

Training or Discipling?

The Apostle Paul's aim was to work with the church in Philippi for their "progress and joy in the faith, so that through my being with you again your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me" (Phil. 1:25-26). It can be easy to confuse growing disciples who are overflowing with joy in Jesus with merely training people in skills and knowledge. We may not realise that we are doing it. This session will help us consider how to nurture men and women as disciple-making disciples, rather than merely equipping them with courses, skills, and knowledge.

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I. Introduction – have we swapped discipling for training? What is it that we want to grow?

II. Vibrant disciples: lessons from Thessalonica

A. Knowing God

B. Receiving the message with joy given by the Holy Spirit

C. Becoming imitators

D. Overflowing with love, holiness and hope

E. The message ringing out

III. Contemporary challenges to disciple-making

IV. How did Paul do it? 2 Timothy 3:10-11; Phil. 4:9

“You don’t learn to fish in a classroom but on a river bank” – Nigel Lee

V. How do we work with others for their progress and joy in the faith, so they overflow with joy in Christ?

VI. Why are we tempted to confuse this with doing training courses that equip with skills and knowledge?

VII. The heart of biblical, spiritual leadership: growing disciples who make disciples, full of joy in Christ

VIII. Reflection questions:

- A. Summarise your growth expectations for:
 - 1. A reasonably mature believer
 - 2. A baby Christian
- B. What teaching, apprenticing, exposure, immersion and support do they need to grow in Jesus?
- C. What can you as a leader do to help them grow as a disciple? (i.e. how can you do 2 Tim. 3:10-11 for them?)
- D. Do you feel able to disciple people? I have put some categories below. Which do you feel able to do? In which do you feel weaker?

- **Discipling people in the truth of the Lord**

- 1. Building Bible-centred prayerful living
 - a. Helping others know how to feed themselves from the Word
 - b. Helping them know how to apply what it says to their lives
- 2. How to disciple others for their spiritual growth
 - a. How to work with them for their progress and joy in God
 - b. How to develop a passion for growing in spiritual maturity
- 3. How to help others grow in love for God
- 4. How to help others identify where they are in their spiritual walk and how to take next steps
- 5. How to live based on a daily appreciation of grace
- 6. How justification and adoption shape character, ambitions, goals and relationships
- 7. How to help them grow in the fruit of the Spirit

- **Discipling people in the ways of the Lord**

- A. Personal – a vision for personal growth

1. How to help others grow in spiritual practices – worship, prayer, love, forgiveness, repentance, witness
2. How to discover and use their spiritual gifts
3. How to develop healthy spiritual accountabilities and friendships in which they encourage each other to love and good deeds
4. What to do when you have stalled spiritually

- B. Corporate – a vision for kingdom growth

1. Helping others understand and vocalise the purpose of a local church and their place within it
2. Help them grasp how they can participate in God’s big purposes to save more people
3. Help them understand how to witness to and disciple others
4. How to build a discipleship mentality in a small group / facilitate fellowship

- C. Developing transferability

How to disciple others in living out the gospel where they are in today’s world

Suggested Readings:

The Heart of a Servant Leader (Jack Miller)

The Spiritual Formation of Leaders (Chuck Miller)

Wisdom in Leadership (Craig Hamilton)

Fruitful Leaders: How to Make, Grow, Love and Keep Them (Marcus Honeysett)