

HOW TO BECOME A DISCIPLER

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This booklet is written to give you a picture of how you can enter into the great work of Jesus Christ. The Bible calls those who learn from Christ and begin to win, build and send other people, disciplers. Don't spend two to five years of your life trying to be a disciple, without becoming a discipler. We are good disciples when we make disciples.

I. Alive in Christ

The first step in becoming a discipler is to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ yourself. All growth to maturity is conditioned on a vital, dynamic fellowship with Jesus Christ. This is the goal of our Christian life, to know and walk with the Lord. This begins when we accept Jesus Christ as our personal savior. He paid the price for our sin when He died for us on the cross at Calvary. His death was sufficient in that one payment to cover every sin we have ever committed or ever will commit. Thus, we are freed from the penalty of sin. To trust in Jesus as our savior and lord is called faith. Faith is something we do in response to the work of God's Spirit, who by grace leads us to turn to Jesus.

But God did more than this. In addition to leading us to Christ He also sent His Spirit to regenerate us and dwell in us. This means that He worked in our lives to give us a new life. He created in us what the Bible calls the new man, or the new creature in Christ. We don't have to act the way we have before. His Spirit stays with us all the time.

Then He did even more. As ones who are free from sin and made alive in Christ, He adopted us into His family. By this action we come to share in all the riches of God through our relationship with Jesus Christ.

What God asks from us, as His freed, renewed, adopted children is that we walk by faith in Jesus every day and obey the leading of the Bible and the Holy Spirit within us. Jesus is as close to us as he can be. We need to be closer to him – that is to walk with him and see him work in our lives day by day.

To accomplish this obedient, fruitful walk, the Lord Jesus works in us through His Spirit. If we are not focused on a walk with Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, we cannot grow. Bible study becomes mere knowledge, witnessing and ministry become rote and legalistic. A close, living walk with Christ is the key to the growth and transformation process. This is accomplished in us through the ministry of the Holy Spirit as He fills us with the power and wisdom of Christ.

This early fellowship with Jesus, learning what it means to be a Christian and to follow Jesus in daily life, is the beginning of discipleship. In fact, the word 'disciple' means learner or follower. Thus, everyone who is a Christian is, in some sense, a disciple of Jesus Christ.

II. Building on the Foundation

Once you have become a Christian you need to grow in your faith so that you become spiritually healthy. The early stages of this growth include learning from the Bible, walking in the Spirit, praying and developing intimacy with God, developing good relationships with other Christians, and beginning to share the good news of salvation with other people. All of these should begin within a few weeks or months from when we trust in Christ.

A. The Word

Our central focus for all aspects of life as believers is on Jesus Christ. He is our Savior and our Lord. Thus our life is focused on a relationship, as I John 1 tells us. The Bible is our source of knowing what He wants us to do. Our knowledge of what to do, of the principles of life and action, are found in the Bible. The Bible is God's only source of authoritative, revealed wisdom by which we can guide our lives.

1. The Authority of the Bible

Our view of the authority of the Bible is based on Jesus' teaching and use of the Bible. He said that all the scriptures bear witness of Him (Luke 24:44-49). He said, in the Sermon on the Mount, that He came to fulfill, not abolish, the older scripture, and that it would all be fulfilled (Matt. 5:17-20). Jesus said, in response to a challenge of the Sadducees, that God was speaking to each present generation through the words of the Bible (Matt. 22:31-32). Thus, our high view of the authority of the Bible, namely that it brings to us the very words and teaching of God, is an imitation of the belief and attitude we see in the Lord Jesus.

2. Bible Study Methods

Of course, we need to study the Bible to grasp the content of its teaching and to understand how to apply it in our lives today. Bible study is done in three stages: observation, interpretation, and application.

Observation is a process of studying the text of the Bible to clearly discern its teaching. In this approach we study the words, sentences and paragraphs of the text, in the context of the individual book we are reading. Actually the paragraph is the best unit of the text to study because a paragraph always represents one main thought. By dealing with each verse in the context of the paragraph, we are more likely to understand the verse in keeping with the intent of the original author.

In order to understand the text of the Bible it is often helpful to have some information on the history and culture of the author writing the text and on the people to whom he is writing. Some Bibles have this in the notes at the start of each book or on the pages as footnotes or marginal notes. In other cases you may wish to consult a Bible dictionary or a commentary. It is only when we have accurately studied the text of a passage that we are ready to proceed to interpretation.

Interpretation is a process of moving from a basic understanding of what the Bible says in some specific text to a mental grasp of how the principle of that text can be applied in my life. Thus, interpretation asks what this text means. This meaning may be stated as a principle which came from the situation in the Bible and could be applied to any Christian at any time. Knowledge of this principle helps me to be ready to apply the text in my life, to discipline myself to do what the text calls for.

Interpretation begins with our understanding of what the author intended to say to his audience. By knowing their culture and historical circumstances we are able to compare their lives with our lives and see where there are parallels and where there are differences. With this information we can then understand what the text calls upon us to do. It takes some study and creativity to observe and interpret the Bible, but fortunately God intended the Bible to read, understood and applied by all His people. We know that God's Spirit will give us insight as we study the Bible and then power to obey its teachings.

Once we know from the text what God wants us to do, we need to decide how we are going to discipline ourselves to actually do it. Simply knowing what the Bible teaches is not enough. God wants us to obey the Bible and live by its teachings. Since knowledge does not automatically lead to correct action, we must become active followers of the Bible. We must work at implementing its teachings in our lives. We are not left alone to do this.

Application is a matter of looking at each individual point of teaching and measuring our lives to see if we are obeying. If we are aware that there is something wrong in our lives, either by way of omission, a failure to live up to the teaching, or by way of deliberate sin, then we need to change. For most of us, this will be a process of steps of growth as we come to live by the Bible's values and practices. Whatever hinders us from obedience needs to be brought before Jesus. We need to ask the Holy Spirit to teach us and help us to make this area of our lives right. This kind of faithful obedience to the Word will lead to a growth in holiness, a growing conformity to Jesus Christ. In addition to the Bible and the Spirit God gives a spiritual family to help us live and grow.

B. The Body

The process of growth in our relationship has been established by God in such a way that, in addition to growing in our knowledge and obedience to the Bible, we are dependent on relationships with people, as well as with a relationship to Jesus Himself. Without proper relationships with other people we will not grow as we should. One of the main passages on this is found in Ephesians 4:11-16. Please read this passage now.

These human relationships take place on three levels. The first level of relationship is often the family or roommates we have, or some other small, stable group of believers. At this level there can be an intimate knowledge of one another, and, given the right situation, a good base for mutual discipleship and encouragement. If you have a personal relationship over a long period of time (for a year or two), then an intimate knowledge can develop. Based on this openness to each other a deep form of whole life discipleship can take place. This is ideal.

At a second level is the relationship developed in a variety of groups. This can be any number of people from a dozen to a hundred. In a regularly meeting group, there is an opportunity to know each person in the group. The goal at this level is for each person to interact with a variety of persons so that mutual benefit of spiritual gifts can take place and learning can come by testimony and example. These groups are often how God brings us into contact with people who will contribute to our growth in small ways of service and ministry to others. Some of these people may become the ones whom God will use to disciple us in deeper ways.

The third level of relationships occurs in large groups. These groups can be any size, so long as there is at least one common objective. Usually, this objective focuses on celebrating the presence and reality of the Lord through worship, or on serving Him in some common actions. While there cannot be personal intimacy with every person in large groups, the sense of identity, belonging and unity can be built. This is the best place to feel a part of a great movement that is being used by God to accomplish much for the kingdom. When people are coming to Christ and they are leading others to Christ, and this keeps on growing it is called a spiritual movement. In Acts 19 Paul and a small group used this multiplication principle to reach all of Asia Minor (modern day Turkey) within two years.

C. Living in the World

God calls us as Christians to be salt and light in the world (Matt. 5:13-16). Salt is a preservative. For us, this means to take a stand for biblical values in conduct of business, neighborhood activities, education and so on. As light, we are to talk to the people we meet in the world about the person of Jesus Christ and about God's love for us. Jesus, who is the Bread of Life and the Light of the World goes before us and helps us. We call these actions service or ministry.

As we participate in the Word, the Body and the World, we develop relationships with people, through which God can first disciple us and then use us to win and disciple others.

III. Commitment to the Process

The process of knowing and practicing these things always takes place within a human relationship. You need to understand the nature of different personal relationships so that you can begin to grow and be used by God more effectively in the kingdom.

A. Relationship

Involvement in any relationship over time can be deepened by developing a sense of trust and commitment. Jesus did this with his disciples and calls us to be in groups of disciples. These groups provides a basis for ministering to one another and supporting one another, which in turn leads to deepening friendships. This trust and commitment constitute the heart of a personal relationship, whether it is of a husband and wife or of two good friends. It is built when there is honesty, openness and loving concern between two people. This kind of trust is hard to come by in the world, whether with family or friends. The

Apostle John tells us that when we come to Christ we are entering into true fellowship with all other Christians and with God Himself (I John 1).

B. Fellowship

The processes of fellowship (koinonia) move beyond simple one to one relationships to a small group of Christian friends. A sense of commitment to one another is based on friendships. Such a commitment takes time so that good fellowship can be enhanced. Without spending quality time with someone it is impossible for a depth relationship to develop. Building a good relationship also requires a free sharing of personal gifts so each person feels like an intimate member of the fellowship and significantly supported and encouraged. The goal of good fellowship is that each person in a group is an active, participating member and learns to share his life with the others. This fellowship also provides the context God wants us to have for reaching out in ministry to other.

C. Discipleship

The word disciple means "learner" or "follower." Everyone who is a Christian is in some sense a follower of Jesus Christ. But most of the 238 occurrences of "disciple" in the New Testament have the deeper meaning of a committed, consistent follower. Lets look at how this takes place by examining the issues of dedication, consistency and the elements of discipleship.

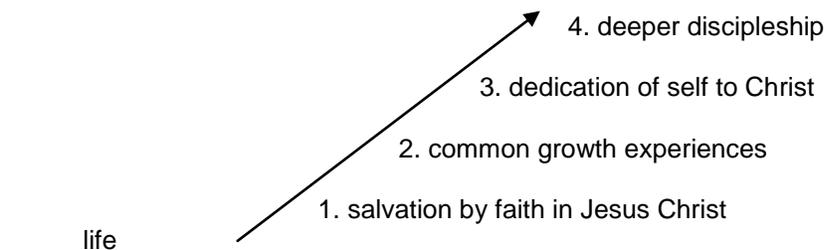
1. Dedication

The heart of discipleship continues the focus on Jesus Christ. In Romans Paul calls for those who are Christians to dedicate themselves to Christ (6:13,19; 12:1). This dedication is a single action by which a person submits himself to the Lord Jesus for all his or her life. The results of this total commitment are then lived out in day by day obedience to the Word and the Spirit. Renewal of this commitment often occurs in daily living, as we find we have allowed something else to take the Lord Jesus' place in our hearts. You can usually recognize a disciple after a few minutes talking by his heart attitude of love and commitment to Jesus Christ. His focus is not on the circumstances of life, but on the Lord Jesus and what He wants to do in those circumstances.

2. Consistency

Consistency means being established as a mature disciple of Jesus Christ. All Christians: (1) have a relationship with Christ, and (2) are to be in spiritual activities such as Bible study, witnessing, spiritual warfare, etc. But all Christians also need (3) to dedicate themselves as followers, and (4) to move into a consistent pattern of being established in the faith. Thus, ongoing discipleship requires an attitude of commitment both to Christ and to the process of growth.

Chart I : *Levels of Growth*



Then, as we are walking with the Lord, a pattern of being led by the Spirit is established. He draws us closer to Jesus, He convicts us of sin and as we agree with Him about sin (repentance and confess it - I

John 1:9) He cleanses us daily. He leads us into truth and increases our fruitfulness. He prepares us for further growth. This process of deeper discipleship begins with the act of dedication. If you have never committed your life completely to Jesus Christ, do so right now by simply praying and asking Jesus to take complete control and lead you by His Spirit.

3. Growing as a Disciple

The elements of discipleship (following Christ) have been summarized in many ways. In Scripture they are summarized as the milk and meat of the Christian life (1 Cor. 3:2; Heb. 5:12; 1 Peter 2:2). John writes that we are first babes in Christ, then young men, then fathers. These represent three stages of spiritual development. It is a privilege to be with simple truths and lifestyle issues and grow into deeper life.

At a more detailed level, forty basic aspects of training have been identified (see Bright, *The Transferable Concepts*; Clinton, *The Christian Life*; and Eims, *The Lost Art of Disciple Making*). The following list combines elements from these authors and from the Scriptures.

Please note that while one must have a mental understanding of these processes in order to apply them effectively, it is the actual application that constitutes discipleship. This application of the elements of discipleship is often called training or equipping. If your life is being changed to become more Christ-like in these areas then you are being disciplined, you are being established.

Chart II : *Elements of Discipleship*

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. The Created Nature of Man | 21. Aggressive Fellowship |
| 2. The Results of the Fall | 22. Spiritual Gifts |
| 3. Faith | 23. Submission |
| 4. Salvation in Christ | 24. Personal Discipline |
| 5. Assurance of Salvation | 25. Building Habits |
| 6. Authority of the Bible | 26. Forgiving Others |
| 7. Lordship of Christ | 27. Making Decisions |
| 8. Obedience | 28. The Will of God |
| 9. Walking in the Spirit | 29. Love |
| 10. Separation from Sin | 30. Purity |
| 11. Spiritual Warfare | 31. Integrity |
| 12. The Tongue | 32. Suffering |
| 13. Assurance of Forgiveness | 33. Witnessing |
| 14. Bible Study | 34. Fruitfulness |
| 15. Scripture Memory | 35. Follow-up |
| 16. Meditation on the Word | 36. Association |
| 17. Application of the Word | 37. World Vision |
| 18. Devotional Time | 38. Missions |
| 19. Prayer | 39. Stewardship |
| 20. The Church | 40. Speaking/ Teaching |

In order to learn about these things and to begin to work them into your life, a special relationship is needed. A disciple needs a discipler, a mentor in the walk of faith. Someone can serve as your discipler if:

- (1) you trust him or her,
- (2) he or she is at least one step ahead of you in one area,
- (3) you mutually sense the calling of God to a discipling relationship.

When you have an area that needs to be changed in your life so that you can become more like Christ, find a person who models the characteristics you want. Challenge such a person to minister to you for a set period of time, usually two hours per week for three to six months, to integrate a new area or practice into your life. It will take, as a minimum, five years to work through all these areas.

If there is someone with whom you would be comfortable being disciplined in all areas of life (whole life discipleship), then seek to establish a two to three year relationship. If you meet together once a week and are honest with each other about issues of spiritual growth, then over time, all these areas can be worked on and your maturity balanced. A plan for these two years has been developed and is free online at www.toi.edu under ministry materials. The result of good training should be a mature disciple who walks with Christ and bears fruit, both in personal growth and in witness. Of course, no two disciples end up looking alike. We are individually grown by the Lord and conform to His plan for us.

Being disciplined involves us in actual life situations. You will be leading people to Christ and helping them grow. You will be leading small groups to study the Word. You will be helping other people and serving them in small or large ways. Growth comes from relationships and leads to ministry.

IV. Discipling Others

Once you have begun to be a committed disciple, you are ready to begin discipling other people. It is a mistake to wait until you think you have reached a "higher level" of maturity. Part of the process of growth is the stimulation you will receive from taking an active hand in building the lives of other people. Jesus put his disciples to work early. Most of us have a Timothy (someone younger than ourselves in the Lord), a Philip (who is involved in ministry with us), and a Barnabas (someone older who has wisdom to help us grow). You will continue to grow yourself, as you work on (1) the elements of discipleship, (2) leading (winning and equipping others), and (3) building deeper relationships. Eventually this multiplication of disciples results in an ongoing ministry reaching some area of the world for Christ. The following topics include building this multiplication ministry (II Timothy 2:2) and developing a larger ministry.

A. Leading

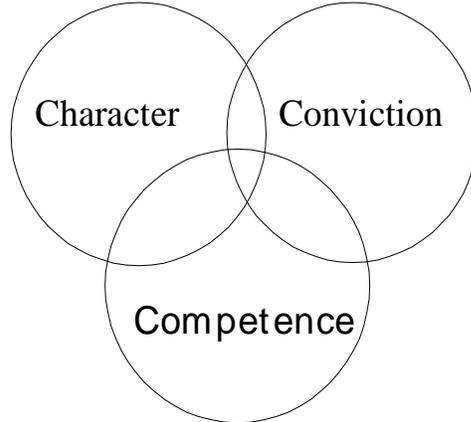
When you move beyond taking in these truths and focusing on your own life change and you begin to give out consistently in discipling others, you are leading (being a discipler or equipper). In one sense, this begins as soon as you come to Christ, for you can immediately tell someone else how to follow you in coming to trust in Christ. As you grow you will be able to lead others to deeper levels of growth.

It is important to remember that the one being disciplined is to end up as a follower of Christ and looking like Jesus wants him to be, not just like you. This means that we have to help our disciples find God's key growth points for their life, not just have them do what we did in a mechanical, assembly-line process. Each person requires individual planning, prayer and work. You cannot have a healthy discipling relationship without developing friendship and intimacy.

At the heart of a discipling relationship the mature believer must have and communicate a heart-felt love for his disciple. All of us grow better and faster when we know the one leading us loves us and that, therefore, we can trust that one. To communicate this love you must have time when you pray for each other and you must allow the disciple to see that you are still learning and growing. He needs to be exposed to your Bible study, prayer, witnessing, etc. The process of discipleship is usually more 'caught' than it is 'taught'.

As you disciple someone, you will have to balance persistence with encouragement. Because discipleship necessarily includes change in our character and behavior, sometimes it is hard. We, and our disciples, will have to learn how to persevere in our walk and how to learn from our struggles and failures. It helps to have someone to whom we are accountable. But that person needs to be our friend, someone who will gently, firmly encourage us to keep on following Christ.

Now, how do you go about the process of discipleship? The process of discipling someone is essentially being a leader in spiritual life and ministry for that person. The elements of leadership, whether of one person or of a group, can be summarized in three terms:

Chart III : *Elements of Leadership*

1. Character is who you are on the inside. It reflects the depth of the life change which the Spirit of God has brought about. Character is the primary means by which God judges success (I Chronicles 28:9). Primary character qualities include: integrity, direction, confidence, curiosity, creativity, stability, happiness, and discernment.

a. Defining Character

Character is the inner person. It is honesty, love, simplicity. When a person is right within himself or herself that inner person will shine through the words and actions and the character will be perceived. Likewise, when there is an inner core of immorality, this will eventually become evident and will impair a leader's effectiveness. A person's reputation - the external self - will be close to the reality of their character.

Character is often seen in one's attitude as either a desire to control people or as an attitude to serve them. One great leader said, "Whoever wishes to be first among you shall be the servant of all." (Jesus) This is not talking about the morality of a person's actions. This is something deeper, in the nature of the person. Actions are an expression of this inner nature. When you see a person repeatedly, and apparently simply, doing the right thing, you begin to trust that person. This is a demonstration of character.

The inner person, who you are when you are alone, is the real person. When we are with other people we tend to show off, or cover up, or project an image. When we are alone or sometimes when we are with people who know us well, our true person is revealed.

Many people lack a clear view of who they are. Their self-perception is not good. They need to be in touch with their inner person, especially their feelings and beliefs. We each need to know ourselves and be honest with ourselves. If you don't have a clear self-knowledge, then you can not have good self-esteem, an emotional and valuational process. If you do not have self-knowledge or good self-esteem then it is impossible to have a proper self-worth: seeing ourselves as God sees us.

It is sometimes a problem to be honest with ourselves. We may have tried to put on a front for so long that we don't know who we really are. Or, our life experiences may have led us to learn certain habits that aren't really true of what we want to be doing, but are a response to what we think is expected of us. These dishonest responses may have led to an unhealthy mental situation. Therefore, the first goal of examining our character is to learn to honestly evaluate ourselves.

b. Identifying Character

At this point let's define more specifically what we mean by character. A person's character is his/her inner qualities, manifested in the total lifestyle over a period of time. There are many elements which make up the qualities or value set of a good character. The following discussion will focus on eight elements.

1) Integrity - Firm adherence to a system of ethics. Honesty and dependability in word and deed. Harmony between public and private life. An unblemished reputation in relationships with the opposite sex, creditors, neighbors, government, etc. A total lifestyle that enhances one's reputation, because it highlights the person's wholeness.

2) Direction - Doing what can and ought to be done. Sees the potential and the possibilities, as well as the obstacles and hurdles. Thinks about what can happen-dreams, imagines, forecasts, predicts. Focuses on the ideal. Thinks in the future as well as the present. Thinks developmentally, not just operationally.

3) Confidence - Observable assurance of worth and ability. Faith in oneself and one's abilities, without conceit or arrogance. May be quiet and cautious or aggressive and bold. Conveyed by physical presence and bearing, by personal dynamism, by knowledge and experience, by position and status, by the way one speaks. Not uncertain, unsure, hesitating, wavering, or insecure. Closely related to one's self-concept. It is having the same opinion of yourself that God has.

4) Curiosity - An insatiable desire to learn. A healthy dissatisfaction with one's present level of achievement. A lively interest in searching and probing. An inquisitive mind that wants to explore and is constantly asking pertinent questions. Pursues general realms of knowledge as well as special areas of interest. Motivated to explore and investigate.

5) Creativity - Enjoys generating new ideas. Willing to experiment; to try the new. To innovate, not just repeat. The ability to focus and harness the imagination. To do something different. To look at all sides of an issue and to seek new perspectives.

6) Stability - A consistent, dependable lifestyle. Not given to major mood changes, nor major fluctuations of interests. Able to stick with the plan, to adjust to the new and unexpected without losing sight of the goal. The ability to cope patiently and steadily with pressures, problems and challenges.

7) Happiness - An attitude that is pleasantly positive. A joy, gladness, optimism and contentment that is positive, yet realistic. Not silly and superficial. Not overly sober and serious. An outlook on life that is essentially peaceful and positive.

8) Discernment - sensitive, perceptive insight. A delicate awareness of what is going on internally and externally. The ability to accurately assess the situation. To know what is right and wrong and what needs to be said and done. The ability to distinguish the real from the apparent.

2. Conviction

Convictions are the deeply held set of values which lead you to act the way you do. These convictions give direction to your ministry and consistency through the difficult times of life. Values occur at three levels: 1) personal opinions, 2) personal and corporate (church) persuasions and 3) deep, biblical convictions about salvation issues.

Broadly, values can be thought of in two broad categories. The first category includes beliefs and opinions about specific items. These could include opinions about racial feelings, telling the truth vs. lying, whether to drink alcohol or not, etc.

It could also include specific items about which we have very deep, highly emotional feelings: the issue of divorce (more likely to be deeply felt if you come from a home where a divorce has taken place), or, the issue of drunk driving (if you have had a close relative killed by a drunk driver you will probably feel your

position more deeply). These are all issues of values. They relate to specific items, but are often not related to each other.

Another category of values relates to your philosophy of life, or the meaning and purpose of life when it is all taken together. It is unusual to have this set of convictions well defined before age 21 or so.

This level of values is often defined by a person's religious feeling, whether committed believer or atheist. If you believe in God, especially if you think of him as savior in some eternal sense, this religious belief may become the heart of your views on all other subjects. Some people hold equally deep convictions that there is not a god of any kind, that mankind is alone in the world, and that to hold any other belief is to pervert human effort into false efforts.

Some people come to clear, deep convictions through some climactic experience which deeply influences them to hold some particular value, not just as a surface value, but as a central value, in light of which all other values are adjusted. Other people come to this same centralizing of a value through personal reflection and self-examination over time.

Defining Convictions

Disciplers (spiritual leaders) have deeply held convictions about something. This is usually part of what makes them leaders, they are passionately committed to some value and have oriented their life to achieve the goals this value suggests. Without any deeply felt conviction, a leader becomes a manager of a task or of a group. There are many managers, few conviction directed spiritual leaders.

This inner dynamic sense of purpose can be developed through personal value clarification and reflection on your convictions concerning the purpose of life, your place and purpose in the world, what is true about reality, and the issues about which you believe you should have deep feelings.

A leader has a cause, he has something he wants to do and will see it accomplished or is ready to die trying. Some people want to improve the environment, some want to make a million dollars, some want to be the best athlete in the world. Whatever the cause, they are willing to pay the price to achieve success.

The 500 largest corporations in the U.S. are regularly studied by Fortune magazine. As they studied the leaders of these corporations, they found one trait that all the leaders had in common - they refused to accept failure. They never quit trying. This kind of inner determination comes because a person has some inner conviction they believe in and want to bring into reality.

People don't have many of these kind of convictions. Most people don't have this kind of conviction at all. A leader must have the inner character to build trust, and a conviction that will inflame the minds and hearts of people.

a. Central Themes

In the area of the Christian life there is not, on the surface, any one central theme which clearly stands out as the central teaching. There are, of course, many important features: developing the relationship with God which began at salvation, living out the covenant requirements of the present age, living out God's distinctive plan for this time, living in the fullness and power of the Holy Spirit, obeying the Great Commandment, focusing on the Great Commission, living out positional truths, 'deeper life' theology, etc.

However, there are two passages in the gospels in which Jesus focuses on two aspects of the Christian life and points the disciples to these as central in his teaching and in their growth. These two passages should form the basis for our convictions.

1) The Great Commandment

In Mark 12:29-31 Jesus says, "The foremost (commandment) is `Hear O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord; And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this, `You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." Jesus' concluding statement in this text is very strong: `There is no other commandment greater than these.' This has to be taken into careful consideration by every Christian. A deeper look at this Great Commandment is in order.

If we chart the three gospel references and the Old Testament source verses it may be put as follows:

Mark 12:30	kardia	psyche	dianoia	ischuos
Matt. 22:37	"	"	"	"
Luke 10:27	"	"	"	"
Deut. 6:5	lebab	nephesh		me'od

The first element (kardia in Greek, lebab in Hebrew) refers to the heart, or the seat of mankind's affections and direction. In technical educational terms it is the affective center of man's being.

The second element (second in Hebrew [nephesh], the same as soul [psyche] and mind [dianoia] in Greek) includes what Walter Kaiser (Harris, 1980) calls the "whole self," that is, the personality or the whole of the spiritual, social and psychological makeup of the individual.

Often, this is summarized as the mind, will and emotions or as the mind and spirit. But both of these summary phrases are too abbreviated to be much good in a discipleship discussion. The emotions are far too complex to be adequately captured by a single term. The mind is so complex that educators and psychologists have subdivided it into 120 elements and developed tests for 26 of these elements (Guilford, Meeker). Thus, `soul and mind' are shorthand references to the whole of the non-physical makeup of human beings.

The third element, strength (ischuos in Greek, me'od in Hebrew), refers to the intensity which we are to bring to the love of God. This is the most common word for `power' in the Bible. In our present context then, strength connotes the actual intensity with which we love God.

By way of summary we may say that our total being is to be intensely devoted to the active love of God.

The second part of the Great Commandment is like this in that we are to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. The Bible assumes that a person loves himself. In fact, this almost universally is human experience and certainly would be termed `normal.'

This Great Commandment summarize all that God requires of us. Jesus says that on these commands depend all the Law and the Prophets (Matthew 22:40). In Mark 12:30-31 Jesus adds, "There is no other commandment greater than these." These are the foremost commands and are the summary of the whole of Old Testament laws. Therefore, this passage should weigh significantly in the determination of a central focus or conviction. God comes first, other people are very important.

2) The Great Commission

The other major command comes after the resurrection. Jesus gave us specific direction about how we can show our love for God and for people. As Jesus prepared to leave the disciples He said to them, "

All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I will be with you always, even to the end of the age. (Matthew 28:18-20)

All four elements of this passage have great importance for us. First, Jesus bases the commandment on the fact of His having been given all authority in heaven and on earth. This means that He is putting the

coming commandment in the context of His ultimate lordship. It will be at the heart of what He expects His men and women to do.

Second, the central element of the passage is the only one which is a command. They are to make disciples. No matter what else we do as the church or as individual members of the body of Christ, we must be in the process of making disciples or we will be in disobedience to the Lord.

Third, the two participles following the command to make disciples should be taken as instrumental verbs. By bringing people to be baptized -- to publicly identify with Jesus Christ -- and by teaching them what He has commanded His followers, we are already in the process of making disciples.

The final element of the passage is His promise to be with us always. As others have pointed out, this is reminiscent of the Old Testament promise, 'I will dwell in your midst' (fourteen passages between Exodus and Zechariah, and a score of other references). Thus, this concluding phrase forms a link with the promise of the New Covenant (given in Jeremiah 31 and initiated by Jesus at the Last Supper). This then parallels the establishment of the Mosaic covenant in Exodus: words of the covenant promise, commitment by the people, duties of the covenant, formula of promise.

The implication of this promise is that in the process of making disciples, wherever we are in the world and whenever we are in history, Jesus will be there in His full presence to give us whatever we need to carry on the task.

3) Summary

The Great Commandment and the Great Commission are not exclusive of each other. As an expression of our love for the Lord, we love the brethren and we reach out in love to the unbeliever. These two commandments stand at the peak of the life and convictions of the Church. This is so because of the scriptural and historical contexts of the teachings and because of the theological importance which Jesus gave them.

Therefore, we must give these commands proper emphasis in our teaching and preaching and mold our own convictions as well as the convictions of our disciples in light of these central aspects of Jesus' teaching. As we live out these convictions a number of changes will take place.

The New Testament emphasis on worship, often a minor point in a theology of the Christian Life, takes on new meaning with the Great Commandment as a central theme. Prayer, meditation, public worship, and ceremonial life in general become primary means of expressing the centrality of our faith and our relationship with God.

Private devotions, another means of expressing our love for God with heart, mind, and intensity, becomes a daily focal point of life, not an occasional afterthought. We commune with the Lord and are refreshed and prepared by Him for service.

Public and private worship become both means of personal growth and steps of obedience. They serve as a claim on our lives and as testimony to others of our relation to God and our new life in Him.

Study, of any truth, takes on new meaning as well. If we love God with our minds, then study of the Bible, doctrine, devotional literature, philosophy, science, and sociology all become means of worship as well as new launching pads of faith. The point of integration of all truth is the experiential knowledge of God and the expression of faith toward Him in every aspect of life.

All phases of life, both ministry and 'secular' work, become means of expressing our love to our fellow man, through providing physical and spiritual means of life to them. No calling is seen apart from its source in God or apart from its end in love to God and to others. This is very much like the message of Ecclesiastes 3:12-13:

There is nothing better than to rejoice and to do good in one's lifetime; moreover, that every man who eats and drinks sees good in all his labor--it is the gift of God.

All of life becomes holy and is a calling before God for which we will be judged.

This total commitment to Jesus also leads us to our deepest convictions. I suggest the following five deep convictions for all people:

1. the deity of Jesus Christ, and our worship and service of the one true God
2. salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ
3. the authority of the Bible for all areas of the believer's life
4. the Great Commandment
5. the Great Commission

We must give these teachings proper emphasis in our communication with other people and mold our own lives as well as the lives of our disciples in light of these central aspects of Jesus' teaching. They will also be central to our corporate/community values.

These values should be worked out in our daily life and in our activities, both personal and corporate. If we hold five values as convictions, all other values and all activities can be brought into line with these and a unified position can be held.

b. Developing Convictions

Some people often come to clear, deep convictions through some climactic experience which deeply influences them to hold some particular value, not just as a surface value, but as a central value, in light of which all other values are adjusted. Other people come to this same centralizing of a value through personal reflection and self-examination.

This inner dynamic sense of purpose can be developed through reflection on your convictions concerning the purpose of life, your place and purpose in the world, what is true about reality, and the issues about which you believe you should have deep feelings. Convictions can be developed.

The Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. had deep convictions about God (he was a Christian minister) and about racial equality. His speeches, actions and writings are oriented toward furthering these two causes.

President John Kennedy had deep convictions about the United States becoming a first class world power and about the development of technology. This worked out in the United States being first to put a man on the moon. But lesser known achievements include the renewed emphasis on science and technology in public schools, billions of dollars going into computer and technology research, and the growth of the military-industrial complex during the sixties and seventies.

Steve Wozniak, Steve Jobs and John Couch built the second largest computer company, Apple Computers, around an idea of staff and performance excellence.

Spiritual leaders need to have deep convictions. They also need to be able to communicate these effectively to other people. In this role they become value-shapers. Thomas Peters, in *A Search for Excellence* (1982), says,

The value shaping leader is concerned, on the one hand, with soaring, lofty visions that will generate excitement and enthusiasm for tens or hundreds of thousands of people. On the other hand, it seems the only way to instill enthusiasm is through scores of daily events, with the value shaping manager becoming an implementer par excellence. (p. 287)

This combines what has been describe as convictions with competence in follow through. In this way, convictions are passed on to other people and the leader becomes a value shaper.

The Bible says that convictions are built by a process of focus and meditation. Where our treasure is, there our heart (our values) will be. By clarifying and focusing on specific values and by reflecting (meditating) on these daily, we build these as true inner values in our own heart. We want to value the things God values, and to seek eternal goals, not human designs.

A person with character, but not conviction, is a nice friend. A person with conviction, but without character, can be a crime boss or a dictator. But to be successful in guiding people, a leader needs a third element.

3. Competence

This includes the technical, but necessary, elements of effective planning and decision making, knowledge of growth elements and the ability to lead others in discipleship. In business terminology these are the practical 'how to's' of planning, organizing, managing and controlling.

Ours is a big, complex world and there are many competitors for the allegiance of people. A leader must have character, conviction and the skills to make things work. Competence includes the ability to plan, organize, manage and control the activities of people so that the desired discipleship goals are achieved.

Competence in leading concerns the discipler's ability to plan a course of action leading to the fulfillment of the goal, recruitment and organization of a group of people to work toward the goal, managing the group through motivation and communication, and control of the outcomes through evaluation and restructuring. This is the easiest area in which to train someone to be a discipler.

Every person who wants to can become a discipler. Character can be improved when someone wants to do so badly enough. Convictions can deepen, or even change, when the inner motivation is directed to the fulfillment of a deeply held value. Competence in management skills and abilities to make a leader practically effective can be taught. All that is needed is the knowledge of these things and the commitment of a person to be trained.

If a discipler has the character and conviction needed, he or she is ready to exercise leadership of others in a discipleship context. This means working with other people to bring them to share the value (common purpose) which we have from Jesus and to work toward its fulfillment in some aspect of life.

The various phases of exercising leadership have been summarized into four stages: plan, organize, manage and control [cf. Douglass, *Management* (1973), pp. 1-16, 1-17; and Stogdill, *Handbook* (1974), pp. 156-166]. This simple pattern will be used to develop the idea of competence in working with people and developing a practical application of one's idea.

a. Planning

Can you identify the common factor in the following activities: an Apollo moon shot, a small business meeting, a trip to Hawaii, reaching the American public with a new computer? At first glance no similarity is apparent. What does a moon shot have in common with a business meeting? The common thread in all these activities is planning.

In each case above, it is necessary to sit down and think through what you want to do and make necessary preparations before beginning a project. It is this thinking ahead that we define as planning. Planning is the process of predetermining a course of action. Often you will want to involve other people in the stage of planning, especially those who have experience in the objective you wish to accomplish, or if other people will be effected by your activities.

There are four steps in planning (Douglass, 1988). The first step is to establish objectives. In this step you determine what should be accomplished. You establish a target toward which you and the people who work with you will be directing your efforts. You cannot very well determine how much money will be spent or when different activities need to happen until you have determined what should be accomplished.

Objectives are criteria against which you can measure the effectiveness of the present activities. Therefore, they need to be stated as measurable activities in an organized set.

For example, ask your disciple to share Christ with at least one person this week. It can be clearly determined whether a person fulfills this or not.

The second step is to program. Here you lay out the steps which will be necessary to go from where you are now to your objectives. You start with the first needed activity, then the next, etc., until the correct activities are going on so that the objectives can be accomplished. You then have a list of the needed activities in the order in which they are to happen.

To use the objective given above, ask your disciple to share Christ with at least one person this week, the steps may be shown as follows:

- 1) choose a person you can both pray for who needs to know Jesus Christ in a personal way,
- 2) choose a tool which in a clear simple way presents the gospel message, such as the Four Spiritual Laws,
- 3) have your disciple arrange a meeting with the person you are praying for,
- 4) in the meeting, ask the person to allow you to share the Four Spiritual Laws with them.

Each of these is a measurable step and the whole set is organized to accomplish an overall task--having your disciple share Christ with someone this week.

The next step is to schedule the activities. In this step you determine when each different activity will be accomplished. Determine when each activity will begin and end. Enter these on a written schedule so that you can remember each one and will be able to measure whether each one is finished on time. This is a very important step because it coordinates the activities of all the people who will be involved.

The final step of planning is to budget. In this step you determine how much personnel, funds and other resources will be needed and how they should be supplied. Many practical issues are faced in this step: How much money is needed and how it can be obtained, how many people are needed and how to recruit and train them, what materials are needed and where will they be obtained. In our example, you may want to organize other people to pray for your witness. You will need to get a Four Spiritual Laws booklet. You may need to arrange transportation, etc.

Expect your plan to change as you work through the actual steps. From your plan you will know the approximate steps to take and what the requirements will be. Do not worry about rewriting your plan unless major shifts take place.

Once a plan is developed you use it to keep yourself and those working with you aimed at fulfillment of the objective. The plan is also useful to give other people an overview of what your value or objective will look like when it is put into action.

b. Organizing

Organizing is a logical step in a process of accomplishing an objective. It is difficult to motivate people to get involved in something if it is not clear and defined in your own mind. Planning must precede organizing. Organizing is the process of placing people into a unified structure to accomplish objectives.

Since the people involved may change, the environment or situation may change, and the work load may grow, organizing is not accomplished once and for all, but is continual.

In any plan there will tend to be natural clusters of activities and people that seem to go together. These links need to be recognized in your organization. Our example above is a very simple one. If you wanted to organize to have twenty people in your church share the gospel with 200 people in the next month it

would involve greater depth of organizing. Once you have determined the related steps in the chain of activities, you can show these on a chart.

All personnel involved need to be shown on the chart so that their contribution can be seen. Begin at the top or left side of a chart and show all the steps involved. Assigning people to specific jobs is called delegation. Delegation is the process by which a leader gives responsibility and authority. Assign people to activities that will utilize each person's strengths and previous experience.

If the job is complex or will extend over a longer period, say a month or more, then the leader may need to develop job descriptions for each person. Job descriptions include all the steps that particular person will need to do to accomplish his or her part of the task. Usually you should include: what the responsibilities are, what authority the person has for doing the tasks, and to whom the person looks for direction and approval.

c. Managing

Managing is causing people to take effective action. This is where the activities you have been planning and organizing will actually take place! This is when you will see the objective begin to be fulfilled.

The following ten topics are all necessary steps of managing a project and when applied will lead to fulfillment of the discipleship objective through the plan and the organization.

1. being a consistent example,
2. making hard decisions,
3. live with some tension,
4. be confident about yourself and the project,
5. care about the people,
6. keep focused on the overall objective (not on the planning steps or the organizational chart,
7. motivate through creating self-starters (help others to see the need and feel the common value),
8. encourage and recognize achievement,
9. dissolve inter-personal tensions,
10. be flexible, because changes will always take place.

The focus of these activities is to be effective at communication, decision making, and problem solving.

d. Controlling

Control is a process the discipler takes to assure that the group performance conforms to the plan and fulfills the objective. Controlling will help to harness and sustain the initial momentum of a plan. In this sense controlling is essentially an attitude of excellence which is committed to accomplishing the objective and want to measure progress to make sure the ministry is being accomplished well.

To establish controls, set intermediate target points at which you can measure whether the plan is on course and is accomplishing the objective. Did your disciple call for a meeting? Did the disciple show up on time? By having these target points, all personnel will know whether the objective is being accomplished and will be able to applaud the progress or redouble their efforts, as needed.

There can be target points for each individual and/or the group as a whole. Each person needs to report on his or her progress and each leader needs to verify the report. You are measuring the results of your effort and what God is doing. If you find that there is a problem in the activity, you can either change the efforts being put out or you can revise the plan.

B. Developing Relationships

It may sound obvious but discipleship relationships are always interpersonal situations. Disciplers lead people. Leaders spend 80% of their time in interpersonal communications. There are four abilities which help build good relationships and four abilities which keep good relationships from breaking down.

1. Beginning a Relationship

a. Establish and maintain good friendships. This calls for character qualities of humor, a good self-concept, a positive outlook on life, stability, the ability to empathize and sympathize, listening, showing genuine interest in others. Non-verbal factors are important: a smile, a touch, a laugh. These are all contagious. Friends are also very helpful when the times of stress come, through their listening, caring and support.

b. Accept individual differences. We tend to include some people and exclude others in our friendships. When we relate to people on the basis of external circumstances (how much money do they have, how do they dress, etc.) we will often miss many important contacts. By looking for character qualities, we can find people who will be friends in many situations. They will be people we can count on in both stress and relaxation. The only reason we should exclude someone from a relationship is because of a poor attitude toward us. Even then we should remain open to the person's attitude changing. Good leaders tend to be significantly more open in their personal and working relations than non-leaders. They see the potential in people and how others can fit into the overall plan.

c. Build and maintain a servant attitude.

There are positions of leadership in every activity and those who occupy them have both responsibility and authority. The attitude with which a person uses his authority should be that of a servant. A servant acts in love to meet the needs of others and to draw them to the common objective. Then, together, the group is able to accomplish the objective in a way that is fulfilling to all the members. A servant leader does not do everything for the people. He serves by caring for their needs while they all work together on the objective.

d. Communicate honestly, openly, and appropriately.

A leader is willing to reveal enough about himself and his goals so that people know who he is and feel good about both his strengths and weaknesses. They need to know him as a person as well as an organizational leader. Of course, only appropriate information should be shared. This will probably differ with those closer to you in the discipleship group, but all members should see that you are open and honest.

When you lead by the example of your own life, as well as by what you say, it puts pressure on other people to examine how they are responding. If you are open, they will be also. This has the potential of deepening the relationships of all those involved.

2. Maintaining Good Relationships.

a. Recognize and handle negative reactions in others.

People may be negative for many reasons. We need to be close to others so that we can freely talk with them and explore why they have reacted negatively. The skill of listening will be important. Often people differ because they have a different perspective on the situation and we can learn from them. This doesn't mean we will give up on the objective, but we may be able to find ways to fulfill multiple objectives. If someone is always negative, then they may have to leave the group.

b. Handle crisis situations firmly.

In crisis situations people often don't know what to do. Crisis often results in a loss of perspective and objectivity. Listen, gain other counsel if needed, then make a decision and act upon it. Often in a discipling relationship, this action will be to help other people. You cannot be in the situation for them, but you can help them to act and to seek success.

c. Face conflict openly.

Conflict is not always wrong. Sometimes it comes just because people are different and need space to carry out their responsibilities in their own way. In these cases, teach everyone to put up with difference as long as the purpose is still being accomplished.

If the conflict is over issues of your behavior, then you may need to apologize and change the behavior. Or you may need to explain why you choose that behavior and seek reconciliation without changing.

The point is that the issue need to be opened up and dealt with openly. When a leader has to mediate between others who are in conflict, he must deal first with the issues and behaviors, then with the personalities.

d. Learn to solve problems.

Carefully evaluate the situation. Leaders need to seek and get good advice. Without correct information, it is hard to make correct decisions. Consider various options for change. Try to take different perspectives. Consult with others until you have all the information. A good leader learns to know how much information is necessary to make a decision. If you spend too long on the information, you may miss the opportunity. If you get too little information, you are sure to have problems later. Once a decision is made, see that all people involved in the problem follow through on the solution.

V. Conclusion

All these elements (character, conviction and competence) work together to influence the discipler's behavior as he leads other people. To the extent these are effective, the discipler will be both influential and successful. Only a person who combines all three of these leadership qualities, together with dependence upon Jesus, can be an effective discipler. These are the biblical patterns of men and women who followed Jesus and helped change their world.

A successful discipler is one who uses his or her character, conviction, and competence to initiate, motivate, communicate and sustain commonality of purpose. Whatever the specific form of our calling from God, we will be involved in building spiritual movements, leading people to new life in Jesus Christ.

Each person God brings into our life is a potential disciple, in that we are to love all people and bring them all to Christ and to completion in Christ, as the Lord leads us to be involved together. No aspect of life, no relationship, escapes this holy calling: family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, fellow members of local assemblies, brief acquaintances, co-members of community groups, and all others. All can be evangelized; all can be disciplined.

This will also effect our concepts of the means of growth in the Christian Life. Positional truth and the Christ-life are sources of spiritual truth which we draw upon in faith to live the Christian Life. All the methods of Bible study, prayer, witness, and spiritual discipline are for our growth in faith and the enriching of our walk with Jesus. Fruit-bearing and holiness are the results of spiritual growth, not the results of hours of ministry involvement or intensity of spiritual practices apart from the proper heart relationship. The fruit of Galatians 5 are the character qualities of Jesus. The gifts of Romans 12 and I Corinthians 12-14 are the work of the ministry of Jesus. As we grow we become like him.

The growth of the Kingdom of God, the development of the Church, the edification of the saints, the witness of salt and light to the world-- all these are goals of the church family and also are results of our walk with Jesus Christ. Surely we will not see these corporate efforts succeed apart from the walk of faith.

The means to this walk is simply stated: Walk by faith. Faith, or belief, is mentioned more than 500 times in the New Testament. Romans, written as an introductory letter to a church Paul had not visited, focuses on faith (chapter 3, 4) as the means to salvation, and on walking by faith (chapters 6, 8) as the means to growth and obedience. In practice walking by faith is the same as walking in the Spirit.

A long term, deep level discipler (in business term: a mentor) is often necessary to become effective as a discipler of others. If a single mentor is not available then God is still able to equip you to disciple other people, but it will mean learning from a number of sources and will take a longer time.

Be hopeful! Moses was about eighty when he began to lead, David was about twenty. God can take you where you are and begin to transform you. You must be committed to the process!

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