

**PRINCIPLES OF DISCIPLESHIP**  
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**DISCIPLE MAKING: AN OVERVIEW**  
**Acts 14:22**

**Introduction:**

Personal discipleship is a ministry that has been neglected by many Christians. Indeed, the vast majority of Christians are not personally involved in discipling new converts. Studies have shown that less than 1% of Bible believing church members are involved in personal discipleship. The lack of effective discipleship being done in the local church today constitutes a dangerous problem. The need is so urgent; we can no longer be complacent about so few lasting results in evangelism.

**EVERY CHRISTIAN NEEDS TO BE DISCIPLED CAREFULLY IF THEY ARE ABLE TO ACHIEVE THE  
POTENTIAL FOR SERVICE THAT GOD HAS PLANNED**

**I. Definition of Disciple Making**

A. A basic definition

1. Disciple making is the spiritual work of grounding a new believer in the faith
2. The Bible emphasizes personal disciple making (Acts 14:21-22; Col. 1:28-29)

B. Specifically

1. Helping the new believer receive the assurance of salvation and acceptance with God
2. Helping the new believer develop a consistent devotional life
3. Helping the new believer understand the basics of abundant Christian living
4. Helping the new believer become integrated into the life of a local church
5. Helping the new believer learn to share his faith with others

**II. The Three Basic Forms of Disciple Making**

A. Sunday school

1. Focuses on nourishing the new believer
2. Emphasizes structured instruction in the basics of doctrine
3. Includes the development of committed relationships

B. Personal study

1. Includes those activities the new Christian engages in on his own
2. Emphasizes personal Bible study and reading

C. Personal disciple making

1. Includes the assuming of a one-to-one relationship by a mature believer with a new Christian
2. Emphasizes aiding the new Christian's growth and nurture

### III. The Importance of Personal Disciple Making

A. The vulnerability of a new Christian

1. A new Christian is more easily deceived by Satan than a more mature Christian
2. Knowing little of the word of God makes a new Christian quite defenseless

B. The new Christian's potential for change

1. The direction and guidance offered by a mature Christian greatly increases the chance and the speed at which a new Christian grows in Christ
2. A mature Christian can help the new Christian avoid wrong life patterns which not only hinder his growth but present unnecessary sin problems that need to be undone in the future before real lasting growth can take place

C. Disciples are produced most effectively through disciple making

1. Personal disciple making greatly increases the speed and probability of discipleship development in a new believer's life
2. A disciple is a Christian who is growing in conformity to Christ, is achieving fruit in evangelism, and is working in follow-up to conserve his fruit
3. Disciple making is the spiritual work of developing spiritual maturity and spiritual reproductiveness in the life of a Christian

D. Personal disciple making is the most effective way of achieving spiritual multiplication

1. Your effectiveness in producing soulwinners will determine whether you will be a spiritual “adder” or “multiplier”
2. A multiplier is a disciple who is training his spiritual children to reproduce themselves

#### IV. Spiritual Multiplication

##### A. Evangelizing

1. When we share our faith with other people
2. It is essential that the Christian share Christ with others

##### B. Personal follow-up

1. Follow-up involves building the new Christian
2. Follow-up involves challenging the new Christian to a public identification with Christ and a proclaiming of the gospel

##### C. Discipling

1. Discipling begins when you start to train a Christian you are working with to personally follow-up with another Christian
2. Discipling goes through three distinct levels
  - a. Teaching him to follow-up someone
  - b. Teaching him to teach others to follow-up someone
  - c. Teaching him to teach others to teach others to follow-up someone

##### D. Multiplying

1. Multiplying occurs when a person, followed up and disciplined by you, is following up and discipling others
2. This is the goal of your disciple making ministry and can be accomplished no other way than through one-to-one involvement and training

## V. Factors Affecting Personal Disciple Making

### A. Relationship

1. Personal disciple making is life transference
2. It is important that the disciple maker be in a right relationship with the Lord in his own Christian experience

### B. Commitment

1. Personal follow-up and discipleship training is a time consuming process
2. Christians are not immune from the pressures of the world and most prioritize their activities which compete for time

### C. Concentration

1. To achieve true productiveness, you must work with only a few people at a time
2. Faithfulness is the criterion for concentration in the process of multiplication

### D. Duration

1. Disciple making is not only a temporary time drain, but it will continue over a long period of time
2. Christ, the master disciple maker, thought it necessary to spend nearly all of his time with the twelve apostles during the last six months of his ministry on earth

### E. Environment

1. The kind of spiritual environment a new believer experiences will play a large part in his subsequent Christian growth
2. A person generally conforms to the characteristics of his environment

# LABORING IN DISCIPLE MAKING

## Introduction:

The Lord Jesus Christ was a worker. In His work He joined together with the One who sent Him. The picture of the Lord throughout the Bible is that of the Great Worker, not the Great Bystander. The Lord's people, who are called "to walk even as He walked" (1 John 2:6), should follow in His steps.

## DISCIPLE MAKERS ARE WORKERS TOGETHER WITH GOD

### I. All Are Called To Labor

- A. As taught in the New Testament (1 Corinthians 15:58)
- B. Yet neglected since apostolic times

### II. All Are Needed To Labor

- A. As full-time workers (Colossians 3:24)
- B. As specialists and generalists (1 Corinthians 12)
- C. As people persons (Philippians 2:4)
- D. Workers in a united body
- E. As pioneers in new fields (Matthew 9:38)

### III. Why Don't Many Believers Become Laborers?

- A. Relying upon paid "professional" staff
- B. Insufficient training (Ephesians 4:11-13)
- C. Fear of signing up for life
- D. Lack of motivation (2 Peter 1:9)

### IV. What Can You Do To Become An Effectual Laborer?

- A. Make yourself available for the service of God (Isaiah 6:1-8)

B. Consider where your aptitudes or gifts may lie (Romans 12:3)

C. Seek training in the specific area of concern

**V. How Can You Improve Your Labor?**

A. Set high standards for yourself (Jeremiah 48:10)

B. Confer with others and review your ministry (Proverbs 27:17)

# PRIORITIES IN DISCIPLE MAKING

## Introduction:

The follower of the Lord Jesus Christ cannot fail to notice how His sense of mission led directly to a life filled with great accomplishments. He understood clearly the meaning of priorities -- preferential attention to what is most important among many demands. Jesus knew life was a one-time-only opportunity, and He would not be able to repeat the course later. The Lord was not a procrastinator, because time was not to be wasted nor opportunities lost in doing less important things.

## THE DISCIPLE MAKER SHOULD LIVE HIS LIFE ACCORDING TO GOD'S PRIORITIES

### I. Developing God's Priorities

- A. Priority of the eternal over the temporal (2 Corinthians 4:18)
- B. Priority of the spiritual over the physical (John 4:13-14)
- C. Priority of people over things (Mark 8:36-37)

### II. Fulfilling Our Responsibilities

- A. Responsibility toward God (Psalm 27:8)
- B. Responsibility toward God's people (Gal. 6:10)
- C. Responsibility toward those without Christ (Matthew 28:19-20)
- D. Responsibilities of normal living
  - 1. Family obligations (1 Timothy 5:8)
  - 2. Job performance (Colossians 3:22-23)
  - 3. Routine duties (Luke 10:39-41)
  - 4. Rest and recreation (Mark 6:31)

### III. Making Right Decisions

- A. Time usage (Ephesians 5:16)
- B. Major decision areas

1. Job or educational decisions

2. Geographic moves

3. Relationships

C. Evaluation of decisions

## DEVELOPING A MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIP

### Proverbs 17:17

#### Introduction:

Developing a close friendship with a new believer is a basic ingredient in effectively following-up a new Christian, for it involves a nurturing that goes beyond merely the teaching and enforcing of rules. It also involves a loving communication of those rules and a loving communication of a life.

#### A DISCIPLE MAKER IS TO DEVELOP A MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIP WITH THOSE INDIVIDUALS WITH WHOM HE WILL BE WORKING

##### I. Develop an Atmosphere of Loving Concern

- A. Be honestly concerned for the new Christian, really wanting to be his friend
- B. Pray for a genuine concern of the new Christian as a person
- C. Recognize God began to pick out your friends after you became a Christian and often he picks out people you never would
- D. Create an environment or atmosphere of unconditional acceptance and love for a person

##### II. Develop Your Relationship Around Christ

- A. Christ should be the focal point of your relationship
- B. Christ is the focal point of true fellowship
- C. Spend most of your time on spiritual things
- D. Make it a natural thing to share with one another what God is doing and what God is teaching you through His word
- E. Whenever you are with a new Christian, strive, formally or informally, to share something spiritual
- F. The best way to motivate a new Christian toward Bible study is to use the Bible when you deal with his problems and share how you use it when you are solving your own problems

### III. Be Patient

- A. The new Christian's relationship with God is going to take time to develop
- B. The new Christian's relationship with you is going to take time to develop
- C. Do not take it personally when the new Christian stumbles
- D. Patience is required to discern the new Christian's attitude in the midst of failure
- E. Another element of patience is being willing to reprove the new Christian when he needs reproof

### IV. Spend Quality Time Together

- A. Choose an optimal time for both of you
- B. Look for something you are already doing to which you could invite the new Christian
- C. Do all you can to create times of informal fellowship with the new believer

### V. Minister to the Total Person

- A. Sometimes we are overly concerned about the spiritual side of a person's life and neglect other aspects involved
- B. Each individual is made up of many parts which form a single whole with all of the parts interrelated
- C. The spiritual affects the social and the social can also affect the spiritual

### VI. Remember What He Tells You

- A. When you forget what people tell you they begin to think you don't really care
- B. A good memory is essential in developing new relationships

## VII. Be a Leader as Well as a Friend

- A. Strike the right balance between being both spiritual leader and friend
- B. Have a healthy balance with a relationship of mutual encouragement, sharing of spiritual truths, and counseling
- C. Deal with problems when they arise and in the order of their priority

# CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

## Philippians 4:9

### Introduction:

A crucial ingredient of discipleship is continual growth in Christian character. These qualities do not magically appear in the life of a believer; they have to be worked on and built little by little into the life of each Christian. Christian character is the most necessary trait that a believer in Jesus Christ is expected to possess. A follower of Christ must be different from anyone else in the world.

### WHEN OTHERS SEE A BELIEVER, THE PERSON OF CHRIST SHOULD BE OBVIOUS AND VISIBLE

#### I. The Focus of Disciple Making

##### A. Conviction

1. People hold religious beliefs, but their convictions hold them.
2. Convictions are built in personal Bible study.
3. Convictions are developed when the disciple is prepared to answer “why” questions.

##### B. Perspective

1. A new Christian is pretty much a self-centered individual.
2. As believers grow in the Lord, they become aware of the needs of others.
3. Mature believers begin reaching beyond themselves.
4. As a Christian's vision is enlarged, he lives his life on a different plane.

##### C. Excellence

1. Jesus possessed a spirit of excellence. (Mark 7:37)
2. A spirit of excellence requires the believer to turn himself over to Jesus Christ and let Him live His life through them.

##### D. Depth of character

1. Character development is a life-long process
2. Godly character is never mastered in this life
3. True disciples continue to grow and mature

## II. Qualities of Christian Character

### A. Health

1. Physical fitness is an important character trait (1 Cor. 6:19)
2. In terms of general health, it is essential to rid ourselves of sinful habits

### B. Outward witness

1. Christlikeness in personal appearance must be developed (1 Cor. 9:22)
2. What we say should also reflect who we are

### C. Purity of life

1. Christians must guard their purity in thought, word and deed (2 Cor. 6:17)
2. Subtle temptations to impurity must be resisted (1 Cor. 10:13)

### D. Servanthood

1. Servanthood reflects to others the reality of the life of Jesus being lived in their lives (Mark 10:42-45)
2. A true servant puts others first and yields his rights to them (2 Cor. 4:5)

### E. Giving

1. God wants all aspects of our lives to bring Him glory, including the finances entrusted to us (Prov. 3:9-10)
2. Blessing accompanies giving (Luke 6:38)

### F. Sacrificial love

1. Love is a mark of a true disciple (John 13:35)
2. Love is Christ living out His life in yielded vessels