

Lifelong Discipleship

Three Key Dimensions in Every Stage of Life

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Discipleship is not something that happens at one point in our lives, but continues in every stage of life. This session will look at how discipleship is important and valuable no matter our context, how the focus of discipleship changes over time, and the 3 dimensions of discipleship throughout our lives

Thesis:

Jesus called us to both be his disciples and to make disciples.

Therefore, discipleship is a key and foundational (I would say non-negotiable) element of His church and mission, as well as for His followers and all ministry.

Discipleship: Basic Definitions

What is a “Disciple”?

- “student”, “follower”, “apprentice”

Who is a disciple following?

- Jesus, we are disciples of Christ

What is Discipleship?

- The process of developing people into authentic, equipped, lifelong followers of Christ.

Dimensions of Discipleship:

Cognitive: knowing

... a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of faith and sound doctrine

1 Timothy 4:6

Character: being

... discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness... show yourself and example of those who believe

1 Timothy 4:7, 12

Competence: doing

Take pains with these things, be absorbed in them, so that your progress is evident to all.

1 Timothy 4:15

Lifelong Discipleship

Grounding: New Christians

Goal: Conversion

Duplication: Ministry and Leadership Development

Goal: Mobilization

Peer Discipleship: Partners for the long haul

Goal: Perseverance

Finishing Well: Completing a Godly legacy

Goal: Convergence

Dimensions of Discipleship

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Biblical Outcomes Bible Knowledge Orthodoxy Worldview Apologetics	Biblical Outcomes Transformation of mind and heart Substantial healing Fruits of the Spirit	Biblical Outcomes “handling accurately the word of truth” Persuasive witness Ministry development Joy of excellence (arête)
Learning Community Ephesians 4:15 I Corinthians 15:26 A generous supply of scripture discovery and sharing	Transformative Community Visible love Grace-based relationships Being knit together in love Colossians 2:2	Serving Community Ephesians 4:12 Reaching out in collaborative ministry A mobilized Home Church will always be more effective than sum of its parts
Discipleship Goals/Targets Bible study skill Course work Broad reading	Discipleship Goals/Targets Personal application In which fruits of the spirit does progress need to be made?	Discipleship Goals/Targets In what skills do I need to “excel still more”?

Three Dimensions of Discipleship in every stage of life

Grounding – Conversion:

- **Cognitive** – What God says in foundational areas and why we can trust them, resulting in a transformation of worldview
- **Character** – Learning to trust and subordinate to God
- **Competence** - Practicing service and love

Duplication – Mobilization

- **Cognitive** – values, principles, Gods view of people, overview of God’s work in history, clarity on the mission and the means
- **Character** – what impedes effective service?
- **Competence** – communication of the gospel, competent study and application of the bible, serving as a team, developing ministry skills.

Peer Discipleship – Perseverance

- **Cognitive** – Increasing understanding of who God really is and His broad desire to be Lord of every area of our life
- **Character** – connecting the “dots” between what we know and the reality of our hearts, increased awareness of what could take us out, fruits of the Spirit
- **Competence** – gaining excellence in key ministry areas, esp. in areas of gifting

Finishing Well – Convergence

- **Cognitive** – Increasing understanding of who God really is and His broad desire to be Lord of every area of our life
- **Character** – Am I the man or women I need to be to finish well?
- **Competence** – pursuing with zeal and joy the areas of gifting and ministry that God has given you.

Discipleship Questionnaire

Evaluate yourselves, your group and your leadership team

1. Looking at the table, where do you see opportunities to improve your discipleship?
 - a. Where do you see need in your own personal life?
 - b. Where do you see need in your discipling of others?
2. Think about your key relationships (peers, co-leaders, spouses). Do you have a vision for one another or are you in maintenance mode?
3. Do you have an honest thoughtful vision for people? Do you have objective goals and steps to reach those goals? What could God do with them?
4. What could neutralize or limit their ongoing and growing contribution to the kingdom?
 - a. Materialism, pull of the world/culture, cultural “mind” regarding life, family, vocation?
 - b. Matters of the heart, character, relationships, something they are “dug-in” on?
 - c. Poor habits – weakness in means of growth, health, skipping out of meetings
 - d. Lack of training, understanding, vision, challenge
 - e. Others
5. Can you clearly articulate what is at stake for them? What are we fighting/laboring for?
6. What barriers do you see in yourself and your team to effective discipleship
 - a. Low bar – are our goals and expectations in line with what God’s words says?
 - b. Cynicism – “it doesn’t work”, “they won’t respond”, “I can’t do it”
 - c. Comfort – “I don’t have time”, “it’s hard”, “challenging people is costly”
 - d. Code of silence – there are things in my own life I am not addressing
 - e. Lack of goals or vision
 - f. Withholding your hear – giving them information but not really given them our lives
 - g. Low energy or effort being put into our discipleship – shooting from the hip, using materials I used years ago without thought, random picking of books to read
 - h. Personally distracted by “other good things” – is discipleship in the HG setting a priority for us?
7. What will change in light of this discussion?