

TRAINING Disciples to Train

Session 27: The Dynamics of Discipleship (11c)

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

Step 1: Opening prayer

Step 2: Each person quotes the memory verse: VERSE: **2 Timothy 4:2**

2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season;
reprove, rebuke, and exhort,
with complete patience and teaching

Step 3: *Read and discuss all or part of the Bible Chapter - 2 Timothy 4*

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

1. Our minds can be regenerated (renewed) in Christ. That means we can think new thoughts and learn new truths and live in a new Way. This is obviously why new believers get excited.
2. It is a truth that as disciples (of Christ) who receive God's Will through His Word, we are equipped to make new decisions to bring glory (praise) to God.
3. Phillips suggests that we ask four questions to help avoid making incorrect decisions that adversely affect the cause of Christ.
4. Christ made sure His disciples knew the truths of Scriptures and understood how to make God-honoring decisions.

Step 5: *Read and discuss the Content from the book:*

Chapter 11c per the author – Keith Phillips:

Teach your disciple how to think.

When your disciple became a new creation in Christ, God renewed his mind (1 Corinthians 2:12). Now God requires that he use his regenerated faculties. Paul exhorts, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is..." (Romans 12:2).

Christ taught His disciples how to think by forcing them to arrive at their own deductions. He asked provocative questions that stimulated self-discovery. He would often respond to their questions with other questions. His teaching in parables encouraged them to ponder the meaning of His words.

Teach your disciple how to think by encouraging him to employ discovery methods of Bible study. Direct him to a biblical passage and let him ferret out the truths contained in it. Pose questions or give suggestions that point the way. Rephrase his questions and ask him what he thinks. Never answer a question that he has not tried to answer. He will learn biblical principles better if he finds them himself than if he receives a pat answer or a proven formula from you.

For example, if Fred Stoesz, our Los Angeles men's director, asked me whether Thuan or Charles should lead a one-on-one relationship with a new staff member, I would direct him to study 1 Timothy 3. Then I would ask him several questions: Who is best equipped to train this man? Who has the most available time? Are there other people who might lead the new staff member better? Who do you think is the best choice? Why? Fred usually arrives at the correct solution himself.

Encourage your disciple to write you as often as he desires. Written communication promotes accuracy and clarity by enabling him to think through his questions and needs. Frequently, he will pinpoint his area of concern or discover the answers himself while writing.

Teach your disciple how to make decisions.

Jesus insisted that His disciples' decisions be based on the will of God. When Christ's disciples had received God's will through His words (John 14:24), they were equipped to make decisions (John 17:8).

Since a disciple's decision-making process is based on the will and Word of God it differs substantially from the self-centered, worldly approach. Teach your disciple that to avoid incorrect decisions that will adversely affect the cause of Christ he must answer four questions:

1. What are the alternatives? Your disciple must evaluate objectively all of the possible options by talking with those who know the facts and with those who will be affected by the decision. He needs adequate data to decide wisely. Proverbs 15:28 counsels: "The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer...." Snap decisions made under pressure are generally no more than guesses.

2. What biblical principles apply? Since your disciple is committed to doing the will of God, no decision should contradict a biblical principle. Mature thinking based on God's Word leads to confident decision-making and Christ-exalting actions.

3. What are the implications? Your disciple must examine the possible far-reaching effects of the decision. A little forethought can avoid many mistakes and sorrows.

4. What is the counsel of my leaders? Once your disciple has thought out the alternatives, principles and implications, he should present these to you. Pray and study God's Word together, seeking His direction. Your disciple must be "diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3). Since cooperation in the body preserves unity, the best decisions are reached when they are made together with those in authority over you. Seeking counsel will help him to avoid making decisions that appear building but may hurt others because he is unaware of vital factors. Each situation is different and demands specific prayer and guidance.

Let me illustrate how this works. Suppose that you are on our staff and have just finished an extremely exhausting ministry month. Your leaders have planned a retreat to refresh the staff. Then, just as you are about to leave, you receive a call informing you that the home of one of your Bible club families has burned down.

Your immediate reaction may be to miss the retreat so you can aid the family. But as a Christian, you must make this decision in light of what is most building for the kingdom and the body. Important decisions like this demand well-thought-out action, not merely an emotional response. Let's apply our four-step decision-making process to this situation:

1. What are the alternatives? (a) Miss the retreat and respond to the family; (b) Respond to the family and try to take a break later; (c) Ignore, postpone or delegate the responsibility to meet the club family's need.

2. What biblical principles apply? (a) Psalms 46:1 teaches that a Christian's strength is found in God; (b) Mark 6:31 acknowledges that Christians need to be refreshed; (c) James 2:15,16 instructs Christians to be available to meet their neighbors' needs.

3. What are the implications? (a) If you miss the retreat, you may hinder your effectiveness by ignoring a deep need to focus on God and be refreshed; (b) If you try to take a break later, you may have to cancel many ministry activities already planned. This could hurt other relationships or negate your teaching on faithfulness; (c) If you ignore the club family's need, you could hurt your relationship with them and lose a great opportunity to demonstrate Christian love.

4. What is the counsel of my leaders? If my guidance were sought in a situation like this, in which there are two conflicting priorities, I would review the alternatives and then consider the implications of each course of action in light of our priorities: God first, the body second, the ministry third. How badly do you need a break now? Can you get away with some other staff members later without jeopardizing your ministry? Is there someone else who could just as effectively respond to this need and who might suffer less by missing the retreat at this time?

After considering these, and any other applicable questions, we would commit the decision to the Lord in prayer and believe that God's Spirit would reveal His perfect will and confirm it to us. Seeking counsel in decision making provides wisdom and unity.

When your disciple makes every decision in light of the welfare of the kingdom and the body, he not only respects the health of the entire community, but he can be confident that he will receive the best guidance for himself.

When Christ left this earth, His disciples knew God's Word and understood how to think and make decisions. Be sure your disciple is taught these essential lessons.

Step 6: *Share personal prayer requests then each person prays for the other's requests.*

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

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