

Discipleship – Everyone a Learner and a Teacher

Introduction

Quotations: “I have always felt that doubt was the beginning of wisdom, and the fear of God was the end of wisdom” – Clarence Darrow

“The only true wisdom is knowing that you know nothing” – Socrates

“Belief is the death of intelligence” – Robert Anton Wilson

“If thou trusteth to the book called the Scripture, thou trusted to the rotting staff of fables and falsehood” – Thomas Paine

“Faith is believin’ what you know ain’t so” – Mark Twain

“Whoever trusts in his own mind is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom will be delivered” – God

John 17:16-19 They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. [17] Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. [18] As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. [19] And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.

The Believer is “set apart” by the truth. Sanctification is a process – and thus there is an on-going learning of the truth as we are sanctified by it.

I. What is a disciple? “One who engages in learning through instruction from another, pupil, apprentice.” While in this study we are going to focus on family and interpersonal discipleship, everyone is always being disciplined by someone or something.

II. The Greek word “mathetes” - “disciple” - A disciple is “one who engaged in learning.” Thus, we are all disciples all our lives. It is used throughout the New Testament to refer to the “disciples” of Jesus.

⇒ It is easy get the impression from the way the term is used in the NT that not everyone actually is a disciple, but such is not the case. Everyone is a *learner* and everyone is following something or someone.

⇒ One of the great challenges of living as a Christian is learning the faith from Scripture well enough to recognize in what ways we have been disciplined by a godless culture and in what ways we have been disciplined by Scripture.

2 Tim. 3:16-17 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, [17] that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

III. How does discipleship work between people? It works “both ways.” In other words, we are all learners. Why do parents fear that their children will get in “with the wrong crowd?” Because their children will be “disciplined” or taught wrong things by the people in that crowd. We are all also teachers. Others are being disciplined and taught by us. Here are some key questions we should ask ourselves then:

IV. Just consider how much material is in the book of Proverbs on the subject of friends and companions... here is a sampling.

Proverbs 4:14-15 [14] Do not enter the path of the wicked, And do not walk in the way of evil. [15] Avoid it, do not travel on it; Turn away from it and pass on.

Proverbs 5:8-9 [8] Remove your way far from her, And do not go near the door of her house, [9] Lest you give your honor to others, And your years to the cruel *one*; **[Adulterous woman]**
Proverbs 13:20 [20] He who walks with wise *men* will be wise, But the companion of fools will be destroyed.

Proverbs 22:24-25 [24] Make no friendship with an angry man, And with a furious man do not go, [25] Lest you learn his ways And set a snare for your soul.

Proverbs 23:19-21 [19] Hear, my son, and be wise; And guide your heart in the way. [20] Do not mix with winebibbers, *Or* with gluttonous eaters of meat; [21] For the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, And drowsiness will clothe *a man* with rags.

=> The underlying principle here is that of discipleship – that “learning” process. Who should we most desire to learn from? The godly – other godly individuals.

=> **Application point:** In light of this, we need to ask ourselves some key questions regarding, what is it that others would gain from being around me all day for 2 weeks?

A. What do my words and actions teach others?

B. What am I learning in my life?

C. What am I teaching by my actions about priorities?

D. Is the way I spend my time indicative of someone who recognizes Paul exhortation to the Ephesians:

Ephes. 5:15-17 See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, [16] redeeming the time, because the days are evil. [17] Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

V. The importance of the pulpit to discipleship - One of the reason there has been, of late, such an incredible amount of talk in Christian circles about discipleship is that the pulpit has fallen on very hard times of late. While there is a place for one on one discipleship and mentoring, one of the reasons Christ's church is so unhealthy lately is that men who occupy pulpits week-in and week-out have lost their confidence in the power and relevance of the text of Scripture.

VI. Why is this series called “How to Disciple Your Family and Others?”

A. Discipleship is inescapable – we will either do it in a well-thought out and intentional way and thus do it well, or we will do it poorly. Discipleship is always happening in all our relationships – Family and Others. Everyone most likely is a part of, was a part of, or will one day be a part of their own family – i.e. be married potentially with children, or be an aunt or uncle, a grandparent, niece, nephew, etc. Extended family relationships and friendships yield huge opportunities for fruitful discipleship. As a father and husband, my primary discipleship project is my wife and children.

B. But there are also many other men in my life that I engage with in what I would call “mutual discipleship.” We encourage and pray for one another, talk about the issues of our day, talk about the Word of God, etc. In his remarkable book “Made in America: The Shaping of American Evangelicalism,” Dr. Michael Scott Horton titled the final chapter: The Loss of Community. In it we find these quotes from the 1970 bestselling book, **The Greening of America, by social and legal scholar, Charles Reich:**

America is one vast, terrifying anti-community. ... The great organizations to which most people give their working and the apartments and suburbs to which they return at night are equally places of loneliness and alienation. Modern living has obliterated place, locality, and neighborhood, and given us the anonymous separateness of our existence. The family, the most basic social system, has been ruthlessly stripped to its functional essentials. Friendship has been coated over with a layer of impenetrable artificiality as men strive to live roles designed for them. Protocol, competition, hostility, and fear have replaced the warmth of the

circle of affection which might sustain man against a hostile universe.

VII. What's Missing From Your Family? I remember years ago listening to Focus on the Family on the radio to and from work and they had a little spot they played for a while where someone would ask: "What's missing from your family?" followed by a brief pause and then the answer came back as another question, "Your family?" What's my point here: Life in America, in 2012 is insufferably busy. Obviously, families need not always be together. In fact, it is probably unhealthy if they are. But the status quo of our day and place in the world and in history, if we are not intentional and determined in our efforts, we will not spend very much time together as families or together as friends.

Question: Can you think of any institution or activity in our society that actually *promote, facilitates, and encourages* families spending extended periods of time together?

VIII. Everyone's Intergenerational Responsibility Before God - Psalm 78:1-9

A. Our Responsibility to the Rising Generations – Psalm 78:1-9

1. **V1-3** – Where did Asaph hear all the things he shares in Psalm 78?
2. **V4** – What three things are we to tell to others, our children, and the generation to come? **1) The Praises of the Lord, 2) His Strength, & 3) His Wonderful works:**

[One of the great things and conversation pieces you can share with children is your own story – how you yourself became a Christian.]

3. **V5** – God "established a testimony," "appointed a law," and "commanded our fathers" that they should _____ to their _____.
4. **V6** – This gives us the purpose of discipleship and teaching the next generation God's "praises," "His Strength" and "His wonderful works which He has done." That they might _____ them That they might arise and declare them to their _____

Application point: As early as possible, your children should have "messages." What I mean is this: Given an opportunity, they should have something to say to others about the Lord. We should encourage the younger generation to be disciple-makers as part of their own discipleship. Paul told the same thing to Timothy - 2 Timothy 2:2 "And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." – i.e. "that they may arise and declare them to their children..."

5. **V7** – Three more purposes for discipling and teaching the rising generation:
That they may set their _____ in God
And not _____ the works of God
But _____ His commandments

6. **V8** – Consequences of failure to disciple and teach the next generation:
A _____ and _____ generation
A generation that did not set its _____ aright
And whose spirit was not _____ to God

7. **V9** – Do you hear how devastating this one verse of Scripture is in what it communicates? What did the children of Ephraim do in the day of battle? _____ . Ephraim refers to the entire Northern Kingdom of Israel (the 10 tribes) because it was the largest tribe.

⇒ **Notice, insult is added to injury, they fled in the day of battle even though they were armed with bows – a weapon which could strike the enemy from a long distance away! And still, they fled!**

VIV. A Sober Reminder: Judges 2:10-12 [10] When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the Lord nor the work which He had done for Israel. [11] Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served the Baals; [12] and they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and they followed other gods from among the gods of the people who were all around them, and they bowed down to them; and they provoked the Lord to anger.

⇒ One generation of fathers failed to teach the rising generation about the LORD, the very next generation served Baal.

⇒ The entire book of Judges describes some of the darkest days of apostasy in all of Israel's history.

⇒ **How important is the generation rising up after us? Every one of us should look at the youth and children and see ourselves, our future, and the future of the church on earth.**

Psalms 144:11-12 Rescue me and deliver me from the hand of foreigners, Whose mouth speaks lying words, And whose right hand is a right hand of falsehood-- [12] That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; That our daughters may be as pillars, Sculptured in palace style;