

Intentional Christian Relationships

Disciples Making Disciples

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Introductory Thoughts

Effectively communicate vision and purpose

- If nothing to get excited about... apathy, weak fellowship, lack of service

Harness energy of those who want to serve

- Need avenue to express zeal and energy

Encourage cross generational relationships → “sticky faith”

- Older men and women need to engage the next generation
- High correlation between losing younger generation because no cross generational relationships
- Hebrews 5:12 “By now you should be teachers...”

Why Disciple/Mentor?

If you want to get better at something (academics, athletics, music, career, etc.) what do you think is more effective?

| Category | Description |
|-----------------------|--|
| Experience | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Similar mistakes, lessons learned• Example of failures and successes |
| Accountability | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encouragement when you feel like quitting• Combating compromise so that end goal is of high quality |
| Relationship | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reciprocal relationship as opposed to a text book• Mentor can help you deal with frustration, handle disappointment |



VS

**Experienced
Trainer**

Biblical Mandate

- “Go and teach (i.e., make disciples)...” Matthew 28:19
 - Command not only applicable to 11 disciples, but extends to those whom they would teach, and to those whom they would teach, and...
- Applicable to all Christians

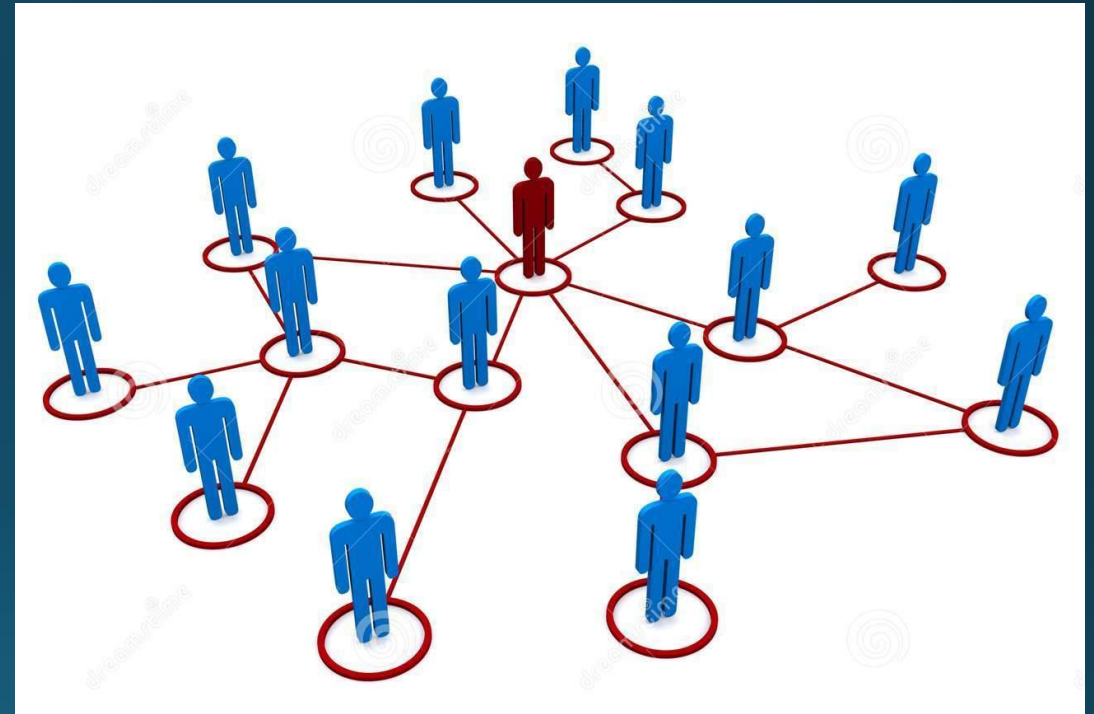


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Examples

Paul discipled Timothy, Titus, Onesimus, and more

- 2 Tim 1:13 Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus
- Titus and Onesimus referred to as Paul's spiritual sons in Titus 1:4 and Philemon 1:10, respectively
- 1 Cor. 11:1 Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ

Priscilla and Aquila discipled Apollos

- Acts 18:26 And [Apollos] began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took [Apollos] unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.



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Barnabas (Joses) discipled Paul and John Mark

- Acts 9:26,27 And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way...
- John Mark (cf. Acts 15:37-39)

Examples cont'd

"1 But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: That the **aged men** be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. 3 The **aged women** likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, **teachers** of good things; 4 That they may **teach the young women** to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. 6 **Young men** likewise exhort to be sober minded" Titus 2:1-6.

Examples cont'd

Helps to have first-hand interaction with another person

- Makes following after Christ more tangible
- Another person with similar struggles and temptations is following after Jesus.

Discipleship is not only for new believers

- Timothy was elder at Ephesus still being discipled by Paul

Always a need for the Christian to mature and grow...

- More victorious over sin
- More in line with righteousness
- More in accordance with Spirit's sanctifying work
- More in love with God
- More loving towards others

Biblical Discipleship Broadened

“11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the **perfecting** of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the **edifying** of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love [*primarily referring to v. 11 regarding apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, but also generally applicable since the purpose is that the entire body...*], **may grow up** into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which **every joint supplieth**, according to the **effectual working** in the measure of **every part, maketh increase** of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.” Eph. 4:11-16

Parts of a Whole

Relational
matrix...



Image credit: <http://bgh.ogcorp.com/share/h/SmPzO>

...every thread does not touch every other thread, but together they form a strong matrix of relationships

Biblical Discipleship Defined

What Intentionally equipping Christians by the
How power and gifting of the Holy Spirit with the
truth of God's word in love and accountability
Why in order to serve others, mature personal
character, and grow the body of believers via
"disciple replication."

Disciple replication = faithful and capable followers of Christ who are then able to train others.

- Implies honesty, confession, encouragement, accountability, instruction, love, vulnerability, investment, challenge, repentance, hard work



Biblical Discipleship Defined... more

- Intentional (not accidental)
- Initiated, exemplified, and guided by leadership
- Centered on God's truth
- Context of loving and accountability
- Equipping the Christian for loving service towards others
- Maturing the Christian's character
- Edifying the Christian to be sure and steadfast in his/her faith in God
- Includes the participation of the entire fellowship
- Empowered by the Spirit (implied by spiritual gifts of saints being employed for the edification of the body. See 1 Cor. 12)

Biblical Discipleship is NOT

Attending services or Bible class

- However, corporate learning and worship are indispensable

Merely going through a booklet or program

- However, structure to initiate the relationship and uniformity in essential doctrines are vital

Only done by elders or teachers or men

- However, leadership should be fostering a culture and environment for discipleship

Only Bible study and teaching doctrine

- However, teaching how to study the Bible is important

Why Discipleship May Be Lacking

- Perhaps we do not want to make the investment
- Discipleship takes time, time, and more time
- Maybe we think the pre-baptism counseling was sufficient
- Maybe we assume discipleship will happen naturally, and therefore there is not much intentionality
- Perhaps we are not involved in general and therefore apathetic towards serving
- Perhaps we are afraid of what others may teach
- Perhaps we are not equipped ourselves and/or not willing to disciple
- Perhaps we think it is only reserved for teachers and leadership
- Geographical limitations (e.g., La Puente comprises a geographically dispersed demographic making time during the week a difficult, if not impossible, feat.)

Lay Ministry: Challenge vs. Opportunity

- **Challenge**: Not enough time... work, school, raising family (esp. for those already in leadership positions)
- **Opportunity**: Those not in formal leadership or teaching positions have a great opportunity to impact and edify new believers (as well as themselves).

Lay ministry ought to tend towards a more involved fellowship, that is, being joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share (Eph 4:16) and the mature believers teaching the immature (Titus 2:1-8).

What Should We Do?

Be convinced we need change

- Develop a culture of disciple making
- Address apathy of average member, many of whom “ought to be teachers by this time”

Communicate value of discipling

- Sermon series, bible class lesson series, booklets or emails

Teach how to study the Bible

- Challenge, encourage, and then equip so that people become capable of mentoring
- *“Give a man a fish and feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and feed him for a lifetime.”*

Personally engage brothers and sisters to disciple and desire to be disciplined

- Might be met with resistance
- Motivate without fear or guilt, but love and encouragement

Draw from already developed resources

- Takes a lot of time to create something in-house.
- Prudent to not reinvent the wheel but make use of good resources already available.
- *“If you try to reinvent the wheel, be careful as you might end up with a square wheel.”*

Discipleship Principles

| Category | Mentors | Mentees |
|---|--|--|
| Honesty, vulnerability, transparency | Cannot expect honesty and vulnerability beyond that which you show. Transparency regarding your sin encourages your mentee to respond likewise. Can only address sin once it is brought to light | You are being mentored to be matured. Implies areas of needed growth. Can only address sin once it is brought to light. |
| Confidentiality | Confidentiality is essential due to sensitivity of personal issues that may arise. If trust is violated damage will be done | |
| Intentionality | Initiate / lead and follow up with regular communication and set up regular appointments. Challenge your mentee if challenge is needed, comfort if needed, encourage, rebuke, etc. Hold your mentee accountable. | Be committed to regular communication / appointments your mentor sets up. Humbly accept your mentor's challenge, comfort, encouragement, rebuke, etc. Allow yourself to be held accountable. |
| Centered on God's truth | Form truth principles on Bible, not tradition or your opinion. Teach your mentee how to study the Bible – make them responsible, not dependent. | Form truth principles on Bible, not tradition or your opinion. Do not ask for simple answers, but struggle to work through understanding for yourself. |
| Prayer | Pray that God would work in your mentee as well as yourself. Pray that God would give you insight into how to better lead. | Pray that God would work in your life and the life of your mentor. |

Applications

Different contexts in which discipleship applies or can be specifically tailored depending on the need

A word cloud graphic on a dark blue background. The words are arranged in a vertical stack, with some overlapping. The words include: 'training' (top, reddish-brown), 'teaching' (second, white), 'marriage' (third, purple), 'life' (center, bright green, tilted), 'evangelising' (left of 'life', purple), 'struggles' (right of 'life', white), 'grieving' (right of 'life', reddish-brown), 'addictions' (bottom, purple), and 'mental illness' (bottom, bright green).

Concluding Remarks

Discipleship...

- is commanded in the scriptures
- is indispensable for a local body of believers
- takes effort, time, investment
- involves the entire congregation
- leaves a legacy

Q&A

Backup

SMART Discipleship Goals

- SMART = Specific Measurable Achievable Realistic Timely
- The following are merely examples. Also, the numerical aspects of these example goals are subject to the size of fellowship. The point is to provide a little guidance/structure.
 - Within the following year, we will identify # individuals to mentor and meet with them once per month (# hours per meeting)
 - Within the next # months, we will identify # mature Believers (# male, # female) and approach them to consider taking on a role as a Conversion Counselor
 - Within the next year, we will pair each Counselor with an experienced member of the ministry, so they can train to take over the role of counseling

Other thoughts

- Although informal mentoring does take place, the regularity, intentionality, depth of vulnerability, and accountability are often lacking
- Establishing formal mentor/mentee relationships is not to imply anything inorganic or uncomfortable, rather it is to ensure the above that often lacks in informal mentoring and help bring together the relational fibers of a fellowship to form a strong matrix of relationships
- Setting up goals can be intimidating because as soon as our intentions become quantifiable, a reference point for success or failure is established. But, that should not dissuade us from setting up biblically based goals and striving to meet them by God's grace and power.