

EQUIPPING SAINTS FOR THEIR MINISTRY

It is the mark: independently dependent.

1. Mark of obedience: John 8:31 "If you continue in My Word, then are you truly my disciples." In the process of learning make sure you are responding - the opposite of ignorance in the spiritual realm is not knowledge - it's obedience. You can't obey if you don't know, but it is altogether possible to know and not to obey.
2. Mark of love: John 13:35 "By this all men will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another" No exceptions, no conditions. Our love is always conditional. Our love should be like Jesus' love for us - how can you afford not to accept yourself when the One who knows all about you accepts you unconditionally. Gal. 6:1 "restore such a one".
3. Mark of Fruit: John 15:8 "Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples" a disciple maker develops this kind of person: obedient, loving & fruitful. He is this kind of person himself and produces this kind of disciple

I have no other excuse for existing than to reach people and make disciples

Matt. 28:18,19 - Christ's confidence is in a group of men
" commission was to make disciples
" curriculum is a) going - WHEN you go
b) baptizing
c) teaching

Method of Curriculum:

19-20 - 3 participles which provide the pattern for the Process

1. Going or "when you go" --pre-evangelism; establishing contacts, i.e. process of making friends - spiritual tenacity to stay with a person - flowing into the life of people. No quick easy way - loving - accepting - exposing.
2. Baptizing - the point at which a person chooses to accept Christ (I Cor. 12:13) at that point where he chooses to identify with Christ and His Kingdom.
3. Teaching: them all things - to live & grow, not "protracted infancy" - greatest problem in the church.

Who is adequate for this job? "I am with you always even unto the end of the world" JESUS. N.B. But His promise only applies to His process - stop asking God to bless your little plan - ask what His plan is and then you can be sure of power, presence, blessing on your life. The Christian life is the life of Christ reproduced in the believer by the Holy Spirit's power. He never teaches you truth, but soon afterwards He has you experience it.

The true nature of a person is what that person can become by the grace of God - like Peter-Rock. Do you see people as problems or potential? How about yourself? How you see others you are discipling or yourself will determine how you build.

Immaturity = clinging to our favorite sins, afraid of becoming HOLY.
Maturity = is characterized by a hate, a loathing of our former treasured sins and a love of holiness. Love and desire to live a holy life NOT an attitude of "Do I have to give up such and such?" But rather, "How I long to live more holy, how I love to be taken up with Christ and His Word and Life."

THE PRINCIPLE OF DISCIPLESHIP

A disciple is a learner - one who THINKS through and then FOLLOWS through. Not only a pupil, but an adherent

The path of discipleship:

1. Conversion - (John 1:12) "He gave the power to become the sons of God". Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy he saved us - (Titus 3:5)

You have to be a son or daughter before becoming a disciple.

2. Discipline - involves teaching and training to soften us, to strengthen and steady us in Christ - to yield the "fruit of righteousness" (Heb. 12:11)

3. The Cost - (Mt. 10:37) loving Christ more than family.
(Luke 14:26) "hating" family

The key principle is counting "all things as loss that I may gain Christ" (Phil 3:8)

- A. The Lord Jesus is the supreme, permanent and pre-eminent One in our hearts.
- B. No other person or thing shares that first place in our lives.
- C. No price is too great to pay for Him and for His sake.

4. Denying "self"

- A. (Mark 10:29-30) means leaving all
- B. (Mt. 6:11) trusting Him for daily food&supples
- C. (I Thes. 4:11-12, II Thes. 3:10-13) daily work in which we are to be faithful.
- D. (Luke 9:23, 14:27, Mt. 16:24) daily cross, "cannot be My disciple" without it.

It is not the cross of Christ - He died for our sins and we don't need to die for our sins. It is the denial of self in the deepest meaning of that word with all its subtleties - and being WILLING to do the WILL of God in every area of life.

Pray for strength to know the "joy of sacrifice and joy of holy living and to stand through tears or loss to know the joy of the sufferings of Christ (I Peter 4:13, 16, 19) . Suffering is a gift.

Q Notes

- A. "The world dazzles us, but is dim in comparison to Christ."
- B. "Loved ones are loved, but He is the altogether Lovely One."
- C. "His love fills and overwhelms us and floods away our "self" so we can say, "Lord Jesus, at any cost, by any cross, make me your disciple".

THE DANGER OF DISCIPLESHIP

Anyone who has said he or she will be a disciple will be put in a place of (1) responsibility - however small and (2) will be in a place of danger and attacks.

There will be:

- A. Intrigue: proposals which will raise questions and instill doubts in your mind. They will want you to explain your convictions, defend your stand and course of action. This is supposedly for their enlightenment, but it results in your confusion and the work ceases. It seems right that you should explain, but it is hardly ever right to do so. Weigh the alternatives and the reasons for the attack. Usually, like Nehemiah, you should not stop the work to argue (Neh. 6:3). To waste time defending against critics stops the work of God.
- B. Innuendo: accusing of false motives. This will come as rumors, unvarnished lies, sordid motives, attacking spirituality, methods maligned. Deny the lies and then commit your cause, your work, your stand to God the Righteous Judge. Trust and do not be afraid (Ps. 31:13-15, 18)
- C. Intimidation: if unsuccessful with intrigue or innuendo. Neh. said, "Should a man like me run? Should I go into the temple to save my life? I will not go in" (Neh. 6:1-16)

Should we be afraid to stand for the Most High God and keep teaching His TRUE Word. (Phil. 1:28) "in no way alarmed by your opponents" - it is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you and that from God.

The Principle here is: In your divinely appointed job don't turn to:

- A. untangle the intrigue, B. undo the innuendo, C. run from intimidation
- Your safest place is doing your job as unto the Lord, without fear, trusting in His power to defend you, standing steadfast and immovable, Werving without defending yourself. Danger faced results in freedom and safety.

PRINCIPLE:

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