

SALVATIONISM 301

Captain Doug Hammond

INTRODUCTION Discipleship

Captain Hammond, along with his wife Karen, serves as Community Development Officer of the South African Territory.

An intense, devoted Salvationist, Doug is committed to discipling converts into warriors of Jesus. An accomplished athlete in rugby and long distance running, he is known as a lover of life.

Previous to officership, Doug was a teacher, and a missionary in Uganda. Doug contributes our chapter on DISCIPLESHIP.

What's it all about?

Well, for starters, it's more than a course offered on Tuesday nights at The Salvation Army! It is an intentional relationship initiated to teach and train converts into warriors for Jesus.

It is the only effective way to accomplish our mission to win the world for Jesus– so read this chapter carefully and determine to apply its lessons.

Doug lives out what he writes on these pages and bears the fruit that gives credibility to what he teaches.

Let this week spark a fire in you that will spread through the world until Jesus comes back.

RESOURCES:

Books:

Ed Read, ed. DISCIPLESHIP: Vision And Mission.
Bill Hull. JESUS CHRIST DISCIPLEMAKER.
Bill Hull. THE DISCIPLEMAKING CHURCH
Juan Carlos Ortiz. CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP.
Win and Charles Arn. THE MASTER'S PLAN FOR MAKING DISCIPLES.

Movies:

THE MIGHTY. (see how you can model, work alongside, instill character...)

Manuals & Resources: ONLINE

Touch Ministries: <http://www.touchusa.org/> (cell-based discipling resources)
Walk Thru The Bible Ministries: <http://www.devotionals.com/> (Innovative Bible-grounding resources)
The Navigators: <http://www.gospelcom.net/navs/> (comprehensive discipling system– such as 2:7 Series)
DISCIPLE MAKING- The Online Self-Study Course: <http://www.wheaton.edu/bgc/ioe/fud/fudtitle.html>
(from Billy Graham and Robert Coleman)

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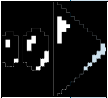
Discipleship One - - - - - ●



"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-- his good, pleasing and perfect will" (Romans 12:2).



"The call to service cannot yield place to any human consideration" (Frederick Coutts. THE ARMOURY COMMENTARY).



Can there be anything more exciting for followers of Jesus than to feel as if they are following the plan their Creator dreamed up for them even before they started to grow in their mother's womb? Many in our world are obsessed with chasing after things they have been convinced will bring them a sense of satisfaction or of worth. Money, career, popularity, along with countless other false gods have stolen the hearts of people who are lost in the worst kind of sense. They are lost, and don't even realize they are lost. If only they could taste the fulfillment of knowing what it is to walk hand in hand with the King of Kings they would realize their past pursuits have been a waste. I've seen many examples of those who show a sincere desire to walk closer with the Master. They desire to be used by God. They recognize that the only ultimate fulfillment they will ever experience is in realizing and obeying the God's purposes for them. Tragically, the most sincere motives can be derailed by a worldly concept of success. Sure, their hearts belong to Jesus, but their minds still belong to the world. They are often focused on numerical growth, programmes, finance, or fancy buildings, not realizing that Christ does not view His Body with our values. The first step to understanding God's will for our lives is signing up for His plan for a "renewal of our minds" (Romans 12:2).

I am not suggesting that God is not pleased with our growth. With all my heart I believe God desires that His Army grows- that literally millions will turn to Jesus. However, when our goal narrows to generating numbers it is too easy to take our focus off our ultimate aim, which is to bring pleasure to our God. Numbers can distract us with presumptions of success or failure. But there are many examples in scripture that suggest that God measures success differently than we do. Sometimes I wonder how Jesus would fit in many of the modern mega-ministry models that receive so much high profile attention. Conferences, videos, books, articles promote those ministries that draw thousands, generate high finance, and a professional-looking product. Other ministries are invited to join in their strategies that have proven so fruitful. Yet we see so clearly that the ministry of Jesus was not driven with the same values. We find John 6 difficult to swallow.

Jesus comes to his disciples with some very complicated teaching that is not well received by those who had been following Him. "From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed Him" (John 6:66). Jesus' reaction might disturb us! Did He try to water down His words, or convince those who were leaving to stay? Did He try to rally the disciples who remained with a 'locker room' pep talk? Neither. Jesus turned to the twelve and said, "You do not want to leave too, do you?" There was no panic forcing Him to reconsider His strategy. He simply wanted to make sure He knew where those who were close to Him stood.

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Discipleship One



Could it be that we automatically assume God's will for us is consistent with a high profile, 'success'-driven mega-ministry model? Perhaps many who have suffered discouragement in service have launched out in ministry with such unrealistic expectations. They take stock and find that their vision (or perhaps it was an hallucination!) has not been realized. As a result they are left defeated and disillusioned. Such discouragement does not come due to a lack of faithfulness on God's part, nor is it His desire that we be bitterly defeated. Not a chance! Fruitless ministry is often due to seeking God's will through the world's eyes. One of my favourite biblical characters was Abraham. He demonstrated an ability to look at things through God's eyes. When Abraham and Lot found it necessary to separate, "Abraham called on the name of the Lord" (Genesis 13:4). When Abram gave Lot the opportunity to choose what side of the Jordan to take for his flocks Lot's decision was based on what he could see with his eyes (13:4).

Many would think Abram foolish to allow Lot to take the better looking land, but through God's eyes, Abram could see that the land was not as attractive as one might think. Lot's choice caused his family great suffering- their land was close to the evil city of Sodom. In contrast, Abraham and his family experienced the special blessing of God. Even the way God chose to use Abraham seems to go against many of the values of our modern 'long on who, short on substance' view of ministry. God chose to work through this one trusting man. If we are going to reject the values of the world and truly search for God's will for our lives, two things are in order: 1) we need to consider Abraham's example, and 2) we must never underestimate the unsearchable wisdom and power of God.

Isaiah 51 is written to encourage all those who are seeking to be obedient, even through dark times. It reminds us of God's ability to make something wonderful out of what man might consider insignificant. Why did God decide to work through just one man? If He had wanted to make an impression could He have not started with a larger population? With a Kingdom? But He chose to work through just one person, and through that person He has blessed all nations. Can we ever overestimate the potential of just one person who completely surrenders herself to the authority of God? Even though we might be tempted to consider one to be insignificant within our carnal values of ministry, God has proven so clearly with such a person He can bless the whole world. Is it possible that God has been looking for a person like that in you? Are you someone who is simply willing to be His person, at this time, in this place? Is it His plan to bless others through you, while you've busy looking for the big score ministry? Just make yourself available for His service. Jesus left us with the very familiar words of the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20, to, "make disciples." But before we begin our study of how to make disciples it is essential that we come to terms with the possibility that God might desire to use us in ways that we have not considered as important areas of ministry before. God might have chosen to use us in a way that seems insignificant in terms of our carnal understanding of ministry.



1. Are we ready to be available to God in ways that we have never considered before?
2. Are we ready for a renewing of a mind?

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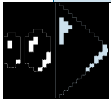
Discipleship Two



"Who despises the day of small things?" (Zechariah 4:10).



"The more the door is shut the more we batter it.
It is our business to go on" (George Scott Railton, GSR).



Right from the beginning of His public ministry Jesus knew His time was limited. A day was coming when He would leave the earth to join His Father in heaven, and on that day He had to make sure there was some vehicle by which the message of salvation could be communicated to the world for future generations. In our information age it might even be impossible for us to understand the implications of such a task in which there was no access to modern technology. Today, if someone has an important message, options of modern communication include television, radio, printing presses, faxes, email, and the Internet. Can we ever imagine the problems of communicating an essential message to an entire planet without even the luxury of a bicycle for transport?

If I were in the situation that Jesus was in I think I might have gone with a Mount Carmel or Red Sea approach. Somehow through divine co-ordination I'd arrange to get a large crowd gathered to witness a miracle with a big screen impact! There is solid Biblical precedent. Elijah staged a massive display of the God's power over the 450 prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18). You can't ignore Moses's flair for the dramatic as the entire nation of Israel watched God gain glory for Himself and an escape route for His people by parting the Red Sea (Exodus 14). Surely if Jesus chose to stage such a miracle there would be thousands ready to listen to His teaching regarding the Kingdom of God. Yet even as we look at such awesome displays of power we must question their lasting impact. Even after Elijah had humiliated the prophets of Baal and had them killed there was not a massive revival in the land. The impact of the event seems almost insignificant to those who were there. With Moses, it was not even three days later that the Israelites were complaining about being stuck in the desert. Although we are attracted to the sensational miracles they do not always soften hard hearts. Jesus needed a more reliable way for the Gospel to be handed down through the centuries.

He chose a teaching method that was not unusual for His time. Rather than aim for the sensational He trained a small group of men as disciples. A disciple was simply a learner who was committed to the teaching of a master. This form of study is much different from modern education, which is almost completely institutionalized. In discipleship, the master completely controls the format and content of the teaching. The most significant difference between how a disciple learns and how a modern student learns might be in the different relationships between the learner and teacher. Although many modern teachers might take an interest in their students, their basic task is to provide a student with an opportunity to learn a given syllabus. Often the teacher does not even have input into what is being taught to the learner. In contrast, the learning atmosphere between a master and his or her disciples is based on relationship. In a healthy master/disciple relationship the disciple will become more and more devoted to the master and to his/her teachings. As a result when the disciple is then expected to pass on the teaching to others she actually owns the teaching for herself. Her devotion to the teaching and to the master is inseparable.

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Discipleship Two



Why would a master devote such energy to the training of such a student? Such an investment is time consuming and not without risk. If a disciple can't cut it, or doesn't buy into the master's teachings, all the time and energy devoted to the disciple is wasted. But many philosophers saw the advantage of such a system and had confidence that it was worth both the time and risk to pass on knowledge. Jesus also recognized the advantage of a teaching system that would place such an emphasis on relationship. Here was a strategy that, after Jesus had left, would leave behind a group of men who were not only devoted to a way of life, but to a Man. A God/man.

The fact that the message did spread, and that it was passed on to future generations, and that 2000 years later we are still given the opportunity to respond to the good news testifies to the fact that Jesus knew what He was doing. Was it a risk to entrust the future of the Christendom to such a small number of men? Or perhaps Jesus knew the power of relationship would guarantee these men would find success.

Today the same commission is passed on to disciples of a different age, but the strategy has not changed. There is no suggestion in Scripture that when modern technology brings ministry opportunities it will replace the power of teaching through relationship. Although there are now incredible opportunities to explore new ways to communicate the gospel, we can never abandon the proven discipleship strategy.

We all must recognize our individual responsibility to be involved in the great commission to "make disciples." No matter what our gifts or ministry calling might be, we cannot ignore Jesus' call for us to join in this process. The question might be, "Where do I start?" We have already noted that it is the disciple who will make other disciples. At the very basic level a disciple is a learner who is growing in his devotion to the master. The essential question for every question then is, "Am I a disciple?" Are you now in a relationship with the Master in which you are learning more about the life He desires for you, and growing in your devotion to Him? This has nothing to do with how long you have been saved, or whether you are a soldier. I need to emphasize that this is not simply a question regarding your knowledge. The need is not for an Army of academics, but for an Army in relationship with Jesus. If you can recognize that you do not fulfill the basic characteristics of a disciple the first thing you need to do is acknowledge your condition. There is no shame in acknowledging your need to grow. Your first task will be to link up with someone who is a disciple- someone who is learning and growing in his or her devotion to the Master. Learn from them through the experience of a relationship. If you can honestly look at yourself and see that you are learning and growing in your devotion to the Master your task is to link up with a Christian who has not experienced such growth. The selection of such a person and the process by which you will develop that relationship will take wisdom and will be discussed on one of the following days. It is sufficient at this stage to encourage you to start praying right now that God will reveal to you someone who you can play a role with in his or her development into a disciple.

The process of discipleship is often hindered by our own refusal to be honest with ourselves. There is nothing to be gained by claiming to be disciples if we are not. There is no way to guide others through the stages of growth if we have not been there ourselves. Once we can recognize our condition we are ready to embark on the most exciting adventure of all time. The incredible privilege of being part of building His Kingdom here on earth should never be considered ordinary.

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Discipleship Three - - - - - ●



"When He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch." Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because You say so, I will let down the nets"" (Luke 5:4,5).



"God does not call His people to a career but to a life of obedience" (Madge Unsworth, MILDRED DUFF).



At times in our past we have been guilty of insulating our converts from anything of the outside world. Instead of getting them involved in a training strategy that will equip them for the King's service we pull them into our buildings and do our best never to let them out again. They become so occupied with the traditional activities of the corps they find little time for anything else, and quickly lose their inclination! We consider them strong when they have immersed themselves in our sub-culture such that they can have nothing to do with those outside our walls.

Yet that was not the strategy that Jesus demonstrated for us in the training of His disciples. Those who responded to His call, 'Follow Me', Jesus plunged into a transformational process that culminated with them being sent out. As they were being equipped they were also involved in communicating the good news with those outside of the fellowship. Although Jesus was followed by huge crowds He decided to concentrate His efforts on a small group of men we refer to as the disciples. Certainly these men were excellent examples of those who were transformed and sent out. There is such a clear distinction between the disciples we meet in the Gospels and those we see in action in Acts. They had been transformed through their experience with Jesus. Jesus' intention was to replicate this process in His Body through history. As young Christians learn what it means to follow Jesus, through a relationship with a mature believer, they get involved in building of God's Kingdom immediately. Our Corps were never intended to create comfort zones in which saints could protect themselves from the outside world. They are supposed to be equipping stations for battle. Is it possible for us today to involve ourselves in the transformation of people's lives so that they will be equipped and sent out to communicate the good news? By God's grace, the answer is an emphatic 'YES!'

The first step would be to identify people who show the basic potential to be disciples. There are basic characteristics we can observe in the lives of those first disciples that might help us to identify those God has placed around us who we could assist in being true disciples. As we read through the Gospels we are often reminded of the weaknesses of Peter, but in Luke 5 we can note a characteristic that qualified him as a disciple of Jesus. We can imagine him washing his nets after a night of fruitless work. While scrubbing up, Simon Peter can overhear Jesus teaching nearby. "When He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, 'Put out into deep water and let down the nets for catch'" (Luke 5:4). After a fruitless evening of labour, Peter was probably tired AND fed up. He was cleaning his nets, doing common maintenance to keep them from becoming hard and brittle. Just as he is wrapping up, a carpenter gives him a command to go out to the deep water and drop these freshly clean nets back in the water! There are many logical reasons that Peter might have given to refuse the order. Peter himself goes on record as saying it does not make much sense, but does offer one reason why he will obey the order: "But because You say so, I will let down the nets" (Luke 5:5). Peter, with all his faults, indicates in this one sentence that he has an essential ingredient that Jesus needs if He is to transform our lives- obedience.

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Discipleship Three



In Christian circles today we meet many who claim to be Christian, who want to know Jesus better, and yet who demonstrate no obedience to the life to which Jesus has commanded us. Rather than a commitment to obedience we find a list of excuses as to why they cannot be submissive to God in many different areas of their lives. They can't commit themselves to fellowship because they are too tired when they get home from work. They can't commit financially because they have bills to pay. They can't consider full time ministry because they have a career to protect. Peter had absolutely no logical reason to obey the command he received from Jesus in Luke 5:4, but he was willing to obey because Jesus said so.

A shopping list of good disciple characteristics is always headed by obedience. A potential disciple with limited ability to obey God's commands is a person whose value as a disciple is doubtful. So many different times in a disciple's life immediate obedience is required or opportunities will be lost. A disciple who always insists on finding some worldly logic as to why God is making demands her life can get consumed in debate and conflict with God.

There are numerous examples in Scripture of disciples who were used powerfully simply because their obedience was immediate and unquestioned. In Acts 8 Phillip was given strange commands from the Holy Spirit: "Go south to the road- the desert road," and later, "Go to that chariot and stay near it." Had there been any hesitation Phillip might well have lost his chance to witness to the Ethiopian eunuch and lead him to salvation. How many opportunities do we miss because we refuse to offer the same simple, yet profound obedience that Peter and Phillip did? Our ability to compromise, justify, and even deafen our ears to the commands of God should disturb us into an attitude of submission.

As Romans 12:2 reminds us: "Therefore, do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is, His good pleasing, and perfect will." Too many potential disciples claim to be searching for God's good, pleasing, and perfect will for their lives, but they do it without a renewed mind. They still look for His will while applying the 'pattern of this world' reasoning to their lives. In Peter, Jesus saw a man who was not willing to allow what he thought best to block him from being obedient to the Master. That was enough for Jesus to work with, and it is enough for us as well. We do not look for people who are superstars, but simply for those who demonstrate the ability to place the desires of Jesus Christ above their own. Such people God has used to change the world, and He can do it again.



1. Do you have an obedient, submissive spirit?
2. Is the pattern of this world your lens for seeking God's will?
3. How can you change?

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Discipleship Four



"And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others" (2 Timothy 2:2).



"Put a burning coal or stick by itself and the fire will often go out, and it will be cold and black; but put several sticks or coals together and they will burn brightly. And it is so with hearts full of the holy fire"
(Samuel Logan Brengle, THE WAY OF HOLINESS).



You have determined that you are to be a true disciple and now seek to be part of fulfilling the great commission to make disciples of all nations. For the sake of Christ and the Gospel you now desire to help lead sincere but immature believers into a deeper relationship with Jesus. One of the most exciting experiences for a discipler is to develop a relationship with someone that results not only in growth of conviction and faith, but also in the multiplication of themselves. But all relationships have a cost. Make careful judgments to ensure good stewardship of your time. Jesus invested a lot in those first twelve and if you are to be effective you, too, will be required to invest yourself. No responsible investor makes a move without first considering the return.

Remember, the essential foundation for a potential disciple is a willingness to obey. A potential disciple has made a conscious decision to obey the Lord no matter what His command. Many consider themselves obedient, but in fact are waiting for God to reveal to them exactly what He desires before making their decision. Such a disciple, with each command, will always be in a state of tension as to whether to obey or not. A true disciple has already decided to obey. As God reveals His will there is no tension about how the disciple will respond. It has already been decided that obedience will be the response- that was decided before the command was even received. There will be other essential considerations later in the discipling process, but to start the issue of obedience helps us identify a potential disciple (there are other factors that make even an obedient person an unlikely disciple). Any investment in a discipling relationship is going to require time spent together. Through the Gospels there are many examples of Jesus, not only in the synagogue with the disciples, but walking with them, eating with them, partying with them. Even after identifying a potential disciple it is important to determine if there will be opportunity to regularly invest time with them. On a few occasions I've initiated relationships with potential disciples that appeared promising only to find there were factors that made it impossible to spend time with them. Their jobs, girlfriends, sports, or hobbies could not accommodate a regular time of fellowship with me. As a result it was almost impossible to believe that any fruit would result. My wife and I have often identified potential disciples that were female. It would not be wise for me to encourage getting together regularly in a potentially compromising situation. In such cases either my wife will pursue the relationship, or we will look for other mature Christians to offer to invest themselves.

It is important that these relationships develop as naturally as possible. This might mean that the time, place, or even the duration of the meetings is varied. Flexibility offers opportunity to exercise vision as to how lessons can be taught. Jesus used a fig tree as an illustration! Present day disciples might be able to teach a lesson while at a hockey game, hiking, or shopping. Allowing for flexibility does not mean there is not structure to the fellowship. Whenever I am involved in discipling someone there is always consideration of God's word, prayer, and an opportunity for sharing of personal experience. It does not matter if that happens in the Corps, home, or the coffee shop. Offering flexibility gives added scope for the living out of what is being considered in God's Word.

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Discipleship Four



I can remember a friend of mine sharing what had first encouraged him to get to know Jesus more. He had made a commitment to Christ at a young age but never thought much about what it meant to grow in his Christian experience. He was going to heaven, and as far as he was concerned, that was it. But one day a leader from a local Intersociety Christian Fellowship picked him up to go to an event. While they were driving someone in another car cut this leader off forcing him to slam on his brakes. My friend instantly prepared to say something degrading about the offending driver but then noticed that the Intersociety leader had been totally calm about the whole thing and drove on without even mentioning it. It was an incidental event that lasted about 3 seconds. Yet it was a real life situation that created a hunger in my friend to know God the way this leader did. I can remember him saying, "I could not believe a guy could be so calm about something like that! I decided I wanted to be like that, I wanted what he had." A disciple maker needs to provide as wide a variety of real life situations in which passive and active teaching can take place.

One other point needs to be re-emphasized, and that is the issue of cost. The cost of building relationships is often underestimated particularly in a world and Army that can be very task orientated. We get an idea in Mark 9 of how much Jesus is in demand. There are people who want to hear him, evil spirits to cast out, and the sick who need to be healed. In the midst of all this demand, "They left that place and passed through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know they were because He was teaching His disciples." He did not wait till all the work was done before He invested time with the disciples. He did not just sit down where He was hoping everyone would just leave them alone. There is an intentional searching for a place where they will not be disturbed. Obviously there were lots of other very good things that could have occupied Jesus' time. Yet He demonstrates that sacrifice has to be made in building up these disciples.

In some Corps today such a strategy would be frowned upon. There are the sick that need to be visited, meetings to attend, all kinds of time consumers that might be worthwhile yet need to be sacrificed if productive relationships are to be developed. There is even some evidence that many of the time-consumers are not really fruit-producers for Christ. So it is a mystery to me as to why Corps and soldiers attach such significance to them. My only conclusion can be that we are often more concerned about staying busy then we are about being fruitful. If relationships are to take such a low priority with us our ministry will be doomed to a condition of barren activism in which our Master will take no pleasure. My prayer is that my life will not be wasted, but invested in others to bring pleasure to my Lord. For Christ and the gospel.



1. In your discipling relationship, do you intentionally make time to get away, even if it means sacrificing other good activities?
2. How can you make your discipling relationship less structured, and take advantages of fig tree learning?
3. How willing are you to sacrifice established programmes to invest in the life of one or two people? How about your Corps?



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Discipleship Five



"Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful" (Joshua 1:8).



In training disciples there is no substitute for establishing a commitment to God's Word. If you can establish a discipline in a young believer's life that keeps her rooted in the Word of God your influence will continue to multiply in her life for many years. Much of our education system is focused on training students to regurgitate information back to the instructor through some form of examination. If a student can recite the appropriate information 'learning' has occurred! The student/teacher relationship in a discipleship model is nothing like that. In this relationship we try to train disciples to hear what the Lord is saying to them and apply it to their lives. My role as a discipler is not to give the lesson and evaluate but to walk with the disciples on an exciting journey of exploration. What is the Lord speaking to you about? How are you going to apply that to your life? There are two considerations that I need to apply if I, as the discipler, am to assist in this journey. First of all I must be able to assist the disciple in getting established in the reading, study, and memorizing of the Bible. Secondly, I must have a relationship with the disciple such that I can offer insight into how what God is saying can be applied to my disciple's life.

It was never Jesus' intention that His followers would experience confusion as to what was required in their lives. God has inspired writers to reveal everything we need to know of Him, and ourselves. Too often we have allowed young Christians to absolve themselves of the responsibility to search God's Word for themselves. They have been allowed to fill their time up with fellowship, service, meetings, and so, and never ground themselves in the teaching of the Word. The longer Christians are permitted to do this the more they accept it as normal, and the harder it is to get them to apply themselves to the teaching. Right from the beginning a Christian should realize that his most essential lifeline is to be spending time with God daily through Bible reading and prayer.

There have been hundreds of wonderful devotional books written which seek to assist people in getting started with their Bible reading. Gifted writers take a small passage of scripture and offer some insight or application that can often be helpful. However, for serious disciples it is essential they be trained in applying God's message to their own lives. Reading what someone has to say about what God has to say cannot take the place of hearing from God personally. I can remember the first time I was reading my Bible by myself and realized that what I was reading was directly applicable to a situation I was dealing with in my life. I had no other commentaries, or devotional books there to which to refer. Right in front of me were words written by someone centuries ago—yet it spoke right into my heart. Suddenly there was an excitement to my relationship to God that I'd heard so many other people speak about but had never experienced till that moment. It was like God had written me a letter so long ago and it was just waiting there for me to read it on that day. Once disciples experience this for themselves Bible reading does not become a chore, but an adventure. The study and devotional aids, although sometimes useful, can often get in the way of such experiences because readers do not seek to apply the word to their lives but rather wait to see what the theologian has to say.

Getting the disciple involved in daily reading of the Bible opens them to this opportunity. Obviously certain parts of the Bible are much more difficult to read than others and for the new disciple books that are easier to apply and understand need to be given preference (e.g. Gospel of Mark, John, Acts, James).

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As they grow in their understanding more complicated teaching is appropriate. Don't avoid study material- it often offers some important understanding regarding the context of the teaching. However, control it. Don't let this turn into an academic study of each passage, but make it simply a relaxed time of opening our hearts to the principles that God has revealed for us. Individuals read and comprehend at different levels and whenever I work with a disciple I find it useful to let them set the level at which they will work. Remember more important than passing on a syllabus of information is the establishing of a discipline. A discipler's goal is not met when his disciple reads through the whole Bible in a certain time frame, but fails to establish himself in a daily discipline of Bible reading. More is accomplished when a disciple is reading 10 verses a day, but makes this a lifetime routine. Once a person's discipline is established the growth potential over a lifetime is almost limitless. Therefore, allow your new disciples to determine how much they can read each day. Similar principles need to be applied to Scripture memory. As disciples find passages that are particularly useful to them they need to be encouraged to, "hide them in their hearts." Scriptures committed to memory gives the disciple opportunity to meditate on them in many different situations of their lives. Memorizing helps in witnessing, developing confidence, and in resisting temptation. But just like Scripture reading, the longer a new believer takes in getting started the harder it will be to develop the habit. Also, each person will progress differently. Some will be able to learn a new verse each week and apply it in numerous ways. Others might be able to only learn one verse a month with the same results (unless learning disabilities exist anyone can learn a verse in a month using basic memory techniques, e.g. repetition, review).

There will be no greater motivation for a new disciple to read the Bible than when he learns how he can enjoy the riches of God's Word as he applies it to his life. This does not come naturally to many in our generation who have not been trained to meditate or be still. If the basis of relationship is sitting beside each other at the Holiness Meeting, you'll have a hard time assisting your disciple. But if there has been a true relationship built up between the discipler and disciple then there is opportunity to offer possible insight as to how one's Bible reading applies to daily life. As I get together with my student one of my basic questions is, "Lucas, how has your Bible reading been going?" Lucas needs to be accountable as to how much, how often, and how useful his time with the Bible has been. Trends should be noted, stumbling blocks discussed. For example, some find it easy to work time for the Bible in to days that are busy because the routine is rigid, but on weekends or holidays they forget. Certain places and times of day are better than others. Themes need to be noted, not just in what they have read this week, but also over the past months. Patterns are often established. For example, "Matthew, it seems that God is really speaking to you a lot about purity lately. Do you remember last month as well when you were reading in 1 Timothy?"

Spending time in the Scripture is pointless unless there is going to be an application of it towards your life. I not only ask, "How is your Bible reading going?" but also, "How does that apply to what you are going through right now?" Again, because there is a real relationship developed between Lucas and me I can probe and assist Lucas to discern what God is trying to say. "Why do you think God is speaking so much about purity? How is your relationship with your boyfriend/girlfriend/husband/wife? Is there something you need to sort out there?" Not all topics need to be so sensitive but certainly if trends can be identified one can be confident that God is addressing a concern. As friendships form and mature in different ways Matthew does not need to feel that his relationship with Jesus has to develop the same way as me. The essential characteristic is that he is growing as he hears and applies what God is saying through His inspired Word. This is the basic principle that is referred to in the parable, "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day, teach him how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." We can give a man a Bible lesson and feed him for a day, or teach him how to hear from God and he will be fed for a lifetime.

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Discipleship Six



"We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away" (Hebrews 2:1).



"To pray together is to be shielded from evil, not only from the perils which beset the body but also from the dangers which assail the soul" (Frederick Coutts, ESSENTIALS OF CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE).



Over the years I've heard many long term Christians express opinions about prayer that demonstrated a lack of understanding regarding this incredible privilege that God offers us. "Certainly we can pray, but we need to do something practical as well." Does that mean that prayer does not fall under the category of practical? Several people have said to me, "Oh, I pray to the Lord all through the day. I don't think I need to set a special time aside to pray." Certainly, I often speak with my wife as we go through the routine of our day. But the best time I have to speak with my wife is when we are just sitting quietly with no distractions. It is at moments like these that we can really listen to each other and take time to communicate. To assume that prayer is simply like talking to a friend as we go through the day is missing the whole opportunity to find intimacy with God. I've even heard it said, "You must pray for my ministry because I'm too busy to pray." Although I'd never want to dismiss the value of intercessory prayer it seems ridiculous to pray for someone's ministry when they have not even acknowledged the necessity to stay in tune with God. I don't believe any such ministry can prosper.

Incredible fallacies abound regarding prayer often because Christians have failed to understand what it is involved. As with any spiritual discipline it is important to get established as quickly as possible in your walk with God. The longer a Christian goes without getting established in a growing prayer life the more difficult it will be. We see so many long standing Christians who lack a meaningful prayer life that we assume it is perfectly normal. Unfortunately, that influence is multiplied and we end up with Corps that are prayerless. From the earliest steps of faith Christians must be made aware of the privilege of prayer and encouraged to begin a journey, a pilgrimage that opens us to the riches God has always desired us to have. One of the greatest blessings for me on a Sunday morning is to visit our Sunday School where children are already encouraged to, "pray all kinds of prayers" individually, in their classes, and even in large gatherings. It is wonderful for me to see our children growing up without any hesitation to pray about anything, anywhere. I desire that every disciple lose all anxiety concerning 'how to pray' and open up to this exciting opportunity. Opportunities to pray in many different places, with different people, at different times serve to remind us of God's continual presence.

Whenever I get together with one of my disciples a time of prayer is central to our meeting. The prayer time is intentionally a reflection of the time we might spend together. If, during our time specific concerns have been mentioned, then these items will be discussed in prayer. If there have been specific items of praise then these will be mentioned in thanksgiving. If, during our discussion certain lessons have been noted from the Bible reading, these will be mentioned during the prayer time. The time of prayer must flow out of the time that has been spent with your disciple. It is important he/she realize that prayer can become as natural a part of our lives as eating or drinking. If after a time of sharing together we launch into a "King James" prayer the conclusion I jump to is that we have to learn how to speak a certain language. Such ideas foster the misconception that prayer is complicated.

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Discipleship Six



There are certain basic practices that can assist a new disciple in getting established in a meaningful prayer life. It is useful to spend some time sharing about the prayer that Jesus shared with his disciples in Matthew 6:9-14. Here we find a wonderful model of how we should pray that can be very helpful for anyone seeking to understand the basic principles of prayer. This does not need to be a deep theological study, but can be done as a simple introduction to the components involved in praying. Understanding the basics can give the new disciple a sense of confidence that he actually knows what he is doing since he has been exposed to the prayer of the Master. Taking time to journal can assist people to slow down their thoughts to express them clearly. Not only in prayer, but also after we have spent time reading our Bibles, it is very useful. Writing down how God's Word has applied to our lives also gives us a record that we can read back over later on. As we read over what we have been dealing with over a week, or month, it can help to establish patterns. After hearing from God we can then write down issues of prayer concern. Some people appreciate writing out their entire prayer, but others find jotting down the main issues (e.g. praise items, requests) is sufficient. Particularly during times of difficulty it can be tremendously encouraging to look back over your prayer journal and be reminded of how God has answered prayer.

Journalizing can also offer a sense of continuity between our Bible reading and prayer time. If we are not careful it is easy to treat these two disciplines as two completely separate activities. It can be very enlightening to actually be praying back to God what He has spoken to you about through His Word. His Spirit can begin to apply it to our thinking in ways we had never considered. It can get to the point where as we read our Bibles we are actually praying along, and as we pray we are reading, or reciting passages of scripture. When you get to this point there is a real communion with God that brings your disciple into a relationship of intimacy. I have been continually amazed over the past 10 years of ministry to find so many Christians who hesitate, or even refuse to join together with other members of God's family in prayer. In Acts we see a wonderful example of the disciples gathering together to pray (Acts 1:14). The fellowship of the early Church was characterized by a devotion to teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayer (Acts 2:41). As I give opportunity for one of my disciples to pray with me, it builds confidence. This confidence should give Lucas and Matthew courage to look for many different opportunities to pray. As believers gather together formally and informally a disciple should feel comfortable to join with them in prayer. In visiting the sick, facing a problem at home, driving to work, witnessing to a neighbor, a new disciple should feel a freedom to approach the throne of grace.

As a relationship develops between a teacher and disciple there should also be a distinct growth in the prayer life of the disciple. If, after several meetings, the disciple is not growing in his relationship with God through Bible reading and prayer, something is wrong. Possibly serious issues are not being addressed because too much time is being spent in idle conversation. Perhaps the disciple, although initially showing potential, is not willing to sacrifice for the sake of growth. Whatever the case, if no growth is evident within two months priorities need to be reassessed and decisions made that will allow both people to be better stewards of their time.



1. How consistently do you enjoy private time (rations, devotions, quiet time...) with God?
2. How long do you usually meet with Him in this way?
3. How can you encourage Christians to pray out loud?

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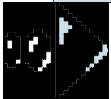
Discipleship Seven - - - - - ●



"But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you" (John 16:7).



"Real success is giving the achievement of noble ends priority over the enjoyment of present pleasures" (Frederick Coutts, THE ARMOURY COMMENTARY).



Something really needs to be said about how to evaluate this relationship as it develops. Unless the goal – to make disciples – is constantly kept in focus it is easy to get side tracked. Even though we start out with the purest of motives there are times that the relationship between a teacher and disciple can become counterproductive. Perhaps a disciple is not ready to grow, or perhaps the teacher is holding the disciple back.

Remember, there are times that disciples don't show any growth, particularly in the area of Bible reading and prayer. It could be that a disciple is enjoying fellowship with the discipler, yet does not have the ability to grow independently in her spiritual development. If this is the case a serious decision needs to be made. Although fellowship and encouragement are important parts of the Christian's life, discipleship is about so much more. If a disciple is not being equipped to eventually lead others to a deeper relationship with Christ then discipleship is not taking place. There are several possibilities as to why a disciple might not be growing.

One possibility is that the teacher has made a mistake in supposing that a certain believer is ready for growth. There are many Christians who can talk a good game but when they are put in action demonstrate they have no intention of playing. Sometimes a very difficult decision must be made. If careful consideration has been made in selecting a potential disciple, then sacrifice has been made to begin developing a friendship with that person, and a bond is often created. A decision to discontinue the relationship at this point may be very difficult, but necessary. It is essential to remember that our commission is to make disciples. If we are not doing that, some action needs to be taken.

Another possibility is that the time together is not being used profitably. Often, brothers and sisters can have a wonderful time in fellowship but never deal with anything but superficial issues. If a sincere disciple is not growing there is a reason. Identify the problem. Problems of the heart cannot be revealed as Christians sit and discuss the weather, or sports. Sometimes very blunt and challenging questions need to be asked. Recently one of our discipleship leaders had someone in their group that was not getting anything out of their Bible reading. When confronted with the fact she was not growing the 35 year old single mother said, "I only learned to read last year and I still struggle to understand the what I'm reading." Obviously in this case there was a reason why she struggled to get the meaning from a passage even though she was reading faithfully everyday. In that case the leader lowered the expectations for the young woman. Although the progress was slow, it was consistent and there was a reasonable explanation as to why she often struggled. Adjust the plan of action to fit the conditions.

SALVATIONISM 301

Discipleship Seven



There can be many reasons why progress with a disciple is slow. Perhaps the most essential consideration is their attitude towards self-denial and their former life. If a disciple is not willing to cut off a little TV each day in order to spend time with the Lord it is a safe bet she is not willing to make the sacrifices necessary to grow. Some disciples have struggles leaving the world's way of living. A person used to going to nightclubs every weekend has to make a huge adjustment to focus on a life with and for Jesus. Obviously these issues can be worked through. However, if the disciple does not show any interest in leaving his former way of life it is unlikely he will be delivered from it. It is poor stewardship to invest in such a person.

When I say that the relationship needs to be discontinued I do not mean that this disciple is treated as 'unclean'. Certainly interest in the weaker brother/sister should continue, but it is unwise to continually invest in a teacher-disciple relationship if for any reason the disciple does not seem prepared for the sacrifice. It would be an invitation for frustration and probable conflict if you continue to pressure them to the high calling of a disciple when it becomes obvious they have not got it to give. Jesus said that anyone who was not willing to put his or her hands to the plough was not worthy of Him.

In Jesus' relationship with His disciples, He continually gave them more and more responsibility as the relationship matured. Ultimately, He left them alone with the ultimate task of making disciples of all nations (remembering that He sent His Holy Spirit to remain with them). There will come a time when it is important to recognize that the disciple can handle more responsibility and needs less supervision. True discipleship has taken place when the new disciple starts to invest in another disciple who needs guidance in how to establish himself in his walk with God. At this point the cycle is complete and Jesus' plan to build the Army is working. Now it is time for the discipler to seek out a new disciple as the work required with the matured believer is become less and less demanding on time. Certainly contact can be maintained, as the needs demand. Perhaps instead of meeting weekly a teacher and his student might decide to meet monthly, or bi-monthly to share, guide, and encourage each other. It might be appropriate for the relationship to take on more of an accountability time where you no longer meet discipler-disciple, but as brother to brother (iron sharpening iron).

Whatever the nature of the relationship it is important that the heavy investment the discipler offers the disciple is reduced in order to offer it to another eager disciple. This process will not change the world in a day, but it will lay a foundation for solid consistent growth in the Army that will involve depth as well as width and height. It is wonderful to see lives that you have invested in continuing to mature years after your involvement is finished as matured disciples open themselves to the leading of the God, as they lead others to maturity, as they experience the excitement of being part of the greatest plan of all time – the building of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

GROUP WORK:

Give some careful prayer and thought into who you could disciple. Now talk about what that might mean for you personally and what the barriers are to living a discipling lifestyle. Pray with each other and make yourselves accountable to someone (ideally that you have led to the Lord) to disciple them.