

Training Disciples to Train

Session 3: What is Discipleship? (2b)

Offered by Ron Lively, M.Div., M.A. – BiblicalMentoring.org (Studies)

Source: The Making of a Disciple by Dr. Keith Phillips. Published by Fleming H. Revell Company, 1981. ISBN 0-8007-1181-5. Introduction by Robert E. Coleman. Content below (except the study questions) is taken directly from the book without revisions. The order for each lesson is: quote the memory verse; read the whole Bible chapter of that verse; read the questions; read and discuss the content; then share personal prayer requests and each closing with a prayer for the other person's requests.

Step 1: Opening prayer

Step 2: Each person quotes the memory verse: [Galatians 2:20](#)
(see <https://biblicalmentoring.org/index.php/training-disciples-to-train-others/>)

20 I have been crucified with Christ.

It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.

And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God,
who loved me and gave himself for me.

Step 3: Read and discuss the Bible Chapter- [Galatians 2](#)

Step 4: Questions for Personal Applications and/or Group Discussions:

1. I can say with Apostle Paul that I've been crucified with Christ, but how can I and others tell that there has been a true transformation?
2. Learn to tell the author's story about a plane crash? About really living by dying to self?
3. Have you personally heard Christ's call or command to follow him by faith in his atonement and redemption?
4. Have you determined to obey Christ as Lord by taking action to make disciples who become like Him? Like you?
5. Do you agree and affirm Phillips' statement I that "without reproduction there is no discipleship". If so, share your plan of action with someone who can pray for God to bless this plan.

Step 5: Read and discuss the Content from the book: **Chapter 2b per the author – Keith Phillips:**

While God's gift of salvation does meet man's most crucial need, this humanistic, do-it-for-your-own-good pitch completely ignores the ultimate reason Christ died on the cross. God provides man with salvation primarily to bring glory to Himself through people who have the character of His Son (Ephesians 1:12). God's glory is more important than man's welfare (Isaiah 43:7).

No one who understands the purpose of salvation would dare to speculate that a person might be saved without accepting Christ's Lordship. Christ cannot be the Lord of my life if I am the lord of my life. In order for Christ to be in control, I have to die. I cannot become a disciple without dying to myself and identifying with Christ who died for my sins (Mark 8:34). A disciple follows his Master, even to the cross.

For a long time I struggled to understand the practical implications of "self-death." How would this determined self-renunciation flesh itself out in my life? It finally registered while I was meditating on Galatians 2:20: "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me..."

Let's suppose that on January 1, I was flying over Kansas when the plane exploded. My body fell to the ground and I was dead on impact. Before long a farmer discovered my corpse. There was no pulse, no heartbeat, no breath. My body was cold. Obviously, I was dead. So the farmer dug a grave. But by the time he placed my body in the earth, it was too dark to cover it. Deciding he would finish in the morning, he returned home.

Then Christ came to me and said, "Keith, you are dead. Your life on earth is over. But I will breathe into you a breath of new life if you promise to do anything I ask and go anywhere I send you."

My immediate reaction was, "No way! That's unreasonable. It's slavery." But then I realized I was not in a good bargaining position, and I quickly came to my senses. I wholeheartedly agreed.

Instantly, my lungs, heart and other vital organs began to function again. I came back to life. I was born again! From that point on no matter what Christ asked me to do or where He asked me to go, I was more than willing. No task was too difficult, no hours too long, no place too dangerous. Nothing was unreasonable. Why? Because I had no claim to my life. I was living on borrowed time, Christ's time. Keith died on January 1 in a Kansas cornfield. Then I could say with Paul, "I have been crucified [have died] with Christ; and it is no longer [Keith] who is alive, but Christ [who] lives in me..."

That is what self-death and being born again are all about. Christ's command to "Follow Me" is an injunction to participate in His death in order to experience new life. You become a living dead man, totally committed to Him.

A great paradox of life is that there is tremendous freedom in this death. A dead man is no longer concerned with his own rights, his independence or the opinions of others. When he was joined in a spiritual union with the crucified Christ, those things so highly prized by the world—riches, security and status—were relinquished. "Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (Galatians 5:24). A man who takes up the cross, one crucified with Christ, is not anxious about tomorrow because his future is in the hands of another.

One inner-city worker dreamed of establishing a daring street ministry. But when the miracles he had hoped for did not materialize, he resorted to fantasy, distorting encounters and creating imaginary events, hoping to stimulate the respect of others. He became enslaved to his visions of grandeur, a captive of his own expectations.

His subconscious motivation was to win the awe and admiration of the Christian world by performing heroic feats for the kingdom. His passions, dreams and visions were never crucified. He was never freed from the pressure to succeed and to produce. He never experienced that release which comes from having nothing to prove, nothing to lose. He had a perverted perception of discipleship. He wanted to serve God so that he could receive glory.

In contrast, a dead man is liberated to do all things to the glory of God (Rom 8:10). He places all that he is and everything that he has at God's permanent disposal. His submission to Christ's Lordship empowers him to please God in every decision he makes, every word he speaks and every thought he thinks. A disciple views his whole life and ministry as worship (1 Cor 10:31).

Self-death frees him to enjoy his love affair with God. Self-death is the mandatory precursor to becoming a disciple. Any person who has not experienced self-death cannot qualify as a legitimate link in the discipling process because he cannot reproduce. Jesus taught, "...unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (John 12:24). Without reproduction there is no discipleship. (pp. 18b-20)