Making Disciple-makers

It’s a process, not a program...

It’s a relationship, not a course!

A survey of the principles and practices of disciple making as seen in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, Paul the apostle, and Timothy.

Ron Berrus  www.ronberrus.abwe.org
Second Level Disciple Making

Three Levels

1. Disciples
2. Disciplemakers
3. Leaders

In this material, we will be surveying the basic processes of disciple making, with the focus on forming a new believer into a reproducing disciplemaker. (Paul’s imperative for Timothy in 2 Tim 2:1-8.) The six chapters will focus primarily on the teachings and practices of Jesus, Paul and Timothy. Additional readings and resources will be required for the body of the course, with others recommended in the bibliography at the end.

Chapter 1 Disciple Making: It’s not a Course, it’s a Relationship    Life in Tandem

Chapter 2 Three Roles of a Disciplemaker    Teacher, Father, Coach
Chapter 3 Four Illustrations, Four Occupations    Investor, Soldier, Athlete, Farmer
Chapter 4 Three Principles of Form and Function    Repeatable, Thorough, Continual
Chapter 5 Four Areas for Growth - #1 Doctrine    Doctrine
Chapter 6 Four Areas for Growth - #2 Disciplines    Disciplines
Chapter 7 Four Areas for Growth - #3 Character    Character
Chapter 8 Four Areas for Growth - #4 Skills    Ministry Skills
Chapter 9 Crucial Choices, Limited Time    Who is more important than How

Recommended Reading
- The Lost Art of Disciple Making    Leroy Eims, NAV Press
- Jesus Christ Disciplemaker    Bill Hull, Revell
- First Steps; Key Qualities; Moral Purity; Journal 1    Ron Berrus
- Story of Hope; Way to Joy    ABWE Publications
- Audio Files on Disciple Making    Ron Berrus www.ronberrus.abwe.org
Excuse me as I shoot myself in the foot before we begin!

The very fact that we are offering this training in a “seminar” format is counter-productive at the outset. We are using a “teaching format” for a “training outcome!” You will not be a disciplemaker when you’ve checked off the assignments and completed the course. At best, you will know more about disciple making, and perhaps be more passionate and interested than before. But to become a disciplemaker is not, and will never be, a course. It is, instead, a life... built on essential principles, lived out in intense relationships, and focused on extreme obedience as one invests his time, resources, skills and energies for Jesus Christ in the lives of others.

I believe and practice the principles I will be sharing in the pages and audios ahead. I have done so for over 30 years. I do not consider myself an expert, but rather a practitioner. The principles we will address are not assimilated or perfected in a year or two. Effectiveness as a disciplemaker of disciple makers requires the elimination of unnecessary activity so years can be invested in redemptive, constructive relationships that develop character and skill in others.

Not many people become effective disciplemakers. Most, because they’ve never experienced it, others, because they misunderstand it, and still others because they are unwilling to make the changes necessary to achieve it.

It is the great commission: “As you’re going.... make disciples” Matt 28:19

It is the greatest, most fulfilling, most exhausting, most heart rending, most satisfying investment on the planet. May God grant us all to be faithful to pursue being and making disciplemakers.

Disciple Making Defined: “An intentional, intimate relationship that influences life-change through instruction, correction, participation, and direction; resulting in well-grounded, self-disciplined, fruitful followers of Jesus Christ”

(For the sake of simplicity and brevity, we will be referring to disciplemakers and disciples in the masculine as “he”, “his”, and “him.” Both women and men are subsumed in this grammatical form with the understanding that everything applies equally and fully to both.)

“Life in Tandem”

To make one, be one. Your effectiveness in ministry is directly dependent on your ability to make and sustain long term, holy, influential relationships. To make a disciplemaker is to model a holy life up close and personal.

The gospels portray, not just the teachings and miracles of Jesus, but very significantly they document Jesus Christ, THE DISCIPLEMAKER, demonstrating the patterns, priorities, and principles of making disciples before our very eyes. This record is provided in a narrative lived out before us.
The Jesus Model  

**Mark 3:14** And he went up into the mountain, and called to himself those he desired, and they went to him. And he appointed twelve, that they might be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach…” (Luke 6:12-13 Jesus spent the entire night in prayer before making His selections)

**The first reason Jesus chose these men was relational… “to be with Him.”** Life transformation is most complete, effective and enduring when done in the context of long term, influential relationships. *God changes people through other people.* Not only did Jesus choose a Peter, but he chose 11 other men to be in constant contact with Peter and he with them. It was a transformational small group. They walked together, worked together, served together, struggled together, ate together, learned together, failed together and triumphed together. This intensive relationship was central, as they learned how to relate, submit, rebuke, restore, pray, preach, and change. Jesus made disciples in the context of daily relationships and thousands of teachable moments. When Jesus told the disciples to “go and make disciples”, they knew exactly what He meant. They had experienced it. It was simply a continuation of a life learned and lived with the Savior.

Our western approach to learning is traditionally in a “school” context. We come, sit, listen and leave; occasionally asking question or taking a test. It is all cerebral. It is all about information intake. Application is viewed as optional… something to pursue outside of class. It is accomplished in 12 to 16 weeks…. “I had that class!”

The gospels, the book of Acts, and the pastoral letters make it clear, however, that while disciple making requires information (Biblical truth), it is provided in the context of expected, immediate application in real life situations. Without the scrutiny and assistance provided by in-depth relationships and clear objectives, information rarely translates into transformation.

The Jesus Model allowed for instruction, application, correction, direction, and encouragement in the normal routines of life. Jesus was there when they needed help! He was there when they needed rebuke! Jesus was there when they needed comfort! His life lived with them was a constant motivation to learn and live a new life for themselves.

**The second reason Jesus chose these men was missional… “to send them…”** It was known from the outset that this relationship was intended to result in their becoming “men fishers.” They knew from the get-go that Jesus intended to train them in ministry skills. His life was the model for their lives, and His ministry was the model for their ministries. Again, the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20 expected that these disciples would make other disciples who would be completely obedient to the same expectations and commands Jesus gave originally.

Initially, the twelve had a lot of missional misperceptions. Some of these missional misperceptions lasted longer than others. We call this “cultural baggage”, and every disciple brings his own misperceptions into the journey. The longer we walk with Jesus, however, the less baggage we retain and the clearer our missional understanding becomes as our character and purposes become more and more like Christ Himself.

The book of Acts is filled with names… (ever noticed that?) names of people who connected with the original disciplermakers, who made disciplermakers, who then made still more disciplermakers.
Jesus trained Paul... Paul trained Timothy and Titus and many others... and Timothy trained still more. *This training was relational and missional. The Jesus model requires both.*

**LIFE IN TANDEM principles for disciplemakers.**

1. Never do anything in ministry alone that you can do with someone else.
2. Life requires doing, not just knowing.
3. Change is most effective when it is seen in a life lived up close and personal.
4. The most effective teaching times occur outside of the classroom.
5. The extraordinary happens in the context of a lot of ordinary moments spent together.
6. Failure, when exposed, is the best opportunity for lasting change to take place.
7. Everyone tends to cover up failure. But failure left unexposed results in more failure.
8. Failure is never self-exposed if distrust exists. Trust is built over time in relationships.
9. Progress is made most effectively when failure is exposed and help is given immediately.

**Summary**

Simplification of major subjects is fraught with danger. However, space demands that we highlight only certain aspects of disciple making with minimal comment.

The Great Commission as recorded in Matthew 28:18-20 is framed around the central command of making disciples. A disciple is one who learns from and follows the example of his master. It is essentially *living life in tandem*; the tandem of the disciplemaker and the disciple in the making. It is a lifelong partnership process of building relationships and strengthening each other in our mutual worship of ... walk with... and work for God.

Jesus’ call to His disciples was: “follow me and I will make you...” Matthew 4:19. His purpose and strategy in Mark 3:14 was to choose twelve men “to be with Him and to send them forth to preach and to heal”. He selected individuals to move into daily experience with Him so that in the mix of daily exposure, example and exhortation He might transform them and prepare them to go and declare truth, demonstrate compassion and make disciples among all the world’s peoples. Disciple making requires a tandem relationship. Barnabas took Paul under his wing after his conversion and presented him to the Apostles, and then went after him for the Antioch ministry. Barnabas took John Mark (Acts 15:39-40) after the rancorous discussion with Paul; and Paul chose Silas and then a few weeks later Timothy. (Acts 16:3). Acts, the Pastoral Epistles and Romans 16 all reveal the practice of Paul to spend his life in continuous association with others so as to make devoted, mature, reproducing followers of Christ. It is in the reality of real life lived out in tandem with others that spiritual maturity is demonstrated and developed.

The essence of disciple making is *“life and ministry in tandem”*. Disciplemakers are called to live and grow in public. We are not perfect, but we must be credible and growing in godliness. The following passages reveal the power and priority of this *“life-in-tandem”* approach.

1 Cor 11:1  Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.
1 Cor 4:17 (he will) remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.
Philippians 3:17 Brethren, join in following my example... as you have us for a pattern.
Philippians 4:9 The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do
2 Tim 3:10 you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance...

*The success of your life and ministry depends on your ability to build and sustain long term relationships and the power of your influence that results from them.*
Suggestions for Further Study

1. Read: Jesus Christ Disciplemaker Chapters 1-7 Circle favorite paragraph in each chapter
2. Read: Lost Art of Disciple Making Chapters 1-2 Circle favorite paragraph in each chapter
3. Listen: audio The Disciplemaker Series www.ronberrus.abwe.org/sermons-audio
4. Complete the worksheet below

Personal Application

Write out your own observations on disciple making drawn from the following passages

Mark 3:14
Acts 16:1-3
Phil 2:19-21
2 Tim 1:2-4
2 Tim 3:10
2 Tim 4:9-12
2 Tim 4:19-21

In the definition of disciple making below, select 6 words that are most significant to you and write a paragraph on why you chose them.

“An intentional, intimate relationship to influence life-change through instruction, correction, participation, and direction resulting in well-grounded, self-disciplined, fruitful followers of Jesus Christ”

Who provided life-in-tandem models for you that had a significant impact on you as a Jesus follower?

What was it about them that made the greatest impact on you? Why?

List at least 10 believers you could have a significant influence on. This is your D 10 list.

What are the greatest obstacles standing in the way of you becoming a more intentional disciplemaker?
# WORKSHEET FOR DISCIPLE MAKING PLAN – BEGIN WITH **WHO!**

## WHO

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## WHAT

### AREAS FOR GROWTH DEVELOPMENT

#### BIBLE STUDY
- Personal Devotions
- Bible Study Methods
- Bible Survey
- Biblical Theology
- Names of God
- Attributes of God
- Will of God

#### CHARACTER
- Teachability/Humility
- Discipline/Diligence
- Respect/Listening
- Integrity/Honesty
- Commitment/Loyalty
- Acceptance/Understanding
- Forgiveness/Grace
- Conflict Resolution
- Accountability

#### MINISTRY SKILLS
- Evangelism
- Public Speaking
- Teaching
- Disciple Making/Mentoring
- Planning
- Evaluating
- Leading Teams
- Personality versus Character

### PRIORITIES – Step by Step
1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
6. 
7. 
8.

## HOW

### METHODS TO EMPLOY
- One on One
- Small Group
- Large Group
- Ministry Team
- Ministry Coach

### MATERIALS TO USE
- Options?

### WHEN
- Time Options?
- Days of the Week
- Length of Sessions
- Number of Sessions
- Frequency
- People Involved

### WHERE
Chapter 2 Three Roles of a Disciplemaker:

Teacher | Father | Coach
---|---|---
**TO KNOW**
Biblical Knowledge | **TO BE**
Character | **TO DO**
Ministry Skills

It’s more than information, it’s transformation.

As we’ve observed, Jesus modeled disciple making within a relationship context. It is more than just the transfer of information. It is life-on-life influence that results in a transformation of character, values and vision in the lives of those who are becoming disciples. It is life lived in tandem with others resulting in the development of relational holiness and ministry effectiveness.

The Jesus model of a disciplemaker includes a number of different roles and responsibilities. For the sake of brevity, we will discuss only three: the role of the teacher (truth), the parent (model), and the coach (skills).

**THE TEACHER**

Jesus was often referred to as “Teacher” by his disciples. His ability to communicate profound truth in simple, compelling stories was and is unparalleled. His stories also confused people, often intentionally, to separate the curious from the committed. And his teaching at times offended and outraged his hearers, providing clear lines of belief and unbelief regarding his identity and authority. His disciples frequently asked him privately regarding his stories, providing additional opportunities for further insights and instruction. He taught formally and informally, directly and symbolically. He always had something of value to say with eternal perspective. He was saturated with scripture. Whether denouncing the devil, debating the religious leaders, or establishing his disciples, he appealed to scripture for everything he taught. The apostle Paul (1 Tim 2:7 and 2 Tim 1:11) followed the same pattern (2 Tim 3:16, 4:2) and expected it of Timothy.

Having been forceful in denouncing a “class” model of disciple making, let me be equally forceful in stating that *information, while insufficient, is yet absolutely essential*. Truth does indeed set us free (John 8:32.) God’s truth alone possesses the power to save and transform the sinner. The truth well taught by a life well lived in honest, intimate relationships is the most influential tool God ever created. We have just described a disciplemaker!

Jesus continually instructed His disciples regarding, among other things, the character of God, spiritual priorities, authority, sin, the gospel, the kingdom of heaven, the heart, eternity, money,
marriage, sin, conflict, forgiveness, love, worship, compassion, accountability, prayer, faith, servant-hood, and humility.

As the population of our world continues to increase, the knowledge of our world regarding the story of God continues to decrease. Biblical illiteracy is a worldwide epidemic. When truth is absent, deception reigns; where deception reigns, destruction results. Therefore it is imperative that we instruct disciples in biblical knowledge and how to mine that knowledge for themselves. All of scripture applied to all of life is inherent in the great commission...“teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” Matt 28:19-20

Paul’s command in 2 Tim 2:2 required Timothy to “invest in faithful men the things you’ve heard from me among many witnesses.” It was assumed by Paul that Timothy would know the content of the common instruction that formed the foundation of his teaching wherever he went. Timothy followed and served with Paul in the same way the apostles followed and served with Jesus and learned both essential biblical content and holiness of life as well as effective methodologies for communicating that truth.

Disciplemakers instruct others formally (bible studies) and informally (conversations) in “the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27) “the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude verse 3). These foundational doctrinal truths must be communicated clearly with practical application for godly living. Those we disciple will read scripture they do not understand. They will be exposed to false teaching. The on-going disciple making relationship allows instruction to take place immediately as error is encountered and before it is allowed to permeate.

While we have focused on the concept of a single disciplemaker, it is expected that the disciple will be learning from a number of other teachers in the body of Christ as well. It should be a group effort whenever possible. A mark of cultism is the tendency to exclusivity in the leader-learner relationship. Expanding relationships among believers at various stages of growth to generate maximum influence in the body is important. Making a disciplemaker necessitates working in tandem with those who have progressed to the place that they are working with others as well. This is the blessing and benefit of integrating disciples into a family of believers where they can benefit from the giftedness of numerous teachers of God’s word. However, the close relationship sustained by the disciple and disciplemaker will allow for expanded opportunities and in-depth explanations of doctrine that other venues will not.

THE FATHER

The disciplemaker must also provide an example of godliness coupled with the unpleasant but necessary responsibility of loving rebuke and correction. Like a physical parent, the disciplemaker recognizes that immaturity always precedes maturity. And while immaturity and disobedience (to God) are expected, they must not be minimized or ignored. The disciplemaker must apply difficult and painful truth, while sharing his own stories of past failure and growth. While rebuke must be done gently and in love, none the less it must be done. However, rebuke without relationship offends 100% of the time! If a disciple is convinced that his disciplemaker is committed to him, seeks his best, believes in him and unconditionally loves him, he will usually respond with humility and repentance. But if he sees anger, arrogance and impatience in the disciplemaker, he will be severely tempted to give up and walk away. Repentance is always the fruit of the Spirit, so it must be preceded by and accompanied with fervent prayer, and a spirit of grace, patience and love (2
Tim 2:22-26; 4:1-2; Jesus’ example as recorded in the gospels) The goal of gentle rebuke is always correction with renewed motivation to walk in obedience. (2 Tim 3:16-17) The combination of positive example with the corrective application of truth is at the heart of the parental role.

The disciplermaker must also resist the sinful temptation to become controlling and manipulative (I Peter 5:1-4) or arrogantly condescending (John 21). This is the “father” role lived out in the life of an adult son, not an infant or adolescent. Disciplemakers must ever be mindful that the disciple is accountable for his own decisions, that God alone can cause transformation in the heart, and that the fruit of growth is a process that takes time to mature. Consider the incredible patience of Jesus as he interacted with his disciples that still didn’t “get it” after three years of night and day life together. Consider how often we, as disciplemakers, don’t “get it” after thirty years of walking with Christ. Paul’s parental admonitions to Timothy in both letters serve as a pattern for us as we seek to influence others in the process of disciplemaking.

THE COACH

The disciplermaker also has the delightful duty of guiding the growing disciple in the investment of his time, energies and abilities in making other disciples. To accomplish this, the coach assists his disciple to discover his spiritual gifts and talents, assess his skills and resources, and embrace his obligations to invest all he is and has in the lives of others for Jesus’ sake. (We will look at this more closely in chapter five.) Again, the life-in-tandem approach will naturally expose the disciple to various ministry opportunities as they live and serve alongside the disciplermaker. Serving early is crucial. New disciples are usually eager and excited about their relationship with disciplermakers, and with opportunities to serve God by serving others. The disciplermaker must remain alert and eager to involve the disciple in various venues of ministry, taking them from observer... to participant... to leader in the process. Each opportunity to serve is just a preparation for the next opportunity that will develop. The wise disciplermaker uses every opportunity to help the disciple evaluate the experience of serving and so improve the next attempt. Jesus sent the 12 (and others) out two by two to experience preaching and compassion ministries on at least two extended tours before issuing the final great commission. Each of these ministry internships was concluded by a wilderness debriefing during which time Jesus corrected their misguided interpretations and strengthened them for greater service by emphasizing humility and cross-carrying.

Again, it must be emphasized that coaching is not an exclusive role. I used to live near PSU, where Nittany Lion fever raged all year long. Joe Paterno was the team “coach”, but the lives of the players were influenced by a score of other coaches and assistant coaches... defensive, offensive, special teams, and more. Additional ministry coaches (influencers and skill builders) should be brought in very early in the disciple’s new life experience. Each one will have an important role in shaping and developing the disciplermaker in process. Living in the Spirit and seizing opportunities to share with and serve alongside others is never wasted. While the most evident fruit will be seen in the lives of those we spend the most time with, yet eternity will reveal the power of even fleeting investments in the lives of others God has brought our way.
LIFE IN TANDEM
Suggestions for Further Study

1. Read: Jesus Christ Disciplemaker Chapters 8-10  Cite favorite paragraph in each chapter
2. Read: Lost Art of Disciple Making Chapters 3-4  Cite favorite paragraph in each chapter
3. Read through the books of 1 and 2 Timothy and list verse references that give evidence of the three roles. For example, Father: 1 Tim 1:2 “my son” Coach: 1 Tim 1:3 “I urged you to stay in Ephesus and charge…”

Teacher – helping the disciple to know and believe – it’s about truth

Father – helping the disciple to grow and belong – it’s about character

Coach – helping the disciple to develop and become – it’s about skills
Personal Application

Who have fulfilled these 3 roles in your life? List and explain how they influenced you.
Teachers
Fathers/Mothers
Coaches

Which role, if any, was less present in your life as a growing disciple?

Which of the three roles do you feel most competent in at this point in your life?

Which of the three roles do you desire the most help in developing?

Who are people you are already influencing in these three roles? (Refer to “WHO” LIST)

Teacher

Father

Coach

Who are some mature teachers, fathers and coaches that you could learn from?
The Apostle Paul, speaking of disciplemakers in 2 Timothy 2:1-8 and 4:7-8, used *four illustrations comprising four occupations* to highlight key principles. He intended for Timothy to spend some significant time thinking about them, as he ended this illustrations saying “think about what I am saying, and may the Lord give you understanding in all these things.” *(Translation mine)*

**Illustration #1 The Investor 2 Tim 2:1-2 Leave it!**

2:1-2 You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to (invest in) faithful men, who will be able to teach others also. NASB

The first occupational illustration is the “investor”. As an investor, Timothy had already received the truths of God as a sacred deposit.

1:13-14 *What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching,* with faith and love in Christ Jesus. *Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you-- guard it* with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us. NIV

Timothy was to carefully *guard* the gospel from error. But guarding it was not sufficient. He was also given the responsibility to *deposit the truths of God* in the hearts and minds of others who would be qualified to continue the process into and through the coming generation and beyond.

The disciplemaker as investor is focused on the knowledge and transmission of the gospel. But it is also focused on long term relationships with those he is investing in. Paul makes two references to the kind of person the disciplemaker must look for... “faithful” and “able to teach others also”.

Faithful denotes commitment. We are peaking here of a high level, up front commitment to growth and change. When Jesus called Peter, Andrew, James, John, Matthew... they all “left their nets” and their former occupations and followed Jesus. They had a lot of changing and growing to do, but there was no doubt about a high-level of upfront commitment to “becoming fishers of men” as they walked with Jesus over the next three years.

As an investor, the disciplemaker is focused on building strong relationships based on the continual input of biblical truth into the disciple and through that disciple into the lives of others. This investing isn’t completed in a week or a month or a year. And it is not merely the deposit of a
message, but also the imparting of a life style, a focus, a purpose, an outlook and a mindset that reflects Jesus Christ in every relationship of life.

*Get it.... Guard it.... Give it.... Leave it* behind you in the lives of others. We have a window of opportunity to invest in those we will leave behind. The investor knows the necessity of making a wise deposit in those who are best able to give a return on the investment by multiplying the riches of the gospel in the lives of those they too will one day leave behind.

As a disciplemaker, we must live and lead with leaving in view.

**Illustration #2 The Soldier 2 Tim 2:3-4 Limit it!**

The second occupational illustration is the “soldier”. As a soldier, Timothy was commanded to “endure hardship... (and to not) get involved in civilian affairs”. As a soldier, the disciplemaker must *patiently persevere* in the face of failures and difficulties and *limit his activity* for the sake of winning the war.

(2:3-4 You therefore must *endure hardship* as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare *entangles himself with the affairs of this life*, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. NKJV)

Perseverance is essential in the life of a soldier both because of personal hardships endured in the life-threatening theater of war as well as the reality that wars are not customarily won in a matter of weeks or months. Hardships regularly endured on the battlefield include lack of food and water, shelter and rest. Life is limited to the most elemental of necessities, since the need to move and fight is paramount. The goal of the solider is to defeat the enemy and set captives free. His very life is offered up for the sake of others and a goal much larger than his own personal profit drives his decision making.

This brings us to the limitation of activity. Paul’s suggestion of a soldier on a battle field trying to manage a side business back home is intentionally ludicrous. The attempt would be personally lethal. Soldiers cannot afford to be distracted by additional, non-essential interests if they intend to gain the commendation of their commander. The disciplemaker as soldier must come to grips with the necessity of limiting his activities. If one wants to make disciples, then one must leave many other interests behind so *the main thing can remain the main thing*. You can’t do everything. There are many things we *could* do. There are some things we *must* do. Making disciples is the commission of our commander, Jesus Christ. Learning to say “no” to the non-essential is a rare but essential skill. One of the primary reasons most North American believers do not make disciples is that they have no time to do so. Their time is taken up with activities designed for personal pleasure or personal profit. Our expectations of life are such that constant activity, entertainment, occupation and accumulation define our existence. Building redemptive relationships with unbelievers or discipling relationships with newer believers is left undone with the excuse... “I would if I had the time.” Most of us live life merely as responders. Effective disciplemakers learn how to live life as initiators. They learn to manage life in the light of lasting priorities. It’s not that they have more time. It’s that they make much better use of it.

To review: The soldier illustrates the principles of perseverance and limitation.
Perseverance with the people and the process involved in disciple making are both crucial. Those we are discipling will not immediately overcome their erroneous thinking and sinful habits. It will be a process. Demonstrating our commitment to those we are discipling will provide much encouragement for them to get up after they stumble along the way. We must speak truth along with showing personal love and commitment in the context of a lifelong journey as friends.

Limitation of the non-essential for the sake of winning a war of eternal consequence.

**Illustration #3 The Athlete**  
2 Tim 2:5  
*Live it!*

2:5 And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned *unless he competes according to the rules.* NKJV

The third occupational illustration is the “athlete”. The emphasis here is the necessity of keeping the rules as the race is run. No shortcuts that disqualify the athlete are allowed. The focus here is on the personal life that the disciplemaker is living. The disciplemaker is not only depositing truth into others (investor) and persevering in the process (soldier), but as an athlete, the disciplemaker is running the race ahead of the disciple. As in a relay race, the disciplemaker is setting the pace and running the track ahead of the runner he is handing the baton off to. His manner of running the race is just as important as his teaching investment and his soldierly perseverance.

The disciplemaker is a living model of discipleship. As in the earlier discussion on the disciplemaker as “father”, here too as “athlete” we are focused on the life example or model of the disciplemaker. The disciple making relationship, as we learned earlier, is an intimate one that allows in-depth examination of the disciplemaker’s relationships, values, vision, and purpose in life.

The disciplmaker’s lifestyle reflected in how he uses his time, money and other resources, along with his role model as worshipper, father, husband, brother, spiritual leader, employee, employer, neighbor, citizen, evangelist, disciplmaker, counselor, etc., is powerful beyond words. His life must provide example, encouragement and inspiration to those who follow in the race.

As a pace setter, we need to be able to say to those who follow... “if you will run like me... if you will use your time as I do... your money as I do,... your resources as I do... if you manage your life and family and relationships as I do then you will be “competing according to the rules” and “you will be crowned” a victor when your lap of the race is done and you’ve made the handoff to those who follow you. Paul, on more than one occasion, emphasized his life-model as disciplmaker

2 Tim 3:10 “But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance...”

1Co 4:16 “Therefore I urge you, imitate me.”

1Co 11:1 “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.”
Illustration #4 The Farmer 2 Tim 2:6 Live it!

2:6 The hard-working farmer must be first to partake of the crops. NKJV

The fourth occupational illustration is the “hardworking farmer”. The emphasis here is the reality of long, hard work consummated by the delight of being the first one to taste the harvest. The satisfaction, joy and love of harvest is what the farmer lives and labors for. No one works harder, invests more, waits longer or understands better all that’s involved in the harvest than the farmer.

Paul’s comments on the disciplemaker as farmer encompass two concepts. The first is that of hard work. As in agriculture, the making of disciples requires long hours, days, weeks and months of labor in the face of constant inconvenience and potential disaster. “You can’t make it rain” is a reality lived with every year. Plowing, removing rocks, harrowing, planting, cultivating, removing weeds, dealing with insects, storms, drought, disease… all of this and more is a part of daily life. Livestock need daily care. The work is endless. Each season brings its obligations. But this is done of the sake of love for the land and love of the harvest. Most farmers are farmers generationally, passing down the values and vision over decades, if not centuries of time. So it is with disciple making. It is a long, hard process fraught with many obstacles that we are powerless to prevent. They must be dealt with as they arise. Each season has its obligations and opportunities. The harvest we envision demands that opportunities be taken and not passed over. As our Lord said: “I must work the works of Him who sent me while it is day; night’s coming when no one can work.” John 9:4

The second concept is that of being “the first to partake of the crops.” Or to paraphrase: “the farmer who does all the hard work is also the first one to taste the harvest.” After all the seemingly endless effort, slow progress and patient waiting, the day of harvest arrives. The farmer who has done the work, now delights in tasting the fruit. Sure, lots of others will benefit from the harvest. It’s not about the farmer keeping it all. But the farmer is the first one to taste the harvest… he is the one who is intimately involved in the entire process and he is the one who has the supreme delight of tasting the fruits of his labor. He labors for the love of the harvest!

There is no joy like the disciplemaker’s joy of seeing his disciple grow and mature, like the slow but steady growth of a field of wheat. What, in all of life, can compare to watching the fruits of Christ-like maturity evidence themselves in your disciple by growth in purity, humility, devotion, diligence, generosity, knowledge, grace, truth, wisdom, and compassion? We labor for the love of the harvest and glory it brings to “the Lord of the harvest.”

As an investor, the disciplemaker builds relationships and imparts truth into highly committed followers of Christ who will reproduce the investment in the lives of others.
As a soldier, the disciplemaker stays single focused on the battle at hand, patiently persevering through hardships to see progress in the lives of his fellow soldiers.
As an athlete, the disciplemaker knows his influence is made powerful and practical by the life he lives in tandem with his fellow runner. He embraces the responsibility to “walk the talk” and finish his own race well.
As a farmer, the disciplemaker labors long with patient endurance with the joy of the harvest always before him. He gives his life to it, not because it’s easy, but because he has an inexplicable love for the harvest. He just must!
Suggestions for Further Study

1. Read: Jesus Christ Disciplemaker Chapters 11-12 and review the study guide in the appendix Cite favorite paragraph in each chapter
2. Read: Lost Art of Disciple Making Chapters 5-6 Cite favorite paragraph in each chapter

Personal Application

Paul concludes his teaching in 2 Tim 2:1-6 with this command:
“Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this. Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David.”

As you reflect on what Paul said, how does Jesus Christ (the perfect disciplemaker) demonstrate the four occupational illustrations? Record your thoughts below.

Jesus as Investor:

Jesus as Soldier:

Jesus as Athlete:

Jesus as Farmer:

In 2 Tim 4:7-8 the Apostle Paul picks up the four occupational illustrations again as he reflects on his own life as a disciplemaker. Discuss how these three passages tie together.

Investor:

Soldier:

Athlete:

Farmer:

Do a search of the New Testament for other references to these four occupations and record your findings and observations.

Investor:

Soldier:

Athlete:

Farmer:

In the light of the four occupations, what changes do you need to make in your own life to become a more effective disciplemaker? What are you going to do about it this week?
Chapter 4  Three Principles for Form and Function

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Repeatable</th>
<th>Thorough</th>
<th>Continual</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Simple</td>
<td>Whole Life</td>
<td>Life Long</td>
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We have waited until now to discuss what seems to me to be the most urgent question on everyone’s mind when the subject of disciple making is raised... “how do I do it and what material do I use.” The reason for this is that we have been trained to think in terms of “programs.”

There are many wonderful “tools and programs” (forms) that exist. The standard for many has been the Navigators 2:7 Growing Strong series or Blackabys “Experiencing God.” While these tools (forms) are certainly worthwhile and recommended, from what we have already seen, it is evident that no single “tool or program” (form) is sufficient to take an individual from spiritual infancy to maturity (function.) Therefore, it is more effective to discuss three functional principles that must characterize the forms (methodologies and tools) we choose to use based on the needs of those we are working with.

Principle #1 – Simple and Quickly Repeatable

If the material we use and the methodology we employ to deliver that material are not simple and easily repeatable in the context of the culture and population we are working with, then it is patently unacceptable to achieve a disciple making purpose. Let me illustrate this principle.

Some wonderfully capable teachers are using technology and media that is truly powerful and effective in getting their point across. But the people they seek to train have neither the educational background, technological skill nor financial resources to ever enable them to repeat this process with someone else. It is not just the truth we communicate that is important, but also the means we use to impart it. The disciple must be able to quickly and simply repeat his own experience in the growth process with the next runner in the relay, to use an earlier figure. (If the guy behind you has sneakers, then don’t use rocket booster roller skates!) Jesus communicated deep truths in a simple manner that his own followers could imitate. Their message and ministry style was a reproduction of the message and ministry style of their Master.

This is not a call to reject technology, but rather use methodologies that transmit the message and transform lives that are simple and quickly repeatable. To fail to do this will result in a much lower rate of return in the making of disciples and will make a growing number of potential disciples increasingly dependent on fewer and fewer disciplemakers. (The same thing Moses experienced in the desert when his father in law suggested a major change of methodologies that would expand
the base of leadership and therefore vastly increase the effectiveness of communicating God’s law to the nation. (Exo 18:1-26.)

The disciple maker must determine “what” he needs to communicate and then “how” to communicate those truths in a variety of ways and times, formal and informal, large group and small group, casual and intensive. We tend to be driven by entertainment media and technology and the desire to be on the cutting edge of progress. The desire for excellence in what we do is a good thing. But excellence as a disciple maker will not depend on great technology, but on influence generated by a quality life with solid biblical knowledge spent in close association with others. Before you decide on a method or a tool, ask yourself this question... “Will my disciple quickly learn essential biblical content through my teaching and be able to reproduce the methods I use and be able to afford to use the material I am using with others?” If so, then it qualifies as a valid option. If you devote yourself to the making of disciples, you will be discovering or producing new materials as need arises. This leads us to the second principle...

**Principle #2 – Thorough, Whole Life**

Disciple making is more than the imparting of Biblical facts. It is the application of all of God’s truth to all of life. It is thorough. It is causing the whole of life to revolve around and be lived in subjection to the person and commands of Jesus Christ. “Teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” Matt 28:19.

Making a disciple certainly includes imparting correct theology. The true knowledge of God leads to the true fear of God which leads to wisdom and a life well lived. However, achieving a high score on a theological exam is evidence of a good memory, not necessarily of a mature and proven character. Our goal is higher than knowledge. Our aim is wisdom. We long to see Christ formed in the lives of those we disciple. (Gal 4:19 My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you...)

Therefore, the goal of all of our efforts in disciple making is the transformation of the entire life of the disciple. This includes the vertical aspects of his life as a worshipper, as well as his horizontal life as a husband, father, son, brother, neighbor, gifted part of the body, steward of God-given resources, evangelist and disciple maker. It also includes his use of his tongue, his time, his occupation, his relationships, his attitude, his goals, and his motives. It includes handling such things as conflict, depression, anger, forgiveness, pride, slander, and injury. Jesus dealt with the entire lives of his disciples. Nothing of value was left untouched. Much of his teaching was applied in the informal setting of an intimate talk after a day of public ministry. Wise disciplmakers address all of life issues either as they arise or purposefully as part of a balanced treatment of biblical teaching. The sermon on the mount (Matt 5-7) is a marvelous passage to study and apply as so many of these areas of life are addressed in it.

To address the failure areas of life requires some knowledge of basic biblical counseling skills. Issues related to communication, conflict resolution, anger, forgiveness and reconciliation, the use, abuse and
proper management of time and money, depression, life stages, parenting and marriage are common. Being an active listener and a wise and honest counselor is very important. Change takes place out of the context of failure. Problems are not to be avoided. Failure requires more than sympathy. A problem in the life of your disciple is your opportunity to address an area of failure that has to this point, remained hidden. Its exposure is your God-given opportunity to bring truth and experience to bear to assist your disciple to make positive change.

Principle #3 – Continual, Life-long

Whatever you train your disciple to do should be of such a nature that you would expect them to continue the practice for the rest of their lives. The simple, repeatable, whole life practices of worship, stewardship, learning, growing, serving, sacrificing, healthy-relationship-building, evangelism, and disciple making are not temporary skills for one stage of life, but the very essence of what living as a disciple is all about. If we devote ourselves to merely imparting information in a classroom setting, without assisting and promoting transformation in a life-in-tandem process, we will never make genuine disciples.

Many years ago I asked a dear brother from Uruguay a question. I revere this brother as one of the most effective and godly disciplermakers I have ever known. This was my question: “What do you see in the American church as you travel among us?” He replied that he didn’t want to answer the question as he didn’t want to cause a problem. This, of course, only raised my level of interest. Outsiders often see what insiders are blind to. As I pressed him, desiring to know his perception, I was unprepared for his answer. It was this: “The church I have seen in America is much like a steer. It is very large, apparently healthy, extremely well fed, but sterile. It is incapable of reproducing disciples.”

I still fight back tears as I hear those quiet, gentle words that were spoken across my kitchen table. They fastened themselves to my heart that day and have provided an incessant motivation to not reach the end of my life merely fattened for slaughter. Like you, I long to see generations of disciples carrying on the Word and work of God in the making of genuine, reproducing disciples.

Suggestions for Further Study

1. Read: Lost Art of Disciple Making Chapters 7-8 Cite favorite paragraph in each chapter
2. Read: Jesus Christ Disciplemaker pages 219-238

Personal Application

Chart out a disciplemaking process for the next 10 months including three potential people to disciple, the subject matter, materials and methods you might make use of, both formal and informal, using the chart on the next page.

1. Potential people
2. Priorities for each person (of subjects and skills to train them in)
3. Subjects to cover
4. Materials to use
5. Methodologies both formal and informal
6. Potential times to meet
### WHO

**POTENTIAL DISCIPLE MAKERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Men</th>
<th></th>
<th>Women</th>
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### WHAT

#### AREAS FOR GROWTH DEVELOPMENT

**BIBLE STUDY**
- Personal Devotions
- Bible Study Methods
- Bible Survey
- Biblical Theology
- Names of God
- Attributes of God
- Will of God

**CHARACTER**
- Teachability/Humility
- Discipline/Diligence
- Respect/Listening
- Integrity/Honesty
- Contentment/Generosity
- Commitment/Loyalty
- Acceptance/Understanding
- Forgiveness/Grace
- Conflict Resolution
- Accountability

**MINISTRY SKILLS**
- Evangelism
- Public Speaking
- Teaching
- Disciple Making/Mentoring
- Planning
- Evaluating
- Leading Teams
- Personality versus Character

### HOW

**METHODS TO EMPLOY**
- One on One
- Small Group
- Large Group
- Ministry Team
- Ministry Coach

**MATERIALS TO USE**
- Options?

**WHEN**
- Time Options?
- Days of the Week
- Length of Sessions
- Number of Sessions
- Frequency
- People Involved

**WHERE**

**PRIORITIES – Step by Step**
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.
- 15.
- 16.
Chapter 5  Four Areas for Growth – #1 Biblical Doctrine

Let’s review.

**Life in tandem** – the disciplemaker lives life upfront and personal with the disciple. From this close and enduring relationship, the influence of the disciplemaker is passed on to the disciple. It includes biblical information and values, spiritual passion and vision, and relational modeling.

(1Co 4:17 For this reason I am sending to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. *He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.*)

**Teacher, Father, Coach** – in this life-in-tandem relationship, the disciplemaker is able to impart biblical information to the disciple as a teacher. As a father, the disciplemaker provides a living model and also immediate correction and encouragement when failure is exposed. As a coach, the disciplemaker gets the disciple involved in ministry and imparts training and skill building in real life disciple making situations. Through this three-fold influence, the disciplemaker is able to assist the disciple in the growth process in knowledge, life style and ministry skills.

(1Co 11:1 Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.)

**Investor, Soldier, Athlete, Farmer** – as an investor, the disciplemaker labors continually to increase the impartation of biblical truth into the mind and heart of the disciple. Truth is best transmitted through the dynamics of a close, supportive relationship. The investor chooses with care those he gives his life to invest in. As a soldier, the disciplemaker endures the difficulties and pain associated with this intensive and extensive relational life and frees himself from lesser engagements for the greater purpose of winning the long term war for the salvation of souls and the glory of Christ. As an athlete, the disciplemaker disciplines himself to run the race with honor to the end as a pacesetting example for the disciple to follow. This self discipline includes placing all of life under Christ’s lordship, including such things as time, money, work, family, priorities, and goals. The disciple must be more than a mouth piece speaking truth, he must also be life-example living it. And finally, the disciplemaker as a farmer labors long and patiently, waiting for the growth he expects, knowing he is utterly dependent on spiritual intervention he is powerless to produce. The disciplemaker does not expect immediate growth, but he labors thorough every season for the
sake of continual, though gradual growth and an ultimate harvest. And no one experiences the joy of the harvest as does the farmer who has invested his life in the effort to see it come forth.

**Repeatable, Thorough, Continual** – the methods the disciplemaker seeks to use are simple, life changing and done with the expectation that they will become a deeply ingrained and continual life style to be passed on to others in the years ahead.

We now return for an in-depth look at four areas for growth that have already been alluded to.

## Area 1 – Doctrine

### Bible Study

Truth transforms a life when it is received with humility and acted on in obedience. The disciplemaker is commanded and committed to pass on biblical truth accurately, carefully and completely, as the following passages indicate.

2Ti 2:2 And *the things* you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses *entrust* to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.

2 Ti 3:14-17 as for you, *continue in what you have learned* and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy *you have known the holy Scriptures*, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

2Ti 4:1-5 In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: *Preach the Word*; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage-- with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when men will not put up with *sound doctrine*. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from *the truth* and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

Tit 2:1 *You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine.*

Tit 2:15 These, then, are *the things you should teach*. Encourage and rebuke with all authority.

Scores of other passages could be cited, but these suffice.

**The disciple must learn how to study the scriptures accurately for himself.** Getting the disciple into the Word for himself is foundational to everything we are attempting to do as disciplemakers. The Word is the source of our authority, our counsel, our encouragement, our strength, our wisdom, our transformation. Disciplemakers must demonstrate, by personal example, their love for the Word and their growing knowledge of it. Our daily reading, journaling, memorizing, and study of the Word will become contagious through the life-in-tandem relationships we build. It is important, therefore, to provide *simple and repeatable methods and tools* for the disciple’s bible study. Along with **THE STORY OF HOPE** and **THE WAY TO JOY** booklets produced by ABWE, additional resources
for deepening your disciple’s knowledge of scripture can be found at www.ronberrus.abwe.org under the DISCIPLE MAKING RESOURCES section.

Other highly recommended tools for Personal Bible Study

The NAVIGATORS 2:7 Growing Strong series is also recommended for this. It can be found at... http://www.navpress.com/Store/Product/9781576831915.html

Equipping the Saints by veteran disciple-maker Dave Dawson is an in-depth curriculum available in many languages and found at http://www.equippingthesaints.org/Pages/EquipSaints.html

Biblical Theology

Along with providing guidance in becoming a faithful student of the scriptures, we must also guard the faith of the disciple by providing training in biblical theology. This can be approached in a number of different ways, depending on the language base and learning style of the disciple. A study of the character and names of God is a wonderful place to begin. A classical or topical approach to theology is normal in the western world. Other cultures will appreciate a narrative based approach. Whatever form is used, the same foundational information must be communicated regarding the inspiration and trustworthiness of scripture, the character and nature of God, the world, man, angels, sin, death, Christ, the Holy Spirit, salvation, the church, and God’s plan for the future. These great truths emerge as the glorious narrative of the Bible is studied in addition to the prophets and doctrinal epistles of the New Testament. Theological error is an ever present danger. New disciples are vulnerable to false teaching since they do not have the wealth of biblical understanding the disciplemaker does. Once again, the close relationship in a life-in-tandem model allows false teaching to be detected and corrected before it takes root. Encouraging the disciple to become involved in sharing truth he is learning with others will not only increase his own understanding of the scriptures, but will also allow him to develop any teaching and speaking gifts he may possess.

Recommended Resources for Biblical Theology

Basic Theology by Charles Ryrie

Suggestions for Further Study

1. Read The Story of Hope and the leaders guide
2. Watch The Hope DVD and read the discussion guide
3. Read and complete Navigators 2:7 Growing Strong Series
4. Read Basic Theology by Charles Ryrie
Area 2 – Disciplines  (This material is also available in booklet form – First Steps in the Spiritual Disciplines located at www.ronberrus.abwe.org in both the Booklet and Disciplemakers Resources section.)

As you will quickly see, the development and consistent practice of the disciplines will likely take three years or more. It will require radical life rearrangement in order to practice them consistently. These eight practices are intended to replace the sinful habits of self indulgence with spiritual habits of personal self discipline. While they are simple to explain, they will be difficult to implement because they are so contrary to “common Christianity” seen in the church today (the “come-sit-listen-leave variey) and so contrary to the lusts of the flesh which are totally opposed to self denial and submission to Christ as Lord of all life, time, money, standards and resources.

“Exercise yourself towards godliness...” 2 Tim 4:7  Disciples never outgrow the need to maintain and develop the essence of the inner life. These are the spiritual disciplines Jesus practiced and taught to His followers. Our tendency to pursue all manner of activity and technology rather than pursuing a deeper walk with God driven by His priorities lived out by His enablement through the spiritual disciplines has borne the anemic fruit of shallow faith and lukewarm lives.

I would suggest eight spiritual disciplines that the disciplemaker and the disciple should practice continually. Taking them one at a time, the disciplemaker should lead the disciple into the practice of these disciplines. Most people live very undisciplined lives. Therefore it is important to start simply and progress slowly but surely so that the disciplines are truly embraced and become life habits, rather than a temporary attempt.

**First, there are four God-ward, vertical disciplines of preparation.** Preparation, that is, for living an obedient life in love for God. Serious athletes live by being disciplined mentally, physically and socially for an earthly goal. (1 Cor 9:25) The purpose of days, months and years of discipline is enablement to do well in the heat of the contest. So it is with the spiritual disciplines. *For the believer, the contest is life itself.* The God-ward disciplines prepare us to abide in God’s love and to love Him in return. The disciplines of preparation focus on responding to God primarily through the use of scripture and the practices of prayer.

**Second, there are four Man-ward, horizontal disciplines of participation.** Participation, that is, in loving our neighbors as we love ourselves. Vertical love must be translated into horizontal love that
is lived out practically towards those who do and those who do not know Christ. God makes it clear that we do not achieve the first (vertical) without practicing the second (horizontal)! 1 John 4:20; 5:3

**LOVING GOD**  The Four God-ward Disciplines of Preparation:

Each discipline is prefaced with negative observations on our age. This is done believing that if one recognizes the illness, the cure is more likely to be embraced.

*We live in an age of entertainment*

**THE DISCIPLINE OF THE WORD**

“Entertainment” substitutes observed, temporal and empty pleasures for participation in pleasures that are everlasting and full. (Compare Hebrews 11:25 and Psalm 16:11) Entertainment is the capturing of ears, eyes and mind with a message that leads one away from reality and into the realm of imagination. The pervasive entertainment of our age is nearly void of moral instruction, customarily opposing all that is holy, right and pure. (An appreciation of the arts is a far cry from an entertainment industry driven by popular media outlets.) Philippians 4:8-9 exhorts us to center our thoughts on holy realities. Believers must learn to think God’s thoughts as revealed in His word or they will be consumed by the messages of the evil one.

First there was the voice of God; then holy angels responded with the voice of praise; then man’s voice rose to praise and commune with God; then there was a fourth voice...*the voice of the serpent.* That voice has multiplied into thousands of voices pressing us to pursue health, wealth, stuff, and pleasure for their own sakes. We can easily become soil both shallow and choked. Encumbered by the weeds of stress, stuff and seeking after empty pleasures we live lives that are stunted and weak. The only remedy for this endless discontent is to silence the fourth voice by returning to the first: the voice of God. His voice is both the first and final voice. His voice is powerful, true and altogether trustworthy. His voice makes all things plain to the one who will listen to it. (Proverbs 8 and 9)

Matthew 4:1-11

The desert experience of our Savior was not only a time of demonic temptation, but also of spiritual preparation. Jesus was about to enter his public ministry years, and they would be filled with a non-stop flow of people, problems and pressure. His time alone in the desert would both test and strengthen Him. Each temptation by Satan received a response from Jesus prefaced by...“It is written”. It is evident that His mind was filled with scripture. Jesus heard the voice of His Father in scripture and lived on it. His omniscience didn’t preclude long hours spent reading, memorizing and studying the law and the prophets from His youth. The fact that Jesus constantly appealed to and quoted scripture throughout His ministry is evident when reading even a single gospel. From a youth in the temple, to a man in the desert, His mind was filled with the Word of God. His heart rested fully on its authority.

Consider the following:
Matt 4:4... (Jesus) said... “It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"

Matt 4:7 Jesus said... “It is written again, 'You shall not tempt the LORD your God.'"

Matt 4:10 ...Jesus said ... "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'"

Matt 5:18  "For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.”

Mark 12:24 Jesus answered and said to them, "Are you not therefore mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures...?"

John 10:35 “…scripture cannot be broken”

John 17:17 “sanctify them by Your truth. Your Word is Truth.”

Luke 24:27 And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.”

Like our Lord, the believer must become “Word saturated.” In order to think and act in accordance with the will of God we must learn to listen to the scriptures constantly, carefully and submissively. This will, more than anything else, cleanse, correct and empower us to obey and enjoy our God. (John 17:17; 2 Tim 3:14-17; Heb 4:12-13; Col 3:16-17)

Suggestions for practicing the disciplines of the Word:

Any discipline requires serious investment of time. Many of my co-workers go to the gym during lunch for a 45 minute workout. Others walk 45 minutes every lunch hour for fitness. Still others do an hour of cardiac rehab every day for health. No one seems to complain about the time involved since they consider the potential benefits worth the investment. How much greater are the potential benefits of the spiritual disciplines? No one can make serious progress in any area of interest without a consistent and serious investment of time and effort. The major challenge is discovering how to subtract time out of existing routine to add it to the pursuit of God. Seek God’s wisdom and guidance to make it happen. If you want it enough, you’ll find a way to make it happen. Set aside 45 minutes a day to begin seriously practicing the disciplines of the Word and Prayer.

How to begin?

Bible Reading: Read a chapter of Proverbs (based on day of month) every AM, then write out a prayer to God based on what is impressed on your mind from the reading. This practice is practical and useful for daily decisions.

Also, read through the entire Bible every year, selecting a different translation at the start of each year. (I read six books of the Bible each month. I usually read an entire book through at one sitting, except I read five Psalms a day during the month of December). Many prefer reading four chapters a day to complete the Bible in a year. Others prefer listening to it on CD or MP3. All major English translations are available on the WEB in these formats.
Whatever method you use, practice reading through the Bible every year. Seeing the big picture of God’s story year after year will greatly increase your knowledge and retention of His word.

**Bible Memorization & Meditation:**

Begin memorizing two verses a week. Read the verse slowly, out loud, ten times. If it is a longer verse, break it into two or three segments and then put them together. Five minutes invested twice a day is more than enough for most people to memorize consistently. Review them until you have them firmly in mind. I usually memorize chapters based on what God is presently impressing on my mind. Start your day with scripture review. It starts the day out listening to the right voice!

**Bible Study:**

Write down your discoveries! It is in the act of writing that we complete our thoughts and respond to the Word intelligently. Whether or not you refer back to your journals, it is the act of completing your thoughts by writing them down in a journal that will help you retain the truths you discover. The days I am not reading through a book of the Bible, I spend studying a particular book or theme that captured my interest during my regular reading. This usually takes 30-45 minutes. I use a small spiral notebook as my devotional-study-prayer journal.

**Spiritual Journal:**

The journal “My Time with God” (free at [www.ronberrus.abwe.org](http://www.ronberrus.abwe.org) Disciple Making Resources, download Journal 1 pdf) is a simple inductive study method using 1 John. Your search for five things will keep you focused: What does it say about God, man, sin, promise/principle, and command-choice-consequence. The activity of reading with purpose and writing down your discoveries will greatly aid you in remembering what God is teaching you day after day.

**We live in an age of independence and immediacy**

**The Discipline of Prayer**

“*Do it Yourself*” and “*Do it now*” are as deeply imbedded in the North American psyche as baseball and apple pie.

“*If you want it done right… do it yourself.*” “*Why wait?*”

Rarely do we recognize such independent attitudes as *arrogant* or the expectation of immediate action as *impatience*. But the scriptures speak constantly of the danger of an independent (“*I did it my way*”) and impatient (“*I want it and I want it now*”) spirit. We humans are worse than weak. Left to ourselves, we are helpless to do anything of eternal value. Persevering prayer is the only option for accessing Divine enablement to overcome natural arrogance. Jesus’ words are still absolute: “Without me you can do nothing.” (And the pity is that we do so much of it!) Learning the discipline of abiding in Christ through persevering prayer is not easy. Continual dependence, honest humility, fervent longings and patient endurance are developed only in the throne room of God.

Though the forty days of fasting and solitude in Matthew 4 do not specifically mention Jesus praying, it is unimaginable that He was not in continual prayer with His Father during those weeks alone. Scripture frequently makes mention of Jesus seeking solitude to pray: Lk 5:16; 6:12; 9:18, 28; Matt 14:23; Mk 1:35; 6:46
Prayer was a constant and evident part of our Lord’s life. As the disciples overheard the Master praying, they saw a huge difference between their prayers and His. They knew how to say prayers, but He knew how to pray. They had a routine but He had a relationship. They had formality, but He had intimacy. His disciples requested that He teach them how to pray. Lk 11:1. Jesus still teaches His own how to pray in His presence.

The gospels contain more than fifty references to Jesus and prayer.

Commanding prayer: Mt 7:7-11; 24:20; 26:41; Mk 14:38; Lk 22:40, 46
Requesting prayer: Matt 9:38

The Sermon on the Mount: (Matt 5-7) contains seven references to prayer as well as “The Lord’s Model Prayer.”

The teachings of Jesus address both the difficulty and the necessity of prayer.


Unanswered prayer: Mark 14:36

In one sense, our salvation is due to an unanswered prayer. Our Lord Jesus cried out... “take this cup away from me...” (Mk 14:36) and “if it is possible, let this cup pass...” (Mt 26:39)... but he surrendered His will to the will of His Father and the Father said “no” to his first request and “yes” to “nevertheless, Your will be done.” (Mt 26:39)

We must accept the wisdom of God when our prayers are denied. But we must not equate delay with denial. Until God makes it clear that we are not praying according to His will in either motive or end, we have every right and every encouragement to press on in prayer. God is changing us in the midst of the process. He will indeed give us good things. But some will take time to mature into the answers that will bring Him the greatest glory and us the greatest good. Prayer is not only the means to accomplish change in the world, but even more so change in our own character and maturity.

How to begin?

Scripture includes numerous aspects of the discipline of prayer.

Private  Mt 1:35; 6:6-9; 26:39-44; Lk 6:12; Acts 10:9; James 5:13
Group  Lk 22:40; Col 1:9; 2 Th 1:11; 3:1; James 5:14; Acts 6:6; 13:3;
Adoration and Praise 2 Cor 1:3; Eph 1:3; 3:21; 2 Tim 4:18; 1 Pet 1:3;
      5:11; 2 Peter 3:18; Heb 13:15; Rev 19:5
Thanksgiving Mt 15:36; 26:27; Acts 27:35; 2 Cor 4:15; 9:11; Ph 4:6-7;
Confession James 5:14-16; I John 1:9 - 2:2;

Supplication Acts 1:24; 4:31; 9:40; 14:23; Phil 4:6-7; James 5:17-18

Intercession Lk 22:32; 1 Tim 2:1, 2:8; Acts 20:36; 21:5; 28:8

Married men must lead their wives and families in the discipline of prayer, keeping our prayers God centered, honest, specific, fervent, and non-repetitive. Prayer is both labor and delight.

Adoration: drawing out the heart in love to God for who He is. It is focused on His glory, attributes and nature.

Praise: giving voice to adoration; uplifting the glory of God for who He is and who He is to us.

Thanksgiving: expressing gratitude for the things God has done; remembering His kindness, mercy and goodness toward us in His Son.

Confession: freely and honestly naming our sins and failings, seeking both forgiveness through Christ’s blood and inner change through His Spirit. In confession we are humbled before the Holy One, seeing Him as He is and ourselves as we are, in desperate need of cleansing. Here we also release all personal hurts and offenses to God, forgiving others as we are forgiven by Christ. (Mt 6:9-15)

Supplication: seeking the supply of our needs from God Himself

Intercession: seeking the supply of the needs of others

Prayer Requests: God’s purposes to be fulfilled for His glory in...
Self; Family; Local church leadership; God’s global servants; Believers; Unbelievers; Community; Nation; World

We live in an age of indulgence

The Discipline of Fasting

Unless it’s before some medical test, fasting is a foreign concept to most of us. We are accustomed to think that being uncomfortable is bad, and making oneself uncomfortable by delaying relief is not only foolish but likely harmful. We have totally bought into thinking that eating is a right, and the slightest hunger pang deserves an immediate snack.

Hunger is a God-given gift. Its continual presence alerts us to our need, and therein lays its power to help us develop spiritually. Because hunger is natural and quickly returns, it prompts us to awareness. We are dependent beings. God is the “I AM”; we are “because He is.” We are totally dependent on God for every breath, every heartbeat, and every morsel of food. But our greatest need of all is for Him. Jesus, quoting Moses, reminded us that “man does not live by bread only, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.”

Fasting is the deliberate, temporary denial of food for the purpose of sharpening our focus on God. When hunger hits, the one fasting turns his thoughts to God, to prayer, to their need of Him.
Fasting is vitally linked to prayer as a two-fold discipline to drive us to Christ, finding in Him our life, our strength, our all.

One may fast for the purpose of deepening intimacy with God, using one’s hunger to pray more sincerely and more fervently. As hunger for food is real, so our hunger for God must become more real. (Zech 7:5) One may fast and pray for the spiritual needs of others (Mark 9:29) or in preparation for special ministry. (Mt. 4:1) But fasting as a means to achieve spiritual superiority is self-centered and arrogant. (Luke 18:11-12) This is the danger regarding any discipline. When external performance becomes the focus, the heart grows hard and life grows shallow. “Whitewashed tombs” was what Jesus called men who were faithful to the disciplines but unfaithful to God!

**How to begin?**

Only on severe occasions did fasting eliminate water. (Jonah 3) Some fast sunrise to sunset and others for 24 hours. Dependence on God, not duration is the key. If possible, use the meal time hour for additional prayer. Be aware of the needs of others and do not make others must suffer for your discipline. Keep your family and responsibilities in view as you plan your times of fasting. (Matt 6:16-17)

**We live in an age of intrusion (noisy and busy)**

**The Discipline of Solitude**

Silence. Is there such a thing anymore? Cell phones, ipods, music on hold… everywhere, all the time… noise. Some people absolutely refuse to be immersed in silence. They have a TV or radio on all the time. Noise is more than a companion. It has become an addiction. Why is this? Perhaps it is because in silence we confront our own inner emptiness. We have become so dependent on the thoughts, opinions and distractions of others that to be still in the silence, thinking deeply about the issues of life terrifies us.

Those who learn to love the silent places must come to terms with life, death, purpose, and need. In silence comes strength, if the heart is drawn out to God and the mind is exercised in serious, Word based contemplation.

**Eastern Mysticism**

Solitude and meditation for the believer must not be confused with eastern mysticism. Simply contrasted, eastern mysticism’s call for solitude and meditation is a call to turn **inward** and to empty the mind. The believer’s call for solitude and meditation is a call to turn **upward** and fill the mind with God’s words of truth, replacing the lies of the evil one.

**Western Rationalism**

Western society abandoned divine revelation in favor of isolated human reason. We moved first from Theism to naturalism and now have abandoned reason for intuition. “I think” has fallen captive to “I feel.”
Eastern Mysticism and Western Rationalism are both the products of fallen man. While man is both a thinking and feeling creature, the clarion call of God is to bring every thought and every feeling captive to God’s Word. 2 Cor 10:3-4

Our Lord constantly sought out lonely, silent places. Luke 5:16; Matt 14:13 & 23; Mark 1:13; 6:47 and John 6:15 are but samples of His practice.

Solitude is not merely a temporary escape from people and pressure. It is a vital preparation for being able to serve people and live with pressure while maintaining an eternal, kingdom perspective. If one does not learn to rebuild and deepen one’s inner being alone with God, then there is no inner fountain from which to draw water for the incessant thirsts of those who surround us.

How to begin?

As with fasting, the duration is not as important as the use of the time devoted to it. Two to three hours is a good beginning.

Suggestions... Take nothing but a Bible.

This is not a time to write, prepare lessons, or read.

It is a time slow down, rest the mind, lift your eyes and heart to the eternal God, to think, pray and consider eternal truth in the light of the journey yet before us.

Observation

Begin by seeing the hand of God in your surroundings. Observe flora and fauna and begin giving God thanks and praise for His wisdom, power and attention to detail.

Contemplation

Consider how God has designed your life from childhood to the present. Observe His hand on your life from your youth. Consider His grace, His goodness, and His faithfulness to you over your lifetime. Let your heart motivate worship as you think about His goodness, preserving grace and guidance. What do you most appreciate about God? What attributes are you most thankful for? What names of God are most precious to you?

Analysis: Now is the time to consider the crucial questions.

Where am I in my walk with God?

What are my deepest needs at this point in my journey?

Where are my relationships strong, weak or broken?

What am I doing about what really matters in life?

Am I investing wisely for eternity the time, talent and treasure God has entrusted me with?
What specific changes should I make to be more obedient to God?

(After your time has concluded, you may want to journal a summary of your impressions and conclusions.)

All the God-ward disciplines are disciplines of preparation: preparation of heart for participation in ministry. Christ calls us to recognize our emptiness to find in Him our fullness to serve with Him in fruitfulness. Being focused and filled with love for God, we now turn to the outflow of that love expressed in loving others in Jesus Name.

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR  The Four Man-ward Disciplines of Participation

We live in an age of accumulation

The Discipline of Giving

We have packed garages, full basements, stuffed closets, crammed schedules, yet empty lives. Our wealth creates our poverty.

Western life is reminiscent of Laodicea...

  Rev. 3:15-17 "I know you inside and out, and find little to my liking. You’re not cold; you’re not hot—far better to be either cold or hot! You’re stale. You’re stagnant. You make me want to vomit. You brag, 'I'm rich, I've got it made, I need nothing from anyone,' oblivious that in fact you’re a pitiful, blind beggar, threadbare and homeless.” (The Message)

God has blessed us with so much in the way of material goods, technology, and healthcare. We have so much more than we need that it borders on lunacy. More than half of the world’s population lives on less than $3.00 a day! Our normal is so abnormal as to be obscene. And the greed of our sinful natures drives us to believe that what we have we need and what we want we ought to have. Adam’s fall robbed us of intimacy with God and the resultant inner emptiness that seeks “stuff” as its substitute.

Years ago we had concluded a major building program at our church. The day of dedicating the new facility had arrived. As I stood on the hill overlooking the large building and parking lots, the thought struck me... “It’ll make a fine fire some day.” No, I am not a latent arsonist. The scripture that came to mind was 2 Peter 3:10-13 “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.”

Jesus said we couldn’t serve both God and money. God or greed will rule. We must learn not to measure ourselves by our neighbor as the standard for either prosperity or generosity.

Giving demands devotion and discipline. Managing money is, in reality, managing ourselves and our desires. To be generous means we must have an income that is larger than our outgo. This requires controlling our desires and making wise decisions based on needs, not wants. While there
may be times of emergency need, most of us could manage on far less than we have. Forty years ago there was no easy credit, no home computers or cell phones. A second car was a luxury and most homes had one wage earner. I am not proposing the impossible return to another day. I am simply pointing out that we have assumed we “need” everything that is “possible.” Such a perspective keeps one in continual financial bondage, as new “needs” arise in an endless stream.

To be generous with money, time, and skill requires that we possess money, time and skill. All of these must be managed and developed for God’s greater purpose through the means of giving. *Giving is investing what we possess in the lives of others for a greater return in eternity.* For most, it will take time (years) and much discipline (saying “no”) to live without debt and be able to give to the extent we should. The appendix lists several excellent resources for learning how to manage yourself and thereby manage your resources.

We are called to be conduits, not safety deposit boxes of our resources. We fear being taken advantage of. We fear “losing” anything. Our “normal” expectations of wealth and comfort paralyze the inner urgings of the Spirit to give freely. We must return to the realization that we *have been blessed to bless others.*

The only cure for innate greed is determined generosity.

God has called us to poverty of spirit – a deep recognition of our own spiritual bankruptcy and the resultant joy of having all the riches of His grace. Out of this must flow the practical response of giving freely and generously to meet the needs of others in the material, social and spiritual realm.

The gospels record Jesus saying the words “give” and “giving” over 100 times. The following verses shout at us to be shockingly generous with all that God has entrusted to us. Matt 5:42; 10:8; 19:21; 25:35-46; Mark 10:45; 14:1-9; Luke 3:11; 6:30; 6:38; 11:41; 14:13; 16:12; 19:8.

**How to begin?** Giving should be:

*Regular:* increase the goal of your giving from 10% to 12% to 20% and more of your regular income. The delightful obligation of generous giving requires thoughtful planning. Carefully analyze all your spending and begin managing your resources with a purpose and a plan.

*Sacrificial* – giving up what we would like to have to be able to give to meet others needs is one of the believer’s special joys. Sacrificial giving is self denial in action.

*Wise* – just giving money to charities and churches without knowing on what our resources our spent is not faith; it is unwise stewardship. While we need to trust others, we must not be willingly ignorant of what our gifts are used for. Generous people will be taken advantage of from time to time. God will take care of that in His own way and time. But we should be careful to give to genuine needs for justifiable reasons.

*Balanced* – giving to the local church is primary. In addition to giving to the body of Christ where we are fed and nourished, we should also consider the needs of world missions and missionaries who are carrying the gospel to the unreached. In addition to this, we need to see the needs of the poor who live around us, in our local church, and in our local communities. It is usually best to do this kind of giving anonymously.
Thorough – managing all of life as a steward includes investing our time, energies, skills, abilities, home, money, and everything else for the blessing and benefit of others and the ultimate glory of God. Giving is more than a check! It is a lifestyle.

One does not need large financial resources to demonstrate great generosity. (Luke 2:23) Giving of time may be an even greater sacrifice than money for some. And this brings us to the next discipline...

*We live in an age of consumerism*

**The Discipline of Serving**

“What do I get out of it?” “What’s in it for me?” “Have it your way”

A common excuse for leaving a local church is often expressed in the words... “I just wasn’t getting anything out of it.” While we do not excuse poor preaching, that expression reveals more about the hearer than the preacher. We must resist the temptation of being merely an audience that critiques the show. We are called to be active participants that play to an audience of ONE.

The believer is called to a life of serving, not being served. The call to follow Christ is a call to serve others. Matt 6:24; 20:28; Luke 16:13; 17:6-10; Romans 7:6; and Galatians 5:13

Being a *cheerful giver* (2 Cor 9:7) includes investing our time and abilities in service. Selfishness manifests itself in what we do with our money and our time; more often in the latter than the former. Serving our own immediate family is a priority. Serving our employer and fellow workers is also kingdom work. Above this, setting aside several hours a week to bless others by involvement in ministries of evangelism, edification and assistance is also important. *We are to live our lives in relationships.* Relationships bring joy, delight, challenge and growth. Serving by teaching, visiting, counseling, cleaning, repairing, providing meals and transportation for the ill, the elderly and the indigent are just samples of ways to serve Christ. It is in the little acts of service, unseen and even unappreciated that allows us to demonstrate selfless love for God. Serving God is most often a matter of *doing the next thing that needs to be done with the right heart attitude.*

While serving with our spiritual gifts is a biblical norm (1 Peter 4:10) we must not exclude ourselves from serving in other areas of need. When tragedy strikes, showing mercy is demanded of everyone. Fulfilling the great commission requires every believer’s participation. Get involved in meeting needs in your church and in your neighborhood. Family, church and neighborhood relationships each provide fertile soil for planting seeds of service.

**How to begin?**

The following questions may be useful as you consider how to prioritize and balance your service for Christ.

*How can I serve my spouse and children this week?*

*What would be most appreciated or needed by them?*

*What ministries are most in need of workers in the church right now?*

*Am I able to help out; for how long; how?*
What people in our church have service needs now?

What neighbors need a visit or practical help now?

Serving is not an option. All believers are called to serve.

Maintaining priorities (1 Tim 5:8; Gal 6:10 are clear commands) and balance requires thoughtful planning and sensitivity to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Feeling stressed with all this talk about serving? So was generous, hard working Martha. (Luke 10:38-42) That’s why Jesus told her that the first priority is listening to God. Without the God-ward disciplines of Word, prayer, fasting and solitude there is no power to give to others your gifts of serving. Trying to love others apart from the indwelling love of God is an effort in futility. The balanced life includes all the disciplines exercised in an unhurried life style. Remember, Jesus was always focused, never frantic.

We live in an age of isolation (loneliness)

The Discipline of Evangelism

“Am I my brother’s keeper?”

“It’s not my problem.”

“What’s the use?”

Jesus warned that a time would come when the world would be so wicked and opposed to truth that the “love of many would grow cold.” (Matt 24:12) Regardless of your eschatological position, it’s painfully obvious such a situation is upon us. The need is so great and the opposition so formidable, our natural tendency as believers is to become silent in our faith and insolated in our communities. North America is so polarized that “Christian” is more commonly associated with politics than with Christ Himself. Believers seem to avoid rather than engage unbelievers. This must change.

Christ has called His own to reach the world with the gospel one soul at a time. The call to follow Christ is a call to seek opportunities to share Christ’s gospel and the impact it’s made in our lives.

Jesus continually called people to repentance. He did not minimize His message or demands. But He also welcomed sinners enthusiastically! One of the criticisms leveled at Him was that he “received” sinners and ate with them. Luke 15:2 (The word translated “received” (prosdechomai) means to eagerly look for and welcome. It is the very word used for eagerly looking for Christ’s coming. See Titus 2:14 and Jude 21. It is a positive welcoming. Jesus was eager about engaging the lost. He calls us to the same perspective and activity.)

Not only was Jesus’ attitude and demeanor positive about interacting with the lost, but He was continually hospitable towards them. He ate with them. It has been my experience that effective evangelism is often done around our table as we open our home and lives to the lost. Welcoming acquaintances and neighbors into our home for meals allows for deepening relationships and genuine interaction as we seek to demonstrate and communicate the love and grace of our Savior.

How to begin? Let me suggest a simple process:
Contact... Connect... Communicate.

Contact: introduce yourself and learn names. When you learn the names of your neighbors, pray for them by name, and use their names when greeting them. Show yourself friendly and demonstrate that you value them by using their names in your conversations. Most people are lonely. Genuine interest and friendship is a treasure.

Connect: listen to their stories. People love to talk about themselves. Ask where they’re from, what they do, family, etc. Share your own background. Identify where you share common interests and knowledge. This may take place over minutes or months. Some will be very open and others very reserved. Listen for three things: pain, pleasure or significance. Pain allows you to show sympathy and understanding. Pleasure allows you to see what they enjoy, are interested in or are excited about. This often includes relationships with family or friends, hobbies and interests. Significance allows you see what really matters to them. It may be religious, political, relational, philanthropic, or philosophical. Pain, pleasure and significance are open doors to move into deeper needs of the human heart and experience. Don’t rush it. God is opening a door for you. Seek to keep that door open. As the acquaintance grows, invite the family over for a cookout, meal or just dessert. Singles are wise to include others in the mix. The purpose is to demonstrate genuine concern and interest and to get better acquainted, listen to more stories and determine their spiritual background, perspective and needs. Connecting includes various forms of activity often including expanding their exposure to other believers in a variety of settings.

Communicate: share your story. As conversations occur, it becomes more and more natural to speak of really important matters. As needs and concerns are expressed, offering sympathy, compassion, assistance and prayer is appreciated. Sharing your own personal stories of God’s grace and comfort naturally flow into the conversation. As you continue to pray for them, God will open doors of opportunity to involve them in Bible study or invite them to small group gatherings where their knowledge of the gospel will grow.

Be patient. Only God can save the lost. But God delights to use His love and grace manifested through us to bring others to Himself.

Balance is a word we have used repeatedly. Balancing our time to include unbelievers is essential. Anything that is a priority includes intentionality. We must intentionally pursue relationships with lost people. God will occasionally “drop them into our laps.” But more often than not we will see people come to Christ as a result of intentional effort in prayer and reaching out to spend time with them. Questions to consider:

Who are the familiar faces without names in my experience?

(Find out, and begin praying for them by name daily.)

How can I strike up a conversation or make a gesture of friendship for Christ’s sake in the next two weeks?

Who is new to the neighborhood that I need to meet and welcome?

Where is the stranger I need to befriend this week?
We live in an age of immaturity

The Discipline of Disciple Making

The Great Commission is a call to make disciples. But what is a disciple? Let me share my working definition with you. A disciple is a well-grounded, self-disciplined, fully-obedient follower of Jesus Christ.

“Well grounded” includes knowing what the Bible teaches and how to read and study it personally. Following Christ is a lifelong process of “allowing the Word of Christ to dwell in us richly” Col. 3:16. Becoming a serious, obedient student of the Word is foundational to following Christ in a world full of deception and evil.

“Self disciplined” includes the eight disciplines lived out in daily experience in home, work, assembly and community.

“Fully obedient” in attitude, action, motivation and practice obeying the commands of Christ from the heart.

To become a disciple is to engage in a process. W. A. Henrichsen well stated, “Disciples are made, not born.” (See appendix) To become a disciple is to engage in relationships that change us to become more like Christ. We need each other. Those who are more mature and disciplined challenge and assist us to make progress in our own journey. As we walk with those ahead of us spiritually speaking, so we need to walk with those who follow us.

Because of the nature of the relationship, it should be men discipling men and women discipling women. Couple on couple is good but one-on-one same-gender interaction is also important for consistent progress to be made.

Simply put, disciple making is “life in tandem.”

The following is my larger working definition of disciple making:

Disciple making is an intentional, intimate relationship designed to initiate life-change through instruction, correction, participation and direction resulting in well grounded, self-disciplined, fruitful followers of Jesus Christ.

“Intentional”... means not accidental. It is pursuing teachable, committed individuals who demonstrate interest and a willingness to grow and change. Honesty, transparency and teachability lead to life change.

“Intimate”... thoroughly honest and open conversations that are trust based and Christ centered are the means by which growth and change take place.

“Relationship”... it isn’t just information imparted, but a life on life interaction that is real. This is the “caught not taught” aspect of relationship that leads to life change. The life model of the disciple-maker is foundational.

“Instruction”... biblical truth communicated is the “teacher’s” role.
“Correction”...sin exposed and correction imparted is the “father’s” role.

“Participation”...ministry practiced and perfected is the “coach’s” role.

This is a call to life involvement in the lives of others. Information that leads to transformation that leads to participation in making a difference in the lives of others.

“Direction”...Bible based guidance and practical advice is provided by spiritual leaders. This is the heart of mentoring.

To make a disciple is to grow a spiritual child into full adulthood. Transferring responsibility must be on-going. Each disciple is unique. Their gifts, level of common sense, insights, creativity, abilities, and commitment levels are unique. We must balance our responsibility to lead and guide with their responsibility to choose and change, lest we become careless on the one hand or overbearing on the other.

As with the other seven disciples, Jesus Himself is the model. He chose twelve, not twenty or fifty. He chose them intentionally. He invested in them heavily. He spent some 12,500 waking hours with them. He spent additional time with three particularly gifted individuals named Peter, James and John. It was Word based life in tandem, day after day involvement as He developed their skills, corrected their thoughts, motives and actions and prepared them to be His followers to go and make disciples the world over.

How to begin?

Perhaps the best place to begin is to take some time to evaluate your life and begin to implement changes that will allow you to put the disciplines into your life.

Change begins by subtraction.

If you want to make lasting changes in your life, then you must begin by removing those things that are wasteful so you can add those things that are productive.

Change begins with a single decision to act wisely, followed by hundreds of other good little decisions to obey.

Questions to consider:

Who could help me become a more devoted disciple?

Which of the disciplines do I need help with?

Who has God brought into my life for a disciple making relationship?

In closing, remember the purpose of the disciplines is to enable us to follow Christ freely and fully with joy, wisdom and effectiveness. Jesus preached and practiced these disciplines as a lifestyle. They are the essence of living out one’s love for God and love for our neighbor.

These eight disciplines are means by which our love for God and love for men is practiced.
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Chapter 7  Four Areas for Growth – Godly Character

Area 3 – Character (Roles and Relationships)

The disciple must also be trained to carry out his various roles and responsibilities in life and to build and sustain godly, healthy relationships in every sphere of influence. This is dependent on godly character.

The disciple has a number of God-given roles and relationships. The following are given as examples.

**Family member** – child, mate, parent, sibling

The discipllemaker is called to make disciples who obey everything Christ commanded us. If the disciple has parents (believing or unbelieving), then they are required by Christ to show them respect and honor. They are to show due care and concern and, as their parents become older and less capable of caring for themselves, to provide for their care. Both Jesus and Paul made reference to these kinds of special needs and the believer’s responsibility in view of them. (Matt 15:4-6, 1 Tim 5:8,16)

**Steward** – in every aspect of life, the disciple is a steward of that which has been entrusted to him to use for his Lord. Learning to be disciplined in the use of time is very important. Punctuality demonstrates respect in many cultures. Diligence in one’s work ethic is commanded by the apostle Paul repeatedly. Proverbs has dozens of warnings against laziness and carelessness. Learning to live within one’s means financially so one can give generously is also commanded. Multitudes of biblical warnings are issued against covetousness, discontent, desire for fast riches, greed, and miserliness. The disciple must not only give account for the use of the time and money God has entrusted to him, but also the spiritual gifts and abilities God has given him as well. We will address more of this in the “skills” section to follow.

**Witness** – every disciple is accountable for the great commission. (Matt 28:18-20) This is also included in the command to “love your neighbor as you love yourself.” (Gal 5:14) Learning to share his own faith story and to build redemptive relationships is foundational in carrying out this God-given role.

**Member of the Body** – having been baptized and identified with a local body of believers, the disciple must learn the importance of building relationships with godly believers who will build him
up in Christ and also with those he can build up as well. Discovering his gifts and strengths and investing them in local church ministry is an important part of fulfilling the multitude of “one another” commands in the New Testament. Helping the disciple to fully integrate into a local church is a major goal of a wise disciplemaker. The additional input from small groups, larger worship services, singing, listening, learning, serving... truly becoming “at home in the family of God” is not only a perk of being a disciple, but also a responsibility as a vital part of the body of Christ.

To fulfill these roles, the disciple must also learn and grow in the following areas:

- **Respect** – learning to listen actively, not assuming, not accusing
- **Honesty** – learning to speak the truth, not exaggerating, not being deceptive or punitive
- **Commitment** – learning to serve, to stay, to forbear, to be longsuffering and patient with others
- **Acceptance** – learning to accept others with their strengths and weaknesses, embracing them and affirming them as fellow heirs in Christ, keeping our expectations low and our love high
- **Forgiveness** – learning how to apologize and be forgiven as well as extending forgiveness, praying for God’s mercy for those who have hurt or offended us, refusing self pity and bitterness

More on this can be found in a booklet entitled “Five Essentials For Building Lasting Relationships” available at [www.ronberrus.abwe.org](http://www.ronberrus.abwe.org), click on Booklets for a pdf, and the messages on *The Five Essentials* in the sermon series “Rules for Right Relationships.”

Bringing all of life under the Lordship of Christ is a life-long process. The world, the old nature and Satan himself all work against the process. It cannot be stressed too strongly that disciple making is not just a matter of biblical instruction, but also of biblical transformation of character, habit and perspective. Matthew chapters 5-7 is a wonderful sermon of Christ addressing many of the things we’ve discussed under the heading of “Roles and Relationships.” Committing much, if not all of this sermon to memory is a stirring and constant incentive to think, believe and act as a true disciple of Jesus Christ. Studying and applying it with your disciple over a period of several months would be most useful in addressing both the disciplines as well as roles and relationships as a disciple.

All of us bring sinful habits, perspectives and norms into our new life in Christ. Growth in godly character is a life-long process. The life in tandem model allows for ready identification of character flaws and transparent discussions about conviction of sin and correction of life. Your disciple needs more than exhortation. They will also require godly counsel regarding how change takes place in our lives and how to apply the scripture to such character issues as...

1. **Sexual Temptation and Purity** – Such simple but effective tools as *The Battle for Moral Purity* by Ron Berrus (available on the website). The suggested biography in this booklet has a lengthy list of other suggested resources including books and websites covering a wide array of issues.
   - Options of ways to address Moral Purity
     - Purity Retreats for Men, Women and Young People
     - ABF or Small Group Studies for men, women or married couples
     - Accountability relationships – one-on-one or small groups
     - Personal counseling
2. **Financial Stewardship** – avoiding greed and envy and learning to live responsibly on a budget so you can be generous are essential character foundations

   Options of ways to address Financial Stewardship
   Stewardship Retreats for couples and/or singles
   ABF or Small Group Studies - Alcorn’s Treasure Principle
   Financial Peace Seminar
   Crown Financial Ministries Courses
   Personal financial counseling

3. **Time Management** – those in more advanced cultures face increased temptations not only to greed and wasting money but also in wasting time on frivolous entertainment and selfish pursuits. The “replacement principle” is essential, that is, to replace wasting time with investing that time in God-honoring pursuits.

   Options of ways to address Time Management
   ABF or Small Group Studies
   Personal time management counseling

4. **The Tongue** – Jesus, and the Books of Proverbs, James and 1 John have a great deal to say about sins of anger and of the tongue, which are usually connected. Character flaws related to inappropriate anger are evident at home. Again, a life in tandem approach will allow for this character issue to be surfaced and addressed. The tongue is a manifestation of the heart. Therefore, heart change is foundational and heart change only takes place through the Word and Spirit of God. Complaining, fault finding, ingratitude, and evil speaking are among the most common verbal sins. Sincere effort to replace these with praise, thanksgiving, and edifying words is possible as scripture is memorized with a teachable and humble heart.

   Options of ways to address Sins of the Tongue
   ABF or Small Group Bible Studies on the tongue – Proverbs, James, Sermon on the Mount
   Personal counseling to identify areas of misuse and accountability to make changes

These are but four examples of godly character traits that need to be developed in the lives of disciples. A simple Bible study of 20 character traits entitled *Key Qualities for Lasting Laborers* is available in pdf. form on the website under booklets. Other suggested resources are Gene Getz’ fine book “Measure of Man” and the companion volume “Measure of a Woman.” Other recommended resources include Kent Hughes book “Disciplines of a Godly Man” and its companion volume, and Stuart Scott’s book “The Exemplary Husband”. An inductive Bible study on the lives of Joseph, Moses, and David, along with studying 1 Timothy 3, Titus 1 and the book of James and 1 Corinthians are filled with practical admonitions and illustrations for growth in personal holiness.
Area 4 – Ministry Skills

The disciplemaker should involve the disciple in ministry immediately. This naturally occurs in the sharing of the gospel with their unbelieving friends. As the disciple observes the discipler sharing his faith story, engaging in witness and responding to questions and objections, he learns the basics of communicating the gospel. In small group bible studies the disciple observes such things as generating discussion, asking good questions, interpreting accurately, and applying personally. Inviting the disciple to participate first informally and then more formally as the weeks go by will increase his confidence and develop his skills. Life-in-tandem once again allows multiple opportunities to discover spiritual gifts and skills in teaching, counseling, comforting, serving, and leading. Ministry skill development should take place inside the church within the parameters of the ministries taking place there, as well as additional ministries the discipler is involved in. Such things as jail ministry, campus ministry, shelter/homeless compassion ministry, elderly and hospice ministry, hospital visitation, youth outreach, camps, and a multitude of other options are possible. The wise discipler finds ways to engage the disciple in meaningful ministry very, very quickly after conversion. “Saved to serve” may be a cliché, but it is none-the-less true. The longer the disciple remains an observer, the more hesitant he will be to begin participating. This is, as we know, a chronic problem in a local church that is designed to expect a crowd that will come, sit, listen, and leave. Those who “attend” are an “audience”, and watch the “minister” do his thing! This is not the way of Christ. It must not be our way. It must be participative, not observatory in nature. We come to give, not to get. We all gather as the ministers, to serve an Audience of One.

Including a study of spiritual gifts connected with exposure to many opportunities for the disciple to sample and experience in various ministry setting is important. The disciple must be challenged to assist you or others in various ministries, including those outside his present comfort zone. He needs to understand that ministry skills can be learned and that everyone feels incompetent and fearful at the outset. But fear and intimidation must not be allowed to prevent the disciple from stepping out in faith to serve with the abilities God has given, and to develop and expand those abilities and skills over time. With your help and the help of many others, a great amount of progress can be made in a year’s time.
Finding ways for the disciple to use their existing talents and abilities in serving Christ will be an important aspect of your role as a disciplemaker. The apostle Paul makes it clear that every member has an important role to play in the overall health of the body. Does your disciple have abilities or interests in such areas as building maintenance, auto repair or mechanical skills, finances, electronics, art, drama, music, child care, computers, compassion care… all can be used to assist in the ministry, in meeting needs within the church family, in helping widows or the elderly, in reaching out in the community in the name of Christ. Mature disciples learn to use all their gifts and resources for the glory of God. Mature disciplemakers must be alert and active in helping integrate the disciple into the body of fellow workers for the King. Our goal should be a seamless and rapid movement from believing (faith) to belonging (family) to becoming (Christ-like) a fruitful follower of Christ.

A side benefit of developing his ministry experience is the new and supportive friendships that he will develop in the body of Christ. This is a good point to stop and remind ourselves that the relationship between the disciplemaker and the disciple is not exclusive. It is not a matter of control or manipulation. It is not a means to feed our sense of self importance. The disciplemaker has a wonderful opportunity to assist the growth and development of a disciple. But he must always beware of and avoid any tendency to “lord it over” those he is shepherding. (1 Peter 5:3)
We must evaluate our disciple making methodology and the kind of fruit that is coming from it. Effective disciplermakers learn how to improve their processes, and adjust their methods and styles based on the needs, learning styles and gifts of their disciples. Like parenting, some children require one kind of discipline and correction, and some another. What would crush one child barely gets the attention of another. A wise disciplermaker speaks truth in love, seeking to make wide applications of Biblical truth to life, not just imparting Bible content to the mind.

You know you and your disciple are in trouble if he or she...
- expects you to make their decisions for them
- is intimidated, not inspired, by your life & conduct
- is more worried about what you think than what God says
- has no great concern for the larger church family
- is not developing more and more positive relationships in the body
- sees no apparent connection between doctrine and life
- has constant unresolved relational issues
- lacks personal sensitivity to sin and the Spirit of God
- relies on you to give them all the answers rather than searching the Word for themselves

Suggestions for Further Study

Read: Lost Art of Disciple Making Chapter 9  Cite favorite paragraph

Personal Application

As you consider the four areas for growth, map out potential materials, times and methods you would use in the life of a disciple to help them grow in each area.

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DOCTRINE | DISCIPLINES | CHARACTER | MINISTRY SKILLS

1. Which of these four areas do you feel most competent to lead in?

2. Which of these do you feel least competent to lead in?

3. Which of them has been emphasized in your personal history to this point?

4. Which of them has been neglected in your personal history to this point?

5. Where do you need to begin focusing for your own personal growth at this point?

Go to www.ronberrus.abwe.org, Disciple Making Resources, open *Spiritual Growth Plan* pdf. and create your own 30 day spiritual growth plan.

Key characters to study to illustrate some or all of the disciplines

Adam
Noah
Job
Abraham
Joseph
David
Jesus
Apostles
Chapter 9 Crucial Choices, Limited Time

If you don’t make disciplermakers, your work will die when you do!

“And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.”

The things... the message... the biblical truths... the foundational doctrine on which to build a life
entrust... the methods... the means you use to impart that truth into the lives of disciples
reliable/qualified... the men the disciples who are highly committed and character qualified to carry the ministry of disciple making on to the next generation and beyond.

Jesus chose twelve, not twenty, not fifty, not two hundred. He spent long hours in prayer and long days of observation before choosing who He would invest his life and ministry in. This is a crucial choice for a number of reasons.

#1 You can’t disciple a multitude. It requires life-in-tandem, up close and personal relationship. By its very nature it limits the number of people you can fit into your life at any one time. Therefore...

#2 Every person you choose to disciple (assuming they are willing and committed), means you forfeit the opportunity to disciple another instead.

#3 Your days are numbered. Therefore making the most of your limited time and opportunity requires making good assessments and selections. Paul told Timothy to evaluate and select men who were “reliable” and “qualified to teach”. This assumes Timothy would know them, have seen them in action, and would make a decision based on carefully considered factors.

#4 You must choose. It is a necessity. If you don’t decide who you will spend the majority of your time with, others will. The inevitable result of letting others dictate your time is that those who take the most of it will do the least with it.

Effective disciple making doesn’t just happen by accident. It is intentional and intensive. Not everyone you choose will be open and willing. Not everyone you choose will mature and develop. Some will stray. Some will walk away. But some will persevere, grow, develop and mature and become effective disciplermakers.

If God has given you the joy and privilege of leading someone to Christ, then the process of disciple making is a natural outgrowth of their relationship with you as you continue to lead them in the study of the scriptures and the process of spiritual growth. This manner of disciple making can be
compared to the normal birth of a child. The child is born into a family and naturally grows up within the context of these relationships.

If, however, you are going to begin discipling believers who have already come to Christ, and some of them have been believers for years, then the process is more like an adoption. This requires a somewhat different approach since they have acquired a set of assumptions and expectations about the Christian life. Some may be deeply hungry for being discipled. Others may see no need of it. Others think that coming to church every Sunday and sitting in a Bible study is all there is to it. In this context, it is far better to begin working with only one or two individuals. If they make evident spiritual progress and are excited about the changes God is bringing into their lives, then it will be much easier to expand the disciple making process. Do not attempt to begin with a lot of people initially, because if you do, it will turn into a “class” setting and the ability to monitor and mentor them will be lost due to the large numbers involved. If you are making genuine disciplers, then in five years or so a significant number of people will become involved through exponential disciple making.

Step 1 – Ask God continually, fervently and specifically for His guidance in bringing potential disciplers into your life... a life-long prayer priority for disciplers.

Step 2 – Determine the present possibilities among those you already know.
Who shows the promise of godliness, teachability, humility and commitment?

Step 3 – Continue to pray and observe, and when you sense God’s timing to make an offer to disciple a seemingly qualified individual, invite them to have lunch or coffee with you to discuss an opportunity for spiritual growth together. They may come to you first!

Step 4 – Present the methodology and material you will be using with a clear explanation of the time and commitment that would be required over the coming 6 to 8 months. Answer all his questions and ask him to think it over and pray about for at least a week to see if he really has the time to begin such a process. Never accept an immediate commitment. Make him take the time to count the cost. Make it clear that if, in a week, he believes God would have him make this commitment, that both you and he would make that commitment before God together. Also, make it clear that this may not be the time to start the discipling relationship. Let him know there is no shame in saying “no” at this time. It may take him a few months to clear his calendar so he has the time to invest in this process. Always give him an “honorable out”, making it clear that your friendship and fellowship does not depend on his buying into this process at this time.

Making these choices about “who” is not an exact science. Pray and evaluate and seek God’s leading. We must work with the workable and teach the teachable. A spirit of commitment and teachability is perhaps the most important element to look for in a disciple.
Pros and Cons of Various Kinds of Disciple Making Groups

One on One

Pros - this model allows for the deepest level of intimate accountability. It also allows for in-depth question and answer time to assure understanding of what is being studied. The relationship can grow more rapidly due to undivided attention given.

Cons - shy disciples may feel more intimidated and less open to share since they view the disciplemaker as being so far beyond them spiritually as not to be able to relate. The pressure to perform may be greater due to the one on one setting, which may or may not be positive.

One on Two-Four

Pros – this model allows for more interchange of ideas and more influencers involved. It can motivate shyer individuals to be more honest as they hear others share their struggles and realize they are not alone in the journey. This model also can generate additional close friendships among believers which increases connectedness in the body.

Cons – quieter individuals may find it easier to hide within the group and therefore be held to a lesser standard of accountability, with less pressure to attend all the meetings.

Couple on Couple

Pros – when two married couples are meetings, it can allow for practical issues of marriage and family to be addressed. Helping both husband and wife to grow in the Word together is a major advantage to this model. This model also makes it very difficult to hide failure areas in the marriage and can make practical holiness discussions very natural. It is good to provide occasional opportunities for the guys and girls to meet separately for times of accountability and prayer as well as the together time.

Cons – often the wife is a more avid student of the Word than the husband. This can be intimidating, causing the husband to resist going to the meetings. Because new believers usually have a lot of relational issues to resolve, the sessions can easily become counseling sessions, with less time devoted to the Word. Finding a balance that will provide both needed counsel as well as Bible study will often be challenging.

As you can see, there are positive and negative aspects to any gathering style for disciple making. There is not just one best way to approach it. In the States, due to the hectic schedules of people, I have found it most successful to put book ends on the disciple making format. For example, inviting a person (or persons) to meet with you every week for 16 weeks, during which time you will study a particular subject, with a definite meeting time, length of session, and time to evaluate it at the end. If there is a desire to continue meeting, then it can be re-set for a particular start and end date with expectations and assignments laid out. This way, the disciple and the disciplemaker have an “honorable out” if circumstances or needs require a break or change of approach. I have found that people who commit to a set, reachable expectation are much more likely to complete it. Otherwise, people tend to stop attending and then feel guilty when they can’t continue, and the attempt always ends feeling like a failure. It is much better to provide the opportunity to re-enlist or take a break from the formal setting. This also allows the disciples to invest time in ministry.
endeavors or other growth opportunities without feeling like they have failed the disciplemaker in doing so. Remember, the small group meeting is only one aspect of making a well rounded disciple. Bible knowledge, skill development, personal self discipline, family worship, involvement in the body, reaching lost friends and relatives, and more... must be developed and learned. Be patient. Be persistent with your disciples. It’s a process... it’s a relationship... it’s a God-thing!

Suggestions for Further Study

1. Read: Lost Art of Disciple Making Chapters 10-12  Cite favorite paragraph in each chapter
2. Read the Appendix sections 1-4 carefully.
3. Review “Lost Art” and write down at least 10 things that you took away from this book that was especially important to you.

Application Questions

As you review the chapters of this course, write down the most important things you want to remember and implement in your own life in the coming years.

Chapter 1  It’s not a Course, it’s a Relationship
“Life in Tandem”

Chapter 2  Three Roles of a Disciplemaker
“Teacher, Father, Coach”

Chapter 3  Four Illustrations, Four Occupations
“Investor, Soldier, Athlete, Farmer”

Chapter 4  Three Principles of Form and Function
“Repeatable, Thorough, Continual”

Chapters 5-8  Four Areas for Growth
“Doctrine, Disciplines, Roles, Skills”

Chapter 9  Crucial Choices, Limited Time
“Who is more important than How”
Select one disciple and design an initial disciplemaking plan for the coming year

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**Priorities – Step by Step**

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7. 

**When**

- Time Options?
- Days of the Week
- Length of Sessions
- Number of Sessions
- Frequency
- People Involved

**Where**

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“NICE TO KNOW” RESOURCES

http://www.ronberrus.abwe.org all of Ron’s resources, recommendations and links
http://www.goodsoil.com ABWE Story of Hope and Way to Joy resources
http://www.equippingthesaints.org/Pages/EquipSaints.html Dave Dawson’s materials
http://guide.gospel.com.net/resources/tellitoften.php Engel Scale explanation
http://www.9marks.org/ (Capital Hill Baptist – Reformed Baptist, Southern Baptist)
Tell it Often; Tell it Well Bright & McCloskey
Choose the Life Bill Hull
Navpress Resources Growing Strong Series, Growing Deeper series