Preparing Disciples for Difficulty

The problem disciples face isn’t just the suffering itself, but the lack of preparation for suffering. There is a critical need to prepare people for difficulty in the Christian life. This talk explores preparing disciples for trials so that their faith isn’t suddenly troubled. Of course there is a COVID parallel, but it also much more generally touches on the seasons of life.

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1. **The Problem**

Matthew 7:24-27

* 1. We need to teach that storms are to be expected
     1. John 16:33
  2. We need to prepare disciples to face suffering
     1. Mark 8:34-35
  3. We need to help disciples lay good foundations
     1. Matthew 7:25

1. **Our Response**
   1. Intimacy with Jesus
      1. John 15:1-5
      2. The importance of spiritual habits
   2. Biblical Worldview
      1. Understanding the whole story of God and not just a fragment of it
   3. Christian Community
      1. The importance of inter-generational relationships and spaces for genuine honesty, vulnerability and support
   4. Cultural Discernment
      1. Daniel 1-3 – preparing disciples for Babylon
      2. Not embracing or escaping but engaging
   5. Whole-Life Understanding
      1. Colossians 3:16-23 / Romans 12:1-2
      2. A holistic vision for discipleship and mission

***Suggested Readings:***

Proximity: [www.presbyterianireland.org/proximity](http://www.presbyterianireland.org/proximity)

A concise curriculum of content that cover the building blocks of Pastoral Care, The Bible and Spiritual Disciplines across 3 booklets: Seasons of Life, Life in God’s Story and Habits of a Lifetime. Each session contains a Bible passage to read along with a short commentary or reflection on it. This is designed for a disciple-making relationship, not just spoon-feeding people the answers but helping to teach people to reflect on God’s word for themselves. Some discussion questions are provided to stimulate conversation together and push people towards action.

***Suggested readings:***

Faith for Exiles Book & Resources

Beautiful Resistance, Jon Tyson

Imagine Church Neil Hudson

Scattered and gathered Neil Hudson

The Care of Souls: Cultivating a Pastor's Heart

Shepherd Leader, The: Achieving Effective Shepherding in Your Church