

What is a disciple? A Disciple is a Lifelong Learner

1. Review

- a. Admirer vs. Disciple
 - i. Admirer is one who is content to be a spectator, disciple is one who must be on the playing field.
 - ii. Admirer is one who will be passive, a disciple is active.
 - iii. Admirer is one who is uncomfortable with change, disciple embraces it.
 - iv. Admirers want the benefits of Savior without paying the costs of following.
 - v. Admirers prefer to attend one hour a week while a Disciple want Jesus to fill their lives.
 - vi. The difference between an admirer and a disciple is the same difference between giving birth and raising your child.
 1. A lady was in the hospital giving birth to her first baby. As the pain and contractions increased, she grabbed the nurse, pulled her close to her and screamed, "Is the hard part over!" The nurse smiled and said, "Honey, this is the easy part. The hard part is in the next eighteen years."
- b. Follow Me: - means to identify with, mimic, follow in his steps.
 - i. We don't worship a crucified savior any longer, we worship a risen savior, a conquering hero, an overcoming Lord.
 - ii. He got to his throne by going through the cross. That cross was his submission to the Father's will at the expense of his own life. So to, we submit, we actually seek the Father's will, even if it means our lives to be spent for Him.
- c. Count the Cost
 - i. Means to calculate up front the cost of this endeavor.
 - ii. A Cross isn't the suffering of this life but the burden we bear when we CHOOSE to love another person.
 1. Some of you looked shocked last Sunday, probably having been thinking that you had born a cross in your daily trials of life...and then I busted your bubble.
 2. Expound on this –
 - a. Illness, hardship everyone has.
 - b. But to pick up your cross is a choice. Love is a choice.
 - c.

2. A Disciple is a Lifelong Learner.

3. Master Mentor Model vs. Socratic Method..

- a. Socratic model is one that is taught, with emphasis upon classroom instruction and educational, intellectual knowledge.
 - i. The 21st Century American Church is a Body Builder.
 1. Body builders sculpt their bodies to massive, good looking muscles but never uses them except to show them off. That describes the American church!
 - a. We are the most biblically literate nation on earth and we are also the most inward and self centered.
 - b. **We have bought the lie that to KNOW truth is the same as to DO truth.**
- b. Paul W. Powell, in The Complete Disciple, described this condition: -
 - i. Many churches today remind me of a labor crew trying to gather in a harvest while they sit in the tool shed. They go to the tool shed every Sunday and they study bigger and better methods of agriculture, sharpen their hoes, grease their tractors, and then get up and go home. Then they come back that night, study bigger and better methods of agriculture, sharpen their hoes, grease their tractors, and go home again. They comeback

Wednesday night, and again study bigger and better methods of agriculture, sharpen their hoes, grease their tractors, and get up and go home. They do this week in and week out, year in and year out, and nobody ever goes out into the fields to gather in the harvest. Paul
W. Powell, in *The Complete Disciple*

- c. At Here's Hope, we don't want to build spiritual muscles so you can show them off!
 - a. We want you to become the best God can make you.
 - b. In a few moments, I will share with you how.

4. Methodology of Discipleship

- a. The discipleship method of Jesus requires the living of life together, with the disciple observing and imitating the teacher's example.
 - i. As the disciple attempts to imitate and experiment with learning the new behavior, the teacher distills the lesson through explanation.
 - ii. Is this how we disciple in the church today?
 - iii. Yet **this was Jesus method: OBSERVE, IMITATE, EXPLAIN..**
- b. Jesus starts by saying, "Come, follow me."
 - i. We start by leaving behind all we have and are and begin to watch and learn.
 - 1. "Come and learn from me". This phrase means learn from my example.
 - 2. Disciples were to imitate the behavior of their teachers.
 - 3. Imitation was of the essence of being a good disciple, and so when a teacher or sage said "follow me," he meant "do what you see me doing, and say what you hear me saying."
 - 4.

5. Jesus taught using the Master Mentor Model. He did not rely upon lectures and note taking, but instead devised practical methods for experiential learning.

- i. We see this in Mark 6:7-13, where the disciples are sent out by Jesus two-by-two. and they undertake the very same activities they have seen Jesus do—preaching, teaching, healing, casting out demons..
- ii. **Jesus sends his disciples out 2 by 2;**
 - 1. Luke 10:1 *The Lord now chose seventy-two other disciples and sent them on ahead in pairs to all the towns and villages he planned to visit. 2 These were his instructions to them: "The harvest is so great, but the workers are so few. Pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest, and ask him to send out more workers for his fields. 3 Go now, and remember that I am sending you out as lambs among wolves. 4 Don't take along any money, or a traveler's bag, or even an extra pair of sandals. And don't stop to greet anyone on the road. 5 "Whenever you enter a home, give it your blessing. 6 If those who live there are worthy, the blessing will stand; if they are not, the blessing will return to you. 7 When you enter a town, don't move around from home to home. Stay in one place, eating and drinking what they provide you. Don't hesitate to accept hospitality, because those who work deserve their pay. 8 "If a town welcomes you, eat whatever is set before you 9 and heal the sick. As you heal them, say, 'The Kingdom of God is near you now.'*
 - 2. In this passage we see that Jesus is training his disciples to do something they have never done before.
 - a. He teaches them dependence upon God (v. 3-4)
 - b. He teaches them how to raise their support (v. 5-8)
 - c. He teaches them to heal the sick. (v 9)
 - d. And he does it not through giving them a "how to" manual, but by putting them where their faith meets reality.
 - 3. I wonder how many of us today would be willing to be taught this way?

- a. In case you didn't realize it, but your family Physician was trained this way...they had to serve a lengthy time as an intern, "doing" what they know under the supervision of an expert. Jenny Sample is undergoing that now.
- 4. Does it bother you? Does it crowd your comfort zone? Yes!
 - a. Bit some of you did it last July. You learned first hand how to share your faith using a video camera as we did "Man on the Street" interviews at Township Park. You saw the spiritual conversations that God opened up for us.
 - b. When I was a single Christian, I asked 2 other Christian guys I knew to covenant with me and rent a home where we would live in Christian community and disciple other Christians. For a year and a half, we led dozens of young men and women to faith in Christ, disciplined them, pooled our resources to reach people for Christ and listened for God's voice. It was a landmark time for me in my walk with Christ.

iii. **Jesus shows them an example to follow**

- 1. John 13:12 *So when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments and reclined at the table again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? 13 "You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. 14 "If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 "For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. 16 "Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. 17 "If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.*
- 2. Jesus has previously taught them about humility, he has previously given them parables about service to others, and now he gives them a powerful example of what it means to serve one another, himself taking the role of the slave and serving the servants. He explains this in v.16 that a slave is not greater than his master, yet he, the master, has taken the role of the slave, then his disciples too should follow his example. There should be nothing beneath them when it comes to serving another.
- 3. Philippians 3:17 *Keep on imitating me, my friends. Pay attention to those who follow the right example that we have set for you. (GNT)*
 - a. All of us need examples to model ourselves after.
- 4. 2 Thess. 3:7 & 9 *"For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example, because we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you...9 not because we do not have the right to this, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you, so that you would follow our example."*
 - a. The apostle Paul offered himself as a model for those he was discipling so that they would be able to follow his example.
 - i. Do you know why they have real people model in art classes? Because one cannot get an accurate image from anything else. .
 - ii. The Greek word used here for model is also translated a "mold". A mold is something that you form the same thing out of over and over again.
 - iii. Likewise, we need to see someone who is following Christ, so we can say, "I see what that looks like."
- 5. Example of Serving others?
 - a. I will never forget my Senior Pastor Burt Purvis in Fort Worth, Texas. Shortly after I was called to serve there, he invited me to go to the hospital to visit someone that was there. I followed behind him, probably looking like a shadow, but watched carefully as he talked, visited and prayed with the person he had come to see. Then, as we left, entering the elevator, he explained why he did each thing that he did. He left me an example to follow and learn by.

iv. **Jesus mentors his disciples.**—

v. *“Follow my example as I follow Christ”* 1 Corinthians 11:1

1. Titus 2:3 *“...teach the older women to live in a way that is appropriate for someone serving the Lord. They must not go around speaking evil of others and must not be heavy drinkers. Instead, they should teach others what is good. 4 These older women must train the younger women to love their husbands and their children, 5 to live wisely and be pure, to take care of their homes, to do good, and to be submissive to their husbands.*

2. We can learn by watching an older Christian.

a. I learned to pray aloud this way. I wouldn't have ever prayed aloud unless someone taught me how. I learned to study my bible this way, someone came along side me and showed me. I learned to witness this way, observing someone else share their faith and then I tried it.

3. To mentor another person you only need to be one step ahead of them.

4. In fact, they walk in your footsteps as you walk in the footsteps of Jesus.

6. How do we start?

a. Lets look at a key passage that many do not associate with lifelong learning.

b. Matthew 11:28-30 *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. **Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.**”*

i. Matthew 11:29. Here's something we don't often like to have. *“Take my yoke upon you and learn from me.”*

ii. Do you have a yoke? What is a yoke?

1. How many of you think a yoke is a heavy burden?

a. Really, it's not a heavy burden.

b. A yoke is a wooden frame worn around the neck of a strong farm animal. It is not a burden to that animal.

c. The animal has much more strength. It is just the opposite to the animal.

d. A yoke makes the load lighter.

e. If you were to hook up a heavy load to the ox without a yoke it would be unbearable to that animal.

f. The plow chains would cut into the hide of that animal, it would choke that animal.

g. A yoke is designed to eliminate pain, not cause pain.

h. So, when Jesus says to “take My yoke upon you,” this is something good.

i. It's designed to eliminate pain and not cause pain.

j. A yoke is just the opposite of an instrument of torture.

k. In fact a yoke is an instrument of mercy given to us by Jesus Christ, our Savior.

l. A yoke makes the work easier, and we must never speak of the yoke of Jesus in a negative sense.

2. David Guzak: *When training a new animal (such as an ox) to plow, ancient farmers would often yoke it to an older, stronger, more experienced animal who would bear the burden and guide the young animal through his learning.*

a. If your yoke is hard and your burden is heavy, then it isn't His yoke or burden, and you aren't letting Him bear it with you. Jesus said it plainly: *“My yoke is easy and My burden is light”*

c. *“...and learn from me...”* (note *“for I am gentle and humble in heart.”*)

- i. **There is no learning of Him (in the sense here meant) until we have taken His yoke upon us—until we have surrendered our wills to His and submit to His authority.**
- ii. It is far more than an intellectual learning of Christ. It is transformational learning.
- iii. Learn of me... watch how I live and do the same.
 1. Christ teaches His disciples not only by precept but by example, not only by word of mouth but chiefly by His own perfect life of obedience and submission to the Father's will.

7. **Barriers to lifelong learning:**

a. **Pride and Teachability**

- i. I know it all already. "*Knowledge puffs up*"
- ii. How many Christian books have you read in the past 6 months?
 1. Besides fiction?
- iii. We think knowledge is our answer, when in fact, knowledge makes us proud.

b. **Busyness:**

- i. Luke 10:38-42 *As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."*
 1. "Distracted by all the preparations that had to be made."
 2. "It will not be taken away from her."

c. **Priority**

- i. Mt 10:24 *"A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master." It is enough for the student (Disciple) to be like his Teacher*
- ii. Is it enough for you to be like your teacher? Or are other things more important?
- iii. Is television more important than a quiet time or prayer?
- iv. Are you willing to give God an extra hour or two a week to be made more like Him?

d. **Lack of Steadfastness**

- i. John 8:31, "*If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples*"
 1. A disciple will prove he is a lifelong learner by his holding fast to the teaching of Jesus.
 2. The word "really" implies that there are many insincere followers of Christ. Jesus shows the characteristic of a true disciple. And what is this characteristic? It is someone who holds to the teaching of Christ rather than holding to the words of others.
 - a. Many people who claim to be disciples are more influenced by what people say than by what God says.

8. **Intro to Pathway of Hope vision**

- a. Our church is to be a hospital for the wounded, and a training camp for the warriors of the faith. God help us if we are a place where we trade old war stories and never take our shots at the world.
- b. What our Pathway of Hope is, is a clear path for all, especially new Christians – many of whom will be meeting Christ and connecting here in this upcoming summer.
 - i. Look at the path...locate where you are?
 - ii. Most of us will think we are at a later time, until we read the descriptor of the path.
- c. Consider the four stages.

i. **Stage One: Seed growth**

1. This stage is the critical one, in which the person comes to know Christ.
2. Some of you are still here. You never grew. Will you decide to grow?
3. Jesus put special emphasis on this stage with the parable of the sower.

ii. **Stage Two: Root Growth**

1. This stage is where there appears to be no growth.
2. Plants don't make any real movement, no real growth, or so it seems.
3. But there is a great deal going down under their surface. Without this they will be stubs and not grow.
 - a. In fact, the bigger the tree, the deeper the roots must go.
4. Some of the studies on this stage deal with healing our wounds from our past, others deal with disciplines of the Christian life.

iii. **Stage Three: Limb Growth**

1. This stage is where the growth seems incredible. This is where they begin to send forth limbs. If your roots have been well founded, you will grow. It is where the supporting structure for fruit is formed. Without the limbs, fruit will not hang!

iv. **Stage Four: Reproductive Growth.**

1. And this is the reason for their growth. To reproduce. To bear fruit.
2. *"If you bear fruit, you will prove yourselves to be my disciples." (John 15:8)*

d. Where are you on the path? Do you think you've arrived?

- i. I think of the youngest Christian among us here and that she is probably the best equipped to share with a young person who is coming to know Christ! Why? Because her mind hasn't been filled with a bunch of stuff.

9. This begins in just a few weeks. March 19th to be exact.

a. Three classes will be offered.

- i. There will be a class on **Money Management**.
- ii. There will be a class on **Fundamentals** of the Faith – a new beginnings sort of class that ought to work for everyone here.
 1. Perhaps you have been here for months and don't know your right hand from your left hand.
 2. Perhaps you ought to figure out what you can do?
 3. Find out what important things will be there for you.
- iii. And there will be a class on **Hearing God**.
 1. Learn how you can know God.
 2. I learned when I was a young Christian. All of us must learn to hear him.
 3. To know his voice.

10. Decision: Will you be teachable? Will you be a student of the Cross?

Many people will be shocked to find out that they will not enter heaven, simply because they called Jesus "Lord." The only ones who will enter heaven are those who become disciples of the Lord, not simply converts.

a.

One of the best movies ever made was *Shindler's List*. The most touching part of this film for me was near the end. The war was over, and Shindler was about to leave Germany. As he's leaving, the Jews he saved from the concentration camps gave him a gift. A man took the gold filling from his tooth and made a ring out of it. They gave it to Shindler.

He slowly, and hesitantly puts the ring on his finger. It dawns on him. He could have sacrificed more to save others from death. He wept over his luxury automobile, "I could have sold this car and saved twenty more from death."

He grabbed the fine clothes he wore, "This suit is worth five lives."

As he entered his car, he looked closely at his expensive watch, "I could have sold this watch and saved one person."

Tears stream down my cheeks as this scene unfolded. I reflected on my own spiritual life, and wondered, "What could I sacrifice in order to win more people to Christ."