TRAINING Disciples to Train

Session 31: The Disciple's Standard: Excellence (12c)

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

Step 1: Opening prayer

Step 2: Each person quotes the memory verse: VERSE: **1 Corinthians 6:18a, 19-20**
18 Flee from sexual immorality… 19 Or do you not know that your body
is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God?
You are not your own, 20 for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

Step 3: *Read and discuss all or part of the Bible Chapter* - **1 Corinthians 6**
Link: https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians%206&version=ESV

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

1. **Purity** – I Peter 1:15-16 quotes God saying, "You shall be holy, for I am holy". All that God is and does is holy. Do you need help to be holy? Do you understand that your holiness is possible only because of Christ and His holiness or righteousness in you?

2. God in His Holiness cannot be related to the pollution and sin of this world (i.e. impurity). What did Christ have to do to keep that from happening?

3. What sin does the enemy use to destroy ministers and ministries? That diminishes the power of the Holy Spirit in one's life. It is a sin that leads sinners to respond with horror, embarrassment and condemnation.

4. Phillips suggest that are three elements to help build your disciple's will to be pure. **First**: conform his mind - to God's mind (Philippians 2:5 – "let this mind be in you". Philippians 4:8 is also helpful to encourage us.)

5. **Second** – be part of a healthy functioning Christian Body (Church Fellowship).

6. **Third**, your disciple in need must willingly confess his impurity and accept God's forgiveness (I John 1:9).

7. You and your disciple must strive to attain God's Stand of Excellence in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity.

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

Purity

Your disciple's usefulness to God is utterly contingent upon his commitment to purity. "...if a man cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work" (2 Timothy 2:21). Since God is pure, He insists that His children be pure: "...like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy'" (1 Peter 1:15,16). Holiness is synonymous with purity.

Purity is separation from the pollution and sin of this world by the cleansing power of Christ's blood. God hates sin and cannot relate to impure beings without compromising His character. Everything God does is in absolute harmony with His holiness (Psalms 145:17).

First Corinthians 6:18 explains why purity is so crucial: "Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body." Sexual sin affects everything about your disciple. It colors the way he thinks of himself, resulting in insecurity and immaturity. It negatively affects his relationships with his family and other believers, making him suspicious and critical. It paralyzes his ministry by diminishing his confidence in Christ, dulling his motivation for doing God's will and robbing him of God's power. I know of no other sin which the devil has so successfully used to destroy ministries.

Since your disciple's effectiveness and the freedom of the Holy Spirit to empower him are directly affected by his holiness, you must be certain that he is pure. Unfortunately, many of us are so "saintly" that we don't even want to know if our disciple is battling for his spiritual life because of impurity. But let me be frank. If you don't love your disciple enough to ask him if he is struggling with lust, you have a shallow relationship.

Acknowledging impurity is painful. It is humbling to confess a need for continued accountability because of an ongoing battle. Nothing calls for a greater baring of one's soul. It is improbable that your disciple will admit such a problem unless he is confident that you will be compassionate and understanding and will continue to accept him.

It is too easy to respond to impurity with horror, embarrassment and condemnation. However, such an attitude could fatally wound your relationship. You must answer your disciple's cry for help by spending whatever energy is needed to pray, encourage and hold him accountable. The Bible speaks of three elements that build your disciple's will to be pure and give him the power to walk in purity.

First, he needs to conform his mind to God's. Philippians 2:5 says, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (KJV). Paul teaches us, "...whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things" (Philippians 4:8). Your disciple's mind is of prime importance in his struggle for purity because his thoughts largely determine his behavior.

When we installed our computer, I became familiar with the acronym GIGO. GIGO means "garbage in—garbage out." Whatever we put into the computer determines what the computer will print out. It is only capable of using what it has been fed.

This is similar to how our minds function. If we saturate our minds with "garbage," our actions will reflect this. But if we fill our minds with God's Word, clean thoughts will then direct our mouths, hands and feet in words and acts of purity. "Every word of God is pure..." (Proverbs 30:5 KJV).

Second, he must be a part of a healthy, functioning Christian body. This is crucial since no disciple can maintain purity on his own. He needs the example of mature believers in the body, and the protection, care and accountability that only the body can provide.

Third, he must willingly confess his impurity and accept God's forgiveness. God promises that if we confess our sins, agreeing with Him about our disobedience, He will forgive us and cleanse us on the basis of His faithfulness and righteousness (1 John 1:9). Purity is impossible without receiving God's cleansing and forgiveness through confession.

However, 1 John 1:9 is not license to continue in sin. On the contrary, Proverbs 28:13 explains, "...he who confesses and forsakes [his sin] will find compassion" (italics added). Your disciple's confession must be stimulated by a sincere attitude of repentance. This will be evidenced by his commitment to do everything in his power to avoid impurity.

One cold night an Arab tied up his camel beside his tent. Near midnight the old man felt the tent moving and awoke to discover his camel's nose under the flaps. When the Arab took a stick and firmly knocked the animal's nose, the camel retreated. But a little later, the camel nosed into the tent again and reasoned with the Arab: "It's so cold out here and you've got this large, warm tent. It won't hurt if I just keep my nose under the flap, will it?" After a moment's thought the Arab agreed.

About an hour later, the Arab woke up and found the camel's entire head in the tent. Quickly the animal explained, "I took just a little more room and now my head is so comfortable. It won't hurt, will it?" Once again, the Arab agreed. Three more times the Arab awoke to find more of the camel's body inside the tent, and three more times he gave in to the camel's convincing pleas. Finally, the Arab awoke to find himself outside the tent and the camel sleeping snuggly inside—refusing to budge.

The moral of this story is obvious: at the first sign of impurity sneaking into your life, you must perform the venerable ritual of nose knocking. Otherwise, you will find yourself completely captivated by immorality and unable to control it.

Your disciple must strive to attain God's standard of excellence in his speech, conduct, love, faith and purity. While this ideal can be perfectly experienced only in Christ's future kingdom, God's grace and power enable us to realize a new measure of righteousness now.

Discipler's Checklist – The Disciple's Standard: Excellence
My disciple understands and is striving for excellence in his:
___Speech
___Conduct
___Love
___Faith
___Purity

pp. 143-146

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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