

MAKING DISCIPLING WORK

A Biblical Viewpoint

A. You must be sold on the blessing and impact of discipling.

1. It is imperative that you have strong convictions about the Biblical basis for discipling.
2. You must explain to the disciplee (s) how important discipling is. In fact, to a degree it is up to you to *sell him on the blessing of going through a discipleship course.*
3. You must believe with all your heart that discipling will make the difference between failure or success in the Christian life for most newly saved people. (Study the materials about *Why Disciple.*)
4. Explain to the new convert or person (You have adopted as a parent to mold for God's glory. Col. 1:28; I Thess. 2:7-12) **that:**
 - a. Personal growth into Christlikeness will only take place through a study course such as you will be leading.
 - b. That they need to learn to pray, to understand their Bible, and to know how to find things in their Bible. This only comes through having a detailed study through discipling. *Be excited with them about this!*

B. You ought to compare this time with them as a new parent looks at caring for their new baby -- feeding, loving, instructing, molding, protecting, etc.

C. Use the time you spend with him to create a relationship based on what the God says in the Word.

1. One of the most important aspects of discipling is that you are building a relationship from which you will be able to ministry in many areas of need in the new Christian's life.
2. It is in this relationship wherein *you share your life* -- where *they see Christianity in your life* -- where *they see the reality of Christ* and His power and love in you -- that they learn how to walk with the Lord.

General Plans

A. It is imperative to have a discipling plan.

1. The local church ought to begin the discipling ministry by discipling those who have been saved during recent months, or the past year.

Making Discipling Work

2. It ought to be the goal of the church to work with every saved person who has not grown and who ought to be disciplined.
3. Those who receive Christ ought to be contacted immediately, within hours or a day after receiving Christ, and discipling ought to be arranged with this new convert.

B. It is very important to begin with an easy but comprehensive course for the newly saved.

1. It is suggested the first course be a study of four lessons from the Gospel of John. (You will find this with our materials on discipling.)
2. This helps the newly saved person to start the study in one book, hence learning how to look up verses, find answers, etc.
3. The study of John gives insight into the Person of Christ, Salvation and other important beginning lessons.

C. This ought to be followed with a comprehensive and thorough study of basics which the new Christian needs to understand for growth, stability and usefulness for God's honor.

1. We have offered the course "*Basic Bible Truths for New Believers*" or the course, "*Bible Guidebook for New Christians.*"
 - a. The first study series of 13 lessons is on the basics. (available here on the web.)
 - b. The second mentioned above is a study from the book of John and is designed more for the teen and others who possibly are learning impaired or a slow learner. It is the easier study. (11 lessons)
2. Reading and studying the materials prior to covering it with a disciplee is very important. Know, understand what God is saying in His Word.
3. It is good to fill in every answer, think through illustrations that would help the new convert or younger Christian to understand.
 - a. I suggest, after discipling over a 100 people or families, that you plan to cover every question. Not just ask them what their answer is, but realize they can write down the correct answer and still now know what it means.
 - b. Plan to **teach thoroughly** what God has said in His Word.

Principles to Follow In Discipling

A. Get acquainted with the person (s).

1. Try to meet with the person prior to holding the first study time or sessions with him. Doing so will help to *set the stage for a good experience.*

2. Be observant of the home if that is where you are meeting.
3. Note the things he or she is interested in such as hobbies, books, etc. and seek to relate with them. Show personal interest in them.
4. A board base of common interests will make follow-up or discipling much easier and more enjoyable and personal.

B. Attitudes as you go about discipling.

1. Your goal ought to be to impact their person. Discipling is a molding of a life, it is investing your life into theirs.
2. You must be interested in the total person, not just their spiritual welfare.
3. Your personal attitude toward the person (s) makes a big difference. Overlook failures, and things that go with someone just coming to Christ.

(Think about what you were saved out of, or saved from. Consider the wickedness of your heart before you become judgmental, critical, and manifest a bad attitude toward the new convert who may at this point may have a lot of sinful baggage from the past.)

4. Meet with them with a deep desire to be a blessing, to help them to love the Lord, to love the Word of God, and the people of God as they become involved in the local church.

C. Pertinent suggestions for discipling.

1. Plan to study alone with the person or alone with the whole family, if it is a family or a couple that you are discipling.
2. Work with them in an effective teaching situation. In all cases be flexible and diplomatic.
3. Ask questions about their (or his or her) spiritual background, if that is helpful.
4. Explain your burden for them (him) and the importance of their spiritual growth. Share with them the Pastor's desire for their growth as well.
5. Use the Bible to answer questions and address problems that may be in the life.
 - a. The church you represent preaches and teaches the Bible and that **must be the one standard** by which he evaluates life.
 - b. He must see that the Scriptures have the answer for all of life and it's problems and needs.
 - c. Your purpose in study the course is to help them apply the Word of God to their personal life. **May each lesson practical and life-related.**

Remember:

- We can only teach that which is real and precious to our own lives.
- We teach to help others experience that which blesses our own lives.
- Only a soul winner can lead someone else to be a soul winner.
- Only a person who is consistent in personal devotions will have success when trying to encourage someone else in their “*quiet time*” with the Lord.

Teaching the Lessons

A. Begin with prayer and end each session with prayer.

1. Make prayer vital and real.
2. Meet with them prayerfully and pray for the person (s) daily as you work with them. Keep a prayerful attitude as you study with them each week. (Matt. 7:7-8; Lk 11:5-10; Jh 17:7; Gal. 4:19)
3. Be open to share your personal answers to prayer and to mention also any difficulties in which God has fulfilled His Word in you.

B. Take him (they, her) from one study to another.

1. Tell him or her **why**,
2. show him **how**,
3. get him **started**, and keep him **going**,
4. teach him to **share** the Word of God with others, because he will learn to do it by doing.

Remember:

- It is up to you to encourage, to not take a no, or put-off for an answer.
 - It is up to you to understand that as a new convert they have an old nature that resists their best... (just as you do) and that therefore you must encourage them to do right even when it is something they don't seem ready to cooperate with you in doing.
 - When they say they can't meet don't say they should call when they are ready to meet. Satan will work to defeat at that point. Don't expect them to call for their best good... you call... work at rescheduling and don't let them off the hook.
5. Spending an hour to an hour and half is normal for each lesson. Sometimes it may be much longer if there are many questions or it is obvious you have a “*Divine appointment*” to meet some need.
 6. At each lesson move quickly into the lesson; don't get sidetracked and make it a gab session, (for some people's personality that is a danger). Having a few minutes of light talk at the beginning is fine, but save any amount of just sharing things for the end, after the lesson is finished.

C. Actually teaching the lessons.

1. Encourage him to talk about what he studied, ask questions along the way to stimulate his interest as you go through the questions.
2. As you cover each question, explain the Word of God, ask questions both rhetorical and those where you expect an answer. Gradually asking more questions as you move through the lessons is the norm. At first you may not know how he will respond to unexpected extra questions.
3. It is only as you truly discuss each lesson, and each question that you will be able to actually teach and to know understanding is gained.
4. Sometimes a “*preview*” of the next week’s lesson will cause the disciple to be excited and want to move on in their study.
5. Make each lesson exciting, interesting, vital and life related. Make it beneficial for his everyday life.
6. Be specific in your assignments and get his promise to have them done when you come for the next visit, for which you make a definite appointment.

D. Relate each lesson to their lives right where they are.

1. As you introduce new Bible doctrines, etc. show him how they **relate** to his life personally and the importance of **application** of truth.
2. Go step by step through each question. All are important. Allow them to ask any question. If their question is not on the lesson, but an important one to them. . . then put off the lesson if need be, seek to answer their question. Or come back to it the next week, but be sure you do that.
 - a. There are no dumb questions. . . must be your attitude.
 - b. Allow them to bring up things that are on their (his) heart.
3. At each visit review the former lesson briefly, check to see if there are ways in which he has seen how these things applied to his life during the week.
 - a. Discuss aspects of personal importance to him,
 - b. and attempt to answer any questions that flow of the study.

E. Adjust each assignment to his individual pace.

1. When he doesn’t fulfill his assignments, find out why, but don’t drive him -- lead him.
2. Perhaps a phone call during the week will encourage the person who has difficulty being consistent or who just a negative attitude.

F. Work at enlisting him into the church.

1. One of the goals is to build faithfulness in the local church.,
2. Help the person to realize how important fellowship is with God's people.
3. Help the convert to realize that God desire to use him in the lives of others.
4. As you study with the disciplee it is imperative that you pour your life into his. This means your goal ought to be to build the person in Christ and to help the person become fruitful in God's work.

Building A Reproducer

(Col. 1:28; "become a multiplier of men" II Tim. 2:2)

A. Every discipler ought to be come a reproducer.

1. God's purpose is that in the process of discipling those who come to Christ will become soul winners.
2. If the newly saved are not *built up* to the place of reaching others the message of the gospel will end with them. It will come to an end with that second generation.

(A study of the materials titled "Why Disciple" will give you a thorough presentation of the Biblical mandate. It is the outworking of the great commission -- to win them, baptism them, and teach them to observe all things Matthew 28:18-20. I will not repeat this presentation here.)

B. The discipler is accountable to produce a reproducer.

1. As Adam and Eve were commanded to populate the earth; as Noah was commanded to replenish the earth with people... and the generations after him -- so we are spiritually to reproduce *after our kind*. (Gen. 1:20-27)
2. God has, early in the Creation Story, laid down the principle that every thing reproduces *after it's kind*. And that should also be true of the Christian today.
3. It is a matter of vision. It is a matter of understanding that which pleases God and laboring to make it so. It will not take place without our determined desire. (Read Col. 1:28; Gal. 4:19; Acts 5:41-42; Acts 20:20)

C. The early church multiplied.

1. A thorough study of the Book of Acts brings one to the conclusion that the early believers expected to reproduce themselves.
2. Today we merely add at times to the local body. ***Multiplying will only take place if we obey discipling with this goal -- building reproducers!***