

# DISCIPLESHIP

*A Manual of Principles  
For Bringing People to Maturity  
In Christ*

Fellowship Bible Church - Tacoma, Washington

The church has been given the task of "MAKING DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS." To varying degrees, the church has been engaged in this task for nearly 2,000 years, and yet confusion, uncertainty, and a feeling ineptitude linger for many. There are various reasons for this ranging from cultural differences to divergent views of just what is involved in this enormous responsibility.

Although no one is claiming to have the final word on the subject of discipleship, we should never hesitate to be so simplistic as to say that Christ Himself IS the final Word. The apostle Paul wrote to the Colossians that he longed for them to,

*"be filled with the knowledge of His will  
in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,  
so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord,  
to please Him in all respects,  
bearing fruit in every good work and  
increasing in the knowledge of God."  
[Col. 1:9, 10]*

He summarized his goals for these believers in verse 28 of that same chapter where he wrote,

*"And we proclaim Him,  
admonishing every man and  
teaching every man with all wisdom,  
that we may present every man complete in Christ." [Col. 1:28]*

Each of us involved in discipling others should have the same objectives for those we minister to as Paul had in regard to the Colossians believers. Many of us aren't even sure where to start. The purpose of this manual is to collate some basic principles of effective discipleship. These are divided into four phases. This, we hope, will provide a foundational understanding of where you should start, help you discern when you finish your part in the process, and what we believe to be the essentials of how to get where you need to go. As you will see, **THIS IS NOT A DISCIPLESHIP PROGRAM OR STUDY GUIDE.** Such resources can be useful, but that is not our purpose here. No matter what other materials you may use, it is our hope that the insights and perspectives we have outlined

will serve as helpful guidelines for you.

## THE STARTING POINT

Matt. 28:19, 20 is commonly known as the GREAT COMMISSION. There is good reason for this. God commands us to spread the good news that Christ brought. The actual command in this passage is not "GO!" but, "MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS." The rest of the passage tells us how to do that.

### MATTHEW 28:19, 20

*(With the authority of Christ)*

- A. "GOING" = Expose them  
to the Gospel      "MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS"

*(In the name of the Trinity)*

- B. "BAPTIZING" = Establish them  
in their commitment to Christ

*(All the commands of Christ)*

- C. "TEACHING them to OBSERVE" = Lead them  
toward gaining maturity in how they  
love God and others

As you can see, the third step in this process involves teaching new believers to "observe" all that God's Word commands.

Without a proper understanding of this word "observe," people usually limit this phase to merely transferring Biblical know- ledge to another person. But that is an incomplete understanding of the term. We must include humble compliance. To illustrate this point, notice how in Jn. 14:15 Christ used the same term when He said,

"If you love Me you will KEEP my commandments."

If we are to teach them to keep or observe what Christ has commanded, where do we start? One of the religious leaders of Israel asked Jesus what He believed was THE greatest commandment. The answer Christ gave him is instructive for us as well.

*"He said to him, `YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD  
WITH ALL YOUR HEART,  
AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL,  
AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.'*

This is the great and foremost commandment.  
And a second is like it,

***'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.'***  
***[Matt. 22:37-39]***

According to Christ's own words, our two main purposes in life are to learn to LOVE GOD and LOVE OTHERS. Those should be the two main purposes for discipleship as well.

Let me summarize the objective for a discipler the following way,

***TO TRANSFER WHAT I HAVE LEARNED IN MY LIFE WITH CHRIST  
TO ANOTHER BELIEVER  
SO THAT HE WILL GROW IN MATURITY [Loving God]  
AND BE EQUIPPED TO MINISTER TO OTHERS [Loving Others]  
BUILDING THEM UP TO DO THE SAME.***

## **A HELPFUL BREAKDOWN**

To fulfill this objective, we must break down this demanding task into smaller segments which are practical and achievable. We must also keep in mind that we should view these segments as parts of a whole, not ends in themselves.

### **A. PHASE 1 (Evangelizing):**

***>Unbelievers Becoming Believers [=disciple-converts]***

1. Here we must pursue methods of outreach which insure that we are following New Testament principles and not modern motivational or sales techniques. The Gospel we present to people is the most critical part of this phase. With the wrong message, or even an incomplete gospel, we run the risk of influencing spurious conversions. Current books which are regarded as reliable presentations of the New Testament message and principles of evangelism are:

**Evangelism As A Lifestyle, Jim Peterson  
Tell The Truth, Will Metzger**

2. We must never suppose that a person may be brought into the family of God apart from His sovereign work in their hearts. Although believers understand this aspect differently, it is vital for God's followers to fully understand and appreciate **THE EXTENT TO WHICH HE IS OUR LEADER**. He seeks us. He saves us. He sanctifies us. He even gives us the desire and ability to do His will. With all that He has done for us, our responsibility to conform to His will is great regardless of our view of His sovereignty. This point must not be taken lightly! The book, Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God, by J. I. Packer discusses this aspect well.
3. We must commit ourselves to the principle that it is **NEVER** God's will for us to neglect a new Christian. Viewing evangelism as merely, "leading someone to Christ" can cause such negligence. But because of such attitudes, or personality differences, or shyness on their part, many new believers are left in a stage of infancy for much too long. God desires every person who becomes a spiritual baby to grow and mature. This is best accomplished with the help of a more stable believer. Those of us who are more mature need to help them. [Rm. 15:1, 2] This moves us into Phase 2.

## **B. PHASE 2 (Establishing):**

*>Converts Becoming Consistent [=faithful followers]*

1. We must pursue methods to establish a new believer which enables him to increasingly demonstrate the requirements which Christ laid out for true disciples in the Gospels. [These requirements will be outlined for you later.] For many this starts with getting their first Bible and learning to use it properly. For others, there is a readiness for Bible studies and some ministry which can lay the needed foundation. When, as disciplers, we don't truly know a person we are discipling, it is easy to overestimate or underestimate their level of maturity. Therefore, great care must be taken to accurately discern an appropriate starting place for each believer. [The book Disciple Alive!, by James D. Divine has some good suggestions on how to become better acquainted with, and evaluate a new believer.]
2. We must help them start building faithfulness into their lives. We can usually evaluate how faithful they are by noting the way the new disciple responds to the Lord, and to the things we are working on together. It is in this phase that you will want to

impart many fundamental Biblical principles including:

- <> *Understanding salvation*
  - <> *Establishing life priorities [including time, finances, skills and abilities]*
  - <> *Developing a relationship with the Lord [more than just praying through a list]*
  - <> *Wise decision making*
  - <> *Learning how to study the Scriptures [so that I love God and love others more]*
  - <> *Developing Biblical convictions*
  - <> *Ripening the fruit of the Spirit*
  - <> *Cultivating healthy relationships [especially in the home]*
  - <> *Responsibly functioning in the Body*
  - <> *Dealing with temptation and guilt*
  - <> *Appreciating the life and ministry of Christ*
  - <> *Evangelizing and edifying others*
- (Choose materials appropriate to the topic and the

disciple.)

Many more issues and topics could be listed. We don't pretend to give you a complete selection. Each relationship will require a different emphasis, thus each discipler will have to modify the list above. There are many resources which can aid you in compiling your list. Good books on discipleship, (some listed at the end) and the suggestions of other mature believers can help greatly. As you develop your list, it will help you measure progress more objectively.

You will have to assess your own strengths and weakness in communicating these various subjects. Others may already have greater expertise, and thus be better equipped for the task. On the other hand, this may be a good time to strengthen an area of weakness or lack in yourself. Formulate your list and have some others look it over for completeness. This will give you a useful guide for what you need to cover.

We need to emphasize to those we train that this phase is not just for amassing knowledge. Whenever possible [as Christ did in Mk. 3:14], we should convey knowledge in the framework of a relationship with a discipler and by involvement in appropriate ministries. Initially a ministry might just be sharing these new truths with someone else. While many learn best *BY* doing, all learn best *WHILE* doing. [Incidentally, learning related to life in this

way can also prevent some of the pride that so often comes with increasing knowledge.] Successfully working through this process will qualify them to go on for additional training in Phase 3 to become a discipler.

**C. PHASE 3 (Ministering):**

*>Faithful Ones Becoming Disciplers [=stable servants]*

1. We must pursue ways to train faithful servants to transmit what they know and how they live to others. In II Tim. 2:2 we see Paul passing the torch to Timothy so that he might pass on what Paul has taught and shown him. There is another aspect of this training that merits our attention.

As mentioned earlier, every disciple is going to have a variety of needs. As a discipler, you may not be adequately equipped to properly meet all those needs, and may recommend that some of those responsibilities be taken by others. Thus, each person being disciplined may have significant contact with many different people through the process. This can be healthy. It not only provides a variety of resources, but it graphically illustrates the inter-dependence of the various parts of the body. Christ is still the only one who can do it all!

2. How do we envision the development of faithfulness?

**STARTING POINT:  
"TESTING"**

**RESULTING MINISTRY:  
"TESTED"**

**JOHN  
15:14, 15**

**DISCIPLE AS A  
SERVANT**

**DISCIPLE AS A  
FRIEND/STEWARD**

**LIMITED UNDERSTANDING  
OF THE STRATEGY**

**SHARES TOGETHER IN THE  
BIG PICTURE**

**TO TEST THEIR  
OBEDIENCE**

**TO ADVANCE HIS  
OBEDIENCE**

**LUKE**

**FAITHFUL IN LITTLE**

**GIVEN BIG THINGS TO OVERSEE**

16:10-12      FAITHFUL IN MONEY-USE      TRUE RICHES ENTRUSTED TO HIM  
FAITHFUL IN USING      GIVEN HIS OWN  
OTHERS' THINGS

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(Are you looking up the Scripture references, or just reading the material? This material was written to relate the principles of Scripture. The Word is our true authority and guide.)

In this phase an evaluation of the disciple's maturity, prayerfulness, aptitudes, gifting, motivations, and apparent effectiveness is necessary. You can identify particular areas for ministry involvement best in the context of your local church. [You should always keep an updated list of opportunities.] While it is perfectly appropriate to start people out with more simple, and possibly menial, ministries, it is also important to stretch them as you consider them ready. Developing confidence in simple tasks is fine for a growing disciple, but each of us must learn that the deeper ministries in God's Kingdom require sincere humility and dependence on Him throughout. With proper and regular evaluation through this phase, a person can get ready for Phase 4.

**D. PHASE 4 (Leadership Training):**

>Disciplers Becoming Leaders (=pastors/deacons)

1. As described here, the ministry phase precedes the leadership phase. This is because we are all responsible to minister, although fewer of us will function as leaders in an official capacity. We need to develop both MATURITY and MINISTRY to be faithful disciples, but for leadership, God's Word requires specific qualifications. [I Tim. 3; Tit. 1; I Pt. 5]
2. We must also know how to train a functioning discipler so that he can become an EQUIPPER--one who superintends the ministries of other disciplers and shepherds a local church. [Eph. 4:11, 12; I Tim. 3:1ff] The leaders in each local congregation should have a clear idea of specific areas for leadership training. Again, there are study guides and good books which can help us understand and implement the leadership requirements of the Bible, but we must catalogue these standards and not leave them to our subjective impressions.

Some helpful books in this area are:

The Team Concept, Bruce E. Stabbert

Spiritual Leadership, J. Oswald Sanders  
The Measure of a Man, Gene Getz  
Timothy, Titus, and You, George C. Scipione

3. Such mature leaders could eventually team up and be sent to a new area to establish another local church for the Lord. Although that is an involved process, it is best executed while following the same four phases of discipleship we are describing here. This approach emphasizes building a congregation by building people, more than programs.

### HOW SHOULD WE EQUIP OTHERS?

[The following list is long, but only reflects a portion of this great ministry.]

- +Commit myself to spend time with people I'm training
- +Pray regularly for them
- +Pray with them
- +Develop a relationship with them
- +Expose my heart to them
- +Expose them to new ideas, people, books, experiences
- +Expose them to themselves
- +Stimulate an excitement about discovering insights from  
God's Word
- +Eat with them
- +Travel with them
- +Visit with them [in your home and in their's]
- +Goof off with them [in order to do this, you have to take the  
extra time]
- +Serve together whenever you can
- +Evaluate and observe them as you go
- +Note what makes them happy or angry
- +Help them learn to evaluate themselves more objectively
- +Stretch them by challenging their thinking
- +Call on them to express the kind of openness which  
demonstrates commitment
- +Focus on the whole person: Spiritually, mentally,  
emotionally, relationally, and physically.  
[\*While doing this, emphasize Biblical priorities; Mt.  
10:37; I Tim. 5:8; Gal. 6:10; Jn. 17:14-16; I Tim. 4:8]
- +Be flexible in your methods and manner
- +Help them achieve realistic and measurable goals



to be

- +Accept them where they are, and take them where they need
- +Treat each one as an individual with unique needs
- +Expect some disappointment [& warn them to do the same]
- +Convey an over all philosophy of ministry
- +Build them from the inside out
- +Don't feel obligated to exhaust every area you present
- +Keep track of what you have accomplished together
- +Help them learn to file and recover important materials
- +Have them teach you what you have previously explained to

them

Etc., etc., etc.

These four phases describe just one way to break down a lengthy and involved process. This outline presents some broad and flexible guidelines that can help you gain perspective. Many other resources can be used to help you along the way. If you are not familiar with the materials that are available, you could visit a local Christian book store, or confer with one of your pastors. Your most valuable assets though are already available to you:

- A. First, and most importantly, THE LORD Himself who said in the context of the Great Commission, "I am with you always, even to the end of the age" [Matt. 28:20]
- B. Next we have HIS WORD, which is, "inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." [II Tim. 3:16, 17]
- C. Finally, humble as it may be, we have the work He has already done in OUR LIVES. [I Cor. 11:1]

May the Lord grant us all wisdom and help us exercise faithful dependence on Him for the task He has assigned us.

As we continue on, we want to explain the process of properly selecting disciples, and then detail some foundational principles of learning to relate to them in a healthy and mature way. The need to relate well is not just helpful, it is essential. Discipleship will be incomplete without this aspect.

## **SELECTING A DISCIPLE: A matter for prayer and discernment**

It should be obvious that we should never neglect anyone desiring to grow. On the other hand, none of us can possibly meet with everyone who needs this type of help. Two principles can help us here:

- \*THE PRINCIPLE OF MULTIPLICATION and**
- \*THE PRINCIPLE OF LIMITED RESPONSIBILITY.**

**THE PRINCIPLE OF MULTIPLICATION** is often misunderstood. It is sometimes viewed as one person discipling two others, and in the same amount of time each of them disciples two people, and so forth. The underlying assumption is that within a few years the entire world can be reached.

Two problems with this are: 1.) Many aren't interested or responsive, and 2.) It is impossible to predetermine how much time each person will need. Multiplication is still the only way to accomplish the task. Although no one but God Himself can project how rapidly the process will expand, it is still best to pour yourself into a few key people to the point that they are able to reproduce similar growth in others.

**THE PRINCIPLE OF LIMITED RESPONSIBILITY** is one that needs to be carefully explained. We don't want to ever give the impression that discipleship is only for a few "Hired Guns" who are on church staffs. We are ALL called to this task. But as we said before, we can't possibly meet with everyone who needs this type of help. So what do we do? Some just do what they can and then feel guilty about those being left out. Others develop a detached indifference which is inconsistent with a true servant of Christ. Fortunately those aren't the only options. We can do as Christ did in His ministry here on earth.

When Jesus was on His face before the Father, just before His crucifixion, He poured out His heart in prayer. The circumstances around Him were dismal. The corrupt and oppressive Roman government was still in power. The church had not been fully established. Of the Apostles, one had defected as a traitor and the others were weakening fast. There were many still sick or demon possessed. Even with all these needs around Him, Christ could pray,

**"I glorified Thee on the earth,  
HAVING ACCOMPLISHED THE WORK  
WHICH THOU HAST GIVEN ME TO DO." [Jn. 17:4]**

What that prayer illustrates is that just because there are needs around us, they are not necessarily our immediate responsibility. Jesus could say with a clear conscience before the Father that He had accomplished all that the Father

had given Him to do, even though He was acutely aware of the many needs around Him.

Our responsibility then is to discern from Scripture, prayer, and the wise counsel of those who know God well and know us well, what God wants us to do. Then we need to get to work doing it. This is what we are calling the **PRINCIPLE OF LIMITED RESPONSIBILITY**.

We must multiply our efforts by training those around us to effectively train others. We must discern what God wants from us, and do it. But we must always remember that **THE GOOD IS THE ENEMY OF THE BEST**, and as Paul prayed for the Philippians, we too ought to, "approve the things that are **EXCELLENT** in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ." [Phil. 1:10] Paul tells us how this grows out of a knowledgeable and discerning love, and produces the fruit of righteousness. [Phil. 1:9-11] This is what we need to strive for in selecting someone to disciple. Following are some basic steps.

#### **FIRST, ASK GOD FOR WISDOM AND DIRECTION**

\*Jesus stayed up all night praying before He designated the twelve apostles [Lk. 6:12]. He must be our example right from the beginning of the process.

\*We should avoid outward appearances when choosing. Don't just look for "POTENTIAL." Also look for believers with faults, and then look beyond their faults to see their needs. God loves variety and He can use those we may tend to see as unworthy of our time merely because they're a little rough. Remember how Paul rejected John Mark for the second journey, but then Barnabas took him and nurtured him to become an effective servant [Acts 15]. Later, even Paul acknowledged the value of Barnabas' ministry with Mark when he asked Timothy to, "Pick up Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service." [II Tim. 4:11] This too is Christ-like.

#### **SECOND, EVALUATE THOSE WITH WHOM YOU PRESENTLY HAVE CONTACT**

\*To what extent does any of them display the following qualities?

1. A priority of love for Christ [Lk. 14:26]

(Watch for marks of this in ways the person spends his time and money. cp. Mt. 6:21)

2. An allegiance to the importance of the spiritual dimension [Jn. 6:63-66]

(Is the person content with the sinful or natural? To what extent does the person consider Christ optional? cp. vs. 67-68)

3. A determination to commit himself to listen to God [Jn. 8:31, 32]

(Has he made any sacrifices to get Biblical instruction? Has his Biblical understanding altered his behavior?)

4. A willingness to count the cost of following Christ, and sacrifice even good things that might be obstacles to full spiritual growth [Lk. 14:27-33]

priorities? Where - (Does the person manifest commitment to Biblical are these often neglected?)

5. A desire to involve himself in the lives of other people because of a growing love [Jn. 13:34-35]

- (Does the person react with anger or detachment when disappointed or hurt? Is there perseverance to keep moving toward people, for their good?)

6. Some evidence of fruit in his life, either in attitudes or actions that show spiritual reality [Jn. 15:8]

- (Is there a growing indication of the fruit of the Spirit, [Gal. 5:22, 23]; fruit of repentance, [Mt.3:8]; fruit of good works [Col. 1:10]?)

***Christ gave these 6 qualities as the marks of DISCIPLES that are GENUINE. These are the MARKS of a NORMAL CHRISTIAN, NOT a SUPER SAINT. According to Christ's own words, WITHOUT THESE QUALITIES, WE CANNOT BE HIS DISCIPLES. Therefore, we should not take on any disciple (after the establishing phase) UNLESS he or she manifests ALL SIX to some degree.***

**THIRD, ASK FOR DISCIPLES DIRECTLY**

After they have gone through the establishing or follow-up phase of discipleship, you must determine their readiness to move ahead. You can approach possible candidates by saying,

"I have been praying for some time about the possibility of spending some additional time together so that you can become equipped to do with others what I have been doing with you. I believe it would be good for us to continue on. Will you consider it?"

This type of statement can be used as you approach someone moving from phase two to phase three.

## THE DISCIPLER/DISCIPLE RELATIONSHIP

"Developing a discipling relationship is crucial. Most potential Disciplers are familiar with the term, but most also have a vague idea of actually knowing what to do. The concept is usually highly structured and, in many cases, too impersonal (using a book, course of study, etc.)" [Disciple Alive, p.16-1]

Theologian and author J. I. Packer wrote in the study guide to his book Knowing God,

*"...it is only as one gives oneself in human relationships, in the home, in friendships, with neighbors, as members of Christian groups and teams--in relationships that go sometimes right and sometimes wrong, as all our relationships do--that experiential knowledge of God becomes real and deep. For ordinary people, to be a hermit is not the way! The buttoned-up Christian 'loner' who keeps aloof and reads books like this (or just the Bible!) may pick up true notions of God as well as anyone else may, but only the Christian sharer, who risks being hurt in order to take and give the maximum in fellowship and who sometimes does get hurt as a result, ever knows much of God himself in experiential terms." [p. 6, 7]*

This view of discipleship presents the relationship with the discipler as being of equal importance with the training received. This is intentional. In a classical Greek discussion of the concept of discipleship, one writer carried this idea even farther. His view was that,

"The basis of the relationship is Socrates himself, not the knowledge at his disposal." [T.D.N.T., vol. IV, p. 420]

## WHAT ARE SOME TRAITS OF A BIBLICAL DISCIPLING RELATIONSHIP?

### 1. WILLINGNESS TO LEARN

The basic definition of "disciple" is "a learner." Intellectual pride, or worse, spiritual pride have no place in the life of a true disciple. A humble teachability must be evident at all levels of growth.

### 2. MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Jesus said, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." [Mk. 1:17] In that one statement, He beautifully illustrates the idea of mutual accountability.

\*DISCIPLES' ACCOUNTABILITY: To follow Jesus

\*JESUS' ACCOUNTABILITY: To train the disciples

One of the main areas requiring this type of accountability is prayer. The relationship and resulting ministries will be weak and inconsistent without regular, heart-felt prayer.

### 3. GROWING TRUST

"The Disciple's credibility is earned through the consistent demonstration of godly character and the modeling of genuine love." [Disciple Alive!, p. 16:1]

Although this is true, none of us can be trusted to be 100% consistent. The Lord is the only one who deserves that kind of trust. A growing trust is best developed by a combination of both a conscious effort to be a good example and a humble willingness to admit when we are not. New believers must learn from both.

### 4. BROTHERLY LOVE

We are to commit ourselves to seek the highest good for one another, even when we don't feel the other person deserves it. [Pr. 17:17] Even if it seems unnatural, we need to cultivate a friendship with one another. Of course, this doesn't mean you need to be friends in the common sense of the word. This is serious business, and not just a time for a casual visit. But if you lack a natural spontaneity, keep the focus of this relationship on Christ, then cultural or personal differences will matter little.

### 5. COMMITMENT TO MATURE

There should be a mutual commitment to, "become conformed to the image of His Son." [Rm. 8:29] That will happen eventually [Phil. 1:6], but in the meantime we must resist and vigorously argue against the temptation to feel we have "arrived" [Phil. 3:12]

## 6. WILLINGNESS TO SUFFER

We must be willing to both count the cost, and pay the price. We must willingly take the good with the "bad." "For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake; not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake." [Phil. 1:29] We don't get one without the other.

## 7. COMMITMENT TO SERVE

Christ Himself said that, "even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." [Mk.10:45] Sometimes a servant is overworked, overshadowed, and overlooked, but a true servant's heart will always conclude, "We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done." [Lk. 17:10; cp. vs. 7-9] Ministry that requires a return is not true ministry at all; it is a subtle form of manipulation.

## WHAT IS THE DUTY OF A DISCIPLER?

There are many ways to describe the disciplers' role. Beside what we have already said, some descriptive titles may prove helpful. Think of how you display each of the labels below.

### A DISCIPLER IS A:

<i>BELIEVER</i>	<i>COMMUNICATOR</i>	<i>TEACHER</i>
<i>INITIATOR</i>	<i>EXAMPLE</i>	<i>EQUIPPER</i>
<i>COUNSELOR</i>	<i>SERVANT</i>	<i>OBSERVER</i>
<i>GUIDE</i>	<i>ENCOURAGER</i>	<i>GOAD</i>
<i>HELPER</i>	<i>LEADER</i>	<i>FRIEND</i>

## HOW TO STIFLE AN EFFECTIVE DISCIPLING RELATIONSHIP

### 1. Don't invest adequate time

Discipleship that is program oriented, rather than people oriented, can be accomplished with a set number of people in a set amount of time. Building people is not that predictable, and requires our availability in order to succeed.

### 2. Resist openness in the relationship

Too often we preach GRACE, but act like we don't need it. Christ said that those who are forgiven much, love much. If we want to convey God's love in a deep and rich way, we need to be free from the pride that promotes hypocrisy. Christ was willing to be thought of as less than He was. Often we don't even want to be known as we truly are.

### 3. Unrealistic personal expectations

We all have deficiencies. We aren't as skilled as we would like to be. We aren't as wise as we would like to be. But if we have grown by God's grace, and have seen change in our lives, we have at least the seeds of a message. There will always be some ahead of us and some behind us in the quest for godliness. Discipleship is something you do WHILE growing, not after you're all grown up!

### 4. Pursuing high volume (vs. high quality) disciples

Remember the PRINCIPLE OF LIMITED RESPONSIBILITY? Give your best to help a few become their best.

### 5. Considering discipleship optional

Making disciples isn't a specialty for a few, it's a mandate for all. Before placing this responsibility too low on your priority list, search the Scriptures (especially the life of Christ) to clarify God's perspective on the subject.

### 6. Lack of discipling "Know-How"

There are many "helps" available for us rookies. But sooner or later, the best way to get the needed "Know-How" is to dive in and learn as you go. It may not be perfect, but it's a start.



## **7. Imbalanced or neglected priorities**

**If we let our lives get out of control, and find ourselves spending an inordinate amount of time in any one area of life, we will surely be neglecting some other very important responsibilities. We don't have to be involved in anything wrong in order to create this imbalance. All we have to do is pre-dominantly focus on one or two good things at the expense of others. Constant evaluation is necessary.**

**(The ideas listed here are a revised version of material in the book Disciple Alive, by James D. Devine. Portland, Oregon.)**

## **IN CONCLUSION**

**All of us have been called to the ministry of DISCIPLING ALL NATIONS. Although there are many different aspects to this, we all fit in somewhere. It is a lifetime venture. It requires time, preparation, diligence, prayer, humility, love, and much, much more. It requires so much of us, that to persevere, we must maintain a dependence on God that is deep and complete.**

**As the Apostle Paul built up Timothy, he often referred to him as his "son in the faith." In this sense, discipleship is parenting at its best!**

**"The GRACE of the Lord Jesus Christ,  
and the LOVE of God,  
and the FELLOWSHIP of the Holy Spirit,  
be with you all." [II Cor. 13:14]**