**Discipling Those Close to You**

Everyone who disciples others knows the special challenge of encouraging spiritual growth in those closest to us -- our spouses, children, grandchildren, close associates, and/or good friends. As much as we value these close, intimate relationships, they do present a unique challenge to discipleship. How can we facilitate spiritual growth without violating relational boundaries or succumbing to relational over-familiarity? This session will encourage us to actively pursue the spiritual good of those close to us and offer practical suggestions on how we might do that.

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1. We Need to First Understand What Discipleship Is
2. What Discipleship is NOT
3. Discipleship is Not Simply a Bible Study
4. Discipleship is Not Only Evangelism
5. Discipleship is Not Solely Spiritual Formation
6. Discipleship is Not Meeting One-on-One as in Mentoring or Coaching
7. What Discipleship IS
8. Discipleship IS Being in (and Pursuing) a Dynamic Relationship with God Yourself (Deut 6:4-9)
9. Discipleship IS Growing Toward Christlikeness (2 Cor 3:18; Rom 8:29)
10. Discipleship IS Yielding to the Ever-Present Influence of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:25; Rom 8:9-11)
11. Discipleship IS Engaging the Word of God through Christian Spiritual Practices (Jn 17:17; 2 Tim 3:15-16; 1 Pet 2:2)
12. Discipleship IS Modeling Christ (1 Cor 4:14-17; Phlp 3:17; 1 Thes 1:4-10; Heb 13:7)
13. Discipleship IS Doing All These Things with and on Behalf of Others (Eph 4:10-16)

 II. We Need to Anticipate the Challenges of Discipling Those Close to Us

1. We are Challenged by Our Own Insecurities (competence, comparison)
2. We are Challenged by Our Own Lack of Discipleship
3. We are Challenged by Unrealistic Expectations
4. We are Challenged by Lack of Vision
5. We are Challenged by Inertia
6. We are Challenged by Skeptical Disciples
7. We are Challenged by Inadequate Preparation

 III. We Need to Develop an Approach to Discipling Those Close to Us

1. Begin with the Biblical Model in Mind
2. God’s Plan for Transferring Faith from Generation to Generation

*4 Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 5 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. 6 These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. 7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. 8 Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. 9 Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates. (Deut 6:4-9)*

* 1. The Foundational Axiom is to Love God with All Our Being

Love for God is the Objective, Goal, Motivation, Means, and End of Discipleship

* 1. The Locus of Love for God is a Matter of Interiority: Heart, Soul & Strength

The Heart is the Focus of Discipleship: It’s the Heart that Needs Transforming

* 1. God’s Word is the Transformative and Operative Material of Discipleship

The Scriptures are the Voice of God that Beckon Us to Know Him

* 1. God’s People Communicate God’s Word Intentionally, Personally and Publicly

Believers look for creative ways to integrate conversations about God

* 1. All of Life’s Natural Rhythms are the Places of Discipleship (Anywhere, Anytime, All-the-Time)

Whether gathered at home, on the road to a destination, bedding down for rest, or rising to a new day, discipling opportunities abound and should be utilized

1. Jesus’ Model of “Following,” “Teaching,” and Sending (Matt 16:24; Jn 12:26; Jn 8:31; Jn 6:40; Matt 10:16; Jn 20:21)
2. Paul’s Model of Discipleship (2 Tim 2:2)
3. Disciple from Who and Where You Are
4. Play to Your Strengths (natural skills, spiritual gifting, personality, knowledge, etc)
5. Include Your Normal Experiences (failures, successes, joy, griefs, challenges, etc)
6. Utilize your Natural Rhythms (daily schedule and routines)
7. Disciple Toward Who “They” Are
8. Stay Focused on the Relationship
9. Look for Shared Interests
10. Utilize their Skills, Interests and Passions
11. Include their Normal Experiences and Natural Rhythms
12. Ask: What do they need for growth in Christlikeness?
13. Ask: Where are they in their spiritual development: what’s the next step?
14. Repurpose the Schedule You Already Have with Minor Tweaks (think about your daily and weekly routines—getting up, breakfast, trip to work/school, lunch-break, coming home, making dinner, etc.)
15. Maximize the Daily Moments (think daily life interactions, personal feelings, display of character, current circumstances, etc.)
16. Capitalize on Memorable Milestones (think achievements, life-stages, holidays, celebratory events, major decisions, etc.)

 III. We Need to Open Our Lives to the Discipling Process

1. Pray, Pray and Pray: Stay Connected to the Vine
2. Invite Others Close to You into Your Own Discipleship
3. Be Authentic: Just Keep it Real between You, God and Others
4. Be Available, Be Actively Present
5. Avoid the Temptation to try to Change Others: That’s the Spirit’s Job
6. Don’t Worry about Doing it Perfectly: It’s Probably Better that it’s Not

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