

The Importance of Content in Disciple-Making

Discipleship involves the transformation of the mind as well as of the heart and will. What we think about forms the raw materials from which our lives are lived under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. During this session, we will consider the importance of defining the content we intend to use in the discipling process and how establishing growth objectives sets the tone for the spiritual formation of the individual or group members. Additionally, related issues such as discipleship cycles, group duration (time), corporate vs. personal discipleship, and content limitation will be discussed with a view to promoting curriculum development as a vital task for effective disciple-making.

John Musselman is the President of the Jackson Institute, a leadership development organization whose mission is to contribute to the cultural, intellectual, and spiritual formation of individuals who are on a passionate quest to be welcomed, received, and acknowledged by God. He studied at the University of Alabama (Honors BS in Mathematics), Reformed Theological Seminary (MDiv), and Fuller Theological Seminary (DMin). After serving on the staffs of the Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, and Perimeter Church in Atlanta, he founded the Jackson Institute in 1991. John has trained leaders in disciple-making in India, Romania, Poland, Australia, Mexico, Tanzania, Kenya, Belize, Spain, and the U.S.A. He has edited John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, A.B. Bruce's classic work, *The Training of the Twelve*, and Thomas Watson's *Man's Chief End: God's Glory*. In addition, he has written *Classic Discipleship*, a manual for equipping leaders in Christian discipleship, and *The Holy Spirit and His Gifts*.

I. The Formation and Reformation of the Christian Mind

A. As a man thinketh: a God-given capacity and gift

B. Shaping our minds into the image of Jesus Christ

C. The foundation of our thought

1. God's eternal and infallible truth

2. General and special revelation

D. Using our imaginations and engaging in rational thought

1. Promotes personal joy (as opposed to succumbing to discouragement or depression)

2. Deepens human longing (rather than abandoning hope)
3. Strengthens faith (when the ground around us seems to be so unstable)
4. Develops a Christian worldview by which we see the world

E. Thinking analogically vs. univocally

1. Removes barriers to spiritual sight
2. Provides understanding and wisdom

F. Obedience to God: knowing and doing

G. A disciplined mind

II. Spiritual Formation in Small Groups

- A. Determining the duration of the group (years)
- B. The importance of regularly scheduled meetings (time)
- C. The place of curricula in the discipling process

- D. Individual and corporate discipleship

III. Curriculum Selection

- A. The broad spectrum of knowledge
- B. A professor's life-changing challenge
- C. Individual and group assessment
- D. Establishing growth objectives
- E. Seven characteristics by which to evaluate curriculum
- F. Curriculum selection: primary and secondary materials

IV. The Fruit of Discipleship

- A. A mind and heart shaped by truth
- B. A well-lived life informed by careful, godly thinking
- C. A life pleasing to God