

## TRAINING Disciples to Train

### Session 30: The Disciple's Standard: Excellence (12b)

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

**Step 1:** Opening prayer

**Step 2:** Each person quotes the memory verse: VERSE: **Mark 12:30-31**

**30 And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' 31 The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these.**

**Step 3:** Read and discuss all or part of the Bible Chapter - **Mark 12**

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

1. Living by one's Biblical priorities, a disciple must make lots of good decisions that aid in his goal to make disciple-makers, Phillips reminds us that a disciple's excellence must begin at home. What does this mean?
2. Phillips wrote how Paul instructed Titus to strive for the quality of conduct that God demands in Titus 2:7-8. Do you understand that your discipleship training requires this same quality?
3. **Love** – Disciples should know what it feels like to be touched by Jesus – the incarnation of perfect love and thus be able to extend that love in those in need.
4. **Faith** – consider how faith contrasts with hope. One of these is based on what has already occurred and the other is based on what is yet to occur.
5. What is the most important part of a disciple's armor (Ephesians 6:16)?

**Step 5:** Read & discuss this content from the book-*The Making of a Disciple* (See Source below): Chapter 11d per the author – Keith Phillips:

#### **Conduct Con't.**

Second only to his relationship with God is his obligation to his family. One dear friend of mine was continually embarrassed by his teenage daughter. She went out of her way to do the exact opposite of everything he taught. One day he confided that her behavior was a direct result of his neglect. While he was ministering to the urgent needs of his neighbors and friends, he had ignored this foremost responsibility. Paul insists of a disciple: "He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?)" (1 Timothy 3:4,5 NIV).

Your disciple's excellence in conduct must begin at home. Your disciple must also serve the Church with excellence. For example, it is not enough for your disciple to merely lead a Bible study. He must be well prepared and do it excellently.

When our men's staff took their teen clubs on an Easter retreat, they spent over an hour building a full-size cross out of rough timber in order to illustrate the agony of the crucifixion. They could have opted to paint a word picture instead of transporting that awkward cross all the way to the camp. But they knew that the gospel deserves an excellent presentation. And the positive response of the teens clearly verified God's blessing on their effort.

Paul instructed Titus to strive for the quality of conduct God demands: "In everything set...an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us" (Titus 2:7,8 NIV).

Finally, your disciple's conduct in the world must accurately reflect his Lord. "Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men" (Colossians 3:23). If your disciple's behavior is patterned after Christ's, he is salt (Matthew 5:13). And a "salty Christian" causes men to thirst after God. However, if the salt becomes tasteless, it is good for nothing.

I know a Jewish accountant who is very skeptical about Christians. One day he shared with me that his prejudice against believers was rooted in one Christian's unethical financial dealings with the government. Apparently, a leader in a local church had tried to enlist my Jewish friend's assistance in defrauding the Internal Revenue Service. Even though that incident had occurred ten years earlier, the accountant had never forgotten it. Your disciple "must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he may not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil" (1 Timothy 3:7).

## **Love**

Love is the sum total of Christ's law (Mark 12:30,31). Christ's perfect love for God overflowed in unconditional love for men. Matthew 8:2-4 records the story of a leper coming to Jesus to be healed. The Lord felt deep compassion for this man who had been denied human touch or physical love for most of his life. Jesus knew that his family and neighbors had fled from him, fearing that they too might contract the disease. Jesus could have cleansed this man by standing fifty feet away and simply saying the word. But the leper needed much more than physical restoration; he needed emotional healing. Moved by compassion, Jesus touched the leper. Imagine the exhilaration that must have shot through him—to be touched, to be loved!

Having been touched by the Son of God, the incarnation of perfect love, your disciple is both enabled and compelled to extend his hands into a world of need. His fond affection and compassion for others should make him eager to impart Christ to them (Romans 11:14).

In the inner city we have unlimited opportunities to share our love. Some of our staff have held children who were infested with lice. No one else would love or care for them. We washed them—and sometimes we got lice. Some have cleaned up alcoholics covered with their own vomit. Others have washed children whose upbringing never included personal hygiene or toilet training. We love the forgotten and neglected in order to bring glory to God. Luke 9:48 (LB) says, "...Your care for others is the measure of your greatness."

## **Faith**

Your disciple must be a person of faith for without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). Faith is based on facts, acting upon something that you know to be true. This contrasts with hope, which expects something to happen. Faith believes that God will or has already done it, not that He may do it. Faith is taking God at His Word.

Christ commissioned His men to make disciples of all nations, to preach the gospel to all creation (Mark 16:15). They could have spent the rest of their lives debating the improbability of accomplishing their task. How could they get to all the world? They had no airplanes or trains—not even a car. How could they reach the masses with no television, no radio, no printed plan of salvation? They didn't even have the New Testament.

But Christ had promised them authority, the power of the Holy Spirit and His continual presence. They believed Him and acted in faith upon His Word. The result is history. Their faith was proclaimed throughout the whole world (Romans 1:8) and the gospel was constantly "producing fruit and growing ..." (Colossians 1:6 NIV).

Norm Boswell exhibited faith when he moved his wife and four young children into the ghetto of Newark to make disciples. They left Kansas before we even had a home for them. Norm had no higher education, no experience in the ghetto. People thought he was acting unreasonably. But Norm knew one thing: God had called him to preach the gospel to the poor. And the Lord promises to bless His faithful children far beyond their greatest expectations. Today, hundreds of new believers in Newark are regularly studying the Bible, disciples are being made and glory is being brought to God because of one disciple's faith.

"So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Romans 10:17). As we study and apply God's Word, we discover that faith works! Here is the most important part of your disciple's armor (Ephesians 6:16), "for we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7). Without faith your disciple will have a hard time believing that Christ will use him to make disciples. Without faith God's ways appear to be foolish (1 Corinthians 2:14). But with faith "...everything you ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive" (Matthew 21:22).

Faith is crucial to a life of excellence because it alone enables your disciple to walk in confidence and maturity. It stands in complete opposition to a life controlled by emotions. Faith looks past circumstances to the unchanging God.

***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. Introduction by Robert E. Coleman. Content (except study questions) is taken from the book without revisions.

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