

ETS 3/8

Assignment Sheet

Date _____

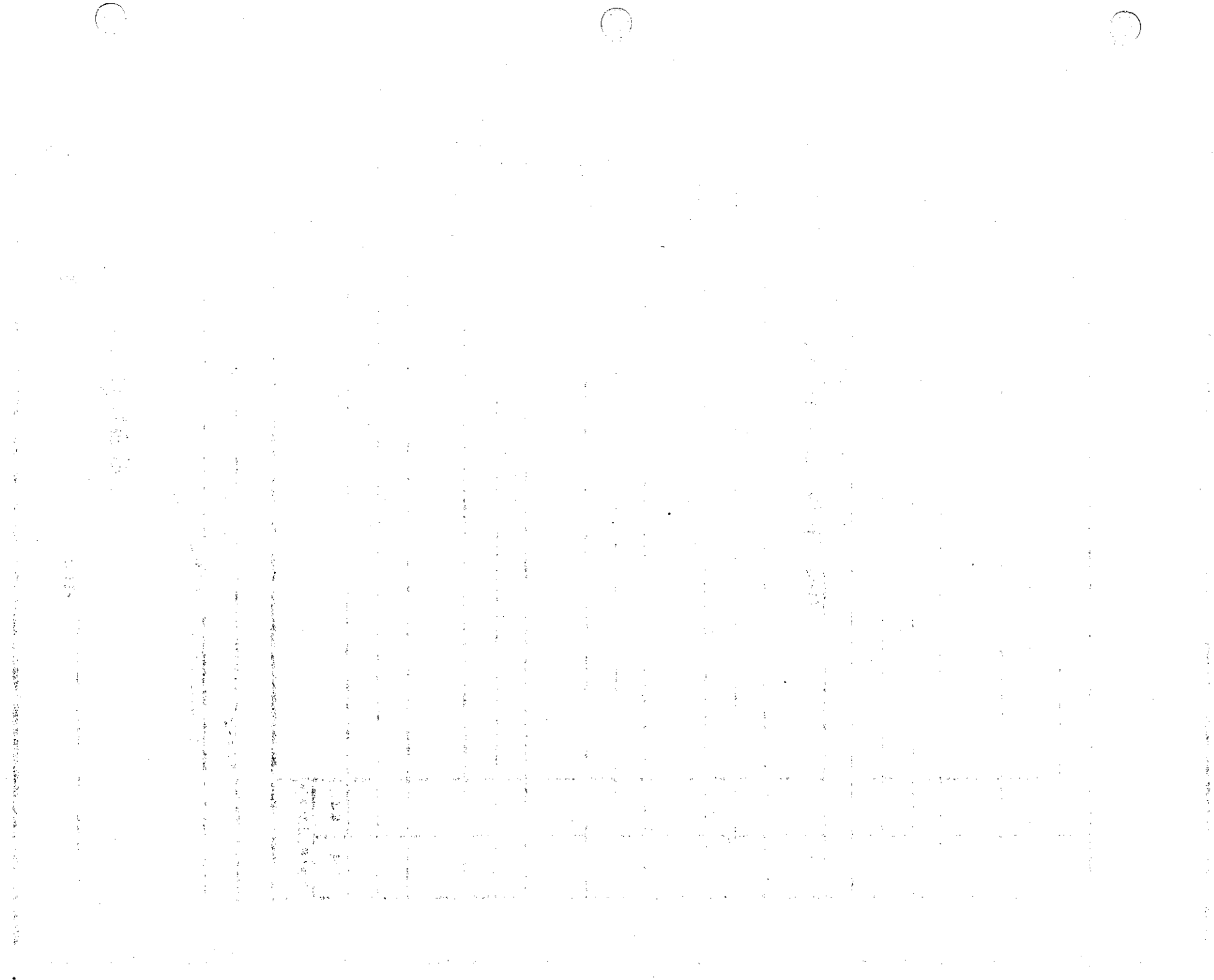
Name _____

Topic _____ Discipleship

Lesson The Focal Point of Discipleship

Class _____

Lecture	Completed	
	Yes	No
Review "The Focal Point of Discipleship"		
Bible Study		
Do "The Return of Christ"		
Write a set of Discussion Questions		
PSMA		
Do 5 PSMA		
Reading		
Bible Reading Chart		
Disciples Are Made Not Born--Chapter 8		
Evangelism/Follow-Up/Discipleship		
Share "Bridge" with non-Christian.		
Pray for your disciple.		
Meet with your disciple.		
Scripture Memory		
Acts 1:8		
John 20:21		
Review previous verses.		



THE FOCAL POINT OF DISCIPLESHIP

Introduction

As long as the Sovereignty of God is only a philosophy or even a theology rather than a reality, we will never enter into God's best for our lives. The sovereignty of God is the substance from which faith is generated. It is the key which sets us free to do the will of God.

In our study of the Principle of Discipleship, we learned that we have been commanded to trust God and not to worry or be anxious about tomorrow. In this lesson we will discover why worry and anxiety are totally unnecessary to the Christian.

Trusting the Sovereignty of God

On what basis is man to trust God? Why should we abandon our lives to Him? Does He have both the power and the concern to deal with the situations that affect each life?

God is the Creator of All

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

Genesis 1:1

He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heaven by his understanding. When he uttereth his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens; and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth: he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures.

Jeremiah 51:15-16

By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.

Psalms 33:6

God is the Head above All

Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all.

I Chronicles 29:11-12

And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come...

Ephesians 1:19-21

God is All-Powerful (Omnipotent)

Ah Lord God! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee.

Jeremiah 32:17

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

Matthew 28:18

God is All-Knowing (Omniscient)

Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from

How to Train a Disciple

Conviction and Perspective

Baseball, like most other sports, has its "Hall of Fame." In Oklahoma City, one can walk through the "Cowboy Hall of Fame." On the right is Will Rogers, and down a ways are Buffalo Bill and many others, men who carved out the West, heroes of what has become the American way of life. Hebrews 11 is God's "Hall of Fame"--the heroes of the faith. As you walk through its corridors, you see heroes and heroines of a bygone age--men and women from all walks of life but with one thing in common; they believed God!

Faith, simply defined, is "believing the promises of God and acting on them." It is obeying the promises of God. Faith is never passive--always active. Note the action verbs in the chapter. Abel offered (v.4), Noah prepared (v.7), Abraham obeyed (v.8).

But faith without a commitment on God's part is not faith at all; it is presumption. God had made some pretty fantastic promises to the people in Hebrews 11, and they acted on them. Without these promises from God, their actions reduce to mere presumption.

Let us imagine that you and I are flying in a small aircraft at 10,000 feet. I ask you, "Could God catch me if I jumped?"

With a note of hesitation you answer, "I...I'm not sure."

Believing that you are expressing a lack of faith, I say, "I believe He can," and then I jump. On my way down, I realize to my horror that although my statement is true, "God can catch me," He never promised that He would. I die not because of a lack of faith but because of the lack of a promise from God. I was presumptuous. Faith must have a basis for its existence.

Before a person is willing to commit himself to act on what God has promised, two things must be true. He must have conviction and perspective. These attributes are readily seen in the life of Moses as described in Hebrews 11.

Verse 23 says, "By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment." Notice that faith as it relates to the life of Moses began with Mom and Dad. Moses was a baby. He couldn't act on the promises of God. It was his parents' faith that saved the day.

Verse 24 says, "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter." Previously, it was the faith of Moses' parents; now it is the faith of Moses. How did this happen? When did it become his faith? "When he was come to years."

I imagine when Moses was growing up, he mimicked the essentials of godly faith with great enthusiasm because of what he heard from his mother. (You will remember after the daughter of Pharaoh found Moses, she turned him over to his own mother to be nursed.) To hear a small child say, "Jesus lives in my heart," is cute, even though this may be simply an expression of the parents' faith. But there comes a time in each of our lives when it is no longer valid to base what we believe on the convictions of others. When we "come to years," our lives must be based on our own convictions. Moses believed in the same God in verse 24 as his parents did in verse 23, but they were his own convictions, the result of his own personal experience with God.

Look at verses 24-27. He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to suffer affliction with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. He forsook Egypt. These were actions based on his own convictions.

When we enter into training, what we do in the initial stages is largely determined by the person who is helping us. The things that my small daughter says and believes are basically dependent upon what she hears from her parents. It is fun listening to her pray. Because she does not understand the meaning of the words, she mixes them up, parroting phrases she has heard other people use.

So it is for the new Christian. Often he prays before meals or goes to church not because of his own personal convictions, but because others have suggested this is what he ought to do. This is not necessarily bad. Having come to Christ through the influence of another, it is natural that he continues by doing what others suggest.

There comes a time, however, when such reasons for doing things are no longer valid. He must eventually arrive at his own convictions. Knowing what to do and how to do it is important, and has been given a lot of emphasis in this book. But knowing what to do and how to do it must be superseded by a personal conviction that this is what God wants me to do.

Joe Marine goes through boot camp at Parris Island, S.C., or Camp Lejeune, N.C. After eight weeks of training, the commanding officer has a general inspection. If we were to follow the commanding officer, how would we find Joe's bed? Perfectly made, with the blanket so neat and tight you could bounce a quarter off of it. The locker? Immaculate, with everything exactly in its place. And the bathroom? So clean you would think it had never been used.

Four years go by and Joe Marine is now a sophomore at the University of California. We visit him in his room. How do we find his bed? As if it has never been made. His locker? A shambles. How about the bathroom? So bad that it reminds you of a restroom in a run-down gas station in the most backward part of the country.

Why the difference? It is not that Joe does not know what to do, or how to do it. Joe's problem is that he has no conviction that he should continue doing it after leaving the Marine Corps.

Many Christians have neither the convictions nor the methods needed to disciple others. But if a choice had to be made between conviction and method, conviction is the more important by far. (I say if because I do not believe such a choice is necessary. I call for the choice here only to emphasize the importance of conviction.)

Discover the person who has the conviction without knowing how to disciple others, and you will eventually see that person find the method. Give a person all the methodology in the world and, if he lacks conviction, eventually he will stop discipling others, no matter how careful you have been in imparting the methods. The person who has methods without conviction is like a bouquet of cut flowers--he is impressive to look at, but he will not last!

Verse 26 says, "Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt, for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward." Phillips renders the last part of this verse, "...for he looked steadily at the ultimate, not the immediate, reward." That is perspective--the ability to see the end from the beginning. We can call it bifocal vision--the ability to see what is directly in front of us in light of the long range.

The person who has things in perspective makes his decisions on the immediate in light of the ultimate. Of the two arch stones in training, conviction is one, perspective the other.

Perspective is seeing it like it is. It has to do with a person's philosophy of life, what is important to him, his sense of values, the things that motivate him. Jesus said, "Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them. How much more are ye better than the fowls? And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest? Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

"If then God so clothe the grass, which is today in the field, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, how much more will He clothe you, O ye of little faith? And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after; and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.

"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Luke 12:24-34).

This is a perfect example of perspective. This is seeing it like it is, the end from the beginning. Here Jesus is urging us to make present decisions in light of ultimate results.

The only time a person willfully sins is when his perspective goes out of focus. He deceives himself into believing he can sin and get away with it. A man walks into a bank and robs it of \$100,000. If he could have visualized himself spending the next 25 years in a 8' x 12' "cage," do you think he would have done it? No! He robs the bank because he cannot see the consequences of his act. He lacks perspective. This is the case each time we sin.

Conviction and perspective characterized the life of Moses. They are the two most important aspects of the training process. They are essential ingredients in "The Art of Discipling." If the aspirant lacks either conviction or perspective, he is not trained.

How do you develop conviction and perspective? How do you build it into your own life, and how do you build it into the life of another? The psalmist says, "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain" (Psalms 127:1). Training begins and ends with God. If He is not at work in us "to will and do of His good pleasure," we labor in vain. God imparts conviction and perspective.

Having said this, however, there are certain guidelines that can help us in exercising our responsibility. I will mention four of them for your consideration and application. These four are by no means exhaustive. You may want to amplify them and add more of your own.

● Major in principles rather than methods.

In this, as well as in the other three guidelines, the phrase "rather than" is not meant to connote "either...or." It is not principles or methods, one to the exclusion of the other; it is both principle and method. But in building conviction and perspective, we want to major in principle rather than method. It is a matter of emphasis.

In Jesus' Parable of the Sower (Luke 8), He tells why the seed is sown, what takes place, and when. But He does not mention how to sow the seed. The "how" is left up to us. Jesus is dealing with principles, not methods.

The Great Commission is another example. The command is to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He said to begin at Jerusalem, Samaria, Judea and move out into the world. His life and ministry are an example of how to do it. Mark 3:14 says, "And he ordained twelve, that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach." From Jesus' example, we can see the best way to do the job is to select a few people and invest our time and our very lives in them.

But the actual method, the nitty gritty of working it out, was left up to the disciples. The Book of Acts is the methodology of how these men sought to obey Christ's Great Commission. Most of what they did was the application of principles taught them by Jesus. We read in Acts 6 that the widows had been neglected. The method they employed to meet that need was the appointing of deacons. The office of deacon was not something Jesus in His earthly ministry urged them to initiate. It was a method used by them to meet a need.

As Christians, we have our methodology. We may have a worship service and Sunday School in the morning and have another service in the evening. Each denomination has its own way of doing things: its order of worship, method of baptism, doctrinal instruction, and Sunday School curriculum. And all of this may be right and good. There is nothing wrong with having methods.

If, however, we follow our methodology because of tradition ("we have always done it this way") rather than because of carefully thought-out principles, we close our minds to new and better ways. Change becomes a threat. But if biblical principles form the basis for what we do, then we will be eager for new and better ways of doing it.

Let me draw an illustration from the kitchen. My wife has a certain way of washing dishes. First into the suds go the glasses, then the silverware, followed by the plates, then the bowls and finally the pots and pans. This is her method of washing dishes. But I had no conviction that I should wash dishes that way. One day I began with the pans--and she corrected me. While discussing why I should begin with the glasses, she pointed out that the objective in washing is to sterilize the things being washed. If getting the food off was all we wanted, we could let the dog lick them. They were washed to sterilize them--this was the principle. Therefore, it follows that it is best to wash first those things which have contact with the mouth and last those utensils which will have a chance to sterilize themselves.

As a result of this, I always wash the glasses first, then the silverware, and so on. I no longer do it this way just because my wife is watching. Having understood the principle behind the method, I developed my own conviction. Convictions are built, not by practicing the method, but by understanding the principle.

The would-be disciple sees things clearly (perspective) and develops convictions by probing into the whys of what is done. And yet, frequently, why is an irritating question, often hard to answer. In training, resist the temptation to gloss over the why. Probe deeply. Ask such questions as: "Is this the best way to have a quiet time?" "Why do we believe Bible study is necessary?" "What are the implications of possible alternatives?" Such probing helps build perspective and conviction.

- Major in meeting the needs of others rather than in developing and imparting techniques.

Jesus and His disciples walk down the steps of the Temple. Before them is a blind man. His need is obvious. If I had been there with Jesus, I probably would have whipped out a tract and begun witnessing, only to realize suddenly that the man could not follow what I was doing. He could not see!

Jesus' approach was different. Squatting down beside him, He spat on the ground, made some mud, and rubbed it on the blind man's eyes. "Go wash in the pool of Siloam," was the command, and "he went... washed, and came seeing" (John 9:7).

You will notice that the man eventually did find salvation, but Jesus began by meeting his need.

Many a Christian views training as sitting in a classroom situation, learning how to master some techniques. He learns how to teach a Sunday School curriculum, how to make a financial presentation to another member of the congregation, or even how to pass out a piece of literature and follow it up with a Gospel presentation. In the last illustration, more often than not the person to whom you "witness" does not respond because you are not addressing yourself to the point of his felt need. He has no conviction he should pursue the conversation further, and because you do not get the anticipated response, you do not see the use of continuing such a futile exercise.

While I was ministering to students in Michigan, the Lord gave a great deal of fruit. Christian students living in the dorms with non-Christian friends related well with them. They went to class, meals, football games, and elsewhere together. Relationships were formed that became natural bridges for communicating the Gospel. Every so often we would have a pizza party or an "Andrew dinner" at our house and would have the privilege of seeing a number of people come to Christ.

Hearing of these and similar successes on other campuses, a church in Ohio asked a group of us to come down and become involved with them in an evangelistic thrust. They decided to invite their friends to a neutral spot and share a testimony or two before giving a short Gospel presentation. When the time came, many from the congregation showed up, but not one non-Christian. All had invited someone, but no one had responded.

As we sat together analyzing why this had happened, it soon became apparent that although many of the people had non-Christian acquaintances, not one had a non-Christian friend. So, when approached, the "acquaintances" were hesitant in accepting.

How then do you become friends with an unbeliever and discern his needs? Let me offer a few suggestions.

● Be a good listener.

We live in an age when everyone wants to talk and no one wants to listen. When others find out that you are willing to listen, it is amazing how much talking they will do. Often in an accepting atmosphere they will expose their needs and reveal their concerns.

Have you ever talked to someone and found that he had turned on his "uh huh?" As you talk, he says, "Uh huh, uh huh, uh huh." As you draw others out, do not turn on your "uh huh." Be a good listener.

- Share your own needs, weaknesses, experiences.

Do not make your friend feel as though he stands alone. The Bible says, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man" (1 Corinthians 10:13). Admit this to be true in your own life. By sharing your shortcomings, an accepting atmosphere will be created in which others will feel free to share theirs.

In Amarillo, Texas, a group of men get together each week for prayer and fellowship in somebody's home. They read a passage of Scripture and discuss it in light of their needs. Believers and unbelievers come together as friends sharing common concerns. The Christians make sure to avoid the impression of "we" and "they." Instead they talk about "our" problems, "our" struggles, "our" sins. Then together they pray over them. As a result, men are consistently coming to know Christ as Savior.

- Spend time together.

Invite your friends over for dinner. Join them at their parties. Go fishing together. As relationships are built, barriers come down. A true friendship means mutual acceptance of one another. If I accept him the way he is, a freedom will exist between us that will allow the sharing of mutual needs and concerns.

As these needs are exposed, it will become very natural to talk about how Christ shares your life. These are just three possibilities, and a flood of other ideas may have already come to your mind.

Meeting needs is how conviction and perspective come, both to the learner and the trainee. As you and your non-Christian friends discuss the essentials of the Christian life, you will be amazed how issues will come into focus for you, and doctrines that were once theological jargon will become deep-seated convictions.

- Major in developing the thought processes rather than the skills.

Jesus Christ is far more interested in what we are than what we do. "It is for you to be; it is for God to do," provides a simple but wise piece of advice. The Savior wants to reprogram our computer, to change our whole thought process.

What was His one complaint with the Pharisees? That they did not know how to evangelize? Jesus Himself said they would cross the

sea to proselyte one individual. That they did not know the Word of God? They studied it regularly. They tithed their income, prayed, and fasted regularly. From all outward appearances, they were good men.

Proverbs 23:7 says, "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he." This is where Jesus found fault with them. It had to do with their philosophy of life, the way they thought. Their problem was seen in their attitude, their sense of values, their whole outlook on life.

A partial list of concepts that indicate an inner change includes: God's sovereign control over your life so you do not feel the necessity of shaping your own destiny, being a servant, submission to the authority of others, looking after the interests of others at the expense of your own. You may want to make your own list of concepts you feel are essential for the disciple of Jesus Christ.

Often such changes in the thinking process come slowly and subtly. It is not until we have a point of comparison that the change becomes evident. A friend of mine, training in the Christian life in California, said it was not until he went home months later and began interacting with old friends that he realized how great the changes in his life were.

Many people think of training as the imparting of ideas or skills, which takes place in the classroom through a pupil-teacher relationship. What we are talking about here has to do with the imparting of character--the changing of a person's sense of values.

The world says, "Get all you can, can all you get, and poison the rest."

God says, "Give without any thought of getting."

The world says, "Shop for a mate."

God says, "Trust me to provide you a spouse in my time."

The world says, "Climb the ladder of success, even if it means stepping on others in the process."

God says, "Do not look after your own interests, but the interests of others."

These kinds of changes in the life are of great importance to God, more so than the acquiring of skills such as a particular Bible study technique. Major in bringing the philosophy of life into conformity with the Bible, and the convictions and perspective will naturally follow.

- Major in how to trust God rather than teaching theories about God.

Earlier in the chapter, we talked briefly about the Parable of the Sower (Luke 8). Let us go back and take another look at it. It

can equally well be called, "The Parable of the Four Soils," or "The Parable of the Four Responses to God's Word."

The first response to God's Word is no faith. Verse 12 says, "The devil taketh away the Word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved."

The second response to the Word is faith without conviction. "They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the Word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe and in time of temptation fall away" (v.13). They gave mental assent to the Word, but as the time came when it cost to believe, they "abandoned ship." They lacked the conviction that this was something worthy of cost.

The third response is seen in verse 14. "And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection." This is faith without perspective. After receiving the Word, they turn around and give their lives to the wrong thing. What was important in life went out of focus, and they gave their lives to insignificance. Mediocrity is a by-product of a lack of perspective.

Verse 15 gives us the final response to God's Word. They took God at His Word and acted accordingly. This fourth illustration is the only proper response to God's Word, reproductive faith.

So, the issue of the parable is this: no faith, faith without conviction, faith without perspective, and reproductive faith. After this brief lecture on faith, Jesus moves out into real life situations giving the disciples an opportunity to see what it means to walk by faith. The rest of Luke 8 can be divided as follows:

Verses 22-25. . . . Crossing the stormy sea
Verses 26-39. . . . Maniac in the land of the Gadarenes
Verses 40-56. . . . Raising of Jairus' daughter
Verses 43-48. . . . Healing of woman with issue of blood

In all of these life situations, Jesus is trying to communicate the importance of faith. The pattern in each of the stories is basically the same:

- (1) A need arises
- (2) Jesus intervenes and promises to meet that need
- (3) No sooner is the promise made than seeming disaster strikes
- (4) Jesus responds by urging them to trust Him: "Only believe."/
"Have faith."

The daughter of Jairus is sick. Jesus promises to meet the need. The daughter dies. Jesus says, "Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole." Jesus was not interested in people mastering the different theories on the attributes of God. He wanted people to learn to trust God.

Who do you imagine knew the most about God? Abraham in the Old Testament or a modern day theologian? Let me suggest it would be the theologian of today. Abraham could not have told you about the two advents of Christ; nor could he have explained the differences between the pre-, post-, and amillennial positions; nor the dual nature of Christ; nor the Virgin birth; nor a dozen other points of theology.

But Abraham knew God! He has a singular place in Scripture as a man who pleased God. In the New Testament alone, he is mentioned 74 times. "Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness" (Galatians 3:6). God was so pleased with this man that Hebrews 11:6 says, "God is not ashamed to be called [his] God."

It is one thing for you to be known by God. It is entirely different for God to be known by you. The Creator God of heaven and earth says, "I am the God of Abraham." Fantastic! Creator is known by the creature. "If you want to know what I am like," says God, "take a look at Abraham." Can the living God be known by you? Can God say, "If you want to know what I am like, just look at the life of the person reading this book?"

We have said that in training disciples you should:

- Major in principles rather than methods.
- Major in meeting the needs of people rather than on developing and imparting techniques.
- Major in developing the thought processes rather than the skills.
- Major in how to trust God rather than teaching theories about God.

By now, you may realize that these four suggestions are simply four facets of the same truth, like the facets of a diamond. The gem we are looking at is conviction and perspective.

Somebody once said 90% of the Christian life is survival. This may or may not be. But if survival is your objective in the Christian life, you will fail. You are like a boxer who enters the ring knowing only how to defend himself. He cannot possibly win. He needs a good attack as well.

For the Christian, an attack is another word for a plan or objective. An aggressive attack in your walk with God requires conviction and perspective, and this is hard to come by. Training is hard. But remember training means growing, and growing means stretching. Growing never has been and never will be a pleasant experience. This is why babies cry. A child learning how to walk falls down and hurts himself often. You say to him, "Get up and try again."

Does he say, "No, I have tried it several times, and it does not work. I think I will just lie here for the rest of my life." No, he has to get up and try it again. My son has fallen so many times we call him "scar face."

Growing is so painful a process that the first chance we get, we want to stop. But there are certain pressures that keep the young person growing. Physical growth itself is one. My daughter can say to me, "Dad, I have done all the growing I want. I like my age and size; I think I will stop here." The trouble is, she cannot stop growing when she wants. Biologically, she is forced to grow. The state laws also force us to grow. A child may want to quit school in the fifth grade. But the law says he cannot. And finally, there is the pressure of a society which expects a person to be able to care for himself--he is expected to learn a trade or profession.

By the time a person is in his mid-20s, these pressures ease a bit. We have probably done all the physical growing we will do. Our education is behind us, and we have learned how to make a living. So great is the temptation to stop growing that when we graduate from high school or college they call it "commencement." Anything to encourage us to keep growing. But our desire to escape the pain of growth is, in most instances, too great an obstacle to overcome. We begin to coast for the rest of our lives on past experience. Having begun well, we drift into mediocrity.

Perspective and conviction (the ability to see the end from the beginning, and a deep-seated belief regarding what is on the heart of God) are the only things I know that check this natural inclination.

John W. Gardner in his book, Excellence, says, "We fall into the error of thinking that happiness necessarily involves ease, diversion, tranquility--a state in which all one's wishes are satisfied. For most people, happiness is not to be found in this vegetative state but in striving toward meaningful goals. The dedicated person has not achieved all of his goals. His life is the endless pursuit of goals, some of them unattainable. He may never have time to surround himself with luxuries. He may often be tense, worried, fatigued. He has little of the leisure one associates with the story-book conception of happiness. But he has found a more meaningful happiness. The truth is that happiness in the sense of total gratification is not a state to which man can aspire. It is for cows, possibly for the birds, but not for us" (Harper & Row, N.Y.).

The arch stones of training to be Christ's disciples are conviction and perspective. They make the difference between the "finisher" and the "also ran." It was not easy for Moses, and it will not be for you. Moses spent the first 40 years of his life in the palace of Pharaoh. The next 40 years of his life were spent on the back side of the desert squeezing sand between his toes as he took care of another man's sheep. The last 40 years were spent wandering in the wilderness suffering with his own generation. After such a brilliant start, what a seemingly miserable end. Everything in him must have wanted to quit. But he did not give in. He hung in there and became a finisher. As a result, the whole world knows about Moses. Every Arab, Jew, and Christian knows about Moses. Every educated person in the world knows about the great lawgiver. Moses' life of seeming frustration and failure was in reality a success. Why did he finish so well? It was because he had conviction and perspective.



THE RESPONSIBLE STEWARD

Stewardship involves managing someone else's property. The Christian is steward of both his life and his possessions, since both belong to God. As those who are accountable to God, we should become responsible stewards of our time, money, gifts, and bodies.

STEWARDS OF GOD'S RESOURCES

1. What does Paul teach about stewards in I Corinthians 4:2?

Using a cross-reference, explain what this means to you.

2. What are some areas in which God expects you to be a faithful steward?

Proverbs 3:9-10

Romans 12:6

I Corinthians 6:19-20

Ephesians 5:15-16

3. What is the basis on which servants are found faithful?
Matthew 25:14-30

USE OF TIME

Every man, woman, and child has been entrusted with 168 hours each week. Are you investing your time wisely each week, or are you spending it? Spending is final, while an investment produces a return. How you use your time indicates your real priorities.

4. Read Matthew 6:25-34.

a. What two things are believers told to seek? Verse 33

b. Define the kingdom of God.

c. Define the righteousness of God.

d. Now write Matthew 6:33 in your own words, using your definitions for God's kingdom and righteousness.

5. Read verse 4-5 and 12 of I Timothy 3. In God's value system, what comes before caring for the church?

6. How important did Paul consider work? II Thessalonians 3:7-9

7. Number the following items in order of priority as they currently exist in your life. Then number them again according to what you think are God's priorities for your life.

EXISTING PRIORITIES	GOD'S PRIORITIES
_____	Job (your chosen profession or occupation) _____
_____	God (developing your relationship with Him) _____
_____	Family (your loving care and instruction) _____
_____	Ministry (your personal outreach and witness) _____
_____	Other (personal emphasis--social activities, hobbies, entertainment) _____

8. After comparing God's priorities with yours, you may want to make changes in your weekly schedule so that what you do coincides with God's priorities for your life. Are there any changes in your weekly schedule that you should make? If so, write them here.

You should continually evaluate how you invest your time, and maintain the right balance in the different activities God wants you to be involved in.

9. Read Ephesians 5:15-21. What does Paul say about making the best use of time? How can you put his advice into practice?

How to make wise use of your time:

Prayerful planning--List things to be done in order of priority.
(Good things in life can often crowd out the best things.)

Obedient selection--Do the most important tasks first, and in faith commit unfinished ones to the Lord. (Many things that initially appear urgent may not be.)

Concentration and diligence--Do the task you select wholeheartedly. Do one thing at a time and stay with it until it is finished.

USE OF GIFTS

10. How should we use the gifts God has given us? I Peter 4:10

11. Read Romans 12:3-8.

a. List the different gifts God gives to Christians. (Define any terms you do not understand).

b. How should a believer view himself and his gifts? Verse 3

c. Summarize Paul's teaching on how believers should use the gifts God has given them.

God has designed each person's appearance, voice pattern, abilities, strengths, weaknesses, and other characteristics, as well as his spiritual gifts. Each person is to share himself in the body of Christ by demonstrating Christlike attitudes, and by building up other Christians through the use of his God-given resources.

12. The Apostle Peter might have listed three of his strengths as enthusiasm, leadership, and speaking, while one of his weaknesses would be impulsiveness. List three of your strengths and one weakness.

Choose one of your strengths. How can you use it to serve others?

USE OF MONEY

13. Why is it important to have the proper attitude toward money?
I Timothy 6:10

14. The five verses on the next page are related to the use of money. Match the following.

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| _____ Earning money to give to others | a. Proverbs 20:10 |
| _____ Warning concerning the acquisition of wealth | b. Proverbs 22:7 |
| _____ Borrowing money and going into debt | c. Luke 12:15 |
| _____ Integrity in money matters | d. Luke 16:11 |
| _____ Proper use of money | e. Ephesians 4:28 |

15. Read II Corinthians 9. What principles of giving can you discover in each of the following verses?

Verse 6 _____

Verse 7 _____

Verse 8 _____

Verse 12 _____

Verse 13 _____

Verse 15 _____

Many Christians have found a regular plan for giving to be both scriptural and practical. Planning ensures against irregular or unwise giving or neglect. In a day when so many demands are made on your time and money, planned giving helps you honor the Lord with your possessions.

Your plan should include these steps:

1. Thoughtfully decide what percentage of your income you will return to the Lord--a minimum percentage.
 2. Set aside the Lord's portion first whenever you receive money. Put this aside to be used as He leads; once set aside it is His and should not be used for other purposes.
 3. Prayerfully distribute the Lord's money as He directs. It is usually good to do this at a regular time--weekly or monthly.
- Make extra gifts and increase your giving as God increases your faith, and as He prospers you. As you trust God with your material resources, He will trust you with His spiritual resources--He has committed Himself to this principle (Luke 16:9-12; Philippians 4:17).

The person who dedicates his money to God is dedicating himself--the fruit of his time, talent, and energy. One who fails to dedicate his money has not fully committed himself to God.

16. Write a statement explaining the truth of Mark 12:41-44.

Use the space below to record your plan for giving.

MY PLAN FOR GIVING

To whom I plan to give: _____

The amount I will give: _____

When I plan to give : _____

Why I plan to give : _____

CARE OF THE BODY

17. Read I Corinthians 6:19-20. What does it mean for you to be the temple of the Holy Spirit?

18. Read Romans 12:1.

a. What did Paul urge you to do with your body? _____

b. Why? _____

19. What was John concerned about besides our spiritual well-being?
III John 2

Treat your body with care because it is the temple of the Holy Spirit. You will think and feel better when you have proper nourishment, sleep, and exercise.

20. From the following list, prayerfully choose an area in which you can improve the care of your body. How do you intend to change in this area?

Maintaining a proper diet _____

Exercising regularly _____

Getting sufficient rest _____

Avoiding harmful habits _____

Remember These Points:

Using the chapter subtopics as an outline, write your own summary of this chapter here.

[illegible]



$\mathcal{H}^1(\mathbb{R}^n) \cap \mathcal{H}^1(\mathbb{R}^n) = \mathcal{H}^1(\mathbb{R}^n)$

Multiplying Your Efforts

In 1945 a group of eminent scientists convened in a strange location, the desert of New Mexico, to test the results of many long months of research. The success of their test could be of inestimable significance. It could be the key to rapidly terminating a long and costly war. The first testing of an atomic bomb was about to occur.

Atomic energy, whether in the form of nuclear warheads or plants producing valuable energy, has greatly shaped the progress of civilization since the dark days of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The principle underlying the mechanism of an atomic bomb is simple. Fast moving neutrons are used to cause fission to occur within the bomb. As a neutron strikes the nucleus of a radioactive substance such as uranium, it causes it to split, forming two new, different nuclei, and in so doing to release three more neutrons. Each of these three neutrons now may strike a new nucleus and repeat the process. As each nucleus splits, energy is released. A chain reaction occurs, and the energy released takes the form of an explosion.

There is explosive power in multiplication, power that the disciple can see unleashed with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Principle of Multiplication

Multiplication is one of the foundational laws of the universe. Sheep, cattle, wildlife, trees, flowers, or bacteria--every growing thing operates on a principle of multiplication. Multiplication is God's way of doing things.

In Genesis 1:28 we read, "And God blessed them and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

In this verse we find the first commandment that God ever gave to man, a commandment to multiply. This is about the only commandment that God has given us that we have ever been able to keep. Man has certainly multiplied upon the face of the earth.

Numerically, it works out as simply as this: If parents have two children they maintain the status quo; there is no net growth in the population. When parents have three or more children, then the population begins to multiply. The more children, the faster the multiplication process.

There is a certain cost involved in multiplication. Every parent knows that reproducing is costly. The more children you have, the more it costs to rear them. There are more interpersonal relationships to cope with in the family unit. There are more decisions to be made, greater chance of disease to strike a member of the family.

There is a greater chance for heartache or disappointment in one form or another. Certainly more children take more time.

For a salmon, the cost of multiplication is death. A salmon swims upstream, lays its eggs in the sand, and then dies.

Grain also dies to reproduce. Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:24).

Even in the development of the atomic bomb, a cost was involved. In addition to the tremendous cost in terms of money and other resources, there was the "cost" of the atom itself. It had to be split and broken in order to produce its effect.

The cost involved in multiplication can also be seen in the fact that it is initially slower than the process of addition. This is particularly important as we apply it to fulfilling the Great Commission. Let's say for example that a gifted evangelist is able to lead 1,000 people to Christ every day. Each year he will have reached 365,000 people, a phenomenal ministry indeed.

Let's compare him with a disciple who leads not 1,000 people a day to Christ, but only one person a year. At the end of one year, the disciple has one convert; the evangelist, 365,000. But suppose the disciple has not only led his man to Christ, but has also disciplined him. He has prayed with him, taught him how to feed himself from the Word of God, gotten him into fellowship with like-minded believers, taken him out on evangelism and showed him how to present the Gospel to other people. At the end of that first year, this new convert is able to lead another man to Christ and follow him up as he himself has been followed up.

At the start of the second year, the disciple has doubled his ministry--the one has become two. During the second year, each man goes out and leads not 1,000 people per day to Christ, but one person per year. At the end of the second year, we have four people. You can see how slow our process is. But note, too, that we do not have only converts, but disciples who are able to reproduce themselves. At this rate of doubling every year, the disciple, leading one per year to Christ, will overtake the evangelist somewhere in the 19th year. From then on, the disciple and his ministry will be propagating faster than the combined ministry of dozens of gifted evangelists.

This is not to say that there is no need for the ministry of an evangelist, but that an evangelist by himself can never complete the task of reaching a lost and dying world.

It's like the dad who offered his two sons the choice of either taking one dollar a week for 52 weeks or one cent the first week, and the amount doubled every week for 52 weeks.

One son took the dollar. The other son said, "Well, Dad, I will try the penny to see what will happen." We all know who wins: the son

who takes the one penny and has it doubled each week. The degree to which he wins is absolutely astounding. By the end of the year, the son who began with the penny will have enough money to pay the United States national debt and still have plenty left over for himself!

God wants the same principles that are at work in the physical realm to be applied in the spiritual realm. The reason the Church of Jesus Christ finds it so difficult to stay on top of the Great Commission is that the population of the world is multiplying while the Church is merely adding. Addition can never keep pace with multiplication.

Some time ago there was a display at the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago. It featured a checkerboard with 1 grain of wheat on the first square, 2 on the second, 4 on the third, then 8, 16, 32, 64, 128, etc. Somewhere down the board, there were so many grains of wheat on the square that some were spilling over into neighboring squares--so here the demonstration stopped. Above the checkerboard display was the question, "At this rate of doubling every square, how much grain would you have on the checkerboard by the time you reached the 64th square?"

To find the answer to this riddle, you punched a button on the console in front of you, and the answer flashed on a little screen above the board: "Enough to cover the entire subcontinent of India 50 feet deep."

Multiplication may be costly and, in the initial stages, much slower than addition, but in the long run, it is the most effective way of accomplishing Christ's Great Commission...and the only way.

Quality Is the Key to Multiplication

The key to success in the multiplying process is training the disciple in depth. Each time one person fails to "reproduce spiritually," you cut your results in half.

One of Adolf Hitler's objectives was the destruction of the Jewish race, but as determined as his endeavor was, he failed. The multiplication process had gone on for too long by the time he appeared on the scene. If, on the other hand, he could have been with Abraham on Mt. Moriah, and taken that knife and plunged it into Isaac, he would have destroyed the entire Jewish race with one blow.

Today, nuclear reaction is used for producing energy. This will grow increasingly during the coming years. The nuclear reaction is controlled by introducing a series of graphite rods into the reaction chamber. This slows down the multiplication process, preventing an explosion. As the Church of Jesus Christ seeks to "explode" through multiplication, Satan is constantly trying to insert his "rods" to slow us down. One way Satan does this is indicated by Jesus Christ: "And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the Word, and it becometh unfruitful" (Mark 4:19).

Note what the Apostle Paul says to Timothy, his son in the faith, "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2). Four generations are clearly seen in Paul, Timothy, faithful men, and others also. Multiplication is assured only when there is proper training of faithful people who can carry the training process into succeeding generations.

It is easy to see that the training process needed to ensure multiplication is slow and costly. It takes a tremendous amount of time. And whenever you endeavor to insert a shortcut, you jeopardize the whole process. That is why the ministry of multiplying disciples has never been popular. Everybody likes the results it produces, but few are willing to pay the price to obtain the results.

A friend of mine and I were talking about a discipling ministry, and he said, "I am in the process of discipling 50 men right now." At that point I realized that he and I were talking about two entirely different things, for it is impossible to train 50 people at the same time. Disciples cannot be mass produced.

While on earth, our Lord Jesus Christ was God in the form of man. He was endowed with every spiritual gift, He did not have any of our weaknesses or failings, nor did He have the heavy responsibilities of being married or running a business; His time was devoted completely to the ministry. And yet, with all of these advantages, He felt that He could effectively train only 12; and even out of those 12, to really major in 3. If 12 was the number our Lord decided on, I doubt if we, with all our limitations, can plan to effectively disciple 50 at one time.

In Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, he explains why he has embarked on a certain course of action by saying, "Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's Gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord, I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia" (2 Corinthians 2:12-13).

When Paul came to Troas, not only did the Lord provide an opportunity to preach the Gospel, but also people who were ready to listen. But perhaps finding Titus was more important than preaching to the whole city of Troas just then. Why? Because if Paul reached Titus and trained him, he would double the effectiveness of his ministry, and together they could turn around and reach two such cities as Troas instead of just one.

The importance of the individual in the process of multiplication can also be seen in Acts 8. Philip (believed to be one of the deacons chosen earlier, Acts 6) went to the city of Samaria and preached the Gospel. "And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did" (v.6). The ministry was so successful that some of the leaders from Jerusalem came up to witness it and give it their blessing.

Right in the middle of this great evangelistic effort, the Spirit of God called Philip and sent him down to the Gaza desert to talk to one man--an Ethiopian eunuch (vv. 26-27). If Philip could multiply his ministry through the eunuch, then possibly this Ethiopian could become the key to reaching all of Ethiopia.

The discipling ministry lacks the glamour and excitement of the platform or large meeting type of ministry. But we can hardly overemphasize the importance of investing in the right kind of person, one of vision and discipline, totally committed to Jesus Christ, willing to pay any price to have the will of God fulfilled in his life. Sticking with a person and helping him to overcome the obstacles involved in becoming a disciple is a long and arduous task.

So often I have heard the excuse, "I just don't have the gift to do this kind of ministry." The Great Commission given to us in Matthew 28:19-20 says, "Go therefore, and teach [make disciples of] all nations." It takes a disciple-maker to make disciples. Historically, the Church has believed that the Great Commission was not given to a select few people, but to all believers. If this is true, then all believers can be disciple-makers. Or, to put it another way, being involved in disciple-making transcends gifts and calling. Irrespective of our gifts or our calling, all men and women should be disciple-makers.

Everyone has the gifts necessary to be a disciple-maker. You may be a teacher, or a housewife, or an engineer, but irrespective of your vocation, you are also to be a disciple-maker. If you are not a disciple-maker, then I would suggest that you do the same thing Timothy did with Paul, or that Peter, James, and John did with the Lord Jesus. Make yourself available to a disciple-maker who can help you to become a disciple-maker. Latch on to them. Learn from them the "how to" involved in developing those qualities needed to spiritually reproduce yourself in the lives of others.

Every Christian should ask himself two questions: "Who is my Paul? Who is the person I am learning from, who is helping me to become a multiplying disciple-maker?" And secondly, "Where is my Timothy? Where is the person I am in turn helping to become a multiplying disciple-maker?"

Biblical Illustrations of Multiplication

Twelve sons were born to the Patriarch Jacob. The Bible tells us that they multiplied and filled the land of Egypt. "And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them" (Exodus 1:7). Jesus, likewise, chose 12 men to become His "spiritual children." He invested three years of His life in them and told them to become fruitful, to multiply, and to spread the Gospel to every creature. You and I are Christians today because 12 men caught Jesus' vision and did as He commanded. Spiritual reproduction works!

Paul's desire on his second missionary journey was to preach the Gospel throughout Asia. Acts 16:6-11 tells us that the Holy Spirit checked his attempt and finally boxed him into the city of Troas. There Paul received the vision to go to Macedonia and preach the Gospel. So, being forbidden of the Holy Spirit to preach the Gospel in Asia, Paul and his team left and went to what is now Europe.

Now notice what happens on Paul's third missionary journey, as recorded in Acts 19. Paul is back in Asia once gain, this time in the city of Ephesus. Verses 8-10 say: "And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the Word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks."

Here is a beautiful illustration of spiritual multiplication. Because of Paul's discipling ministry in the school of Tyrannus, everyone in the province of Asia heard the Word of the Lord Jesus. And just to make the point clear, Luke adds, "both Jews and Greeks."

Multiplying disciples is the New Testament vision and method for getting the job done. We have not taken time in this chapter to do an exhaustive study on the principle of multiplication from the Scriptures, but this might be a topical study you would like to do on your own. You will certainly find it rewarding.

Discipleship is not the ministry of any one particular organization or church. It is God's ministry. It has been on His heart from the beginning of time. Just as He set up the physical propagation of the human race on a multiplying basis, He has likewise set up the spiritual propagation of the human race on a multiplying basis. But, because of the spiritual battle involved, many would-be disciples disqualify themselves. God's cry to the Prophet Ezekiel is His cry today: "And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before Me for the land that I should not destroy it: but I found none" (Ezekiel 22:30). Have you heard His cry? Will you be that person? Will you be God's disciple-maker?

HELPING OTHERS FIND CHRIST

Sharing with others the gospel of Jesus Christ should be one of the results of your Bible study. If you are prepared, the Holy Spirit will use you to awaken an unbeliever to his need.

HOW TO PREPARE

1. In Philippians 2:14-16 Paul described the kind of life that reveals Christ and attracts men. Define in your own words the terms he used, and rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 10 in each area, with 10 as the best score.

	SCORE
Does not complain or argue	_____
Is blameless and pure	_____
Is without fault	_____
Shines like a star	_____
Holds out the word of life	_____
Which of these areas needs the most attention in your life at this time?	_____
What can you do to improve in this area?	_____

2. Read Matthew 4:19. What is the best preparation for sharing Christ with others? (Explain your answer).

3. According to the following verses, what can you pray for those without Christ?

John 6:44

John 16:8-9

I Timothy 2:1-4

4. How can you prepare yourself to speak for Christ?

II Timothy 2:15

I Peter 3:15

MAKING CONTACT

5. Read Matthew 9:10-12.

a. With what kind of people did Jesus associate?

b. How did Jesus make contact with them?

6. Where did Paul meet people to present Christ to them? Acts 20:20

7. Using questions can help you introduce spiritual matters into your conversation with an unbeliever. You must guide the discussion and not command it--and the person who guides a conversation is usually not the one answering questions, but the one asking them.

List by name some non-Christians with whom you come in contact regularly. Develop questions that would help you make the transition in your conversation into the good news of Christ. (Note the examples. Jane is a college student, Clark is a businessman, and Norman is a soldier).

PERSON	QUESTION
Jane	How have your ideas on religion changed since you came to school?
Clark	What need in your own life do you hope to meet by having a successful business?
Norman	Why do you suppose there is so much unrest in the world today?

RECOGNIZING NEEDS

Jesus was a master at recognizing needs, and would speak to the issue that was of deepest concern to a person He met. The primary need of a man without Christ is to receive Him as Savior and Lord. However, a man without Christ may feel he has many other needs that should be met before he receives Christ. You may have to meet "felt" needs before you can help a person with his "real" needs. Felt needs are symptoms caused by real needs.

8. Read Mark 10:17-22. (Also compare Matthew 19:16-30 and Luke 18:18-30.)

a. What was the man's felt need? _____

b. What was his real need? _____

c. How did Jesus illuminate the real problem? _____

d. What attitude did Jesus have toward the man when he put him to the test?

9. In recognizing needs it is important to realize that problems result in a variety of surface symptoms. John warned us about three such problems: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (I John 2:15-17). What are possible symptoms for each of these problems?

a. Lust of the flesh

Instability and discomfort around people

b. Lust of the eyes

Possessive attitude

c. The pride of life

USING THE SCRIPTURES

10. What does God's word do? Hebrews 4:12

11. What does God promise to believers concerning His word?
Isaiah 55:11

12. Where and with whom did Paul use the Scriptures in sharing
Christ? Acts 17:1-3 and 26:22

13. How should you handle a situation with an antagonistic or in-
different person? II Timothy 2:23-26

Carry a small New Testament with you. When presenting Christ, let
the other person read the verses for himself if possible. This is
a powerful way to present Christ and to build confidence in the
Scriptures.

PRESENTING CHRIST

14. Why is it important to present Jesus Christ to men who are
lost?

John 14:6

Acts 4:12 _____

15. Read John 3:16-18.

a. What four points summarize the gospel? Verse 16

b. Why did God send Jesus into the world? Verse 17

c. What are two types of people? Verse 18

d. What one thing is necessary to escape condemnation?

Be ready to speak of Christ in any situation: Know the essentials of the gospel. Plan and practice how to explain about Jesus Christ in a clear and interesting way. Then pray and take advantage of your opportunities.

16. After presenting the gospel, the key to helping a person open his heart to Christ is often a question such as, "Would you like to receive Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord now?" If he would, ask him to pray and invite Jesus to come into his life as Savior and Lord.

In bringing a person to this point of decision, it is good to use an "action" verse to show him his part in responding to Christ's offer as the Holy Spirit prompts him. Choose one of the following verses and explain how you could use it in such a situation.

John 1:12

John 3:16

John 5:24

Revelation 3:20

HANDLING OBJECTIONS

17. Conviction of sin and the desire to receive Christ come from God alone. But He gives Christians the privilege of cooperating with Him in helping others come to faith in Jesus Christ.

Persons who have heard the gospel have a number of reasons for not receiving Christ. By being familiar with some of the more common objections and courteously pointing out the answers, you can sometimes help others see more clearly their needs of Jesus Christ. (Remember to keep Christ and His forgiveness at the center of the discussion. Don't let Satan sidetrack you into spending too much time on less important matters.)

The following verses apply to some of the most frequently used objections. List the reference that answers each objection.

Proverbs 14:12
Mark 2:17
Mark 8:36-37
John 7:17
John 14:6

Romans 1:19-20
Romans 1:28
Romans 3:23
Romans 14:12

I Corinthians 1:21
II Corinthians 6:2
Hebrews 9:27
II Peter 1:21

- a. "If God is all powerful and a God of love, why does He allow evil in the world? Why doesn't He stop it?"

- b. "What about those who have never heard the gospel?"

c. "What about the errors in the Bible?"

d. "Why do so many educated people reject Jesus?"

e. "What about all the hypocrites?"

f. "If a person is doing the best he can, God will accept him. Sincerity is what counts."

g. "Surely there is more than one way."

h. "There is too much to give up."

i. "I will probably become a Christian some day."

j. "There are so many things in the Bible I can't understand," or, "I must wait until I understand more."

k. "I'm really not such a bad person."

l. "Maybe we'll get another chance after we die."

m. "I'm too sinful to be saved. God won't accept me."

Read Colossians 4:5-6.

a. What should your attitude be toward non-Christians?

b. Explain how you should go about communicating the gospel.

Remember These Points:

Using the chapter subtopics as an outline, write your own summary of this chapter.

ETS 3/12

Date _____

Assignment Sheet

Name _____

Topic Discipleship

Lesson Finding the Will of God

Class _____

	Completed	
	Yes	No
Lecture		
Review "Finding the Will of God"		
Bible Study		
Do "Follow-Up"		
PSMA		
Do 5 PSMA		
Reading		
Bible Reading Chart		
Disciples Are Made Not Born -- Chapter 12.		
Evangelism/Follow-Up/Discipleship		
Share Christ with a non-Christian.		
Meet with your disciple.		
Pray for your disciple.		
Scripture Memory		
Leviticus 19:11		
Acts 24:16		
Review all verses.		



FINDING THE WILL OF GOD

Introduction

As disciples of Jesus we are to follow in His steps.
Listen to what Jesus said about doing the Will of God.

...My meat is to do the will of Him
who sent me and to finish his work.

John 4:34

I seek not mine own will but the will
of the Father which hath sent me.

John 5:30 (b)

For I came down from Heaven not to do my
own will, but the will of Him that sent me.

John 6:38

...not my will but thine be done.

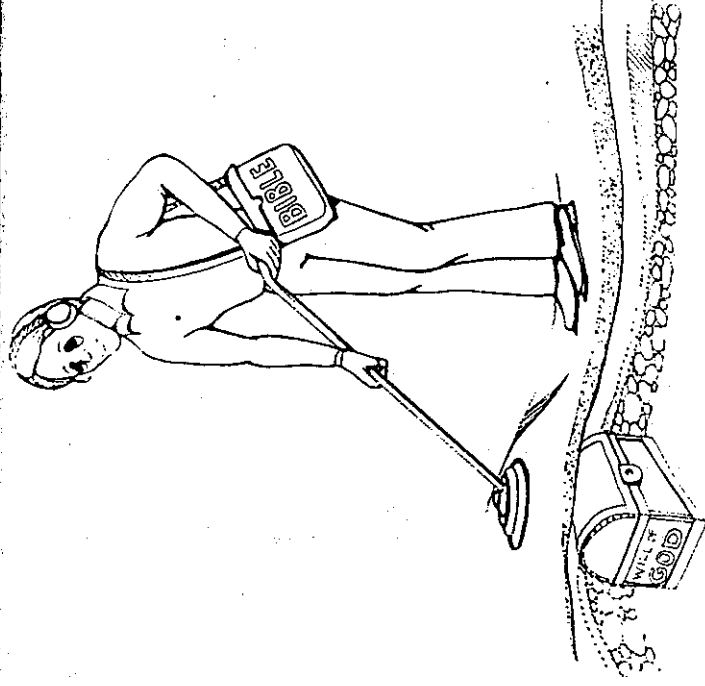
Luke 22:42 (b)

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in
earth, as it is in heaven.

Matthew 6:10

It is interesting to note Jesus inserted this as a
petition in the Lord's prayer. Every time we pray
this prayer, we are asking God for His will to be
done. Whose will are you doing?

It is obvious from the above passage that Jesus was
totally committed to doing the will of His Father--no
matter what the cost to His own person. We, there-
fore, as His disciples must also be committed to
doing God's will above our own. But--can a person
know the mind of God in specific issues of life?



The Scriptures are clear that God wants us to know His will and that He will reveal it to obedient hearts.

I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.

Psalms 32:8

Jesus said:

If anyone wants to do His (God's) will, he'll know whether my teaching is from God or I speak my own thoughts.

John 7:17 (LB)

Spiritual Prerequisites for Knowing God's Will

Examine Your Relationship with God

If you have some unconfessed sin in your life or are out of fellowship with God over some issue, you need to deal with that before going any further in seeking God's will for the future.

If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.

Psalms 66:18

Pray for God's Guidance

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

James 1:5

Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you.

Matthew 7:7

Check Your Real Motives

For example, in considering a new job, my real motives may be the money and status connected with the position rather than because the job will better enable me to serve God. If my motives are not sincerely directed to God's service, He may not work in the situation.

...or you ask for something but don't get it because you want it for a wrong purpose--to spend it on your pleasures.

James 4:3 (Beck)

Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord pondereth the hearts.

Proverbs 21:2

Ensure Your Willingness to Obey

Oftentimes people want to know God's will so they can decide whether or not they will do it. However, God does not reveal His will to curiosity seekers. He reveals it to those whom He knows will obey.

If any man will do His (God's) will, he shall know...

John 7:17

Note in this passage "willing" comes before "knowing."

Walk in Daily Fellowship with God

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly...but his delight is in the Law of the Lord and in His Law doth he meditate day

and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

Psalms 1:1-3

Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.

Psalms 119:105

Practical Prerequisites for Knowing God's Will

God gave you a great asset in discovering His will when He gave you a mind.

Any enterprise is built by wise planning, becomes strong through common sense, and profits wonderfully by keeping abreast of the facts.

Proverbs 24:3-4 (LB)

The following considerations can help you to think logically and practically in discerning God's will.

Do I Have All the Facts Straight?

Am I sure that all the facts are in and they are accurate, or am I going on hearsay or probabilities?

What are the Pro's and Con's in this Situation?

Making a pro and con list is helpful--list all of the factors no matter how insignificant and then weigh their importance.

What do I Want to do?

Sometimes Christians mistakenly think that if they really want to do a particular thing, then it cannot be the will of God. This is erroneous because God normally prepares our hearts to be in tune with His will. Often the thing we are most gifted for or desire to do the most is exactly what God has for us.

I delight to do what You want, my God. Your law is in my heart.

Psalms 40:8 (Beck)

How Will this Affect My Ministry?

Dear children, keep away from anything that might take God's place in your hearts.

I John 5:21 (LB)

Does this Violate Any Known Scriptural Principles?

Would I marry a non-Christian knowing that God has spoken so explicitly in Scripture?

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

II Corinthians 6:14

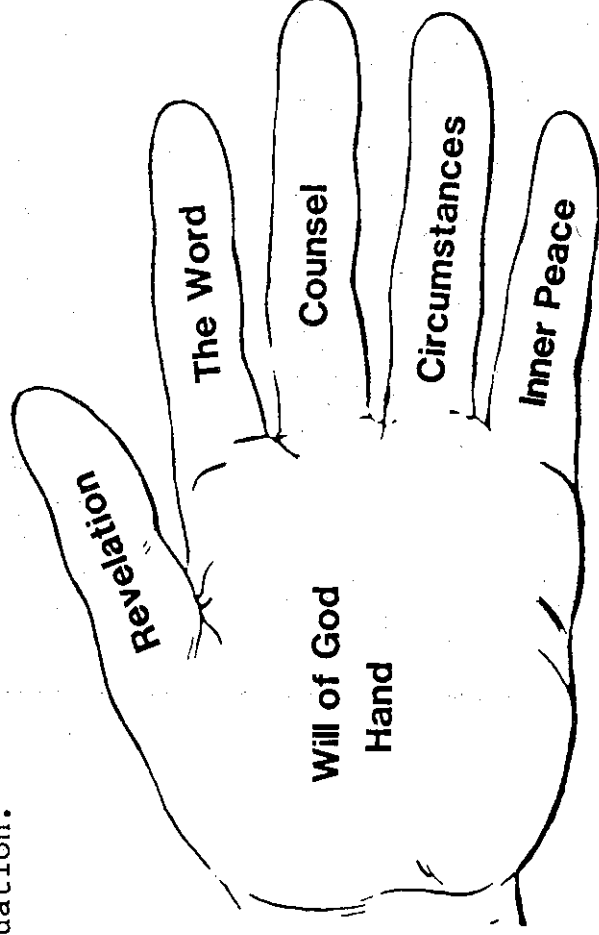
Will My Doing this Cause Someone Else to Stumble?

But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to them that are weak.

I Corinthians 8:9

Will My Doing this Bring Glory to God?

When you have honestly answered the above questions, you are ready to apply the "Will of God Hand" to the situation.



Revelation

Has God given you some direct revelation such as was given to Paul on the road to Damascus? If so, make sure it is consistent with Scripture. For example, if you seem to have some direct revelation to marry a certain person, but that individual is not a Christian, you had better check your revelation again. (II Corinthians 6:14 definitely teaches us that we "be not unequally yoked together with an unbeliever.")

The Word

God has clearly revealed His will on many specific issues in the Word of God. If we are consistently reading and studying His Word, we will be aware of the totality of teaching on certain subjects and will be careful not to rely on any isolated verses that may be taken out of context.

Satan delights to see us take one isolated verse and base our decision solely on that. When we close our eyes, let the Bible fall open and pinpoint a verse, we are not handling the Word of God in a responsible manner, and we become open to Satan's false leading. In Matthew 4:6-7, Satan even tried to get Jesus to take a passage out of context and make a foolish decision on it alone. But because the Lord knew the total teaching of the Word, He was able to withstand the enemy's deception.

And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Matthew 4:3-4

Counsel

We are advised by the Scriptures to seek counsel of others. We need to get objective, mature, and spiritual counsel from Christians who are not emotionally involved in the situation as we are. We must be careful not just to turn to the counsellors who will tell us what we want to hear. A good counsellor will help you to shed light on your situation from the Scriptures and to evaluate the circumstances and other factors involved. Through this godly counsel you will be able to see things from God's perspective and be better able to discern His will.

Without counsel purposes are disappointed; but in the multitude of counsellors they are established.

Proverbs 15:22

Circumstances

The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.

Proverbs 21:1

What doors are opened or closed by circumstance? Often God gives real leading in this way. Since God is in control of the hearts of all men and is sovereignly in control of all things, He can often turn situations to lead us into His will. However, we must be sure that this finger of the "Will of God Hand" is not too large in proportion to the other ways of finding God's will. Circumstances can also be very deceptive and used by Satan to lead us astray.

Inner Peace

Don't worry about anything whatever. Tell God every detail of your needs in earnest and thankful prayer and the peace of God which transcends human understanding will keep constant guard over your hearts and minds as they rest in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6-7 (JBP)

Peace and personal conviction are subjective factors which must be considered. When you have prayerfully considered all the factors, what does your inner conviction tell you is right to do? Does this conviction carry with it a deep peace that comes from God?

As you consider the "Will of God Hand" at first glance, it may seem that all the fingers are stretched out in different directions. But as God leads, you will find that 2, 3, or 4 of the fingers begin to point in the same direction, and you have a deep peace that God is at work. Then move ahead, prayerfully, asking God to close doors or change things if you somehow have not discerned His will rightly.

You (God) have rescued me from death and will keep my feet from falling that I might walk before God...

Psalms 56:13

Timing

There is a right time for everything.

Ecclesiastes 3:1 (LB)

Remember that God has both a will for your life and a perfect timing that will be fulfilled. We must make sure that we have both! Often when we try to rush or delay God's will, it is to our own detriment and we only hurt ourselves. God's will and timing are always perfect! He is never too early or too late!

For example, I may have discovered God's will for me for a life partner, but it may not be God's timing yet. Perhaps my future partner is still very young and immature in Christ and needs more time to develop his or her own convictions and discipleship. If I rush into marriage without considering God's timing, I may find that the immaturity of my partner adds problems to the marriage that may take years to correct.

Summary

God is pleased when we, as His disciples, walk in His will. If we apply the principles written here, God will gladly reveal His will to us, and we will have the joy of personally discovering that His will is always good, acceptable, and perfect!

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Romans 12:2

NOTES

FOLLOW-UP

Helping new believers get a good start in their Christian lives and grow toward spiritual maturity is the responsibility of all Christians. There is always someone who needs your help.

WHAT IS FOLLOW-UP?

1. Read I Thessalonians 2:7-12.

a. How did Paul describe his ministry in teaching the Thessalonians to live the Christian life? Verses 7-8

b. What was Paul's relationship with them? Verse 11

c. What three things did he do to help their spiritual progress? Verse 11

d. What was Paul's goal for his spiritual children? Verse 12

Follow-up is spiritual pediatrics--giving continuous help to a young believer to stimulate healthy growth toward Christian maturity and usefulness.

WHY FOLLOW-UP?

2. Jesus Christ gave His followers the Great Commission to reach the world with His gospel. What did He command them to do as part of that commission? Matthew 28:20

3. Why was Paul concerned about following up those he had reached? I Thessalonians 3:5

4. Read I Corinthians 4:15. Why do you think Paul felt personally responsible for the Corinthians?

THE WORTH OF EACH INDIVIDUAL

Every person's value and dignity is the result of his unique creation. Man alone was made in the image and likeness of God. In all the universe he alone has the distinct privilege of reflecting godliness.

5. How did Jesus illustrate how valuable you are in God's eyes? Matthew 10:29-31

6. What can you learn from Luke 9:25 about your individual worth?

7. What does Jesus teach about the importance of the individual in Luke 15:3-7?

8. How many people did Paul mention by name in Romans 16? How is this significant?

9. Read Psalm 8. How does the psalmist express the worth of man? Explain how this relates to you.

HELPING OTHERS GROW

10. What did Paul and his companions do to help those who had recently believed in Jesus Christ?

Acts 14:21-22

Acts 18:11

11. What did Paul and his co-workers pray for their converts?

Colossians 1:9-12

Colossians 4:12

12. What could you encourage a new believer to do with the Bible?
Colossians 3:16

13. In what other areas could you instruct and establish him?

Mark 5:19

Luke 9:23

John 15:10

Philippians 4:6

Hebrews 10:25

14. Paul used various methods in following up new Christians.
Which methods do the following verses describe?

Acts 15:36 _____

I Corinthians 4:14 _____

I Corinthians 4:17 _____

II Timothy 1:3 _____

How can you help someone you know by using one of these methods?

You will want to help a new Christian in these areas:

- Assurance of salvation
- Regular quiet times
- Scripture memory
- Bible study
- Fellowship
- Testimony

BEING AN EXAMPLE

15. What could Paul say about his example to the Philippian church?
Philippians 4:9

16. Read I Timothy 4:12. In what areas should you be an example to others?

17. Why is setting a good example important? Matthew 23:3

18. Can you say with Paul, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ" (I Corinthians 11:1)? In what way should some aspect of your life be changed so that you maintain a good example?

19. Think of one person whom you have had the privilege of leading to Christ? Remember to pray for him, and consider what more you can do to stimulate his growth. Should you visit, telephone, or write him? Would Book One of the Design for Discipleship series or the Beginning with Christ packet help him? Should you take him with you to witness, or to call on another young Christian? Summarize how you can help and what you intend to do.

Remember These Points:

Using the chapter subtopics as an outline, write your own summary of this chapter.



Choosing a Life Objective

Webster defines an objective as "an aim or end of action; point to be reached."

An ancient proverb states, "He who aims at nothing hits it." We need a life aim or objective.

Your life can be represented by a straight line which has as its origin your birth and an arrow on the opposite end indicating the unknown time of your death. None of us knows how long he will have in this life, but for the sake of discussion, say you have lived 20 or so years and you have approximately 40 years left.

Here is the question: When you come to the end of those 40 years, and you have nothing but death to look forward to and nothing but memories to look back upon, what will you need to see in order for you to come to the conclusion, "My life was a success?"

I suggest that you are not ready to live those 40 years until you have answered that question. Until then your life is without direction, aim, or objective. Make sure you answer that question in specifics, because the more specific you are, the better chance you have of hitting your objective.

The Lord Jesus was able to answer positively. He said, "I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do" (John 17:4). Twice in the ministry of the Lord Jesus, He said, "It is finished." Once He said it on the cross, and that obviously refers to the work of redemption. But earlier He was praying in the Garden of Gethsemane when He said, "It is finished." There He was referring to His ministry. Over 40 times in John 17, He refers to His disciples--they were His ministry. Repeatedly He makes reference to these 12 men who occupied three years of His life. And in that context, He says, "I have finished the work You gave Me to do." In essence, the Lord Jesus was looking God the Father in the face and saying, "O, God, all that You had on Your heart for My life, I did."

When you come to die, will you be able to look God Almighty in the eye and say, "O, Father, all that You had on your heart for my life, I have accomplished? I finished the work You gave me to do?" If you cannot in integrity of heart answer yes, then whatever the price, I would urge you to bring your life into alignment so that you can.

Another man who was able to claim this kind of success was the Apostle Paul. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing" (2 Timothy 4:7-8). Just previously he stated, "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand" (v.6). When your time of departure is at hand, will you

say with the Apostle Paul, "I have finished the race, I have done what You want me to do?"

When I was in college, I was looking for purpose, for meaning, for reality in my life. A giant void existed inside me. I could not put my finger on it; I did not know what it was; but I knew that the void existed. Then I met Bob, who suggested the void could be filled by the Person of Jesus Christ. That God Almighty was willing to enter my life and take up residence was a brand new concept to me.

As I listened to Bob explain the Scriptures, I thought to myself, "Henrichsen, you'd be an idiot if you turned that offer down. Here is God, the Creator, the Maker of heaven and earth, the One who threw the stars into space and made everything that is, and, according to the Bible, He is willing to enter into your life and take up residence!"

So, that night in Bob's living room I got on my knees, prayed, and received Christ. I only faintly comprehended what I was doing, but when I got up, I was a changed individual, and I have never been the same since.

The void was filled.

I began to ask questions: What really counts in life? What is really important? For what should I give my life? At the same time, I made an intensive search in the Bible for answers.

Then I came across 2 Peter 3:10: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are herein shall be burned up." It was that last phrase that got me: "Shall be burned up."

I was an engineering major. The reason I was majoring in engineering was that I had previously worked on a construction gang in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. It was tough work, and I for one did not like tough work. Every so often I would see the engineers go by, and they did not appear to be working very hard. They would finger their slide rules, and I would think, "They've got the right job!" I decided that I would be an engineer too so that I could walk around, slide rule in hand, and tell other people what to do.

My objective--to be a civil engineer and build bridges, dams, and roads--lasted until I ran across 2 Peter 3:10. What a shock, then, to realize that everything I planned to build, God would come along and destroy! I want you to know, that discouraged me. Good grief! I did not want to build a bridge if God was going to destroy it. It was not worth it. Why give all my time and effort to build something which God had already said that He will burn?

As I continued my study, I became even more discouraged. I read, "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

And having food and raiment let us be therewith content" (1 Timothy 6:6-8). This picture emerged: I come into the world empty-handed; I build bridges and dams; God follows behind and burns them down; and when I leave the world, I leave it empty-handed. What a depressing scene!

So, I prayed, "God, I don't want to give my life to nothing. Why pour 70 years into something and then discover You will burn it, and leave me empty-handed?"

Surely there must be some purpose, some meaning, some direction for life. Surely there must be something God is not planning to burn. I continued my quest in the Scriptures. By His grace, I found two enduring things to which I could give myself.

I found the first in John 5:28-29, which says, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." In the resurrection at the end time, who is going to come forth? They that have done good and they that have done evil. Everybody is going to live forever.

I have talked to people who say they do not believe in resurrection. They do not want to be resurrected. I say, "Tough grits, friend, you are going to be resurrected whether you want to be or not."

I have heard people say, "Maybe I will just be a bad guy and then God will annihilate me, and that's it." Bad guys and good guys alike are going to be resurrected. For better or for worse, people last forever.

The second thing that lasts forever is mentioned in Isaiah 40:8: "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the Word of our God shall stand forever." God says, the grass and the flowers are going to die but not God's Word. There are other eternal things--God, angels, virtues such as love--but I wanted something enduring that I could grab hold of and give my life in exchange for. In setting my life's objectives, I could give myself to people and the Word of God, and know that God was not going to follow me and burn them up. He has gone on record that they are eternal. And Jesus said, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for the meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you, for Him hath God the Father sealed" (John 6:27).

This doesn't mean a person should not be a teacher, housewife, businessman, or even build bridges. To be involved in such a vocation may be the perfect will of God for your life. But God forbid that you should give your life in exchange for it!

The Apostle Paul made tents for a living. If you had bought one of them, I am sure you would have had a good piece of equipment. Paul himself said, "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men" (Colossians 3:23). But note that Paul did not have

as his life objective to become the largest tent manufacturer in the Roman Empire. Rather, he invested his life in people.

Another verse really motivates me. "For the Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance" (Deuteronomy 32:9). You and I know people who are waiting for someone to die so they can gain their inheritance. God Almighty can choose His inheritance--anything He wants. If it doesn't exist, all He has to do is speak, and it comes into existence. "By the Word of the Lord were the Heavens made and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth" (Psalms 33:6). So what does He choose? People! His people! Fantastic!

Out of everything that is or might be, God Almighty has chosen people for His inheritance. With that in mind, consider Isaiah 43:4, "Since thou wast precious in My sight, thou hast been honorable, and I have loved thee; therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life." Though Israel is the subject here, and God speaks of giving others for Israel's sake, the principle can apply to us also. That is, our lives may be given for the sake of some person who is a chosen vessel (an Israel) of God. By thus winning people, we have the same inheritance, in the final analysis, which God chose for Himself. As Jesus said, "Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19).

Some people give their lives in exchange for money, for property, or a host of other things; yet God says these things are going to burn. But He gives us this fantastic promise that our inheritance can be the same as His. We can catch men. This is the kind of promise you will want to hold on to as long as you live. Give your life in exchange for people.

What does it mean to give your life for people? Paul writes, "So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you not the Gospel of God only but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us" (1 Thessalonians 2:8). This means you get involved in the lives of people. When Paul went to Thessalonica, he didn't just impart a message; he gave of his very life because these people were dear and precious to him.

Giving your life in exchange for people means getting involved in the gut issues of life. This is not getting involved with committees or programs. As good as these may be, they are no substitute for personal involvement in others' lives. People can be superficially involved in teaching classes, or committee work, or programs, without any heart involvement. That has no cost attached to it. But when you spiritually give birth to an individual, you cannot be casual about it. You have a responsibility; it is costly, and that is why some people would rather serve on a committee than get involved in another's life.

A young boy grew up in a family with several other children. They lived in the country because his parents believed the children could better learn responsibilities there. This meant hard work

for parents and children, and a life without many so-called luxuries. The family had close friends who were childless and lived in a large city nearby. Yearly these friends would take each of the children on an outing. From early morning until evening, they would see that the children had a special day: the zoo, amusement park, all they could eat at restaurants.

Riding the train back home after such an exciting day, the young lad compared the two families and their life-styles. His family knew plain hard work, raising children, limited vacations. The others enjoyed a nice apartment, new cars, eating out, the theater after work, weekend trips, and long vacations. He decided that when he grew up, he was going to copy the life-style of his parents' friends. But when he got married, he saw things from a different perspective. He realized that the difference between a comfortable marriage and a costly marriage was children--reproduction.

Similarly, the difference between comfortable Christianity and costly Christianity is spiritual reproduction. It costs to become involved in the lives of people. This is why there is not a stampede to accept God's gracious offer allowing us to give our lives in exchange for people, as He did.

Another fantastic promise in the Bible is found in Isaiah 58:10-12. "And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday. And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones; and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places. Thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in."

This is a whole list of promises given by God, but they are all conditioned on an if. If, what? "If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul." We live in an age in which there are many hungry and afflicted souls. The opportunities are legion--fantastic opportunities of getting involved in the lives of people. I find that every time an individual goes on record before God as saying, "Lord, that is going to be my objective; I am going to give my life to people, I will pour out my soul to the afflicted, and satisfy the hungry," he never wants for opportunities.

When word gets out that you are interested in people, they will beat a path to your door. Your telephone may ring a lot; your home may become like Grand Central Station; people who are spiritually needy and hungry may surround you. You do not have to be a gifted individual to get involved in others' lives. Just listen to them, that is all; you do not have to be a skilled counselor. You will be amazed how many people will want to talk to you and the things they will begin telling you--hungry, afflicted souls looking for some answers.

When you become involved with people in this way, you become a co-laborer with God in the second creation. This is the picture. God created heaven and earth. He made everything that exists. Then sin came in, and God said, "I am going to have to destroy it all and re-create. Only this second creation is going to be marvelously better than the first. So magnificent is it, I am going to allow My people to labor with Me in that creation."

When you pour out your life into the lives of others, when you share with them the unsearchable riches of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and become involved with them in their concerns, you become God's co-laborer in a creation far greater than the first one.

Yet people turn down this opportunity day after day. A man who wanted to help some other men begin in Bible study once asked if I would help him get started. Because the men involved all had busy schedules, we decided to meet at 5 a.m. on a weekly basis in my friend's home.

The evening prior to the first meeting, I stopped by his home with the Bible study materials to see how plans were developing. When I walked into the house, I immediately sensed that something was wrong; you could have cut the air with a knife, it was so thick. His wife was present, and before long she pointed out that she did not want those men coming and sitting on her furniture, spilling coffee and doughnut crumbs on her carpet. Furthermore, 5 a.m. was a ridiculous hour, and why should the rest of the family wake up just so these men could do Bible study. Her voice began to quiver, tears came down her cheeks, and she began to tremble, so deeply involved was she in the issue.

As I listened to her, I prayed silently, "O God, deliver me from the curse of ever believing that my living room furniture is more important than people."

Are not people's lives of infinitely more value than the furniture and carpet which God has already promised He is going to burn? Because involvement in people's lives is costly, very few take it seriously. It costs in time. Your phone will ring in the middle of the night with some distraught soul looking for answers to his needs. It will cost you your life because your life is not your own.

"And seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not; for, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the Lord, but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest" (Jeremiah 45:5). Are you seeking great things for yourself? "Do not," says God, "for I am bringing evil upon all flesh."

Jesus said, "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, but whosoever will lose his life for My sake, the same shall save it" (Luke 9:24). I submit for your consideration that there is no greater objective in life than to give yourself for others.

ETS 3/11

Date _____

Assignment Sheet

Name _____

Advanced Follow-Up

Topic _____

Lesson Team and Teamwork

Class _____

Lecture	Completed	
	Yes	No
Review "Team and Teamwork"		
Bible Study		
Do "Helping Others Find Christ"		
PSMA		
Do 5 PSMA		
Reading		
Bible Reading Chart		
Disciples Are Made Not Born--Chapter 11		
Evangelism/Follow-Up/Discipleship		
Pray for 1 person to share the "Bridge" with.		
Pray for your disciple.		
Meet with your disciple.		
Scripture Memory		
Ephesians 5:3		
I Peter 2:11		
Review previous verses.		



TEAM AND TEAMWORK

Introduction

As you study the Scriptures you become keenly aware that God is fulfilling His will and destiny through men. Usually He begins with a God-fearing man and burns His divine objective or vision into the man's heart. He gives to that man promises to guarantee the fulfillment of the objective. As that man begins to do what God has called him to, he soon discovers that one person will never be able to do it alone. At this time God begins to bring other men around who are attracted to the vision and are recruitable. Soon a team is formed and together they give themselves to the task. Rarely does God begin and end with one man.

Definition of Teamwork

The dictionary defines a team as "a group of persons joined together in an action, especially in a game. Animals harnessed together."

Often we use words such as "group," "gang," "crew," "bunch," and "team" interchangeably. However, I would like to suggest that there are six essential elements common to a real team.

- A common vision or objective
- An accepted leader
- Agreement of method and activities
- A strong sense of love and loyalty among members
- A division of labor among the members
- Members subjugated to the objective and to each other

Anything less than this would only constitute a collection or an association of individuals who may or may not accomplish an objective.

Team and Teamwork in Scripture

As I have already suggested this concept of team and team work is not foreign to the Bible. In the life of the Lord Jesus we see that He called a group of twelve men to become a part of His team.

And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach.

Mark 3:14

We also see this in Paul's pattern of life and ministry.

And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus.

Acts 20:4

Not only is this found in the New Testament but the Old Testament as well.

And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and there went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched.

I Samuel 10:26

Then said I unto them, ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach. Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work.

Nehemiah 2:17-18

Advantages of a Team

Tremendous Power

It is obvious that two or more can accomplish more than one person working by himself. Two men working together are not just one plus one but the equivalent of two squared. In Leviticus we see this illustrated for us.

And five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight; and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword.

Leviticus 26:8

Team effort multiplies the individual's thrust and provides the impact of sheer numerical strength. A team also has the ability of engaging many to a task who could never operate by themselves.

If I jab five fingers at a wall I will end up with five broken fingers. However, if I form them into a fist, I can punch a hole in the wall.

Balance and Cross Training

A good team has complimentary gifts and abilities as well as depths of experience. No one individual has everything that is needed to accomplish an objective no matter how smart and skilled he may be. Each team member, including the leader, is strengthened and developed by the other members of the team. The team helps each member become well-rounded and more capable of fulfilling the objective.

But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues. But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

I Corinthians 12:7-13

Protection and Encouragement

Christians teamed together in loyalty to Christ and His Word provide mutual protection against the world and its attractions. When Jesus sent men out, He

sent them two by two and not alone. It's interesting to note that when Judas decided not to follow this pattern he opened himself to destruction.

Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.

Matthew 26:14-15

Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Planning

Men benefit greatly by bouncing ideas off each other, whether it be the strategic plans of where and how to minister or the more tactical plans of method and timing. The team concept allows this, particularly where the leader provides a permissive atmosphere. An editor of Newsweek magazine interviewed the heads of 100 of the largest corporations in America and sent questionnaires to another 300 in an effort to find a pattern for their success. He discovered that good executives had strong teams around them. The executive presents an idea to his team, lets them attack it, probe it, and offer suggestions. When the meeting is concluded, the whole team is ready to follow through on the plan.

For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy way;
and in multitude of counsellors there is safety.

Proverbs 24:6

Rapid Establishment of Ministry

A band of men who know where they are going attracts others who want to get going. If a man tries to penetrate an area alone it may take him a year or more before he has a group of men who demonstrate the dynamic aspect of the Christian life. If he starts with a team, however, he immediately has his "show case."

How to Start a Team Prayer

The first step in forming a team is to pray, for in the final analysis teams, like all good things, are a gift of God. In praying about a team we are following Jesus' example.

And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles....

Luke 6:12-13

Remember that believing prayer is sustained by the promises of God, so we must look to God for pertinent promises. Another way to strengthen prayer is to look for a person of like heart to pray with you for a team. God has especially committed Himself to the fervent prayer of two or more who join together in faith.

Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.

Matthew 18:19

Get Started

The next step is to simply start. Start making contacts through evangelism, Bible studies, rallies, etc. God will guide you as you prayerfully move out in faith expecting God to give you people. Often Christians make the mistake of merely praying without acting. They seem to expect that as they pray God will just drop team members out of a cloud, prepared and designated for the team. However, this does not often happen! It is much easier to guide a moving ship than one that is moored in the harbor. So God will guide the person who is moving out in faith.

It is also important to realize that people will not be attracted to a team that "is going to get started someday" but to a team that is already in motion. Recently a small group of teenagers had a vision to start a swimming team in their school. For months they had talked to their classmates about being on the team. They had cajoled, reasoned and pleaded--

all to no avail. Finally they decided to start with what they had. At the first training session only three were present, but they had decided to start and keep going no matter what. Within six weeks a dozen others had joined the team. After three months the word had spread outside the school that a team had formed. Others from the community were joining. The ranks had grown into an active and sizeable team.

This is exactly what happened in the infant church of Acts 2. The first converts got started serving God with joy and simplicity. As a result, others were attracted and daily people were added to the growing team of believers.

And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

Acts 2:46-47

Handpick Members of Your Team

From all the contacts that you develop, you must choose a workable team. Insofar as God gives liberty, the team leader should aim at a balance of gifts and abilities in selecting the people for the team. But above all, the leader must look for godly people who are living by Biblical convictions.

Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens...

Exodus 18:21

Keep the team small and hard. To bring the wrong person into the team means that you are handing over the leadership of the team to him. Why? Because the leader will constantly be asking himself, "What if he doesn't like this idea?" or "Will he have an attitude problem if we do this?" Remember the DBITH principle! (Don't bring in the half-hearted.)

And the officers shall speak unto the people, saying, What man is there that hath built a new house, and hath not dedicated it? let him go

and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man dedicate it. And what man is he that hath planted a vineyard, and hath not yet eaten of it? let him also go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man eat of it. And what man is there that hath betrothed a wife, and hath not taken her? let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man take her.

Deuteronomy 20:5-7

While we must be careful not to surround ourselves with the half-hearted, we must be equally careful not to surround ourselves with "yes-men," or those who are unable to be honest or to think independently.

Present the Objective

It is essential in forming a team that the leader present a vision that is realistic and attainable, yet big enough and exciting enough to warrant giving one's whole life to it.

The vision must be imparted in such a way by the leader that it becomes the individual objective of each team member. As long as the goal is simply "the leader's goal" or "the team's goal," commitment will not be deep enough or strong enough to weather the enemy's attacks. The vision must be preached and presented again and again until the team members are captured by the objective.

Billy Graham tells the story of a man who was offered a job at a fabulous salary. He turned it down. The company asked, "Aren't we offering you enough?" The man replied, "Oh, your salary is big enough, but your job is too small--I'm out to reach the world for Christ."

Summary

As you launch out in your ministry and it begins to grow, the need for a team will grow with it. It will be an encouragement to you to see God bring a small team together which will help you accomplish the ministry that God has given to you. As you apply these principles they will help you form your team.

If the world is ever to be reached for Christ, it will be because of thousands of small teams which are banded together in different places--all dedicated to fulfilling the Great Commission in their own particular sphere of influence.



ETS 3/10

Assignment Sheet

Date _____

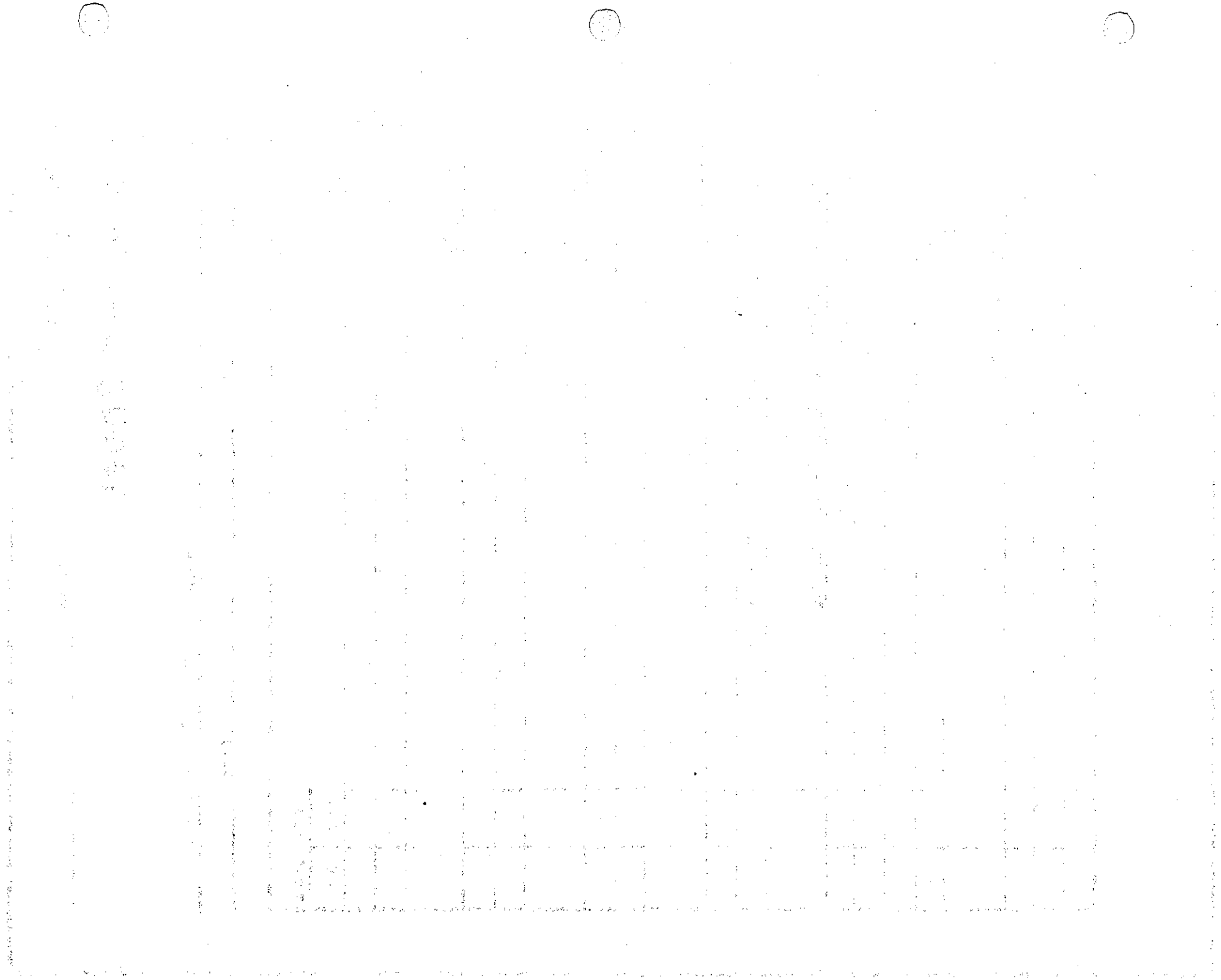
Name _____

Topic _____ Advanced Follow-Up

Lesson The Selection of Men

Class _____

Lecture	Completed	
	Yes	No
Review "The Selection of Men"		
Bible Study		
Do "The Responsible Steward"		
PSMA		
Do 5 PSMA		
Reading		
Bible Reading Chart		
Disciples Are Made Not Born--Chapter 10		
Evangelism/Follow-Up/Discipleship		
Share "Bridge" with non-Christian.		
Pray for your disciple.		
Meet with your disciple.		
Scripture Memory		
Philippians 2:3-4		
I Peter 5:5-6		
Review previous verses.		



THE SELECTION OF MEN

Introduction

On every frontier of Christian outreach there is the same resounding cry: "We need men; more men with better training, men of keen commitment to the Person of Christ, men who know how to advance the cause of Christ in our generation."

It has always been and will always be true that the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ stands or falls, advances or retreats, is dynamic or static in proportion to the number of available men and women who will live or die to take His message to the ends of the earth.

God needs people.

Thou shalt not delay to offer the first of thy ripe fruits, and of thy liquors: the firstborn of thy sons shalt thou give unto me.

Exodus 22:29

The Laborers are Few

The Lord Jesus was well aware of the need for people to bear His message. He therefore instructed His followers to pray that God would send forth laborers.

But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

Matthew 9:36-38

The quality of people needed as well as the quantity can only come from God. Our part is to pray that God will raise them up. As He does, we must assume the responsibility to train them and implant the vision which will set their hearts on fire, their feet moving, their hands working, and their tongues proclaiming. Laborers will not be raised up if we fail to pray and seek for them as God commands. Laborers will not be reproduced if we ourselves are not committed both to be laborers as well as to train laborers.

The fields are white unto harvest, but the laborers are few.

Why Select People?

We need capable people

In many parts of the world churches are filled to capacity with people. At first glance it would appear that there is no real need in such places. However, when one of these churches tries to have an outreach to the community, it becomes apparent that something is seriously wrong. Committees are formed and leaders are appointed, but often the leaders are unable or unwilling to really lead the group. Others in the group may become frustrated because they find themselves in jobs they do not know how to do, and with no one to show them how they are doomed to failure.

If you have ever observed or been involved in such an endeavor, you will understand why selection is so vitally important to the cause of Christ. If we can get the right people in the right jobs with the right know-how the task is as good as done.

One leader will burn out

Without a continuing process of selection within the Body of Christ, the few leaders who are available will soon be overworked and will eventually burn out.

Moses is a primary example of this in the Scripture. He was at the point of emotional, spiritual, and physical exhaustion trying to administer the two million or more people who had come out of Egypt. His wise father-in-law, Jethro, observed what was happening and warned him that he would soon bring about his own destruction unless he began to select and delegate.

And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses sat to judge the people: and the people stood by Moses from the morning unto the evening.

And when Moses' father in law saw all that he did to the people, he said, What is this thing that thou doest to the people? why sitteth thou thyself alone, and all the people stand by thee from morning unto evening? And Moses said unto his father in law, Because the people come unto me to inquire of God: When they have a matter, they come unto me; and I judge between one and another, and I do make them know the statutes of God, and his laws. And Moses' father in law said unto him, The thing that thou doest is not good. Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee: for this thing is too heavy for thee: thou art not able to perform it thyself alone.

Exodus 18:13-18

The Body will lack ongoing leadership

When Moses died, Israel did not suffer a lack of leadership because Moses had been careful to train his replacement--a young man named Joshua.

As the Lord commanded Moses his servant, so did Moses command Joshua, and so did Joshua; he left nothing undone of all that the Lord commanded Moses.

Joshua 11:15

However, during Joshua's leadership the people of Israel were so busy taking the land that Joshua failed to train a new leader for the future. Consequently, when Joshua died Israel was leaderless and was thrown into a state of confusion. The people ended up in sin and their land was lost.

How To Select People

Through Observation and Training

Jesus did not send out raw, new recruits into service. Mark tells us:

And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach.

Mark 3:14

There were two reasons why Jesus selected the Twelve:

NOTES

- To be with Him--The first thing Jesus did was to call the disciples around Him. Being with them, He could observe their lives and they could observe His. In such a close relationship real training in their areas of specific need could take place.
- To send them forth--Jesus had trained His men in the midst of life and ministry. It was not a school where He had given them academic instruction. He had trained them in the heat of the battle. Now He was going to instruct them so that they knew what to teach others. Because they knew what to teach, Jesus was able to say to them on the mountain top:

Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Matthew 28:20

It is vital that before leaders are appointed, they are trained to lead.

In an Attitude of Prayer

And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles; Simon, (whom he also named Peter,) and Andrew, his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor.

Luke 6:12-16

Observation of people and proper training are crucial to selection. However, they cannot take the place of prayer--seeking God for His selection of people.

Although Jesus intimately knew these disciples who had followed Him faithfully for over a year, He did not depend upon His own ability to choose. He spent the entire night prior to His selection in prayer to God--seeking God's face and will. He knew how vital the choice of these men would be. Upon them the whole future of the Church would rest. He therefore did not select flippantly, but carefully and prayerfully.

And it is evident that God did answer His prayer. The Bible records Jesus' deep conviction that the disciples had been the men whom God had given to Him. Jesus was well aware that these men were God's men entrusted to Him.

I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me: for they are thine.

John 17:6-9

According to Gift

The Bible states clearly that every child of God has been given one or several spiritual gifts by the Holy Spirit.

But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

I Corinthians 12:7

These gifts are given for the purpose of building up the entire Body of Christ. As each person exercises his own gift and trains others in that area, the Body is edified and the saints become equipped to minister.

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ.

Ephesians 4:11-12

As we select people for various responsibilities, we should be sensitive to help them serve in an area where they can exercise their gifts. If we do, we will find people making their greatest contributions with the least amount of effort and frustration. As a result the entire Body will be blessed and strengthened.

Who to Select

NOTES

Jethro was very wise in counselling Moses as to whom he should select to help him lead. He knew that if the wrong people were appointed, it would be worse than not having anyone to help at all.

Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens:

Exodus 18:21

Example of Moses

According to this verse, Moses' helpers were to be

- Able
- God-fearing
- Honest
- Incorruptible

Example of Paul

Paul also commanded Timothy on the selection of men.

And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

II Timothy 2:2

Timothy was to choose men who were faithful and able to teach others.

Example of the Apostles

When the Apostles of the early Church expanded their leadership, they selected seven men to help them.

Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

Acts 6:2-3

They looked for men who were of honest report and filled with the Holy Spirit.

The books of Timothy and Titus give us long lists of character qualities to look for in people who are selected for leadership. We have already discussed these in our examination of leadership.

Out of all of these scriptural lists, I would like to suggest that there are three qualities which are indispensable in those we would select for leadership and special service. We may be able to remember these three qualities better by the following little slogan.

"Select F.A.T. people!"

The three letters in this acrostic stand for the three necessary qualities to look for. A potential leader should be:

- Faithful
- Available
- Teachable

Faithful

Faithfulness has always been a rare quality and is becoming increasingly hard to find in this existensial age of "non-commitment" and "non-responsibility."

Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?

Proverbs 20:6

Discerning Faithfulness

One of the best ways to discern a person's faithfulness is by assigning him tasks and then observing his follow-through. If he consistently completes the tasks on time and does them well, faithfulness is present. If he does not, a red flag should go up in selecting him for further leadership. Unfaithfulness on the part of the leader or a team member will be a constant source of irritation and frustration to those who work with Him.

Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint.

Proverbs 25:19

Faithfulness is one of the qualities that is extremely important to God. Jesus says that one must exhibit faithfulness in little things before He will entrust more privileges and responsibilities to him.

He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?

Luke 16:10-12

Faithfulness and Rewards

Much of our external reward will be based upon the quality of faithfulness.

His Lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

Matthew 25:21

Timothy is an excellent example of the kind of man we should look for in our selection.

But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel.

Philippians 2:19-22

Available

Many people who have great potential for leadership and disciplinemaking eliminate themselves from realizing it because they are unavailable. They fail to live by

their priorities and find that the "tyranny of the urgent" forces them further and further away from eternal goals and values.

Unavailability is one of the chief causes of the lack of laborers in the harvest. Trying to accomplish anything with people who are unavailable to you is an exercise in futility.

Scripture contains some striking examples of men who were greatly used of God because they were available and ready.

Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying,
Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?
Then said I, Here am I; send me.

Isaiah 6:8

So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth; and Elijah passed by him and cast his mantle upon him. And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee. And he said unto him, Go back again: for what have I done to thee? And he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him.

I Kings 19:19-21

And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightaway left their nets, and followed him.

Matthew 4:18-20

Teachable

The third important quality to look for in selecting people is a teachable attitude. If a person is not open and willing to learn he will never be able to harmoniously serve or lead in the Body of Christ. The unteachable person soon becomes lifeless and static--stuck in rigid patterns which lose their effectiveness.

NOTES

One of the reasons that God could not work through the Pharisees was that they were unteachable. They thought they knew it all. Though they were hyper-faithful and available in the keeping of the Law, they were not teachable to Christ's New Covenant and, therefore, Jesus had to bypass them as He selected men.

No matter how much a person may know, he must realize that there is ever so much more to learn from our infinite God. If we are continually open to be taught new things from Him we will find we have an ever increasing capacity to deal with all of life's situations. Jesus said:

When, therefore, a teacher of the law has become a learner in the kingdom of Heaven, he is like a householder who can produce from his store both the new and the old.

Matthew 13:52 (NEB)

Summary

As you select men and women in your ministry, train them wisely. These people will be the keys to reaching the world. They will also be the people whom you will select to be a part of your team. If you have trained them carefully they will be a giant asset in reaching the world for the cause of Christ.

How to Train a Disciple

Gifts and Calling

Just before His death on Calvary, the Lord Jesus expressed to His Father what was on His heart. In that prayer, recorded in John 17, we find one of His major concerns was that Christians dwell together in unity.

The Holy Spirit's bestowal of gifts on the Church was designed to ensure that our Lord Jesus' prayer for unity would be answered. He did this by making sure that all Christians have some of the gifts, and no Christian has all the gifts. This assured the importance of every believer, because his gifts were necessary to complement the rest of the body. It also assured the dependence of every believer on others. Since one did not have all of the gifts, he needed his brothers and sisters in Christ. This was God's formula for unity. This design for unity, however, has been jeopardized by certain problems that have entered the life of the Church.

One of the problems is found in the background of many new Christians. Many today come from a background of existentialism, which teaches that meaning and reality are only to be found in life through an "experience." Dope, sex--anything to find purpose in a life that is at its best a "sick joke." This desire to "have an experience" has permeated Christianity. In many cases it finds its expression in people looking for the more spectacular gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Another problem confronting the church regarding the gifts is that they are so often sought in a spirit of comparison and competition. I become proud because I have gifts that you lack, or I become envious because you have gifts that I lack. What originally was intended to unite us as brothers and sisters becomes the thing that divides us. The reason for this disunity is the absence of true Christian love, and this is precisely why the Apostle Paul sandwiches the great chapter on love, 1 Corinthians 13, between his two chapters on the spiritual gifts.

Still another problem that we face today regarding the gifts is the tremendous feeling of inadequacy that many Christians have simply because they are not sure what their gifts are. They know that they are supposed to have gifts--at least this is what they have been taught from the Bible--but if you were to ask them what their gifts are, they would be unable to answer.

As we train young Christians to become disciples, one of our primary objectives should be to help them discover and develop their gifts, since every believer has gifts which God holds him accountable for developing and using for the sake of the Body. In making disciples we are not trying to produce proficient technicians who are able to reproduce themselves by a prescribed methodology; rather, we are seeking to develop men and women who are disciples diligently exercising their particular gifts and abilities.

The Purpose and Importance of Your Gifts

To explore this subject, let us briefly study Paul's analysis of the gifts in 1 Corinthians 12.

In verses 1-11 we see the distribution and diversity of the gifts. It is frequently asked whether the gifts listed in Scripture are illustrative or exhaustive. Are they examples of a broader list of gifts? Or when you list all the individual gifts mentioned in the Bible, do you have the sum total of all the gifts that God distributes? The supporting evidence for either view is inconclusive, but I believe that the lists of gifts such as those in verses 8-10 are illustrative.

This is important when helping a man discover his gifts because you have to decide whether you will confine your quest to the gifts mentioned in the Bible or whether you will view the subject more broadly. As I help people in this area, I work on the premise that any talents or abilities a person has are God-given and become "spiritual" when controlled and energized by the Holy Spirit. Other than those mentioned in the New Testament, we might look for abilities in the fields of music, writing, or art. Having helped a disciple determine what his gifts are, we can then creatively think through on how his gifts can be used in accomplishing the objective of making disciples.

All that God has for me was made available through the cross of Jesus Christ; and as a believer, it is my responsibility to appropriate all that He has made available. Helping a disciple discover, develop, and utilize his gifts is simply a matter of helping him fulfill his responsibility to appropriate that which was made available to him through the cross of Christ.

In verses 12-31, we see the dependence of the members on the Body and the Body on the members. As we said earlier, the Spirit's endowment of specific gifts to each believer means that each has a uniquely significant place in the Body and a complete dependence upon every other believer.

This passage illustrates the foolishness of comparison. It is as ridiculous for me to compare myself with my brother as it is for my hand to compare itself with my foot. If I can understand my role in the Body and the role of my brothers and sisters, I can rejoice in their success because I know that it contributes to the Body as a whole.

While visiting Mexico City, I was shown a beautiful mosaic on the wall of one of the buildings at the university. The magnificent picture was composed by arranging stones of various colors and sizes in the form of a pattern. If any one of the stones had been removed, the picture would have been incomplete. The removal of your gifts from the Body would make what Christ is doing incomplete.

Consider a lineman on a football team. By himself, he cannot win the game. But his blocking is indispensable if the ball carrier is going

to score. An oboe in a symphony orchestra is not a solo instrument, but when played in harmony with the other instruments, it sounds beautiful.

In verses 11 and 18, we learn that God decides what function each of us is to play in the Body. The feelings of inadequacy or inferiority that many Christians experience often stem from a wrong comparison of oneself with others. For example, if I had been led to Christ and disciplined by a pastor, I would tend to compare myself with his speaking ability and then feel quite inferior if I could not duplicate his gift. If, however, a talented musician led me to Christ and disciplined me, I would be prone to compare myself with his abilities in the area of music. Again, if I could not duplicate his gifts, I would tend to experience feelings of inferiority.

We can readily see the importance of helping a man discover his gifts and realize their unique importance early. These gifts, whatever they are, assure his worth as an individual. It must be remembered, though, that there is no such thing as being given a gift solely for one's own personal use and edification. The very nature of the gift, whatever it may be, is such that it can be used to build up the Body of Christ. The value of the gift is measured by the degree to which it contributes to the well-being of the rest of the Christian family.

Verses 25-26 teach that the Body is dependent upon each of the members for its proper functioning. Paul says a strange thing in Colossians 1:24: "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind in the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His Body's sake, which is the Church." What I understand Paul to be saying here is that Christ in a certain sense is still suffering. He is not physically suffering, since that was finished at the cross; but as our Head, He continues to suffer, as 1 Corinthians 12:25-26 suggests. When the head is in danger of being hit, the hand immediately responds by trying to ward off the blow at the sacrifice of itself.

Any time one member of the Body suffers for the cause of Jesus Christ, it affects every other member in the Body. For example, when Jim Elliot and his four co-laborers were martyred in Ecuador, all of the Church suffered. The vacancy their death left became our responsibility. Again, adapting Paul's illustration in 1 Corinthians 12, when one of the limbs, let's say the leg, is amputated, the body can adjust, but it cannot function as well as it could before. We say therefore that the body is handicapped.

If a person's gifts are not being utilized for the well-being of the Body, he will not feel a part of the fellowship and will soon lose his sense of personal worth. This could be one reason organizations such as the Lions Club, the Optimists, and the Masonic Lodge are successful--they give their men a feeling of belonging and personal importance.

Discovering Your Gifts

Every believer needs to know what his gifts are and be utilizing them for the well-being of the Church. The Church is actually handicapped if any member's gifts are not being properly applied. How then do we help people discover and develop their gifts? Let me offer four suggestions.

- If he is a disciple, get him involved with people.

First Corinthians teaches that the purpose of spiritual gifts is to help edify the Body. Gifts are never for ourselves. If a person does not know what his gift is, it may be because he is not giving himself to other people. One discovers one's gifts by selfless giving. Therefore, encourage the person you are helping to become involved in the lives of other people. As he serves others, his gifts will come to light.

- Help him exercise any gift that you or he suspects he might have.

Let's take teaching as an example. If your man suspects that he has the gift of teaching but is not sure, encourage him to use every teaching opportunity he can. As he teaches, it will become evident to him whether he has the gift or not.

- Generally speaking, a person's gift lies in the area in which his interests lie, and where he can most easily exercise faith.

Let me illustrate this by my own life. I do not have the gift of healing. When I meet sick people, I find it very difficult to exercise faith in their being made well. I do, however, preach. And whereas I am always fearful and apprehensive about standing before an audience, I can, nonetheless, muster enough faith to do it.

- Have him exercise the potential gift in front of people who can give him an honest evaluation.

If your man thinks he has the gift of teaching, let some gifted teachers evaluate him. If he thinks he has the gift of speaking, let speakers evaluate him.

A word of caution is in order here. Not having a specific gift does not absolve you of responsibility in those areas where God has commanded obedience. Let's use evangelism as an example. It may very well be that you and I do not have the gift of evangelism, but God does command that we be witnesses. His commandment is not abrogated simply because we are not gifted in that particular area. I may not be a gifted evangelist, but I am still obligated to do evangelism.

The Gifts and Calling of God

God never asks a person to do something he cannot do. There are times when He may ask a person to do something he does not think he can do.

God asked Moses to represent Him before Pharaoh and the people of Egypt. Feeling very inadequate, Moses, in effect, replied to God, "Lord You have the wrong man." But God assured him that He had the right man and that He would endow Moses with whatever gifts were necessary to accomplish the task.

The gifts and calling of God always go hand in hand. Most churches have some form of ordination formalities for their pastors, usually preceded by an examination council. The council examines the man to see if he has the gifts and training necessary for the work of the ministry.

The man says to the church, "I am called of God to be a pastor."

The church in response, says, "We must examine you to see if we concur that you have the necessary gifts and call." Ordination, then, is a recognition of the fact that the gifts and calling of God go together.

It is imperative that early in the discipling process, the man begin to look for his gifts and develop them. His calling in life should be in harmony with whatever his gifts are. So many Christians are uncertain about their life's work simply because they are not sure of their gifts. The disciple's life is a fulfilling one because he is involved in the most satisfying and exciting thing life affords, namely, being involved in transforming people into the image of Jesus Christ.

To experience this fulfillment, however, the disciple's life must be in accordance with the way God has made him. His function is in harmony with his gifts. Whatever else the training of a disciple should include, helping him discover and develop his gifts must be part of it.

