TRAINING Disciples to Train

Session 22: Discipleship is Relational (10b)

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

Step 1: Opening prayer

Step 2: Each person quotes the memory verse: VERSE: **Zechariah 8:16-17**

16 These are the things that you shall do: Speak the truth to one another;
render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace;
17 do not devise evil in your hearts against one another,
and love no false oath, for all these things I hate, declares the Lord."

Step 3: *Read and discuss all or part of the Bible Chapter* - **Zechariah 8**

Link: **https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Zechariah%208&version=ESV**

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

1. After covering Warmth, Phillips covers four more qualities of a healthy relationship with a disciple: Loyalty, Fairness, Maturity and Availability.

2. Loyalty: The author says that loyalty is a consistent commitment to another person and that your disciple (trainee) must never question your loyalty.

3. Fairness: Fairness means seeing each person as uniquely gifted by God with differences but with a goal for a Christ-like character.

4. Maturity: He says that maturity is a steady faithful walk with God for both of you.

5. Availability: Being available for your disciple is very important. Phillips says that when you obeyed God's command to follow Him, all of your time became God's time to be used in any way that best honors Him.

Step 5*: Read and discuss the Content from the book:*
Chapter 10b per the author – Keith Phillips:

Loyalty

Loyalty is a consistent commitment to another person. It means standing by his side through thick or thin. Few things solidify a relationship like weathering a crisis together. "If you love someone you will be loyal to him no matter what the cost. You will always believe in him, always expect the best of him, and always stand your ground in defending him" (1 Corinthians 13:7 LB).

Your disciple must never question your loyalty. If he fails you, never express a lack of faith in him or hint that you want to abandon the relationship. Share your disappointments only with your leaders who can help you build him. Ephesians 4:29 instructs, "Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment...."

There have been times when I have sincerely believed in and defended people to the hilt and later discovered that I was wrong. But I have never regretted being loyal. A dead man does not feel used or abused. He has nothing to lose by being loyal to his disciples.

Fairness

Fairness demands that you be unbiased. "For there is no partiality with God" (Romans 2:11), nor should there be with His people (James 2:1). Your disciple must know that you are fair.

I have the privilege of investing in nine people who direct our inner-city ministries across America. They have diverse backgrounds, varied intellectual capacities, unique personalities and different potentials.

I diligently attempt to accept each director for who he is and to develop his special talents and skills. I asked God to help me overcome any personality preferences which might hinder my usability and to protect me from motivating one disciple by comparing his growth to another's. The only uniform standard toward which we all strive is a Christ-like character.

It is unfair to demand or even hope for equality in Bible understanding, Scripture retention or ministry performance. Each person is God's own inimitable creation and must be treated accordingly. If you try to lead your disciple with an inflexible, predetermined plan, it will be disastrous.

If you try to make him fit into a certain desired mold you will be disappointed. Fairness demands that you respect his uniqueness and enjoy the variety in Christ's body.

If your disciple accuses another member in the body of a wrong, demonstrate that you are loyal and fair to each person. Do not agree or disagree until you have talked to both of them, preferably together. "...A quick retort can ruin everything" (Proverbs 13:3 LB). Listen to each point of view. Pray. Then seek the answer in God's Word and through your leaders. Help your disciple refocus on his purpose and objectives. Train him to ask for and give forgiveness. Together reaffirm your commitment to unity in the body to the glory of God. If your disciple knows that this is your policy, he will obey Zechariah 8:16 (LB): "...Tell the truth. Be fair. Live at peace with everyone."

Maturity

Maturity is a steady, faithful walk with God. Jesus claimed, "...I always do the things that are pleasing to Him" (John 8:29). Paul said, "You are witness, and so is God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers" (1 Thessalonians 2:10).

Since you seek to produce a wholeness in every area of your disciple's life, you must be consistently mature. He will learn servanthood, sensitivity and the correct attitude toward responsibility through your example. He will copy your conduct and respect your maturity.

The reverse is also true. Your disciple will monitor whether or not you live what you teach. He will watch you even when you are unaware of it. A sarcastic comment, a questionable joke, a lack of trust in your leaders or jealousy will be observed and reproduced.

Maturity never hinders the formation of a discipling relationship. When Marge was new to our staff, she was so anxious to develop close friendships with some teenagers that she did virtually everything they did. Her zeal was commendable and she became well-liked by the girls. But over a period of months, we noticed that whenever any of the teens had a serious problem or wanted guidance for an important decision, they talked to our women's director instead of Marge. Marge had become just "one of the girls" and did not have their respect. Immaturity is too high a price to pay for acceptance.

Availability

Your disciple is your top priority in the body, unless you are married. If you are married, he is second only to your family. Even though Paul found an open door to preach the gospel in Troas, he left in order to find Titus (2 Corinthians 2:12,13). Titus was more important to Paul than the whole city of Troas. You must have a dogged determination to keep your disciple as your priority.

You and your disciple need maximum access to each other in order to have a quality relationship. You may need more than three hours of formal weekly meetings if you are having difficulty getting to know each other or if your disciple is insecure. While one meeting must be reserved for training, Bible study and accountability, additional times may be designed for fellowship, sharing and doing things together.

Be available to invest in and challenge your disciple even if his many questions or strong desire to learn demand a great deal of time. Do not stifle his fervor. Be particularly sensitive during times of adjustment or crisis. If he struggles with addictions such as impure thoughts or "doing"

instead of "being," help him day and night.

When you obeyed Christ's command to follow Him, you relinquished your right to determine your own schedule. "...you are not your own. For you have been bought with a price..." (1 Corinthians 6:19,20). All of your time became God's time to be used in any way that best honors Him.

If you are too busy for your disciple when he needs you, you are too busy. One disciple whom I love dearly phoned me at two in the morning and in a broken voice simply asked if we could meet immediately.

Without hesitation I rushed to the appointed place and spent several hours in prayer and counsel. It was the wisest investment I have ever made in terms of strengthening our love and commitment. He knew that I viewed him as a priority and that when his world was collapsing, I was there to help put the pieces back together. Moments like this record the principles governing a healthy relationship in indelible ink on the life of your disciple.

On a recent trip to Wichita my schedule was packed with staff training, public speaking and private meetings. As our director, Al Ewert, and I drove from appointment to appointment, we discussed his long list of ministry questions.

My final meeting went longer than expected, causing me to miss my flight. Since the next plane did not leave for four hours, I wearily suggested that we get a cup of coffee.

Once we sat down, I shared some of the pressures, deadlines and emergencies with which I was dealing. Al's encouragement was like a cool breeze on a blistering summer day. Before long I was reflecting on my dreams and goals— how I believed God was about to do mightier things than either of us expected. Al affirmed my vision and added several inspiring thoughts God had given him.

The time passed quickly. As I boarded the plane, I could hardly believe how refreshed I felt. Several days later, Al told me on the phone that for him our time in the coffee shop had been the highlight of my stay in Wichita— and it had certainly been mine.

Do not waste valuable time by taking long drives by yourself or by sitting alone in an airport. Invite your disciple to be with you. These are precious opportunities to teach, fellowship and be a consistent influence. Jesus "tried to avoid all publicity in order to spend more time with his disciples, teaching them..." (Mark 9:30 LB). He was never too busy, never too tired to meet their needs.

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

pp. 104-109

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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