Christian. It will not mean you understand everything - far from it! - but you should have enough of Jesus and his ways in you to give something away. Read Philemon 6 and write down the benefit of ‘giving away’ what you have learned.

.....
You actually grow in understanding and maturity through the process of giving away. In fact, you do not have to wait until a person becomes a Christian to start discipling them. Jesus’ disciples followed him before they really believed in him. Jesus is not primarily looking for people who will say a ‘prayer of commitment’ but for those who will start obeying his teaching - and he may use you to teach non-Christians his ways. Obviously, such a person would have to make a clear commitment to Jesus in due course, but they will understand Christianity better if they already know what discipleship means.

Is there anybody already looking to you for advice? If so, who?

.....

Assignment:

1. Look out for Christians or non-Christians who you feel are beginning to look to you for advice. Arrange to meet with them.
2. Agree the time and place to do Lesson 6 with your discipler puts such a strong emphasis on obedience.

6. Discipling others - A

Previous chapters have shown discipleship from the point of view of the person being disciplined. As you make progress in living God's ways, you should expect to start discipling another person. This chapter outlines some principles from the life of Jesus to help you disciple others.

The potential of discipling

There are two ways of reaching the world for Jesus - through making converts who respond to an evangelistic message or through making disciples. The evangelist makes more rapid progress to start with but if a discipler disciplines one person per year, and trains each disciple to train one new person each year, each of whom continue to do the same year after year, then the whole world will be disciples of Jesus in only 32 years! And the discipler will produce better quality Christians too.

1. Select

Discipling is God's way of training men and women to serve him. Discipling is personal so the discipler usually works with a few people - often only one. Read **1 Kings 19:16, 19 to 21** to see how Elijah recruited his disciple Elisha. Discuss your answers to the following questions:

- Why do you think Elisha burned the ploughing equipment?
 - Why do you think he cooked a feast for the people?
 - What does the word 'attendant' say about Elisha's attitude?
- See also **2 Kings 3:11**

The Lord Jesus is our main model for discipling and he chose twelve men to be his close disciples. Read **Mark 3:13-15** and **Luke 6:12-13** and answer the following questions:

Where did Jesus go to make his choice?

Why do you think he went there?

What did he do there?

What were his feelings to those he called?

Jesus based his selection on both the spiritual and the natural. We should look for a person with a genuine heart for God, as well as one we enjoy being with - and we should also ask the Lord to show whether he wants us to disciple them. Only then, should we approach that person with a view to developing a discipling relationship. One way of initiating this would be to invite them to work through this booklet with you.

Jesus started with 12 men, but you would be wise to start discipling only one or two so that you can gain experience of what is involved. The person who has been discipling you will be happy to help you. So please share with him what is happening in your attempts at discipling.

2. Spend time

Please refer to the Assignment at the bottom of page 6. If you have not completed the exercise, please do it now, as it shows that Jesus gave a lot of his time to his disciples. We should do the same.

Our time together must include meals, fun, laughter, outings, travel, as well as teaching, praying, studying and fasting together. Some of these will happen spontaneously, but it is better to plan some in advance.

The quantity of time is important, but so is the quality. A disciple-maker is looking for times with his disciple where life is being touched. It is nice to chat about sport or politics, but quality time will also include discussing personal issues and how the Lord is working in our lives.

Write down all the reasons (or excuses) you can think of as to why a person would not want to be involved in making disciples:

.....
.....
.....

Mark any of the above which you feel could stop you being a discipler. Discuss these with your discipler and then pray together.

Perhaps the biggest obstacle to discipling others is lack of faith - we struggle to believe that discipling really is God’s method and that he will use imperfect people like us to do it. If you feel like this, ask God to increase your faith. Speak God’s word to yourself about who you are in Christ and how his power works in you and through you.

3. Set an example

Jesus continually lived a godly life before his disciples. When he prayed, his disciples wanted to learn how to pray (Luke 11:1). We should not only be living lives of increasing godliness, but we should also be quick to explain why and how we do things. People need to learn the heart as well as the outward action. Traditions are formed when people adopt the external behaviour without ever understanding the real reason for doing something. Paul had discipled Timothy so well that he said he ‘will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus.’ (1 Corinthians 4:17)

Years later, in **1 Timothy 4:16**, Paul still urged Timothy to set an example to the believers in:

- Speech
- life
- love
- faith
- purity

For each of the above, write down a situation where you feel that you have been able to set a godly example. Share this with your discipler.

Now, look at the list again and make a note of any part of your life which would not set a good example. Be ready to discuss this too.

.....
.....

4. Specify tasks

Discipling people must involve giving them specific things to do. Our aim is not to make life easier for ourselves, although that may happen, but to help them grow and develop through being faithful. God loves and rewards faithfulness (See **Luke 16:10-12**)

The popular notion is that maturity comes with age. Not true. You get old with age. Maturing comes by the acceptance of responsibility. In every area of life.

Ed Cole, Maximized Manhood

On page 15 of this booklet, we have suggested possible tasks for disciples. The disciple maker should also look at areas of responsibility which he is carrying to see which of them could be ‘given away’ to his disciples. For example, you might be leading a small group meeting with a few disciples. You could assign your disciple a portion of your responsibilities, such as leading a short time of prayer, bringing an exhortation, leading a discussion etc. Always be on the lookout for what you can give away for your disciple to do. They will learn by carrying responsibility.

Think about responsibilities which you presently carry. Write down some aspects of them which you could ask your disciple to do:

.....
.....

When we assign a task, we should make sure we also give :

Specifics - Spell out exactly what your expectations are – what is required, as well as when, where and how it needs to be done

Space - Give people freedom to do the job as well as they can. Do not intimidate them by continually looking over their shoulder.

Success - Aim to give a disciple a job he can succeed at. There may be times when he will fail, but we should not let that happen too often, If something goes wrong, use the experience to build up confidence, rather than to bring discouragement.

Jesus sent out the 72 like this, but afterwards, he made sure that he found out how things had gone. Accountability is a useful part of discipling and provides scope for encouragement and learning. We should train our disciples to be quick to report back. And we should be alert to asking about how faithfully they have handled a responsibility given to them, or how they are doing in different areas of life.

Read the following bible passages and summarise the questions which Jesus asked in each situation:

Matthew 16:8

Matthew 16:13

Matthew 17:25

Mark 9:33

Luke 24:17

John 21:15

Whilst the disciple-maker must feel free to ask questions about areas which concern him, he should be sensitive to the level of relationship and the situation they are in. He should not probe in an unhealthy way or cause hurt or discomfort by the questions he asks.

7. Discipling others - B

We have seen the first four steps in effectively discipling others:

1. Select
2. Spend time
3. Set an example
4. Specify tasks

Now we will look at three more:

5. *Speculate*

When we give tasks to people, we do not know in advance how well they will do. We have to take risks and step out in faith. Everybody has to do everything for the first time at least once! After we have seen a basic heart of faithfulness in a person, we need to stretch them in areas of faith – their’s as well as ours. If we have been wrong to ask them to do something, we should be quick to admit it and apologise. But don’t give up if a person makes a mistake or responds wrongly in a situation – and don’t keep waiting for them to be ‘almost perfect’ before you entrust a clear task to them. Take a risk!

Can you think of some occasions when people took risks with you? Write them down here, and be ready to talk about what happened

.....

Our heart attitude to our disciples makes a difference to what the Lord can do with them. In **Philippians 1:6**, Paul declared his confidence *‘that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ.’* Many people do not notice the next verse, where Paul explains why he is so confident. Write out the first half of

Philippians 1:7

.....

Paul’s attitude towards the Philippians, made him confident that the Lord would complete his work in them. **Philippians 4:1** shows Paul’s

love and longing for them. His love and faith helped move the Philippians on in God’s purposes. Our love and faith will do the same for those we disciple.

When we treat a man as he is, we make him worse than he is. When we treat him as if he already were what he potentially could be, we make him what he should be.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832)

6. Spectate

Jesus’ discipling methodology can be summarised as follows:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Jesus does | |
| 2. Jesus does | Disciples watch |
| 3. Jesus and disciples do together | |
| 4. Disciples do | Jesus watches |
| 5. Disciples do | |

Step 4 is a vital part of discipling but is the one which is most often missed. We should observe with alertness how our disciples handle things and give them feedback. It is tempting to ask a disciple to do something because we’re going to be away, but it is far more helpful for them if they make their first attempt at a task when we are there and can observe what happens.

In the process of making disciples, it is important to know what we should be looking for. Read **1 Samuel 16:7** and fill in the missing words: *The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at but the LORD looks at*

The ABC of discipling covers three areas:

A stands for **activities**. It is quite easy for a new Christian to begin doing different things, like attending meetings, giving out tracts etc. This represents a change in what he does. It is a good first step.

B stands for **behaviour**. A disciple will begin to change the way he handles himself as soon as he is around other Christians. He will start

using better language and, perhaps, dressing differently. He may have argued badly with his wife and children on the way to meet you, but he makes it seem as if everything is fine when he arrives. This may seem hypocritical, but it does show a desire to give the right appearance. Can you think of any time when you have tried to give an appearance of godliness in this way? Write it down here:

.....
.....
.....

Once again, a change in behaviour is a step forward. In **1 Peter 5:5**, the apostle wrote, *All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another.* He understood that, even if our heart is not really humble, it will be slowly trained as we decide to ‘clothe ourselves’ with humility. The same applies to other areas of our life.

C stands for **character**. This is the area which concerns God most as it shows how much of the life of Jesus is really taking a grip within the person. It is the most difficult for the discipler to assess.

For example, a person may start giving to the poor. He can seem to be a generous person as you hear about the way he helps the poor and donates to good causes. However, his heart may not have been touched at all. He could be doing the right thing in the right way so as to make a good impression. His heart could remain mean and selfish. God is looking for a change in character in his disciples.

Read **Romans 8:29**. What is God’s goal for each Christian?

.....

It is difficult to know how much a person’s character is really changing, and it is usually a slow process. This box contains words of wisdom. Please think about them and write down, on the next page, any example from your life when you made a decision which eventually led to a change in your character:

*Today’s decision is
Tomorrow’s habit, is
Next year’s character*

.....

We should ask the Lord for discernment and also pray that he will arrange situations which bring to light what is going inside the disciple. Then we can help our disciple move on in God.

7. Separate

When we feel we have trained our disciple to a level of maturity, we need to separate from him. He will not be perfect but he is making progress at learning to 'obey everything' that Jesus commands. Separating could mean asking somebody else to disciple him in areas where we are not gifted. It could also mean allocating clear areas of responsibility where he can now function independently. It may also mean a geographical separation as we each move on in God's purposes. However, we should expect the relationship to remain, even though it changes in nature.

Read again the Great Commission in **Matthew 28:18-20**. How long did Jesus expect his relationship with his disciples to last?

.....

The reality of discipling

1. Setbacks

Not everybody we disciple is going to respond well and make great progress in the Kingdom. Read **John 6:60-66** and write out **John 6:66** in full:

.....

This is what happened to Jesus, so we should not expect much better!

Now read **2 Timothy 1:15** and write down how many people left Paul:

.....

Most of Jesus disciples turned their back on him when he went to the Cross. Judas betrayed him, Peter denied him, and only John was physically present at the crucifixion. That was the result of three years

of close discipling! It is wise for us to expect some disciples to give up on us too.

John Mark set out with Barnabas and Saul on their first missionary journey but deserted them in Pamphylia (**Acts 13:13**). That must have disappointed Paul - but years later, after Barnabas had disciplined him, Paul valued him. Read **2 Timothy 4:11** and write down how Paul described him:

he is

2. Successes

Now read **Mark 4:1-20** and read how Jesus describes the different soils, which show the response of different types of people to the message of the Kingdom. What stops the word of God penetrating these hearts?

The Path

Rocky places

Amongst thorns

The same things will stop some of your disciples making progress. But look up **Mark 4:20** to see what some seed, sown in good soil, will do:

.....

3. Conclusion

Jesus had such confidence in his discipling of his disciples that he promised them (and all who believe) that they would do ‘even greater things’ than he did. See **John 14:12**. As you apply the teachings in this study, may you have the joy of seeing many people do even greater things than you have ever done!

Before completing this course, pray together with your discipler, thanking God for your time together. Pray that the Lord will enable you to disciple of others so well, that they will end up doing greater things for the Lord than you have ever done.