TRAINING Disciples to Train

Session 28: The Dynamics of Discipleship (11d)

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 1:7-8**

7 for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.
8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord,
nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God,

Step 3: *Read and discuss all or part of the Bible Chapter* - **2 Timothy 1**
Link: https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Timothy%201&version=ESV

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

1. Since all believers go through a life-long process of sanctification, your trainees will have weaknesses which you as a trainer needs to help correct.

2. Your job is to confront your disciple if he or she is to become more like Christ.

3. Have you learned how to correct, rebuke and encourage another fellow believer in submission to the Holy Spirit?

4. Learn that praying together can help turn a weakness into a strength. We will learn how to develop a strategy to do this.

5. There is value in developing your disciple's strengths – not just in pointing out his weaknesses. Trust him to be skilled to help his own disciples one day.

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

Correct Weaknesses

One of the hardest things for me to do when I began ministering was to correct another person. I dreaded rejection and feared that I might be wrong. An old preacher changed my whole perspective. He told me, "You're just a mouthpiece. Don't give your opinions or suggestions. If you can't preface it with 'Thus saith the Lord,' don't say it. But if the Bible says it and you're scared to declare it, you don't love the person."

Inevitably, there will be areas of your disciple's life which will not yet be Christ-like. You are responsible to expose and deal with these weaknesses (Galatians 4:19). You will be tempted to rationalize, "He's had a hard life," or "That is just part of his personality." But you must love your disciple enough to become involved in correcting his weaknesses. The following process is suggested for this purpose.

Discern his weaknesses.

Carefully observe your disciple and listen to what he says. He is your greatest source of information concerning his needs and spiritual welfare.

Ask him questions that will help him express how he is doing and what his needs are. Concentrate on his life, his time in the Word and his relationships with others.

Watch him relate to those in authority over him, to his family, to strangers, to the opposite sex and to his friends. Discern how others view your disciple. Listen to the comments made about him. Is he respected? Credible? Liked? Check his written assignments and memory work. Do all this in love, but with a careful eye toward areas of need.

Confront your disciple.

Once you have discerned a weakness, discuss this with your disciple. Love him enough to confront him. God says, "Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline..." (Revelation 3:19 NIV). If your disciple strays from God's will, be courageous enough to call him back to the correct path. Paul was "exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one...as a father would his own children" (1 Thessalonians 2:11). If you respond weakly or are intimidated by your disciple's rebellion, his training will be deficient.

Your disciple will respond positively to your confrontation if it is firm but loving. Paul told Timothy that he should "correct, rebuke and encourage —with great patience and careful instruction" (2 Timothy 4:2 NIV). But he told Titus to "...speak to the Christians...as sternly as necessary to make them strong in the faith" (Titus 1:13 LB).

Paul was gentle but direct when he challenged Timothy about his reticence (2 Timothy 1). Paul began by affirming his love for Timothy (vv. 1-4) and recalling details of their intimate relationship (vv. 5,6). Then, based on this expressed closeness, he boldly addressed Timothy's need: "For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline. Therefore, do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, or of me His prisoner..." (vv. 7,8).

Always base your confrontation on God's Word and the authority of Jesus Christ. Then you can be as bold and confident as Christ was when He confronted Peter: "...Get behind Me, Satan; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's" (Mark 8:33). Paul wrote, "...We request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus ..." (1 Thessalonians 4:1).

Show your disciple the biblical principles which expose his sinful actions and habits. This will establish that God's Word, not your opinion or experience, is the basis for correcting him.

However, do not confront your disciple each time you meet with him. Some time ago I noticed this tendency in my life. Because of the widespread nature of our ministry, there were some staff members whom I seldom saw. When I did see them, it was because they had a serious problem that demanded my personal attention. After a period of time a very natural thing happened. When they were told Keith wanted to see them, they felt guilty and anxious. This dread was similar to that of a Roman Christian being invited to the Colosseum rather than the anticipation of meeting with a concerned brother who loved him. No one wants a relationship that is built on confrontation.

Be sure to balance your confrontation with encouragement and support. Compliment your disciple for his growth and application of God's principles. Share how he ministers to you. He must have this affirmation.

Once you have confronted your disciple, study the Bible together to find the positive characteristic that needs to be developed in his life or encourage him to discover the standard for himself.

Pray together.

Only God can change a life (1 Corinthians 3:6). Paul urged his friends to "agonize" with him in prayer (Romans 15:30). Jesus promised, "...If two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father..." (Matthew 18:19). Make a commitment in prayer to turn this weakness into a strength.

Develop a strategy.

A strategy is a series of steps that will lead your disciple to the achievement of his goal. These steps must be specific, clearly defined and attainable. Let me suggest three vital elements that must be included in every strategy to eliminate weakness.

***1. Bible study**. Many do not study the Bible because it rebukes them. But change occurs through the "encouragement of the Scriptures..." (Romans 15:4). God richly blesses those who obey Him.*

George was a staff member who frequently turned his reports in late. His leader explained the inconvenience this caused, but George failed to correct this weakness until he studied about faithfulness in small things. That changed his attitude. Studying passages that speak directly to the problem must be included in the strategy.

***2. Positive models**. Your disciple will learn to follow Christ by watching you and other mature believers who can furnish positive models of the needed characteristic. Peter told the elders to be examples to the flock (1 Peter 5:1-3). Paul encouraged the Philippians to "Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you" (Philippians 3:17 NIV). Your lives will demonstrate that it is possible for the disciple to obey God in the area of his weakness. He must be exposed to the needed trait. An example is a powerful agent of change.*

***3. Practical application.** James 1:22 (RSV) exhorts us to "...be doers of the word, and not hearers only Your disciple will grow through specific application. Involve him in activities that will help correct his weakness. For example, he will learn servanthood by cleaning up after a group meeting. He should not participate in activities that are detrimental to his maturing in his area of weakness. Leading a Bible study may feed his pride and be counterproductive. Your disciple must see this strategy as his, not one you have forced on him. Incorporate his ideas whenever possible. Affirm that you will support and encourage him in following this plan.*

***Hold him accountable**. Even though this is a long process it is excellent time stewardship. If your disciple understands the principles and knows how to apply them, he will be effectively equipped to deal with future weaknesses in his life and in the lives of those whom he will lead. Equally important, this process will verify your love for him and reinforce his trust in you as one who seeks God's will in every decision you make. Since trust is the basis for submission, dealing with his weaknesses in this manner will help him joyfully submit to God's authority.*

Develop His Strengths

In order to foster your disciple's growth and develop his God-given gifts, you are responsible to cultivate his strengths.

First, be sure that his apparent strengths are not a source of pride. If they are, deal with them as weaknesses. Then design a strategy to develop his areas of strength. This strategy must include Bible study, positive models and practical application as discussed above. It is ideal if you can assign a project that will correct a weakness and develop a strength simultaneously.

Ruth was weak in organizing, but strong in servanthood. So, we gave her the responsibility of overseeing the meals for our Los Angeles staff. This included planning the menus, organizing the shopping and assigning the cooks. Her servanthood motivated others to willingly do their jobs. This built her strength. And Ruth became a good organizer, correcting her weakness. In response to your prayer, God will give you discernment to see undeveloped strengths in your disciple.

Upon completion of any project, evaluate your disciple's effectiveness. Ask him what worked. Why did it work? What didn't work? Why not? How could you improve? What was accomplished?

In addition to project evaluation, reexamine and discuss your discipling goals. Was your disciple thorough? Prompt? Organized? Creative? Did he delegate well? Was he sensitive and building to others? Did he take initiative? What did he learn?

Finally, encourage and compliment your disciple. Then when another, more difficult task arises, give him the supreme compliment—assign it to him.

Disciple's Checklist – The Dynamics of Discipleship
I ensure that my disciple's spiritual environment includes:
___**Worship** – an attitude of adoration that expresses our love, awe and respect for Almighty God.
___**Ministry** – building up and edifying each other.
___**Memorization** – hiding God's Word in our hearts.
___**Meditation** – striving toward God-consciousness.
___**Teaching** -
___the Bible
___how to think
___how to make decisions.
___**Correcting weaknesses.**
___**Developing strengths.**

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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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