TRAINING Disciples to Train

Session 18: Choosing a Disciple (9a)

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

Step 1: Opening prayer

Step 2: Each person quotes the memory verse: VERSE: **Matthew 4:19-20**
19 And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."
20 Immediately they left their nets and followed him.

Step 3: *Read and discuss all or part of the Bible Chapter* **– Matthew 4**

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

1. Choosing the right players in sports almost always leads to victory. How does this apply to discipleship training?

2. It appears that Jesus chose His twelve disciples from only those He knew who were willing to follow Him. Can you see how this applies to those we choose to train?

3. In this session, we will learn to set a high standard and to pray diligently as Jesus did in choosing His disciples to train.

4. We will study about the five characteristics of a disciple. Let's ask if all five are equally important.

5. We are to understand that God's guidance in the choice of a disciple to train is mandatory as He looks at one's heart which we cannot do so we have to look at other qualifications.

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

Chapter **9a** per the author – Keith Phillips:

Choosing a Disciple

Sandlot baseball was the rage in my neighborhood when I was a youngster. Every Saturday afternoon eight of us would split into teams and play until it was too dark to see. The success of my weekend was often determined by the quality of my teammates. Choosing the right players almost always led to victory.

The selection of the person whom you will disciple is crucial. The following principles have evolved from personal experience and I believe them to be indispensable in choosing a disciple.

Set a High Standard

Jesus made fishers of men only out of those who were willing to follow Him (Matthew 4:19). He demanded that His disciples give up everything they had, even their own lives, if necessary, to follow Him. They had to meet His standard.

Five characteristics will help you identify a potential disciple:

1. He desires to Know God Intimately

His teachable spirit indicates his hunger for God and thirst for righteousness. He seeks "to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death..." (Philippians 3:10 NIV). His consistent obedience to God demonstrates his self-death (James 1:22-25). God has said, "Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me..." (Jeremiah 9:23,24).

2. He Is Available

Whenever there is an opportunity, he is willing and eager to be with you. His availability demonstrates the priority he places on your relationship. We always make time for things we think are important. Christ's disciples left their jobs to be with Him. Their availability proved their commitment.

3. He Is Submissive

He realizes that God accepts nothing less than a broken spirit (Psalms 51:17). His vulnerability and transparent communication demonstrate his trust in God and you. His servanthood and love for you reflect his submission and respect for your maturity. If he ministers to you, he is probably your person. Paul highly regarded Onesiphorus because he often refreshed and unashamedly served Paul (2 Timothy 1:16-18).

4. He Is Faithful

He is consistent in his Christian commitment, his routine responsibilities and his love for God. "Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful" (1 Corinthians 4:2 NIV). God's Spirit places such a high value on faithfulness that He inspired Paul to make it the pivotal ingredient in determining which men should be trained (2 Timothy 2:2).

5. He Seeks to Become a Discipler

He understands that a mature Christian must be committed to discipling others. He desires to grow in the Lord so he can bring glory to God by reproducing Christ in others.

These five criteria may seem too lofty. But the quality you receive is determined by the standard you demand. If you will accept mediocrity, that is what you will get. Each year our directors review the guidelines for accepting new staff. Invariably, when we stiffen the requirements, the quality of the candidates is greatly improved. Do not be afraid to set a high standard.

Pray Diligently

Jesus chose His disciples only after "...He spent the whole night in prayer to God" (Luke 6:12). The Father gave Jesus the insight to see the potential of impetuous Peter, who would be called "Cephas," the rock (John 1:42). Behind the cynical Nathanael, He saw the character of one "in whom [there] is no guile" (John 1:47). God's guidance in the choice of a disciple is mandatory. "...man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7).

There is no way you can entice someone to die to himself and enter a discipling relationship. Jesus taught, "No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him..." (John 6:44). Only God can prepare a person to become a disciple and to reproduce a Christ-like character in others. God Himself said, "...Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them" (Acts 13:2 NIV). Even Christ's disciples were given to Him by God (John 17:6).

The selection of a disciple demands diligent prayer. Together with your spiritual leaders ask God to direct you to the person He wants you to disciple.

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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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