

Thirteen Steps in Building Disciples

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Introduction to Thirteen Steps in Building Disciples

There are a number of steppingstones between a believer's conversion and a mature, fruitful life. We enumerate here 13 steps, with explanatory notes and suggestions on the road to being what Jesus called, a "true disciple."

Believers are called to be disciples. How can this be accomplished? There are 13 things that should be laid before each believer who aspires to be a true disciple. Those who assist them should touch on each point. Here is an outline of each of these points.

1. Follow-up. Initial assistance given new or untaught believers who never received it following a profession of faith. It is not God's purpose to allow new believers to remain immature "babes in Christ."

2. Disciple-Making is the process of moving a convert from initial follow-up to being a mature follower of the Lord Jesus.

3. Improving Disciple-Making - Part I. This teaches them to be a strong finisher, how to claim God's resources for victorious living, how to make needed life changes, responding to the Lordship of Christ, and the example of the Lord Jesus as the True Disciple Preeminently.

4. Improving Disciple-Making - Part II. This teaches the proper goals for a true disciple, unacceptable characteristics, problem areas at their roots, the necessities of effective discipling meetings, and both dos and don'ts to keep in mind. There is also an evaluation

sheet which the discipler should learn to use positively with the person being helped.

5. Improving Disciple-Making - Part III. This will review "time-wasters" and "time-savers" so the disciple can be "redeeming the time because the days are evil" (Eph. 5:6). Suggestions are given to achieve this purpose.

6. Multiplication in Discipleship. This calls for specific steps to help someone become a "spiritual reproducer," one who trains others to do what he or she has been trained to do. Eight steps are given in this process, each essential for a "multiplier" and the candidate.

7. Commitment to Servanthood. This teaches disciples to serve others for Christ's sake, just as He, the Perfect Servant, did in His earthly ministry. It outlines the meaning of both servant (diakonos in Greek) and bond slave (doulos in Greek). It provides examples of faithful and unfaithful servants and shows the benefits to all concerned.

8. Effective Use of Spiritual Gifts. This shows the meaning of a "spiritual gift," as distinguished from human talents, and its God-given purpose for the individual and the local church. It classifies gifts and shows how they are to be utilized.

9. The Disciple's Vision for the Church. This shows the importance of the church as a divine institution, both universal and local. It shows what is needed for effective function and notes hindrances to its development. It is intended as a family-gathering center, a workplace, a help station for the needy, and an outreach center. It is not set up to be simply an auditorium to hear sermons by preachers.

10. Spiritual Goals, Purposes with Eternity's Values on View. All successful endeavors, divine or human, require definitive, long-term goals, as well as short-term, to achieve lasting purposes. They must be pursued with a "single eye," Christ being always the center. There must be a plan, priorities to achieve in order of importance. Suggestions are given for things we need to do or stop doing or study more deeply. Hindrances must be recognized.

11. World Vision and God's Eternal Plan. This lesson lays before the disciple that God thinks "world wide." "He loved the world and gave His only begotten Son" to save people (John 3:16). He is "not willing that any should perish" (II Pet. 3:19), but that all should "come to repentance." This lesson explains the nature of real vision, beyond the immediate scope of time and sense. Suggestions are given for achieving this vision.

12. Worship on a Regular Basis, Remembering that God Seeks Worshipers (John 4:23)! The lesson defines worship (speaking to God, about Himself). It is personal and corporate (with other believers). The Scriptures ring with doxologies (praise to God), for Himself, His wonderful works and His salvation. Disciples must learn to be better worshippers, frequently, fervently.

13. Watching for His Coming and Preparing for His evaluation of our lives here on earth when it's all done. We do not know the day or hour (Matt. 25:13). It is imminent and might be at any time. The true disciple yearns for this. It is the last prayer of the Bible (Rev. 22:20). We will then be judged for our lives and service here at the Judgment Seat of Christ (II Cor. 5:10). We

will not be judged for our sins for Christ paid our debt
(Rom. 8:1).

Appendix A - Deals with the "School of God" for
Disciples.

Appendix B - Deals with "Spiritual Warfare" by Disciples.

Step 1: Follow-Up

This expression is not common to other languages. It refers to the process of helping newborn babes in Christ (I Thess 2: 7-12, I Peter 2:2, I Corinthians 3:1). It may also be needed with those who after their profession of faith in Christ did not receive this help. Doctors who help infants after birth are called pediatricians (baby doctors). Follow-up is "spiritual pediatrics."

New babies, physical or spiritual, have several common needs; both need simple initial foods, like milk. Paul said to new believers, "I have fed you with milk" (I Cor. 3:2). It is normal for a newborn baby to desire (long) for the "pure milk of the word" (I Peter 2:2). This refers to a desire to take in the Scriptures.

This is given through simple, daily study of small portions of Scripture, like I John or John's Gospel, later Mark's Gospel and I Peter. This occurs in what is called "Quiet Time," being alone with God and the Bible, hopefully undistracted, preferably rising early in the morning. It may only be possible initially to devote as little as 15 minutes at a time, hopefully 30. The new believers should have it explained why it is vital, like daily food. It will probably be necessary to "show them how."

Do it with them, show them how to seek a personal application from something they read (hearing and responding to God).

Move them to the ability to feed themselves (as very young children) not be "spoon fed" indefinitely.

Help them learn how to apply the scriptures personally (II Tim 3:16). Ask these questions:

1. Promise to claim?
2. Example to follow?
3. Command to obey?
4. Sin to forsake or a warning?
5. Encouragement given?
6. Counsel to take?
7. Character Trait to be noted?

(Positive/Negative)

Areas of Application

1. Personal Life (purification, guidance, encouragement).
2. Relationship to others (helping them, speaking God's word to them, being an example).
3. Thoughts about God (His true likeness, His ways differing from our ways, drawing near by faith).

Major Goals in Helping Believers

1. Consistent walk in the Lord.
2. Regular, fruitful devotional times.
3. Knowing how to live an overcoming life of victory.
4. Developing Christ-like character.
5. Developing the habit of sharing your testimony as a way of life.

What Are Your Qualifications to Follow Up Others?

1. A steady walk with Jesus.

2. Victory in your own devotional life.
3. Willing to invest time in others.
4. Ability to be firm in your care and to deal with problems when necessary.
5. Not easily discouraged.
6. Be faithful to God and this person.
7. Keep confidences.
8. Coordinate your work with others in responsibility (they are not your property because they are your responsibility).

When Dealing With Those Praying to Receive Christ

1. Make sure their understanding of the Gospel is clear (Ephesians 1:13); that they have truly repented of their sins (Acts 2:38); that they have surrendered control of their life to the Lord (Luke 6:46).
2. Are they confessing to others that Jesus is their Lord (Romans 10:9-10)?
3. Each day, are they praying and reading the Bible (Psalms 119:10, 15-16)?
4. Do they know that they are saved (I John 5:13)? Are they trusting only in His shed blood on the cross to cleanse their sins (Heb. 9:14, 22)?
5. Is there clear evidence of a changed life (II Corinthians 5:17)? Have they turned away from evil practices to live righteously (I John 3:4-10)?
6. Are they prepared to confess Christ in the waters of baptism as a believer (Acts 2:41; Mark 16:16)?

In Dealing With Those Who Pray to Receive Christ

1. If truly born again, remember they are like newborn babies and need much care (I Peter 2:2).
2. Meet with them every week for at least one hour.
3. Help them break away from any sinful practices (Isaiah 1:16, 55:7).
4. Pray for them, encourage them, and support them in dealing with problems such as opposition and fear (Joshua 1:9).
5. Remind them that the Lord will help them "by His indwelling Spirit, by His spiritual life planted in them (Rom. 8:9-11), by the food of His Word taken in regularly (I Peter 2:2)" so they can grow.

Step 2: Disciple-Making

This is the process of moving a convert from initial follow-up to being a mature follower of the Lord Jesus. "Disciples are made, not born" (Matt. 28:19). Disciples are made by other disciples.

It is the Lord's command: "Go you into all the world and make disciples" (Matt 28:19). It is called "The Great Commission," and it goes beyond sending missionaries to foreign fields. It is for all believers wherever they are and for all churches to follow its directives. It involves the assisting of other believers to grow and become productive.

It is exemplified by the Lord Jesus and His work with the Twelve. It is seen in the ministry of the Apostle Paul and Timothy. It is seen in the Apostle John and his disciples. It is seen in a man named Polycarp. It is seen in the Old Testament in Moses with Joshua, Elijah with Elisha, Samuel in his schools of the prophets, Paul and his young disciple Timothy. "The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witness these entrust to faithful men in who will be able to teach these also" (II Timothy 2:2).

What is a disciple? He is a learner, a follower, an imitator, one who passes on what he believes to others that they might also be Jesus' disciples. It was a common term used by the Greeks for those who followed certain philosophic schools. It was used of the followers of John the Baptist (Matt 9:14). It was even used by the followers of the Jewish sect, the Pharisees (Matt 22:15-16). It was natural to use the term in reference to those becoming Christians (Acts 11:26). Thus, it was

used broadly of all who professed to follow Jesus (Matt 5:1-2) including even false disciples (John 6:66).

Narrowly, the word describes those who meet strict requirements by the Lord. He called these "true disciples" (John 8:31). These are the real disciples. The terms for true discipleship go beyond, and are not the same as, the terms of salvation. These terms are:

1. No Rival: Complete loyalty to Christ (Luke 14:26).
2. No Refusal: Habitual obedience and submission to Christ (Luke 14:27).
3. No Return: Persistence in following Christ without turning back (Luke 14:33).

Why should anyone wish to accept such strict terms? Primarily because they fully love our Lord Jesus and appreciate the sacrifice of His life for us (II Cor. 5:14-15); these things motivate them, not self-indulgence or complacency. There are also many benefits.

1. Spiritual blessings in this life a hundred fold (Mark 10:30).
2. Future rewards beyond this life. (I Cor 3:14; II Cor. 5:10).

What is essential to begin becoming a real disciple?

1. You ought to be living a consistent Christian life yourself. Be committed to living a God-pleasing life (I Thess. 4:1).
2. You should not be having besetting sins over which you have not had victory (Heb.12:1, I John 1:9). Examples are temper outbursts, harsh or impure speech, drinking, pornography, or sexual problems.

3. You should have a consistent devotional life (effective daily quiet time) with a steady diet of the word and regular prayers.

4. You should be sharing your faith with others in your immediate circle (witnessing, confessing).

Here are some suggestions for effective discipleship sessions.

1. The candidate he disciples should make himself dependably available to the discipling process.

2. There should be a regular weekly meeting time of at least one-hour. Extra time can be arranged for needed social fellowship and joint ministry activities, such as calling on others.

3. Share at each meeting, both of you, your personal applications from the Word. Discuss them. Decide why God has brought these to your attention. What will you do about these specifically?

4. Pray together audibly, perhaps even on your knees. Include evangelistic prospects, character needs or problems, and of course worship. Encourage and give hope.

5. Review your goals and specify items of progress. Consider progress in character development, ministry skill needs, and problems being faced or overcome.

6. Institute a scripture memory plan beginning with basic gospel verses then adding growth or other key verses.

7. Pursue a well chosen reading program supplementing but not substituting for time in the Word. Even Paul was not a "Bible-only" man but a widely read man who

quoted non-Biblical sources. Biographies of godly men are helpful, also a basic grasp of Biblical and extra-Biblical history. How else could you appreciate the prophecies of Daniel or other prophets?

8. Prepare thoroughly for the weekly meeting. Do not just show up and talk. Make sure everything is understood. Repeat often, especially anything basic. God does repeat key commands. Try to demonstrate.

Never assume anything. Look up for careful definition any words used. Keep a dictionary handy; also a concordance of Bible words with their meanings in Hebrew and Greek supplements.

9. Keep emphasizing the Lordship of Christ in every way, especially in matters of decision and action (how will this serve Christ and His purposes?) Remember, "Not my will but Thine be done." Take up the cross daily in self-denial and personal sacrifice.

The following suggestions are for the person doing discipling ("Make Disciples").

1. Select with care a faithful person who will voluntarily make himself available and approachable. Use great care that you do not spend time on an unfaithful person. Begin with a few initial meetings to check his response. Promise nothing beyond this. If there is a lack of effective response, continue no further; other than pray for them.

2. Check progress on all steps outlined above; adjust where necessary, spending more time where it is most needed.

3. Show them how every step of the way, from effective devotional time to witnessing.

4. "Speak the truth in love" (Eph 4:15), admonishing firmly yet courteously with courage (I Cor. 4:14). Don't avoid this just to be well liked at all times. Often people do not want to listen to this. Still you are not seeking to win a popularity contest, only to please God and help them.

5. Get them involved in some ministry in the church, starting even with simple things (serving others) then perhaps to pre-school, Sunday school and assisting with youth and other small groups. Keep in mind the development of spiritual gifts by serving broadly where God will bless others the most. Teach them to be others directed, just as our Lord modeled it. Give attention to good management of relationships.

6. Give assignments, including areas of need or skill, reading, memory work, witnessing, and developing contacts. Do not coerce (force) people to do things. That should not be necessary in a willing disciple. Remember they are Christ's disciples not yours. You are not a lord over God's heritage. (I Peter 5:3).

7. Expect growth: some growth is gradual (character or skills) (I Peter 2:2, II Peter 3:18), some immediate (temptation, impure thoughts, bad habits, incurring needless debt) (Eph. 4:22).

Step 3: Improving Disciple-Making - Part 1

This means giving attention to what we should be doing more effectively - as well as helping others. It may involve better devotional times, better prayer life, better time use, improvement in setting daily priorities, more effective witnessing, and character development.

We can make a great beginning but not be a strong finisher. The Lord was a strong finisher. He exemplified (John 17:4). The apostle Paul also was one who said, "I have finished my course"(II Tim 4:7)

1. We must teach the need to love the Lord with a whole heart (Matt 22:37-38).
2. We must teach them to "eat the word" daily as necessary food (Jer. 15:16, Ps. 119:97, 103).
3. We must teach them by mutual action and sharing how to make changes, in self or others, by prayer (Eph. 6:18, James 5:16).
4. We must teach them to sow the seed of the word with others, water, pray, and seek personal contacts. When there is some response, lead them to press ahead and then multiply (John 4:35-36, I Cor. 3:6).
5. We must teach them to grow in virtue (II Pet 1:5a) and bear much fruit (John 15:8).
6. We must teach them to recognize spiritual opposition (Eph. 6:10-13). The three major foes of spiritual development are:

1. The world system (kosmos) with its values which encourage mediocrity, complacency, conformity to its way of doing thinking (I John 2:15).

2. The fleshly, sinful nature which desires to yield to temptation and resists self sacrifice (Rom. 13:14).

3. The Devil is our supreme enemy and the personification of evil who "goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour" (I Peter 5:8). He deceives, usually subtly raises doubts and attacks within the limits of God's permissive will (Job 1:10-12, 2:6).

7. Teach them to claim their spiritual resources for victory (II Peter 1:3). These are:

1. The Divine Nature (2 Peter 1:4), God's life in us, displaying the "Image of God" (Rom. 8:29)

2. The power of the Indwelling Spirit (Eph. 1:13, 19, 3:20) that raised Jesus.

3. Realizing that the power of Indwelling Sin is Broken (Rom. 6:6, 11). We are no longer slaves to sin, but now able to be slaves of the righteousness of Christ.

4. The Prayers of the Lord Jesus (Hebrews 7:25). What is He praying for you?

5. The Word of God (I John 2:14; Hebrews 4:12), which is the sword of the Spirit, a life-giving, energizing surplus.

6. The prayer of Faith (Mark 11:23-24; Matt. 26:41) to maintain spiritual vitality (example: Peter on water) is the mightiest weapon we have, but needs to be used according to God's Direction.

7. The life of Jesus manifested in you (2 Cor. 4:10-11, Rom. 12:1-2), which flows out of a yielded, open channel.

8. Teach them the need to change if they wish to grow; consider the following:

- God wants this change.
- With God's help I believe I can change.
- I commit myself to change (character, skills, functions or relationships).
- I will designate a few areas in which I plan to change. (after a thorough review of every area of my life).
- I will work out several steps (strategies).
- I will set a time limit for achieving each step of my plan.
- I will make myself accountable to someone to see that I do act upon my plan and strategies (monthly at least).
- I will pray daily for God's help in achieving my goals and ask others to pray for me.
- I will meditate on Scripture daily and systematically with personal applications that may achieve my goals.
- I will achieve my goals, or modify them so I can achieve them or replace them or drop them and confess failure.

8. Teach them the meaning of the words, "He is Lord of all" (Acts 10:36). He is called Lord approximately 522 times in the New Testament. We are to walk under His Lordship daily (Col. 2:6). How do you do this in practice in everything (Col. 1:18)? Consider these areas:

- Our priorities.

- Our bodies.
- Our possessions.
- Our loving relationships.
- Our work and home affairs.
- Our speech and thoughts.
- Our hopes and ambitions.

Our priorities must be clear (Matt. 6:33). With so many demands upon our time and energy, the wise followers of the Lord Jesus, like His master, must determine where to give preferential attention to the most important things, by God's standards. There normally is enough time each day to do what God wishes, but not enough time to respond to each demand on our time and attention. "Redeem (buy back) the Time." Use it by doing two important things at the same time (rehearse memory verses, pray or meditate while walking) (Eph. 5:16).

There is no question that the Lord has instituted some clear priorities for His disciples. The first of these is putting God first. We are to love Him above all else (Matt. 22:37-38). In all things He must have preeminence (Col. 1:18). "He who offers God second place, offers Him no place," said a wise man. This insults and robs God (Mal. 1:6-8).

There are other priorities, in principle, from God's perspective:

1. Priority of the eternal over the temporal (II Cor. 4:18; Col. 3:1).
2. Priority of the spiritual over the physical (Matt. 24:35; John 4:13-14).

There is no greater priority than the Lordship of Christ in daily living. He is the blessed and only potentate, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords (I Tim 6:15; Rev. 17:14, 19:16). Even Hell knows this (Mark 5:7, James 2:19). When people fell down to worship and called Jesus Lord, He commended them (John 13:13). The confession of Him as Lord is required for salvation (Rom. 10:9-10). It should be acknowledged now, but everyone will do it ultimately (Phil. 2:10-11). For many it will be too late to save them because in life they refused to have Him reign over them (Luke 19:14). His Lordship demands yielding of everything to His control.

1. Our possessions. He is Lord of all He has given us (I Chron. 29:14). We are merely the managers or stewards (I Cor. 4:2). Material possessions, talents or enablements and the days of our life belong to Him and are lent to us at His discretion to be used for His purposes.

2. Our relationships. "He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked" (I John 2:6). He loved the people but He forbade "friendship with the world" (James 4:4). He was "separate from sinners" (Hebrews 7:26), though He ate with them and received them (Luke 15:2). Both love and holiness must govern all our dealings with others. Following the divine order in home relationships is obedience to Him as Lord (Ephesians 5:22-25).

3. Our business, home, and school affairs. Whether employee or employer, we are called to be honorable and just (Ephesians 6:5,9; James 5:4). We are to do everything as unto the Lord (Colossians 3:23; I Cor. 10:31).

4. Our speech and thought life. The very words of Jesus sprang from God and not man (John 14:10). He is willing to speak through us, if we let Him (Matthew 10:20). We are to be swift to hear but slow to speak (James 1:19). We are not to speak ill of others (James 4:11). The thought life is a source of defilement unless He controls it (Matthew 15:18-20).

5. Our hopes and ambitions. What will stand the test of His eternal evaluation (I Corinthians 3:11-15)? We are to "seek those things which are above where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God" (Colossians 3:1). We are not to set our desires upon earthly things.

The following checklist may help focus on areas where we need to improve:

1. Does every day begin with a fresh commitment of my body to Him?
2. Does every other interest take second place to His interests?
3. Does every decision consider Him first?
4. Does every commitment line up with my commitment to Him?
5. Does every relationship have His approval?
6. Does every activity enable Him to be present?
7. Does every area of my life come under His rule?

Conclusion

To live under the Lordship of Christ is to live under the wisest being in the universe. He is the possessor of all knowledge and wisdom, including all that will ever happen in the future. How could we imagine that

avoiding His rule would be beneficial or bring happiness? The Lord Jesus has loved us with an everlasting love and demonstrated that love by laying down His life for us on the cross (Revelation 1:5). Why should He be suspected of wanting less than the best for His own (Romans 8:32)? Why should we despise His love by refusing His leadership? Turning our backs on Jesus our Lord is ingratitude at the least and insanity at the worst.

We are no longer our own. We are bought with a price. We should therefore glorify God in our bodies and in our spirits by humble and loving submission to our great God and Savior Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13).

Step 4: Improving Disciple-Making - Part 2

Selecting a Disciple

It is important for disciplers to seek out and select the best possibilities for training in discipleship. What kind of person is he or she now? How can that person be expected to most effectively assist others? Can they identify problems or hindrances? What are the do's and don'ts? Consider a goal sheet; also the living example of the Lord Jesus. Primarily, five things should be in view even if imperfectly developed.

1. Is this person "sold out to Christ," a committed believer with a heart for God?
2. How well has this person functioned in relationships, home and outside? Is this a "team person," pleasant, not hypersensitive, or overly critical, but a good prospect as a worker?
3. Is this person able to handle a reasonable workload and pressure without becoming "angered" or unduly frustrated? Can he be both diligent and calm?
4. Are essential leadership qualities evident? This will include decisiveness, initiative, getting things done (a "can doer") and ability to communicate ideas and visions to others.
5. Is there stability and dependability indicated in character?

The disciples must have goals for this relationship.

I. The Discipeler Under God

We are called to be something before we share anything. To do otherwise is to be a hypocrite. Jesus Christ is our Lord, without reservation (John 20:28). We are called to be conformed to His image (Romans 8:29). We are subject to Him. We have a vital relationship to God on a daily basis and our body is presented to Him for whatever He pleases (Romans 12:1-2). Even a relatively new believer can have this relationship with the Lord.

II. The Discipler and Christian Basics

There must be doctrinal knowledge and practice of certain fundamentals. These are:

1. Thorough understanding of the Gospel.
2. Assurance of salvation.
3. Consistent daily devotional life.
4. Fellowship in the local church.
5. Control of our life by the Holy Spirit.
6. Effective application of the Word.
7. Effective prayer.
8. Obedience to God.
9. Sharing our faith as a way of life.
10. Effectively meeting temptation.
11. Knowing the will of God.
12. Developing Christian character traits.

The discipler must be consistent in the fundamentals. This includes a daily devotional time with God, praying in a meaningful way, applying the Word personally in Bible study, and sharing our faith with others as a way of life. Some doctrinal matters may be covered in basic

Christian training classes. This will free us to work on other matters.

III. The Discippler in Relationships

1. The godly person is certainly separate from the world, even though living in the midst of sinners. Such was the life of Jesus.

2. The person God uses will certainly be active in the local church and contributing as a member of the body.

3. He should be others-directed in his life, keenly interested in needs, which give him opportunity to minister.

4. He seeks to find others with whom he can share Biblical life goals. He wants to share his life with those who are like-minded. He wants to be used by God as a motivator and to be able to transfer effective spiritual principles rooted in the Word. He seeks to find and make multipliers for Christ.

The discipler must learn to assist others in solving problems, while not making decisions for them. That is their job, not yours.

The golden principle in dealing with others as a helper is "

speak the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15). The Lord Jesus did exactly that.

God's Word speaks of the necessity of warning (I Thess. 5:14; Acts 20:31,)

admonishing (II Thess. 3:15; Col. 3:16), rebuking (II Tim. 4:2; Titus 1:13, 2:15), and correcting (Titus 1:9) those we are seeking to help.

These are the principles used by God in chastening those He loves (Heb. 12:5-11).

There can be no progress to maturity without change and this requires discipline. We are to confront characteristics, which are detrimental in believers and seek to help them change. We should never minimize sin nor accept excuses for not changing.

The following characteristics should be deemed unacceptable:

1. Lack of discipline, tardiness, and failure to complete assignments.
2. Excuses, blame-shifting, dwelling on past influences or experiences.
3. Talking about problems without acting, ventilating endlessly.
4. Defiling habits, associations, retaining "grave clothes" of old life.
5. Failing to obey God in areas of which they are aware.
6. Talking about others, criticizing, gossip.
7. Laziness, unwillingness to work.
8. Anger, lust, gluttony (excessive overweight) ingratitude, pride.
9. Talking about their feelings in place of actions.
10. Self-centeredness, rather than being others-directed, Christ-centered.

Problem areas should be diagnosed at the root, not on details. Identification of these roots might be assisted by considering the following areas:

1. Not truly committed to do personal discipleship in the first place.

Perhaps they sought personal spiritual help in basics and did not intend to get involved. Perhaps they considered themselves inadequate (fear). It would seem that effective input can only be given to a person who is committed to effective output.

2. Not functioning in spiritual basics personally (undisciplined life).

If we are not effective in an area, we have nothing to share. Training in discipleship is not something learned to pass on to others while not living it personally.

3. Failing to study and use the materials and training given (not listening).

Some believers have not learned to listen and practice what they have been shown by experienced workers. They are familiar with concepts, but they do not act upon them. They set up their own patterns and ignore clear instruction.

4. There is a need for further assistance but lack of effort to get it.

Field practice in calling or personal evangelism, small group assistance and individual problem-solving sessions may help. If we need more direction, we must take steps to get this help and move out. There should be continuing interchange with a more experienced discipler. They are waiting when they should be taking action.

5. There may be a need to simplify by doing fewer things and doing them well.

We may be best at simple follow-up. We may need to work on our ability to share the gospel or study the Word for ourselves in a productive way. We can concentrate on these, one at a time. We can begin by helping someone else in an area where we have had a measure of victory and blessing.

6. Failure to see that disciples are made by other disciples, not programs.

It is possible to be a "paper disciple." Reading or listening to certain truths is not enough. Reading matter and talk alone will not do the job. One becomes a spiritual reproducer by the personal assistance of another reproducer. Are you moving to be a reproducer for Jesus?

How can the discipler further improve his or her ministry in this area? Begin by reviewing your past efforts with strict self-judgment. Any of us can do a better job at anything if we choose to do so.

Effective discipling necessitates regular meetings, assignments, progress towards goals, ministry effectiveness review. The following objectives will keep us "on the same page," even if our interchanges reflect our different personalities?

1. Establish a close, communicating, trusting bond with the person with whom we are working. We are not just "checker-uppers."
2. Model everything we teach in character, habits, skills and fruit-bearing.
3. Teach them by mutual sharing how to meditate on God's Word. Select and apply the Scriptures as God's Word to us personally.

4. Establish a mutual prayer list, which includes: (1) personal requests, (2) evangelistic prospects, and (3) progress in their ministries.

5. Produce a written set of goals (each should have a copy) for each man. Include a major character need, a ministry skill, and one other goal whose attainment would accelerate their progress.

Your men or women should be able to effectively disciple others, shepherd some of the sheep, do well in their ministries, maintain a solid devotional and family life.

In the course of training, some will drop by the side of the road. That is inevitable. Lets make sure the result is not because of failure or omission on our part.

Here are some do's and don'ts to consider:

Do's

1. Make the standard the

Word of God and the Person of Jesus, not yourself. Yet remember Luke 6:40. The disciple will be like his teacher!

2. Give affirmative Scriptural and practical input concerning the way to grow and the way to correct our patterns.

3. Center on their needs, as God sees it, not your interests. Ask the Lord to enable you to reinforce what He is doing in them.

4. Make clear that you are interested in them as a person, not just as a spiritual project. You are concerned for them.

5. Be a real person who also has problems, conflicts, and failings. Yet refrain from unloading past or present details.

6. Express love. Listen thoughtfully. Do not interrupt, except by necessity. Respond at the points of their interests. Initiate follow-up inquiries such as, "How has your injury been healing?" "Have you received an answer to that prayer?"

7. Keep your word even in the smallest matters. Stress by word and example the need for them to develop the same character trait. Insist on their keeping their word to everyone, especially to God (Psa. 15:46; Num. 30:2). Your word should be your bond.

8. At times you may want to answer a question by a counter question, as so often did the Lord. Not everything needs a reply.

9. Plan for social or sports activities together to balance the relationship and change pace. Growth is needed in all areas.

Don'ts

1. Take people for granted. They need attention and reassurance.

2. Ask them to do things you are not doing. You are not just a "checker-upper."

3. Be hasty with your counsel, unless there is a dire emergency. Being "quick to speak" is when mistakes occur in judgment. Arrange to meet later. What is the hurry? Who is responsible?

4. Burden them with your misgivings, discouragements, doubts, and negative information concerning others.

5. Use your spiritual attainments as a standard. Live Christ before them. Point to Him. Stop talking about your life. Don't act as though you had "already attained" (Phil. 3:12).

6. Burden them with excessive correction or too much to do at any one time. Be sparing and gentle. The Lord's burden is light (Matt. 11:30).

7. Never violate a personal confidence.

Personal Goal Review Sheet

What areas need improvement in quality or time allotment? In what way?

Circle where growth is needed. Number growth needs in order of importance or urgency. Discuss with your partner.

1. Personal devotional life with God

1. The Word

1. Regularity and time.

2. Understanding, interpretation, specific applications rooted in text. Sensing that God is speaking.

2. Prayer

1. Consistency

2. Worship

3. Intercession (written list?)

4. Thanksgiving

5. Confession and Repentance

6. Godly requests

2. Family or Social Relationships

1. With spouse, children, or parents
 1. Closeness and unselfish love
 2. Effective communication
 3. Time together
 4. Building up, affirming
 5. Family devotions
2. With others profitably
 1. Christian friends
 2. Nonbelievers
 3. Contacts with opposite sex (wholesome, helpful)
3. School, Job Performance
 1. Where improvement needed
 2. Effect on spiritual life or ministry
 3. Being in God's will in all aspects
4. Ministry Skills
 1. Witnessing outreach
 2. Conversational ability
 3. Serving, helping
 4. Teaching (if involved)
 5. Study, reading
 6. Vocabulary, grammar use
5. Character Traits
 1. Self discipline
 2. Speech, tongue (gossip, criticism, over-talking or argumentative, kind, helpful)

- 3. Self-centered, introspective
- 4. Fearful, timid
- 5. Impatient
- 6. Fruits of the spirit needed (Gal. 5:22,23)
- 6. Other
- 1. Physical condition
- 2. Finances, debts, budget
- 3. Leadership qualities

Step 5: Improving Disciple-Making - Part 3

This will include the need for vision in disciple making and the best use of time. A list of "

time wasters" and "

time savers" will be in the lesson discussion.

There needs to be a genuine vision for disciple making. Here's God's word about this: Prov. 29:18, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." Like any important understanding it takes vision goes beyond the present see God's plan and perfection. Matt. 28:19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations." Spirit alone, apart from human action, does not develop disciples. If that were true, every Christian would be "spiritual."

Consider This:

"If the whole world repented, believed the Gospel, was baptized and even added to the church, then stopped at this point, the full commission of the Lord Jesus would not have been accomplished. We are commanded to "

make disciples" of believers, "teaching them to observe all that I commanded you."

Amazing! Do you believe this?

It is important to consider in detail our use of time. At best we waste valuable time.

In what way?

1. By not spending as little as five minutes a day to plan your activities and use of time to accomplish priority things: Can you daily identify a priority item? Stop

focusing on easy but unimportant things. Get an early morning start if you want good production. If you fail to plan, you plan to fail.

2. By not having pen and paper (or stick-on notes) at hand to remind you of things to do, people to call, ideas to remember

3. By watching TV, reading unnecessary material, "day dreaming," talking too long on the telephone, or personally doing things others could and should do (even paying them if needed), searching for things you carelessly misplaced, worrying, getting involved in things that should not concern you or be your responsibility. Maybe you are needlessly "neat" (rearranging your desk, closet, attention to clothes).

4. By procrastinating and creating a crisis or "rush situation" later that disrupts an orderly schedule. Maybe you sleep too much. How many hours do you need to stay healthy and alert?

5. By working when fatigued, with poor concentration, rather than taking a "nap" or brief rest. Maybe you don't get enough sleep. Maybe you eat too much or at the wrong time. Are you overeating? Go on a diet, exercise more.

6. By not keeping a good filing system and using it helpfully:

- a. File only essential material.
- b. Put things in files immediately.
- c. Have useful titles so you can locate things quickly.

d. Take an hour once a month to clean up your files, discarding some things and acting on others.

7. By not doing two things at once that are not conflicting. Think, memorize, pray while you walk/ride, use the bathroom. Listen to tapes when walking or riding. Read while you eat (when possible).

8. By not saying "no" when you should, resulting in postponement or neglect of higher priority items.

9. By not using your wastebasket enough (the round file), thus increasing clutter, which interferes with your work. Put needed things in their proper place.

10. By not writing short notes or making brief phone calls to take care of things quickly.

11. By reading every piece of junk mail that crosses your path.

12. By not keeping useful reading matter at hand so you can fill in spare moments. Throw away what you have read or no longer must keep. File articles practically you may want to use in the future.

13. By not making prompt decisions to dispose of questions or issues because you always want more info. What is enough? Don't be a "perfectionist."

14. By not putting things in the same or right place (tossing your keys somewhere) so you spend time looking for them. Pray for lost items.

15. By pursuing unresponsive people and activities which God has not blessed, despite your time investment.

Consider these possible

"time savers":

1. During the day, repeatedly ask, "What is the best use of my time - right now?" "Is what I'm doing getting me closer to my goals?"
2. Get started on overwhelming A-1 tasks by using short time periods (5 minutes or more) to prepare and organize procedures or explore one aspect of task (pulling out relevant files and materials). Discipline your time use to get going now.

Do not procrastinate. It's a hindering sin.

3. Use your time twice; while driving, listen to a cassette, do dictation, memorize verses, think through problems; take along a book or magazine with you to the barbershop or doctor's office; memorize a verse during your shower or bath.
4. Think about puzzling questions just before retiring unless this keeps you awake (this allows the subconscious to work on the problem while you sleep). Record first thoughts in the morning.
5. Keep reading matter conveniently available, especially when doing things that don't interfere (eating, going to the bathroom).
6. Give up worrying (Matt. 6:34). Most of our fears never happen. God takes care of sparrows. Why not you?
7. Avoid delving into things that are none of your concern or doing anything that could be delegated. Above all avoid needless procrastination, which is a sin considerably destructive.
8. Keep following your "to do list" in order of priority.

Step 6: Multiplication in Discipleship

God's command to man is "be fruitful and multiply" (Gen. 1:28). It is an essential quality of our life. This comes down to His desire that His followers multiply and bear much fruit (John 15:1-8). In His last words on earth the Lord Jesus commanded that His disciples go forth to all the earth preaching His word. Thus He reinforced His Great Commission in Matt. 28:19 to go forth and "make disciples." That is what He did on earth (Luke 6:13-16, 10:1). That is what His disciples did afterwards (Acts 2:41, 6:7). That is what we should do.

Every living thing has the capacity for reproduction in the physical sense, and also in the spiritual sense, we are in the well-known phase, "born to reproduce." Physical reproduction is first recorded in Gen 1:28. Spiritual reproduction on "good soil" comes out of one who "understands the word" and "bears fruit" 30 to 100 fold (Matt. 13:23).

The purpose of God is for us to be fruitful and multiply (John 15:1-8). He desires "much fruit" (vs. 8). He prunes His branches (believer-disciples) (vs. 2) that they may "bear more fruit." It is the outcome of abiding in Christ (vs. 5) coupled with a commitment to fulfill this calling. When we do not do this we "dry-up," and others do not see our testimony (vs. 6). Fruit bearing glorifies God because it demonstrates that we truly are disciples of "The True Vine," who did this (vs. 8). Otherwise, He "takes away" such branches in terms of effective testimony (vs. 1). Making disciples is the expressed will of God (Matt. 28:19). This is more than seeking

"decisions for Christ." The best use of a disciple's time is to expend it on multiplying other disciples. If we did this with only one person in a year, that year would be successful.

In Acts 1:15 The Lord Jesus commissioned this goal in His closing words on earth. The first believer took this to heart and on the Jewish feast of Pentecost (Acts 2:41), their ranks multiplied by thousands. This kept going to Acts 6:7 when "the numbers of disciples multiplied." It all began when the Lord called the Twelve (Luke 6:13-16) to multiply this number with 70 more (Luke 10:1). The hindrance to further harvesting was that there were not enough workers (Matt. 9:37-38). It is still true. We should be seeking to be spiritual parents (I Thess. 2:7-12).

What must we do to be a "spiritual reproducer"? We must make the time and give the priority to do it and accept it as a divine calling.

1. We must set the pace from the beginning by daily sharing our faith with the unsaved (witness). This is true whether or not we have the gift of evangelism.
2. We must be active in helping committed believers grow into mature workers. This means active disciple making.
3. We must maintain a growing spiritual life, "walking in the spirit" in order to have the power of God to effectively carry on this ministry. This will include "Christ likeness" gradually increasing.
4. We must pray that God will enable us to help raise up "spiritual reproducers" who will become workers in a needy harvest field (II Tim. 2:2; Matt. 9:37-38).

5. We must use every available means and ministry to train them in groups, individually and especially "on-the-job" demonstrations.

6. We must regularly evaluate and monitor their progress. Are they making sufficient progress?

7. We must help them overcome hindrances, temptations, discouragement, and excessive job demands. In dealing with them ask yourself, will they be "finishers"?

a. Be dominated by grace (II Tim 2:1).

b. Be dedicated to His plan (vs. 2).

c. Be disciplined for His pleasure (vs. 3-4).

A. Personal Devotional time: This requires a daily time of study and meditation on a short portion of God's Word (God speaking to us). It also includes prayer (we speak to God) which includes worship (or praise), thanksgiving, confession, intercession (for others), and petition (requests for our own needs). We seek provision, guidance, deliverance, encouragement, and perseverance from the Lord. He stated this in the context of taking a lowly place. Servanthood is a lowly calling, not a lofty one. If we wish to be great, then we must serve. So taught the Savior. Then He exemplified this by saying, "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve" (Mark 10:45 NASB). Even He took the towel, and knelt to do the lowly work that the disciples had overlooked or avoided. Like the lowly slave, He did what represented the will of God. He made Himself the object lesson. The servant is not above His Lord. If the Master had done this for them, then they

were called upon to do this for others while taking the servant's place.

B. Personal Evangelism: This requires the regular practice of witnessing to those we think may not be truly born again within our own circle of family, friends, and other contacts. There should be a concentration of time and effort on at least two or three of the most promising or responsive. It may include written letters and gospel literature (Acts 1:8, Acts 8:4). To be a soul winner is wise (Prov. 11:30).

C. Fruit In Ministry: Based upon John 15:1-5, this means there is an outgrowth of our labors for Christ. All believers are called to do this. It particularly includes souls that are won to the Lord. It also involves believers who are growing and becoming "true disciples of mine" (John 8:31). Add also ministries that are blessed by God, whether with children or adults, conversion of prison inmates, those with drug or alcohol addiction problems, homeless people (rescue missions), radio and television outreach, medical, humanitarian, educational, and handicapped persons (e.g., the deaf). Jesus said, "You will know them by their fruit" (Mat. 7:20). He desires for those deeds to steadily multiply up to a hundredfold (Matt 13:8).

D. Growth in Character: This means that the growing believer, being empowered by the indwelling Spirit, will exhibit an ever-increasing degree of "the fruit of the Spirit." These are (as examples) love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness (dependability) gentleness, and self-control (Gal 5:22-23). A believer is called one of the imitators of Christ (Eph. 5:1). It is essential to maintain a pure

thought life, resisting every lustful and unworthy thought and temptation, bring every thought into obedience to Christ.

E. Doing What Our Master Commands: It is ever the mark of the volunteer follower and pupil that He obeys and emulates His teacher. From the perspective of His manhood, that was Jesus' path, walking under the direction of the Father as the Son of Man. "I do always those things that please Him" (John 8:29). There was no disobedience in Him, not ever. He was obedient unto death (Philippians 2:8). "He learned obedience by the things which He suffered," is the amazing tribute of Hebrews 5:8. That is, He learned the experience of this discipline, He never had to learn to obey because of any trait of disobedience. This disobedient person cannot be a disciple. That would be alien to the concept. The disciple learns to please God and not self. Thus even "Christ pleased not Himself" (Romans 15:3). The disciple is interested in receiving and relaying the message of God rather than his own words. "He whom God hath sent, speaketh the words of God" (John 3:34). "The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself" (John 14:10). The deeds of the disciple are those which are commissioned by the Master. He is never called to do his own will. Thus our Lord says, "I have finished the work which thou gavest Me to do" (John 17:4). "The works which the Father hath given Me to finish, the same works that I do bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me" (John 5:36). The mark of the disciple is total obedience. That was the characteristic of the Lord Jesus.

F. Loving the Lord Fully: It is John who gives us one of the supreme marks of the Christian. "Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and everyone that

loveth is born of God and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love" (I John 4:7-8). All disciples are called upon to love. We are called to love the Lord (Matthew 22:37, Mark 12:30, Luke 10:27), to love neighbors (Matthew 22:39), to love our fellow believers (I John 3:14), and to love even our enemies (Matthew 5:44, Luke 6:27). The very personification of love is the Lord Jesus Christ. He was perfectly righteous, just holy, and faithful in every utterance or deed, yet He unfailingly expressed love. Millions of little ones have sung, "Jesus loves the little children of the world." For did He not overrule the disciples and call the children unto Himself saying, "Of such is the Kingdom of God" (Mark 10:14)? But the list is endless. He loved the rich young ruler who went away sadly from His summons (Mark 10:21). He expressed love to the outcasts. He loved even His enemies and persecutors and prayed for them from the cross (Luke 23:24). But He loved the Father supremely and taught the disciples to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread" (Matthew 6:11). For in whatever was needed, He looked to God the Father. He depended upon Him for bread to feed the multitudes (Matthew 14:19), for tax money with which to pay His and Peter's taxes (Matthew 17:27), for a colt with which to ride into Jerusalem (Matthew 21:2). It is never recorded that He publicized a personal need, yet neither He nor the disciples ever lacked. He never showed anxiety about personal needs and taught His disciples to refrain from worrying about tomorrow (Matthew 6:25-34). His ministry appointments were by Divine arrangement, without advance communication (John 4:4-7). His future was Divinely planned, and He rested securely in that plan, living His life one day at a time.

Step 7: The Disciple's Commitment to Servanthood

"I am among you as He that serveth," said our Lord (Luke 22:27). "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45 NASB). The Father said of Him by the mouth of Isaiah, "Behold, my servant" (Isaiah 42:1). He is the model servant. The Gospel of Mark so presents Him.

In the world there is the constant striving for preeminence. The competition is for first place, self-elevation. The goal is to be the top one, the boss of all. Jesus modeled and taught a revolutionary new way. The disciples were disputing among themselves who should be the greatest. Jesus corrected them explaining, "If any one wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all" (Mark 9:35 NIV). He demonstrated this by washing the dirty feet of His own disciples (John 13:1-17).

Becoming Great Through Serving:

"Whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant," Jesus exhorted, "and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all" (Mark 10:43-44 NASB). Jesus taught that in the kingdom of God, the only way up is down. The concept of serving is so radical that it is recorded in all four gospels (Matthew 20:25-28; Mark 9:33-35, 10:35-45; Luke 22:24-27; John 13:1-17). Every aspect of His life displayed servanthood. Although the subject is vital, it is difficult to grasp.

The word servant (diakonos) is one of two words often translated as “servant.” The other word (doulos) is rendered “ slave.” That term may offend us because slavery is generally condemned. This word refers, however, to people becoming slaves of other people. Believers acknowledge that God is our Creator and owner, not some human, particularly by virtue of Christ’s redemptive work. We are not our own but “bought with a price” (I Cor 6:20).

We are distinctly called “Christ’s slave” (I Cor 7:22).

Before we were “slaves to sin” (Rom. 6:6). Now we are slaves to God. To be a slave is to be in a condition of unconditional submission. One who resists this idea and says “we will not have this man rule over us” (Luke 19:14) invites God’s judgment. The believer should realize that he or she is not diminished by willingly submitting to the Lordship of Christ who loved him and gave Himself for him (Gal. 2:20).

The apostles were completely dedicated to the Lord (meaning “master”) and gladly assumed the position of slaves unto Christ. The apostle Paul repeatedly used this word in referring to himself (Rom, 1:1, Gal 1:10; Titus 1:1). He also included Timothy (Phil. 1:1) and Epaphras (Col. 4:12). Peter also so designates himself (II Pet 1:1) and also James (Jam. 1:11). Why should we wish to be anything different if we are truly His disciples? Do we think we do not need to be like our master (Matt. 10:24-25)?

How do we carry out our duties as slaves? We do whatever our Master commands without question. Obedience, not half-hearted compliance, is an absolute necessity. The Lord characteristically directs our

attention to others in serving. His own ministry here has been summed up in a single word, others. Believers are to be more concerned about the needs of others than their own (Phil. 2:3-4), motivated by love (Rom. 12:10). This often involves self-sacrifice, even personal risk, and certainly the investment of time and possessions.

The function of Godly servants or slaves involves certain characteristics:

1. Prompt response to requests or orders with a cheerful spirit. "Immediately" is a key word in Mark's Gospel.
2. Hard work or diligence. The lazy person ("sluggard" in scripture) is condemned (Prov. 10:26; 18:19; 24:30-34).
3. Dependability is a must. Jer. 48:10 says, "Cursed be the one who does the Lord's work negligently."
4. Competence, skill, "doing all things well" is important if we are to be a "worker that does not need to be ashamed" (II Tim. 2:15), doing all to the glory of God (I Cor. 10:31).
5. Loyalty to Christ, His church, our close friends, or even employers is a real mark of a good servant (Eph. 6:5-8).
6. Seeing and doings that need to be done, without being told specifically.
7. Getting along with others demonstrates success in relationships. This includes dealing with those who present difficulties in attitude or those easily offended.

The entire process of functioning in this way requires great humility. The Lord Jesus said, "Take my yoke and learn of Me for I am meek and lowly" (Matt. 11:29).

What a challenge! This will take deep commitment to Christ, with all that this consecration implies. This will, at the most profound level, require a deep faith grounded in believing what the scripture commands and obeying. Too many believers wrongly think that God is indebted to them (by creating them) and is committed to simply making them “happy.”

Scripture abounds with examples of those who were faithful servants of God and His people. Faithfulness is one of the most desired qualities in a servant (Luke 16:1-12). It is a prerequisite to future opportunities (Matthew 25:24-30). Faithfulness involves trustworthy, dependable, loyal service to others.

1. Examples of Faithful Servants. Joshua became a great leader in Israel, but first he was the servant of Moses (Exodus 24:13) because he faithfully served Moses (Joshua 1:1-5). Similarly, Elisha ministered to Elijah as a servant for six years (I Kings 19:19-21). When Elijah was translated, God honored Elisha as heir to the prophetic office (2 Kings 2:9-14). Timothy was a servant to the Apostle Paul “like a child serving his father” (Philippians 2:22 NASB). When Paul’s life and ministry were complete, Timothy would continue the work he began.

2. Examples of Unfaithful Servants. Others in Scripture are noted for unfaithful service. Saul was unfaithful in completing delegated tasks (I Samuel 15:1 3, 20-21). Because he was unwilling to go all the way, God took the kingdom from him (I Samuel 15:26). Absalom looked faithful but was not. He was unwilling to serve his father, the king. He wanted the allegiance and affection of the people for himself (2 Samuel 15:1-6). Demas, Paul’s helper, started out well but did not last. The

affairs of this world were more important to him than serving (2 Timothy 4:10). What is hindering you from being faithful in God's service? One encouraging example gives us hope. It is possible to change. John Mark traveled as a servant to Paul and Barnabas, but deserted them at Pamphylia (Acts 15:38). Later he was given a second chance and was championed by Barnabas who was willing to take him along in the Lord's service (Acts 15:39). Although Mark was unfaithful at first, he later proved faithful (II Tim. 4:11).

The benefits of servanthood are numerous. For faithful service we might receive greater responsibility in the way Joshua did (Joshua 4:14), or see spiritual fruit the way Aquila and Priscilla did (Acts 18:26; I Cor. 3:6). But most important of all, the lessons we learn in servanthood will be eternally significant. Our performance as servants will be evaluated by the Lord Jesus Himself at what is called the Judgment Seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10). Not our sins, which He paid for, but our lives and service will be reviewed there when rewards are given for faithfulness unto Him. He expects all His servants to be profitable. Even before the eternal throne of God and of the Lamb, we read, "His servants shall serve Him" (Revelation 22:3). Servanthood is an eternal occupation, dignified and blessed by our Lord. It will not lose its reward at His hands.

How has God called you to serve? Whom are you serving? Jesus promised a great blessing to all who loyally serve Him. "If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am there shall My servant also be; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him" (John 12:26 NASB).

Step 8: Developments in Effective Use of Spiritual Gifts

A spiritual gift, as distinguished from natural talent (e.g., musical ability) is a special empowerment in the ability to bless and build up God's people (others-directed, not self-exalting). Every believer is given at least one, sometimes more (I Cor. 12:7-11). Gifts are assigned by God as He desires, not according to what we crave (v. 11). Every gifted person has a proper function in the Body of Christ (the Church) and none is superior to another, only different in function (vs. 20-25). No one believer has all the gifts (vs. 28-30), so we need one another. The important thing is that each member function in the Body rather than sit and listen to sermons. A good church will provide opportunities for the use of all gifts by all members, not just the paid staff or elders. There is no clergy-laity distinction taught in Scripture. Gifts can remain as mere dormant seeds unless assisted or trained by someone to develop and use their gifts under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

One of the striking features of the early or apostolic church was the widespread participation and spiritual function within the body of believers. The work was not done by the apostles alone, nor by a small group of trained "clergymen." An examination of such passages as Acts 2:46-47; 5:13-14; 6:2-6; 8:4 indicates that many believers were involved in proclaiming the gospel and in other activities.

There has been a rediscovery of this vision of every-member participation today and return to New Testament practice. When Jesus ascended He gave these

gifts unto His followers (Ephesians 4:8, 11). The purpose was “to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up” (Ephesians 4:12 NIV). Gifts are to be used in the development of all of God’s people so that they can do the work of the ministry. Paul used the picture of the human body and its parts in teaching this doctrine in I Corinthians 12. Proper functioning of the body requires that every part or member do its assigned task. No body could work properly if it were all mouth or hands.

Nature of the Gifts

1. Definition. Spiritual gifts are God-given capacities for spiritual service, supernaturally bestowed upon believers only. Our English word comes from two principal Greek words. One is *charismata*, which has given us our word “charismatic.” The other word is *pneumatika*, meaning “spiritualities” or “something from the Spirit,” indicating its source is God, pertaining to the realm of the Spirit.

Gifts differ from natural talents, although both have their origin in God and may work together in certain instances. Natural talents come from the first or natural birth. Gifts come at the second birth. When spiritual gifts are properly developed and exercised, something supernatural takes place. There is an impact upon another believer in Christian growth and encouragement. Playing instruments, singing, doing artistic works are talents from God, but are not listed as spiritual gifts. The unsaved can also possess these. Gifts also differ from the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). Fruit proceeds from within, pertains to character, and is part of the process of growth for all believers.

2. Source. Every good and perfect gift comes from God (James 1:17). So it is with spiritual gifts. Every believer receives one or more gifts from the risen Christ (Ephesians 4:7-8; I Corinthians 12:7; I Peter 4:10). There is no such thing as a believer who has received no gift. In this sense, all believers are “charismatic,” whether they realize it or not. The body of believers cannot be divided Scripturally between “charismatic” and “non-charismatic” groups, although this is widely done in the Christian world. Gifts are not the property of a few ordained people. The force of this truth is to remind us of our responsibility to stir up this gift within us and make use of it (II Timothy 1:6).

What determines which gift we receive? Some believers point to I Corinthians 12:31 and 14:1 as indicating that it depends on our aspiration and asking God. Yet the first reference uses the plural rather than a singular pronoun and evidently is addressed to the church as a whole. Gifts come from the grace of God and are not a reward for holiness or striving (Ephesians 4:7). It is the Lord’s discretion, not ours, which governs the apportionment of gifts (I Cor. 12:11).

3. Purpose. The timing of this provision is related to the ascension of the Lord Jesus to heaven after His resurrection. It is particularly His provision for the church. The formation of the church at Pentecost makes it clear that this is a new provision for believers, not available in prior ages. Gifts are to build up other believers so that they can do the work of the ministry (I Corinthians 14:12, 26; Ephesians 4:12); to promote growth in unity and love (Ephesians 4:16); to assist in the care of one another (I Corinthians 12:25; I Peter 4:10); and to glorify God, especially in the ministry of

the Word (I Peter 4:11). There is no hint in any of this of self-improvement, self-edification or self-importance as a goal. Gifts are to be others-directed. But does it not say that tongues are to edify self in I Corinthians 14:4? This verse is a comparison between prophesying to edify the church and the Corinthian practice of tongues-speaking. The comparison makes tongues the lesser. The verse does not state that self-edification is a purpose of any spiritual gift. Edifying of self is a by-product. Gifts are to build others.

Classification of the Gifts

Bible scholars disagree as to the exact number of gifts. As few as nine and as many as twenty-two are recognized. Moreover, there is no agreement as to whether those listed in Scripture represent a complete catalog. Many believe that the major gifts are mentioned, but there could be others that are not listed in Scripture.

The question is intensely debated as to whether some gifts passed from the scene with the apostolic church. Many conservative writers believe that the sign gifts, such as healing, were for the times of the apostles primarily. Others vigorously deny this and say that the proof is lacking Scripturally. Many leaders have claimed that they are apostles of God, even possessing the powers and authority of the original Twelve. But apostles could only be with us in the secondary sense of the word, since none today could be a witness of the Resurrected Christ as was required (I Corinthians 9:1; Acts 1:21-22). The matter of whether some gifts yet remain with us or whether others have now been added is still debated. It is beyond the scope of this lesson.

Various ways of classifying gifts have been used. Examples are (1) according to their nature (speaking, serving, signifying); (2) according to their sphere (church at large or church local); (3) according to their aspects (motivations, ministries, manifestations); (4) according to their duration (permanent or temporary).

Utilization of the Gifts

Each of us is responsible to function as a servant of the church by using our gift. The New Testament does not present the picture of a few workers doing most of the service for God while others merely attend, enjoy the ministry and help a little financially. Remember the parable of the talents and our coming reckoning before God (Matthew 25:14-29). Each Christian is to be vitally involved in a body of believers and ministering according to God's plan. How are we to go about doing this?

1. Discovery of Gifts. This is not directly commanded in Scripture. However, there are many commands to serve the Lord in the fellowship of His church. Thus we can begin by serving in whatever way we can help. We need not wait until we discover our own particular gift before serving. We are commanded to function in many gift areas, without having that gift. These areas include serving (Galatians 5:13), exhortation (Hebrews 10:25), giving (II Corinthians 9:7), faith (II Corinthians 5:7), evangelistic work (Acts 1:8), discerning or distinguishing spirits (I John 4:1), teaching (Col. 3:16), and shepherding (Phil. 2:4). The special blessing of God in one of these areas of ministry is a sign of spiritual gift. But who would limit giving, faith, and helping others only to the gifted? It appears that one person may

have more than one gift (Paul, Philip). In any event, there should be no occasion for claiming spiritual superiority (I Corinthians 12:21-24).

2. Development of Gifts. Normally this comes when we are actively using them for God. They do not seem to be conferred in full bloom. Growth in the use of spiritual gifts seems to be governed by the same principles governing all areas of spiritual development. The command to present our bodies to Christ for His service that we might be a living sacrifice precedes a passage on gifts (Romans 12:1-2). A plea to walk worthy of our calling precedes another such passage (Ephesians 4:1). Such factors as obedience, effective prayer, diligent study of the Word, sharing our faith, active local church fellowship and a desire to do God's will affects the development of our gift(s). No short cuts or speed-up processes exist to develop gifts. As in other areas of spiritual progress, there must be gradual growth.

3. Guidelines for Recognizing Gifts. The following guidelines may be helpful:

a. Be Others-Directed. Spiritual gifts minister to others, particularly in building them up so that they also can serve in the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:12). Do not concentrate on yourself.

b. Look for "Open Doors" of Service (Galatians 6:10). Do not wait to discover your gift before serving. It may not be what you had in mind, but there is a need and you could do it if you made the effort. When needs and opportunities abound, it is not spiritual to be waiting around to "discover my gift first." Jesus said, "I am among you as He that serveth" (Luke 22:27). Trying to concentrate on one area too soon may be a handicap.

c. Pray for Opportunities to Serve the Lord Jesus. Do not wait for someone to come and seek you out. Part of taking the whole armor of God is to be prayerful (Ephesians 6:18). Ask God for wisdom (James 1:5) to understand where He wants to use you. Review the list of gifts and seek to find some opportunity to serve. Do not underestimate your capacity to do what God opens up for you. Appreciate His sufficiency (II Corinthians 12:9).

d. Seek the counsel of mature believers who know you (Proverbs 11:14). We are often not the best judge of our own gift (I Corinthians 14:29). Our personal desires may be utterly at variance with the mind of the Spirit. This section draws on materials in Intermediate Christian Training by this author (Walterick Publ., Kansas City, MO)

Step 9: The Disciple's Vision for the Church

Without a vision for active participation in the life of the local church, this is a Scriptural lack in the disciple's vision. The church is a God-established gathering center for believers as collective members of His family. This goes beyond being simply a separated or individualized member of the general or "universal church," made up of believers from each century of "the church age." New Testament churches received the epistles (letters of the apostles), not varied organizations or ministries which did not even exist then.

The situation today has developed a great deal, to include Sunday School and youth classes, adult Bible classes, and varied other ministries. The local church can be truly a discipling center. It can have a New Believer's class, small group fellowships, visitation, evangelism training, caring ministry, and "core groups" for committed young teenagers, single adults, and couples.

The local church is the principal unit of God's people on earth. It is the God-ordained gathering center of the believers in any locality where it exists. It is the place where believers are to be shepherded, fed, guarded, and developed, and where they worship together. It is the pillar and ground of truth (I Tim. 3:15). Church revitalization is of major importance in the progress of the Gospel. No true disciple should ignore the importance of the church or fail to be functioning as a part. We are not to forsake assembling ourselves together as a company (Heb. 10:25).

The word church is a very poor translation of the word *ekklesia*, which means a “called out company.” It is better translated as assembly or congregation. It is an ordinary word used in the Bible to describe a heathen mob at Ephesus (Acts 19:32, 39, 41). It is also used in connection with the wandering Israelites in the wilderness (Act 7:38). It becomes definitive when applied to Christians.

The word for church or assembly is used in a local sense. New Testament letters are addressed to believers gathered in localities such as Corinth, Ephesus, Thessalonica, and Philippi. They are called “churches of Christ” (Rom. 16:16), “churches of God” (I Cor. 11:16), and “churches of the saints” (I Cor. 14:33). The word is also used in describing the totality of all believers gathered to Christ, among all nations, in all ages, as one Spiritual body. This is sometimes called the Universal Church. It is called “the Body of Christ.” The church of Christ is “one Body” (Eph. 4:4), and believers became a part by being born again and incorporated into it by the baptism of the Spirit, starting at Pentecost (Acts 2). The church of Christ contains both Jews and Gentiles, without distinction, a departure from the history of Israel. It was a mystery until fully revealed in the New Testament (Eph. 2:11-22, 3:3-6).

The church has a very high standing in the eyes of God, regardless of weaknesses on earth. We are seen as “in Christ” (Eph. 1:3-4), united with the Lord Jesus (Rom. 6:5; Eph. 5:23-32), a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle. It is valuable because Jesus purchased it with His own blood (Acts 20:28). The Lord loves His church (Eph. 5:25).

Early believers were added to the church and baptized when saved (Acts 2:41). They continued there in the apostles “teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread and prayer” (Acts 2:42). Titus and I Timothy prescribe its governmental form, and I Corinthians supplies details of discipline and function. The church was the ministry center (Acts 12:24, 16:5), training center, and church multiplication center (Col. 1:28-29; Acts 13).

The church should be a work-center for active believers, not a warehouse for sermon listeners merely sitting in pews or chairs. Believers must be converted from spectators to ministers and encouraged to use their spiritual gifts within the local body of Christ (I Cor. 14). They must learn to depend upon Christ and His Spirit, not on heard knowledge with little more than mental agreement. Over-dependence on the pastor-hired staff or elders for all major functions is not the pattern of the New Testament. The increase of pastors and workers suffering what is called “burn out” is a testimony to an unhealthy situation. The church should be a functioning unity of all its members, not a hierarchy of “clergy and laity.”

Growth by disciple-making and team function may be hindered by several factors.

1. Being paralyzed, or polarized, by existing leaders unwilling to change or “move-on.” These sometimes dictate the lifestyle of the church.
2. Having too many believers who are falsely motivated, emotionally controlled, or manipulated by others, especially by fleshly (carnal) Christians.
3. Being polarized by divisions, often on secondary issues, leading to constant internal strife, which is not of

the Spirit. Those seeking control, prominence, and agreement with their spiritual viewpoint (masked by scripture quoting) contribute to this atmosphere.

4. Inability or fear of offending, preventing the resolution of problems and divisions so you can “move” to primary responsibilities. This may necessitate separating contributors to this situation from the fellowship.

Discipling Ministries in the Local Church

A new believer’s class is important for any church. This also can minister to “Inquirers” and those needing Biblical “basics.” Use small classes (12-15) with interaction to meet the special needs of newly committed Christians (discussion groups with a trained discussion leader). One method is to have 7-13 weekly, one-hour sessions during the Sunday school hour (generally).

1. Give the Scriptural basis of salvation. Have them memorize them.
2. Assurance of salvation.
3. Assurance of answered prayer.
4. Assurance of victory over sin.
5. Assurance of forgiveness of sin.
6. Biblical review of responsibilities of members in normal church life.

All graduates are then encouraged to attend further adult Bible classes on Sunday.

Discipleship Groups

Purpose

Small group fellowships within church function can help discipling.

To build Christ-like qualities into each member (II Tim. 3:16-17).

Philosophy

1. Mixture of ages, maturity, background, singles, etc.
2. Husband and wife involvement as members.
3. Husband and wife involvement as leaders.

Method

Have them personally study approximately 2 hours each week, plus occasional informal and recreational times together.

1. Bible discussion – together weekly.
2. Share joys and concerns.
3. Give outreach training and orientation.
 - Encouraging.
 - Low key.
 - Equipping for opportunities.
4. Prayer – conversational, audible.

Participants

1. 12 optimum size; 6-8 even better.
2. Selected from volunteers and discovery class graduates.

Visitation Evangelism

It is important to develop effective evangelism leadership for the church and to systematically

evangelize everyone in the church's sphere of influence (visitors, inactives, parents of Sunday school children, etc.).

Weekly three-hour training class:

1. Training.
 - a. 13 weeks as a trainee.
 - b. 13 weeks as a trainer.
2. Presenting Christ to those without clear testimony of conversion (prepare and use your own testimony).
3. Assisting pastoring believers within the church or visiting others.
4. Scripture memory (beginning with evangelistic verses then others that may be needed).

Disciple should consider participation in some form of ongoing caring ministry for the disciple. This is to help minister to the practical needs of people in church and community. Caring is evidence of the believer's love for God and man. People with needs are everywhere. God designed the church to function as a ministering body with varied abilities to meet varied needs (elderly, widows, handicapped, needy).

1. Identify, within your church and community, practical, unmet needs which people are not able to meet themselves.
2. Establish a system to bring together those with abilities and those with needs.
3. Select a person to coordinate the system. The coordinator puts the system into action as needs come in.

4. Encourage widespread participation of church members.

Step 10: Setting Spiritual Goals with Eternal Values

This means exactly what it says. Every successful endeavor, divine or human, ordinarily comes from specific goals or purposes in the minds of those who set them, mentally or preferably in writing. Goals extend from the uttermost good of achieving God's eternal purposes in His Son.

When the believer can define his goals in life, he can pursue them "with a single eye." If he chooses to devote his life to the things of the eye and senses in this life, rather than the future one, it will come to pass. If the believer chooses instead to live with eternity's values in view, for Christ and His Kingdom, and perseveres in so doing, it also will come to pass. When we describe someone as a "committed Christian," that is what is involved. Such a one "walks in the Spirit." The other "walks in the flesh," being called in Scripture, "carnal" or fleshly (I Cor. 3:1-5.)

How do you set proper goals? We suggest the following sequence: Set down a number of goals in any order, but all within the over-all goal of glorifying God and obeying His Word. These might include needed improvements in previously listed disciplines (devotional life, prayer, witnessing); or character goals (love, patience, faithfulness); or family goals (time profitably spent with spouse, children); or physical needs (losing excess weight, increasing stamina by exercise); or eliminating all debt and unwise installment payments (credit card abuse).

The idea that we should set specific spiritual goals for our lives is far from the thinking of most professing Christians. They seem not to have thought, in any active, urgent sense, of doing such a thing. This is in spite of their belief in God, their Creator. But what was His plan or purpose for our lives? Certainly He is the Great Planner. "I have purposed it. I will also do it" (Isa. 46:11). There is nothing haphazard in this.

Nevertheless, there are many who think God, having created us, then simply released His creatures to whatever might happen, whether by "fate" or random choices. This would not be conceivable with a Supreme Intelligence who is an omniscient Designer.

What of the child of God? "I have plans for you, plans for good, not calamity, and to give you a future hope" (Jer. 29:11). We are chosen in Him before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4). That is an immense plan. The Lord Jesus meticulously fulfilled every detail of Messianic prophecy according to the Divine Plan, the way of salvation, wherefore, a holy God could save sinners required an eternal plan.

Having said all of this, how should it apply to the way a true disciple lives? We ought to have spiritual plans and goals for our lives which are in accord with God's will. Is this not entirely up to the Holy Spirit, apart from our response? Not true. It requires man's cooperation with the Spirit. If not, we all would be "spiritual," which is also not true.

What kind of spiritual goals should we have? He wants us to be conformed to the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29). He wants us to grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord

Jesus (II Pet. 3:18). He wants us to have right priorities and then live daily according to them. These are:

1. God and His Kingdom must be first (Matt 6:33).
2. The eternal takes precedence over the temporal (II Cor. 4:18).
3. The spiritual takes precedence over the physical (Matt. 6:19-20).
4. People take precedence over things (Mark 8:36-37).

Setting spiritual goals is only the first step. How will these goals best be achieved? By a systematic series of steps carried out preferably with an ongoing accountability to someone you respect as godly and spiritually discerning, who will give you the time. The steps and enabling forms are attached to this introduction.

It should be noted that those who seek training in professional or business careers or higher education (even professional sports) routinely make systematic plans for achieving secular goals. Why not spiritual goals for disciples seeking supremely to please God?

There should be means, markers, dos and don'ts on the way of goal achievement. These might include:

1. Things you need to stop.

Excess sleep, prolonged use of the telephone or cell phone, idle talk about inconsequentials, especially the sin of procrastination; "junk reading."

2. Things you need to start.

Witnessing regularly, written intercessory prayer lists, written applications from Scripture, a systematic, daily “to do” list.

3. Things you need to read and hear.

Solid reading (be a reader), good audio or video tapes, using research sources (the library, internet, concordances, dictionaries).

4. Things you need to meditate upon about the Lord Jesus.

Your model also should come from observing the lives of godly people.

Here are some hindrances to setting spiritual goals:

1. Not convinced of their necessity.

You would rather “fly by the seat of your pants.” I have lived this long without it. Why now?

2. Not specific enough; just generalities.

Choose a better prayer life. Would you even be sure God answers your prayers in this area? Are you just hoping, dreaming, or taking action?

3. Do you have unresolved problems?

Character deficiencies, “weights,” debts, excess poundage, lack of skills.

Here are some orderly steps to be monitored by the disciple-maker himself or herself.

1. Write down your analysis in the

Personal Goal Review Sheet. This tells you where to go. Determine goals in order of need for your life.

2. Schedule strategic supporting activities. Keep in mind your priorities and rate them ABC.
3. Draw up a plan for your three most important goals.
4. Consider the Scriptural basis for each goal.

These should be your goals, not decided by another person or imposed. Consider the time each goal might take to achieve. Set deadlines for each, at least one for intermediate progress. Make your goals realistic and attainable, as well as challenging.

Step 11: World Vision and God's Eternal Plan

The believer needs to see his or her life in terms of God's eternal plan for success. He needs a vision for a lost world for whom Christ died (John 3:16). He needs a vision to witness diligently, seeing the many on "the road to destruction." He needs a vision for the mission field, beyond the immediate surroundings or even nationalistic narrowness. One can go there personally by God's call or support missionaries by prayer, gifts of money, and letters of encouragement. Beyond this it is necessary to communicate vision to others.

"The Son of Man came to seek and save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). He sought those "having no hope and without God in this world" (Eph. 2:12). He wants "all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth" (I Tim 2:3-6). He does not want any to perish but that all should come to repentance" (II Pet. 3:9). He called on the disciples to go to the remotest part of the earth, to all creation, to preach this message (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8; Mark 16:15). How could any true disciple not share in this vision, work in cooperation with the Spirit to seek to further it and to communicate this same vision to others?

Vision involves seeing beyond the present and discerns God's eternal plan from Scripture. Oswald Sanders said,

"Eyes that look are common. Eyes that see are rare." The Lord said, "Lift up your eyes and look upon the fields, that they are white for harvest" (John 4:35). What is the

hindrance to a greater harvest? It is because “the workers are few” (Matt. 9:27). Therefore, a true disciple will pray for more workers in the field (Matt. 9:38) while being one himself and making disciples to also become multiplying workers.

God has the whole of humanity on His heart. He directs workers to fields of His choosing. This may vary with needs, opportunities, degrees of responsiveness, timeliness, and the suitability of the worker. The harvest field exceeds at present six billion souls and is steadily increasing. Little more than one billion are even profession Christians, most of them nominal (in name only). One could scarcely project many more than 300 million evangelical, Bible-believing, converted souls. What a vast field remains!

The need is staggering. What can one disciple hope to accomplish in facing this task? Here are some suggestions:

1. Pray privately for specific needs and workers on the mission fields. Use missionary letters and handbooks.
2. Support every effort to promote missionary vision in your church. Mission conferences, speakers, and special missions events can assist the spread-the-vision work with international students.
3. Financially support missionary efforts with sacrificial giving above and beyond the Biblical tithe (tenth of income).
4. Go overseas yourself at first on “short-term” missions. Short-term missions increase familiarity with needs and customs. You can distribute literature, build homes for the poor, help in medical or other humanitarian work in

the name of Christ. You can expose yourself to local missions for the poor, the hungry, the homeless, and prison ministry (visitation and correspondence).

5. Finally, if the Lord clearly calls to a definite place, go yourself. It is preferable to work with an experienced missionary there whenever available. It is essential that you diligently master the language of the people to whom you go. Take the best language courses, especially in the countries where they are spoken, where you can saturate your mind with their use of words and customs. You will not be able to effectively communicate with the common people, or gain their respect, unless you learn to eat their food. They see this as a sign that you like them. Walk in their shoes and wear their style of clothing. Conform even to their customs of dress, even if not Biblically required (veils, coverings, discretionary clothing).

Have a sense of urgency about all this. “Why do you stand here idle?” Be properly motivated. “The love of Christ constrains us” (II Cor. 5:14).

Never be interested in personal preeminence, acclaim, authority, or financial gain. It is utterly contrary to His Spirit.

Resolve to make God’s eternal plan for all the world and for your life your own plan and goal.

Step 12: Worship

By this we mean speaking to God about God and His wonderful attributes.

It is praise expressed by the exclamation, “Praise the Lord” (P.T.L.), or in Hebrew, Hallelujah!

Begin each time of prayer as Psalm 100:4 commands:

“Enter His courts with praise!”

In addition to personal prayer, the believer should participate in corporate prayer.

This can take place in a “prayer meeting,” a small group fellowship and certainly in the general meetings of the church.

Increasingly services feature “worship music.”

Worship can be silent although this takes real concentration that resists mind wandering.

It can be audible where appropriate.

The sole restriction on prayer at the general meeting of the church is found in I Corinthians 14:34, 40.

The believer will maintain regular attendance at church meetings on the Lord’s Day in order to worship God.

“Not forsaking our own assembling together as is the habit of some” (Heb. 10:25) He or she will also be a sacrificial giver (I Corinthians 16:1-2), regularly, proportionately, and systematically.

This is called a spiritual sacrifice and is acceptable to God as an act of worship (Phil. 4:18).

The

Disciple is a worshipper of God.

No true disciple could fail to be what

God says He seeks:

worshippers.

He wants those who worship Him “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:23), not by going through rituals by habit or in erroneous beliefs.

Worship can be silent in the presence of a God who knows our innermost thoughts.

It can be audible, either when alone or amid other believers.

It should begin any personal devotional time.

“Enter His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise [worship].”

Corporate worship (with other believers in a church meeting) is more than listening to a sermon while sitting in an audience.

Worship deficiency in corporate meetings has been called the missing jewel of the church.”

Many believers do not understand the true substance of worship.

This is to be directed to God alone, and the subject is God, not self.

Many Psalms are excellent examples of worship.

Note the expressions used, such as “magnify the Lord,” “sing His praises,” or those that deal with many of His great attributes (all-knowing, all-seeing, all powerful, loving kindness, tender mercies, grace).

New Testament letters, especially by the Apostle Paul, feature doxologies (praise of God).

The most famous doxology begins, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

One may truly worship in song if it is done with deep sincerity, from the heart, and not mindless repetition of familiar words.

Worship is often mingled with thanksgiving in Scripture, but they are distinct from one another.

Worship concerns who God is, in essence or actions He has taken.

Thanksgiving is for blessings we receive.

It would be well for all disciples to give close attention to the daily practice of worship.

This can be done in private devotional times or spontaneous expressions of praise when God's blessings and providence become evident.

This makes participation in corporate worship much easier.

We do not have to "turn it on" one day a week.

Private prayer begins with worship.

Sufficient time should be devoted to worship.

Quality should be improved by meditation on great Scripture worship passages, especially in the Psalms, like 103 and 139.

Worship will be our eternal occupation, according to Scripture.

It will center on the Son of God as the “Lamb freshly slain” for us, a constant reminder of how we came to be Heaven-bound.

Step 13: The Disciple Looks for the Lord's Return and Prepares for the Judgment Seat of Christ

The Lord Jesus clearly said, "I will come again" (John 14:3).

In His parable of the absent king who returned to have a reckoning with the servants for whom he gave "talents," the Lord effectively foretold that He too would return (Luke 19:15).

When Jesus returns, He will both judge His defectors and His faithful servants.

Before ascending to Heaven, following His resurrection, angels announced, "The Son of Man shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go" (Acts 1:11).

He ascended from
Mount

Olivet and will return to this same spot (Acts 1:12; Zech 14:3-4).

He will come with ten thousands of His saints following (Jude 14).

Coming with His saints is not the same as coming for His saints (I Thess. 4:13-18).

This event, "the Rapture," is not the same as the earlier event, the Revelation (public manifestation of the coming Messiah).

He promised, "Surely I come quickly" (Rev. 22:7, 12).

The disciple's response is, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20).

When will this be?

He said, "No man knows the day or the hour" (Matt. 25:13; 26:36-42).

He will come as a "thief in the night," unexpectedly (I Thess. 5:2).

Since we do not know exactly when He will return, we should be watching for His appearance (Matt. 25:13; Mark 13:35; Luke 12:46).

The true disciple will be doing this daily, awaiting the imminent return of the Lord.

In connection with His coming (immediately prior), there will be an evaluation of the believer's life and service at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

This is for the purpose of recognition and rewards, as well as a realization of loss because of misused, careless living as a Christian (Rom. 14:10; II Cor 5:10).

This is not a judgment for sins because Christ has paid for these by the sacrifice of Himself (Heb. 9:26; I John 1:7).

We will never be condemned because of these sins (Rom.8:1).

Sins of the unsaved are to be judged after the Millennial Reign of Messiah at the Great White Throne (Rev. 20:11-15).

Due to these solemn coming events, each true disciple will be daily evaluating his or her own life as to conformity with God's will.

If we judge ourselves, we shall not be judged (I Cor. 11:31-32) and disciplined here accordingly (Heb. 12:5-11).

John 13:17 says, "If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

The Lord commanded that we be on the alert at all times, watching for His return (Matt 24:42-46).

"We do not know the day or the hour" (Matt 25:13; Mark 13:32).

It can be at any time.

The committed believer will do this and not be among the many who will lack this faith (Luke 18:8).

The last prayer of the Bible says, "Come Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20).

"If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them!" (John 13:17).

Appendix A: The School of God in Discipleship

The true disciple realizes that life for him or her on earth goes beyond conversion.

It is a developing teaching period in God's

School of

Life.

The Lord Jesus is the Master Teacher and was an example on earth of all He taught.

We are called to be diligent students, practitioners and persuaders of others to also become His disciples.

That's what a true disciple does in any usage of the Word, then or now.

The Lord is an infinitely wise parent Who desires godly children.

God was the Teacher of Israel under Moses, His instrument, and Aaron, as mouthpiece (Deut. 4:5).

He communicated with them, before Scripture was formulated, by special revelation, dreams, visions, and providential miracles.

The Psalmist called out for God's instructions (Ps. 25:4,8-9, 12, 27:11).

Life is a classroom.

God is the teacher (I Thess. 4:9).

Teacher was a common form of address to the Lord Jesus.

He was accorded the respectful title of rabbi, meaning “my master,” before it became a formal religious title among the Jews.

Jesus invited all to be His devout students.

“Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me” (Matt. 11:29).

What should we be learning?

Information only?

No.

We should be learning:

1. About the Lord Himself (character, ways, actions).

We always need to know Him in a deeper way, beyond that of being our Savior (Phil. 3:10).

We can have no greater privilege than to truly know God (Jer 9:24).

He will teach us to fear Him (Psa. 34:4), the beginning of wisdom (Prov. 9:10).

He will teach us His ways (Ps. 119:12, 26, 64, 68), which otherwise we could not discover.

He will teach us to do His will (Ps. 145:10) for our benefit and to His glory.

He will teach us His attributes (Ps. 103, 139).

2. About the centrality of the Son of God in our lives.

It is important to see that God has sworn that “every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord” (Phil. 2:10-11).

He has given all judgment into His hands (John 5:22).

He must have preeminence (Col. 1:18).

In God's sight, all believers are complete in Him (Col. 2:10).

He is not just a benefit.

He is our life (Col. 3:4).

3. About the value God places upon us.

We are made in the image of God, morally and spiritually (Gen. 1:27; 5:1, 9).

We are destined for conformity to the image of God's Son (Rom. 8:29).

This means Christlikeness.

We are called to be imitators of Christ (Eph. 5:1).

He wants us to know that He loves us with an everlasting love (Jer. 31:3), so much that He gave His beloved Son to die in our place John 3:16).

4. About the importance of fruit in our ministry (John 15:1-5).

This is an outgrowth of our labors for Christ.

All believers are called to do this.

It particularly includes souls that are won to the Lord.

It also involves believers who are growing and becoming "true disciples of mine" (John 8:31).

Add also ministries that are blessed by God, whether with children or adults.

Conversion of prison inmates, drug or alcohol addiction problems, homeless people (missions), radio and

television outreach, medical, humanitarian, educational, and handicapped persons (i.e., the deaf).

Jesus said, "You will know them by their fruit" (Matt. 7:20).

He desires for those deeds to steadily multiply up to a hundredfold (Matt. 13:8).

The eternal purpose of God must ever be in view as we study in God's School.

We have been chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4).

We were predestined to adoption as His children (Eph. 1, 5; Rom 8:17).

We are to be object lessons before the hosts of heaven of His grace (Eph. 3:10).

Our stewardship will be evaluated and rewarded accordingly (Luke 19:17-19).

We are being prepared to "judge angels" (I Cor. 6:3).

This is the way, "walk you in it" (Isa. 30:21).

Our steps will then be guided by the Lord (Ps. 37:23).

God disciplines (trains) His children.

He does this by learning through experience, the best teacher, but "the tuition is high."

This is more than subjective feelings.

Strict discipline produces the best results, as with elite military groups.

It may mean physical discipline, as a "rod" with a rebellious child (Prov. 22:15, 23, 13-14).

The Word chastises, as in

Heb. 12:5-11.

God disciplines by correction (Titus 2:12-13; I Tim. 1:20; II Tim. 2:25, 3:16).

This is evidence of God's love and concern for our growth, not just an outburst of anger (Heb. 12:6-7).

We must have a good attitude towards discipline since it is all for our good.

We need to see it as helpful and not be stubborn (Ps. 32:9).

The Lord is very patient with His children as any wise parent (Jer. 32:33, 35:13).

However, we should take heed not to be "dull of hearing" (John 16:12; Heb. 5:11).

The problem of absorbing, applying, and living according to Godly principles is complicated because we do not recognize these things:

1. Said is not always heard.
2. Heard is not always understood.
3. Understood is not always agreed.
4. Agreed is not always done.
5. Done is not always continued.

We will not be fully matured until we continue doing what God wills for our lives.

We must learn to listen carefully, observe from the Word the Lord's ways, which he says are not our ways.

We need to meditate daily on matters while “the fire burns” within (Ps. 39:3).

We need to pray that every thing we learn will be incorporated into the way we live.

Finally, we must resolve to go beyond thinking, meditating, and praying.

We must be “doers of God’s Word, not hearers only, deceiving ourselves” (James 1:22).

The question is:

“Are you doing these things” while in the

School of

God?

[This material is based upon a book by the author, Living Discipleship Principles (Walterick Publishers).]

Appendix B: Leadership

Every disciple may not necessarily be a “born leader” or even a gifted one.

Still, a true disciple is an example, which is the core of excellent leading and training.

Such a person will obviously be followed.

Therefore, any disciple should consider the role, function, and model of leadership.

They should exhibit the personal qualities and actions of good leaders.

Leaders Share

This excludes dominating actions of a strong personality (III John 9-10).

No person has all the gifts or all the wisdom necessary.

Leaders Initiate Action

This requires positive action to carry forward Biblical commands.

They must bear responsibility before God for the outcome of their stewardship, whether it is that of weakness or spiritual strength (I Peter 5:2-4; Hebrews 13:17).

Responsible leadership never just prays and leaves to God what requires human action.

Leadership should take all necessary steps to assure that fellow believers function according to the mind of God.

This includes soundness of spiritual life as well as sound doctrine.

Leaders Model

Leaders should model the life and character of the Lord Jesus Christ, being examples to the flock, as those spiritually qualified (Hebrews 13:7-8).

Spirituality, not seniority, should be the chief qualification.

They are not “lords over God’s heritage” (I Peter 5:3).

Proper function must accompany spirituality (Acts 20:28).

TEN PERSONAL QUALITIES OF A GOOD LEADER

Rate yourself on each quality – (1) Definitely (2)

Somewhat (3) Doubtful

1. Spiritual

Wholeheartedly seeking to live for Christ.

2. Sacrificial

Willing to lay down your life for fellow believers.

3. Servant

Ready like Jesus to willingly serve others

4. Disciplined

Your life is well managed in time use.

You can make yourself do what is required when you don’t feel like it.

5. Decisive

Ready to make a decision when required (not vacillating, procrastinating, avoiding).

6. Energetic

Not easily wearied in serving the Lord.

7. Sense of Direction

You know where you are going in life and where the church needs to go (vision).

8. Courageous

You are able to handle criticism and opposition without giving up.

9. Positive Outlook

You expect to achieve success in areas to which you are committed; not pessimistic, negative.

10. Discerning - Perceptive

Generally you have good judgment about the abilities and character of others.

TEN ACTIONS OF A GOOD LEADER

Rate yourself on each quality - (1) Definitely (2) Somewhat (3) Doubtful

1. Stands in front as needed

Steps forward rather than remaining in background in most situations.

2. Imparts Vision

Frequently inspires confidence in others with your ideas and influence.

3. Initiates

Frequently begins new efforts to meet needs rather than waiting for others to act.

4. Communicates

Listens well, expresses ideas persuasively and without frequent misunderstandings.

5. Organizes

Spends necessary time in planning and organizing things needed to be done.

Not haphazard, nonsystematic.

6. Delegates

Draws others into activities, according to their ability, and utilizes them well.

Checks results and accepts responsibility for their performance.

7. Motivates Others

Inspires others to make decisions and take action.

One who exercises a great positive influence.

8. Overcomes Obstacles

Sees problems as opportunities.

Is not easily discouraged.

An achiever - not an excuse maker.

9. Accepts Responsibility

Willing to accept blame when things go wrong in their areas.

Does not blame others for failures.

10. Handles Pressure Well

Remains calm in crisis or when duties multiply heavily.

Perseveres rather than quits.

Appendix C: The Disciple in Spiritual Warfare

We are in a daily war against powerful enemies:
the world system, our sin nature and Satan (Eph. 6:12).

We battle as soldiers of Christ (II Tim. 2:4).

We have important spiritual weapons of righteousness
(II Cor. 6:7).

We must put on spiritual armor to be victorious (Eph.
6:16).

We have spiritual weapons.

These are:

1. Faith (Eph. 6:16; II Cor. 5:7).

We seek “great faith,” not a “little faith,” which Jesus
condemned (Luke 24:25; Mark 16:14).

We seek mountain-moving faith (Mark 11:23).

2. Prayer (Eph. 6:18).

We must pray on

Jesus Name (John 14:14), in faith (Mark 9:23), with
personal purity (Psa. 24:3-4; 66:18) and with
perseverance (I Thess. 5:17).

It accomplishes much (James 5:16).

3. The Word of God (Eph. 6:17).

It is likened to a fire (Jer. 5:14) and a hammer (Jer.
23:29).

It accomplishes whatever purposes God has in mind (Is. 55:11).

It will not fail even in the smallest detail (Matt. 5:18).

It is supernatural, accomplishing miracles.

It guides believers (Ps. 119:105, 130).

It encourages (Rom 15:4; I Thess. 4:18).

It acts as spiritual food for our souls (I Pet. 2:2; I Cor. 3:1-2).

We are called to “eat the Word” (Jer. 15:16), to claim its promises.

We must use it against our enemies, including the devil (Matt. 4:3-10) to refute unsound doctrine (Titus 1:9), uphold weary souls (Is. 50:4), sow the seed beside all waters” (Is. 32:20).

Good soldiers know well their weapons and how to use them.

Do you?

The disciple must be conscious of the fact that he or she is engaged in an intense, invisible at times, spiritual war with three deadly forces:

the world system, our fleshly nature, and the devil.

“

Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of darkness, against the spiritual wickedness in the heavenly places [Satanic] (Eph. 6:12).

That is why we are called in Scripture “ soldiers” for Christ (II Tim. 2:4).

It is a part of a soldier's life to "endure hardness" (II Tim. 2:3).

As spiritual soldiers, we do not use physical weapons (II Cor. 10:4; II Tim. 4:7).

We use "weapons of righteousness" (II Cor. 6:7) in the power of God.

We have a spiritual armor.

Taking the shield of faith, with which you can quench the fiery darts (flaming arrows) of the evil one (the devil) (Eph. 6:16).

By this shield, we are aided in spiritual living.

The just shall live by faith (Habakkuk, Romans, Galatians, Hebrews).

It is to be an offensive as well as a defensive weapon, in order to achieve God's purposes.

Faith necessitates confidence, leading in Scripture to obedient action.

It, therefore, requires some word from the Lord as a secure foundation (John 2:22; Rom. 10:17).

It is not presumption.

It is much more than intuition.

It is not subjective but objective.

How does faith work in practice?

1. It enables us to walk correctly without seeing (II Cor. 5:7).

It is not true that "seeing is believing."

2. There is such a thing in Scripture as “little faith,” “great faith,” and sadly “no faith.”

To doubt is to forfeit hope of God’s responsive power and blessing (James 1:6-8).

Great faith moves mountains (Mark 11:23).

When in doubt, a good prayer is, “Lord, increase our faith” (Luke 17:5) so it will not fail under fire (Luke 22:32).

We must resist doubts and focus unhesitatingly upon the promises of God.

It is not right to spiritualize or allegorize the Scriptures while denying evident literal meaning.

The use of figures of speech does not oppose this concept.

It is not what critics call “wooden literalism.”

3. Faith may develop gradually as we mature, so we are exhorted to “grow in faith” (II Thess. 1:3).

We learn to trust God in small matters and then grow to the point where we can trust Him in great matters, beyond human reckoning.

4. Faith is nurtured as we experience God’s providence for our lives and answers to specific prayers.

Our lives can be changed from impotency to power (Matt. 17:14-20).

We have the effective prayer when we sincerely invoke His Holy Name (Acts 19:11; John 14:13-14).

5. The Lord rebuked a lack of faith.

He asked the disciples, “Where is your faith” (Luke 24:25; Mark 16:14).

6. Faith must persevere if we are to experience reality.

We must “faint not” (Luke 18:1; Eph. 3:13; Heb. 12:3).

We must endure in our faith.

As noted above, we are given spiritual weapons by God.

Two major ones are:

1. The Weapons of the Word.

“Take the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God” (Eph. 6:17).

It cannot be broken or nullified (John 10:35).

Not a single dot or comma will fail until His promises are completed (Matt. 5:18).

How does the Word work in practice?

It is supernatural, beyond human possibilities.

It leads to the miracle of the new birth, deliverance from sin’s slavery, and other miraculous events.

How is the Word used effectively?

You “eat the Word” (Jer. 15:16), assimilating it into your life.

You claim its promises, rather than store information and mentally agree (Rom. 4:20-21).

You use it against your enemies, including the devil (Matt. 4:3-10), saying simply, “It is written.”

You can use it to refute unsound doctrine (Titus 1:9).

You can sustain one who is weary in spiritual life (Is. 50:4).

You can sow the seed in the hearts of the unconverted (Is. 32:20).

2. The Weapon of Prayer.

“Pray at all times in the Spirit with all perseverance” (Eph. 5:18), “without ceasing” (I Thess. 5:17).

“The effective prayer of a righteous man accomplishes much” (James 5:16).

We must ask in His Name (John 14:14), pray in faith (Mark 9:23), pray with a life of personal purity (Ps. 24:3-4).

We must pray according to the will of God (I John 5:14).

We must remember that we are communicating with our all-powerful God, for whom “nothing is impossible” (Matt. 19:26).

No wonder that the disciples asked, “Lord, teach us to pray” (Luke 11:1).

What is the conclusion of all this?

We must be ready for battle and know how to use our weapons as do all elite soldiers.

Thus, we cannot only be victorious, but be “more than conquerors” (Rom. 8:37).

Discussion Questions on 13 Steps

Step 1

1. What is the meaning and purpose of “follow-up” (helping new or untaught believers) as you understand it?
2. What has been your experience, if any, in trying to do this?
3. What steps would you take and why would you make priorities in carrying out this mission?
4. What problems or questions have you noted when “converts” have professed to know the Lord but have some ominous character failings?

Step 2

1. How would you begin the task of “making disciples” (Matt. 28:19)?

Include your minimal conditions (at least three) for selecting a person in whom you wish to invest your life.

2. How could you be sure the person with whom you started should be continued for more time?

What might cause you to temporarily (or permanently) suspend further sessions?

3. What do you see as essential for the weekly discipleship session?

review the notes, then add your own thoughts.

4. What do you consider to be the essential elements for being a “true disciple,” the terms set down by the Lord?

Step 3

1. What teaching and modeling priorities would you suggest to improve the results of your disciple-making efforts?

List at least three according to your priorities.

2. What daily check list would you suggest for the candidate to grow and become a reproducing disciple?

List at least five items.

3. How specifically would you plan to make sure the disciple perseveres for the pursuit of greater godliness, fruitfulness, and effective use of opportunities that God may give?

Step 4

1. Several goals are mentioned in the lesson regarding God, relationships with others, effective functioning in “basics” for godly living.

Which ones would you deem to be essential in helping people become “true disciples”?

Name at least seven.

2. What qualities would you seek in selecting someone to disciple?

Name four.

3. Nine characteristics are deemed unacceptable.

You can suggest others.

Name at least seven you consider unacceptable.

4. Six problem areas specified.

Again, you may think of others.

Name at least five you have encountered or might encounter.

5. Five improvements are listed as possibilities.

You may think of others.

List at least four that you use or plan to use.

6. Nine do's and seven don'ts are listed.

Which ones do you need special care to observe.

Name at least five of each.

7. How can you be a good role model?

8. Do you have any questions about completing the

Personal Goal Sheet on the disciple (copy to him or her, one for yourself)?

Step 5

1. How would you go about instilling spiritual vision in practical living in your work with a candidate?

2. How will you know you have progressed in this work?

3. Fifteen potential "time-wasters" are listed in the lesson.

List at least eight you have noted, either in your own daily life or in others.

4. Eight "time-savers" are listed in the lesson.

Perhaps you can think of more.

List at least five you think are especially important to implement.

Step 6

1. What has been your own commitment to be a “spiritual multiplier” of other true disciples?

Be honest.

How will you commit this command of the Lord to others?

2. Eight characteristics are listed of the effective “multiplier.”

Name at least six.

3. How can you verify if the disciple is beginning to be fruitful?

Step 7

1. The Lord Jesus was God’s “Perfect Servant.”

How can we be servants in the same manner and to whatever degree possible?

Be practical, specific.

2. When we use the word servant, what do we mean?

3. What should a good servant do?

The lesson makes seven suggestions.

You may think of others, like prompt, efficient service.

List at least six you think are of prime importance.

4. What do you need to do to be a good role model?

How does humility enter into the process?

Step Eight

1. What is your understanding of the meaning of a “spiritual gift,” as differentiated from human talent?

2. What is the divine purpose for giving all true believers at least one such gift?

Are you using yours in this manner?

3. While “discovering” or puzzling over what is my gift, how could it be determined what was my gift, or gifts?

Several guidelines are suggested in the lesson.

Name at least six you might follow or observe.

Step Nine

1. How would you define for someone the Biblical meaning of the word “church”?

2. What is your vision for your local church?

For other local churches?

Why do you need it?

How can you impart such a vision to other multiplying disciples with whom you may work?

3. What hinders a local church from achieving God’s goals?

Four are listed in the lesson.

Another major hindrance is that the church leaders may not be aware that the assembly needs goals and a vision.

They never thought it necessary and survived without them.

Why do they need goals and a vision?

4. Two charts are supplied for effective goal-reaching by local churches.

Review them and list at least four things what you consider to be needed in your local assembly for effective function.

5. Does your church have a “New-Believers Class” or care group?

Are you seeing an inflow of adult converts to take such a class?

If not, ask, “Why not?” and “What can we do to have this be true?”

Step 10

1. What questions do you have as to your own needs for specific goals?

How do you impart this vision of eternity’s values to someone else?

2. What are your own goals and priorities after reviewing the suggestions in this lesson.

3. What might hinder you in reaching these goals?

What might hinder the person you seek to help?

4. Do you have any questions about how to complete the attached forms or how to use them effectively with the person you are helping?

Step 11

1. How do you see your own life here fitting in with God’s vision and eternal plans?

2. What suggestions given in this lesson might you need to implement?

3. If you have real world vision, what might this entail for your life?

Or the life of the person you seek to help?

Step 12

1. What do you understand about the meaning of true worship?

What does it include and exclude?

2. Do you regard yourself as a regular worshipper?

Why?

3. How can you help someone else do this?

Step 13

1. In what way are you waiting and watching for the Lord's return?

2. In what way are you preparing now to come before the Lord at "the Judgment Seat of Christ" for your life and service?

Guidelines for Effective Adult Bible Classes

In most cases, churches do not have structured adult Bible class groups with group discussions supplementing lectures.

Typically, there is no homework required or evaluation.

There is no training for leadership, group prayer sessions, and discussion among leaders.

In such cases, elements of suggestions made below can at least be started or implemented.

They are in order of importance:

1. Leadership lecturers should keep to their text.

Do not use many texts.

Be careful in selection.

Read briefly.

2. Posture and Movement When Speaking a.

Don't stay frozen at speaker's stand.

Move purposefully.

b. Maintain eye contact throughout audience.

Don't keep looking at notes or text.

Don't just read.

Speak directly.

Communicate personally.

c. Maintain strong volume for hard of hearing (Jesus spoke to thousands without a microphone).

3. Introductions a.

Use strong opening statement leading to subject.

Never waste this time with friendly generalities designed to get the audience on your side.

Speak “the oracles of God,” His Word (I Pet. 4:11).

b. Do not exceed one tenth of your allotted message time on introduction.

c. Utilize a “key phrase” from your text.

State your theme clearly.

d. Lead naturally into the main outline.

4. Main Outline a.

Stay within your allotted time limits.

Too much material with too many points makes this very difficult and leads to rushing your words.

b. Keep your outline points to a minimum.

The audience gets confused easily and remembers only a very small amount (roughly 10% after one day; 1% after one week).

c. Make your outline developmental, orderly in thought progression, leading to conclusion.

d. Parallel the way you head each point of the outline.

All should be united, using questions (rhetorical), clear statements of content (thematic), or the “who-what-why-where-when” formula.

e. Always begin with definitions.

Never assume knowledge of the simplest things.

Follow any mention of grace with “undeserved favor.”

Following believe with the idea of obeying and doing.

If you mention the name of a Biblical character, at least in a sentence, say who it was.

If you use a Biblical story, as in an illustration, briefly review the occasion.

f. Remember the need for illustrations which hearers often remember better than the outline points.

Use illustrations to illuminate, not decorate, or try to be humorous.

There is a place for meaningful humor at times, however.

g. Challenge thinking at each point (it need not be about salvation always).

Do not accuse or charge your audience or be sarcastic.

Be firm, kind, and pleading in tone, not condemning.

h. Move to your climax and then conclusion.

5. Conclusion a.

Make it brief.

Tell them what

God would like them to do.

b. Never review or recapitulate outline points.

Never introduce new points here.

c. Close with powerful sentence of appeal or challenge, not "so I leave you with these few feeble thoughts."

Doing Homework: Completing Discussion Questions

Generally, people don't like to do homework.

They think it's like school.

They feel they are too rushed or busy.

They prefer to just go, listen, and in discussions give opinions which may be uninformed and certainly without adequate thought before.

Thus, the doing of homework must be continually urged in a firm, gracious way.

Convince them that they will learn much more by reading lessons carefully, answering questions, and coming to class prepared.

Doing homework will strengthen self-discipline of the mind and spirit.

It will promote deeper spiritual understanding of your own strengths and weaknesses.

Leaders should collect the homework every week.

Make it an occasion to exhort everyone in the class to do the work, emphasizing "it's for your benefit," not ours.

What do you look for in grading and evaluating homework?

1. Correct doctrinal understanding.

Is it weak, confused, reflecting only some personal opinion?

2. Is there a growth in spiritual, Biblical wisdom?

Are answers just copied from the text or thought through and applied?

3. Is there spiritual growth, development in character?

What about their attitude (concerned or complacent)?

4. Is this affecting their relationships?

With family, work, school mates, neighbors?

Grading the Homework

Here are some dos and don'ts.

Do

1. Generally, encouragingly, giving hope for improvement.

2. Make your suggestions gently, positively, not abruptly, as to discourage.

3. If there is a major problem or hindrance, go to them privately (never publicly) and try to help with humility, not arrogance on your part.

4. Write questions on their homework to promote deeper reflection.

5. Use the homework to know the student better.

Don't

1. Use grades like A-B-C.

2. Don't even appear to belittle or make "clever remarks" which can be interpreted as sarcastic "putdowns."

3. Be very clear; avoid misunderstandings from ambiguous questions (capable of more than one meaning).

4. Don't correct grammar, punctuation, spelling.

You are not teaching their language.

5. Never compare them with others and advise them to avoid comparing.

God doesn't want this, except comparing ourselves to Christ alone.

6. Give them hope and encouragement to believe that they are able, by the help of the Spirit, to understand everything God wants them to understand.

Guidelines for Discussion Leaders

By doing a good job here, class learning by everyone will be enhanced.

1. Maintain a balanced, informal atmosphere.
2. Ask someone before the class to open in prayer.
3. Seek balanced participation by all.

Gently curb over-talkers.

Tactfully draw in the non-talkers by addressing a request to them for their viewpoint.

If necessary, contact attendees outside the class to tactfully keep these goals in mind.

If over-talkers persist in these violations, gently correct them rather than let them take over.

4. When the discussion wanders from the subject, bring them back to the main topic or questions.

5. Try not to embarrass anyone.

6. If there is silence after a question, go on to the next one.

You don't have to first "clean up" every point.

7. Respond to questions by asking counter-questions to help them think it through.

Jesus did this.

8. Motivate by asking about whether they agree, what something means.

9. Express your appreciation for their contributions or any participation.

10. Be sensitive to the reactions of each individual.

Search their eyes.

Watch closely.

Listen carefully.

11. Keep repeating key questions (use this a lot).

Don't lecture or preach.

Draw it out from the group.

12. Don't fear brief periods of silence if it is obvious people are thinking it over.

Give them time.

13. Avoid involved questions, side issues, complex doctrinal differences.

Keep it simple.

Using Questions in Discussion Groups

Learn to be a good questioner, without being a "cross examiner," like an attorney in court.

1. In addition to questions in the homework, note in advance "backup questions" to help clarify a point.

There are three types of "backup questions":

observational, interpretive, and applicational.

In other words:

What does it say?

What does it mean"

What does this mean in practical terms in your life?

2. Observation questions are good to draw in participants.

Just have them read a Scripture and answer that they think it means.

3. Interpretive questions seek to bring out what participants think is meant.

Ask them about the preceding or succeeding verses (context).

Ask if they can think of any other Scriptures that apply on this point.

Ask about certain key words or phrases as to what they think you mean.

4. Applicational questions seek to help them think in terms of how in practice some principles or examples might be needed in their lives, not someone else's.

Personal experiences by them, if stated briefly, can be helpful.

5. Study the questions of Jesus in the Gospel.

They are masterful.

Form A: Evaluation of Speakers

1. Text Selection (circle where applicable)

Apt, on point, clear, brief, well read

Note any areas of suggested improvement.

2. Posture and Movement When Speaking (circle applicable)

Standing in a balanced way, not rushing, moving away from the pulpit to both sides in a purposeful way, maintaining eye contact with a variety of people throughout the audience, not looking constantly at text or notes, not losing eye contact while speaking, maintaining good volume, using pauses, especially after key points or questions.

3. Introduction (circle applicable)

Strong opening statement.

Don't waste time on generalities.

Keeping it brief, using key phrase from text.

Go immediately to the main outline.

4. Main Outline (circle applicable)

Stay within the allotted time.

Limited outline points and avoid rushing because of too much material you failed to cover.

Outline points developmental, orderly, progressive, paralleling in style (questions, phrases, sentences).

Definitions at every step done initially.

Illustrate often to illuminate the ideas.

Challenge thinking.

Persuade.

Move to climax.

5. Conclusion (circle applicable)

Brief, compelling, stating the action they need to take since God commanded it.

No recapitulations or new points.

Strong closing statement.

6. Delivery (circle applicable)

Compelling, adequate volume, speaking as “oracles of God,” using pauses often, including long pauses at significant times; no major distractions (state any you notice).

Summary of major encouragements and suggestions.

Form B: Evaluation of Discussion Leaders

Consider the following points in evaluating discussion leaders.

Give them this written form to keep for a reminder.

In general tone be encouraging rather than overly critical (on every point, stick to the “majors.”

(circle applicable)

1. Well-maintained group environment.
2. Responds well to others and gives appropriate feedback, with sensitivity, based on good listening).
3. Did the leader handle well the attendees’ wrong, superficial or confused responses; allow them to stray off topic?
4. Maintained balanced participation, controlling “over-talkers” and bringing in non-talkers.
5. Stayed within time limit.
6. Used many questions including counter questions.

Did not lecture.

Note:

Ice-breaker opening questions can be helpful, if they help stay within the main topic or do not go too long.

Form C: Evaluation of Attendees

This should be done by discussion leader assistants (where possible, women with women, men with men).

The leaders can help.

The big issue is:

Where is the person spiritually?

Discussion class work alone can not be expected to determine this.

It will take time outside the class.

Personal visits, including lunch or breakfast, are best.

Phone calls can help if done frequently but not annoyingly (wrong time or setting; let them say when).

Social times together are very helpful.

Invite them for dinner.

Do a project together.

Help practically where you can.

Be a friend, not a “checker-upper.”

Answer these questions.

Keep confidences.

Give a copy to the key leader for suggested actions.

1. Is there evidence of true salvation?

If so, have they submitted to “believer’s baptism”?

2. Is Christ really their Lord in daily practice?

3. Are there good relationships with others?

4. Are there hindrances?

Examples:

Defective consecration, known areas of disobedience to God's will, impurity of thought or deed, defiling habit as besetting sin, unforgiving spirit, unresolved grievances (circle applicable and explain briefly but don't break confidences or tell others of your opinion).

5. Where is their real, ongoing progress?

6. What is the status of their devotional life?

7. Are they sharing their faith as a way of life?

8. Are they doing Scriptural memory work?

9. Have you expressed approval in areas of progress?

10. What are your goals for them?

What are their goals, if they have any.

Summarize.