

“Upon this Rock I will Build My _____”

Part 5: Fostering Discipleship

PETER DEWITT
AGATHOS CHURCH
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Full Text (for reading on your own)

Student leads Another Student to the Lord!

Ryan shared how one of his students had missed a lot of school and how another student (a believer) came to Ryan and shared that the student who had been out was going through a very tough time emotionally. The student who came to Ryan wondered what she could do to help her friend. Ryan suggested “maybe you should just invite her to church.” The student ended up inviting her friend to church where she was touched by God. The believing student came to Ryan again and shared how her friend was touched by God at the evening service, but that she may not have gotten saved. She was asking Ryan for help. Ryan shared how he needs to be sensitive to it being a public school. The student said “well could we use your room during lunch so we could have a little bible study with you there?” Ryan agreed. Over the course of a few weeks, the believing student led the other student to the Lord who now goes to church with her every week!

A Need for More Intercession

Some of you are intercessors. You need to start interceding more. The Lord spoke to me recently through a dream saying that the level of intercession needs to go up. In Nehemiah, Nehemiah was never opposed by Sanballat and Tobiah when he was the cup bearer for the king. When Nehemiah was only employed earthly, there was no recorded demonic opposition. (Chapter 1)

Nehemiah hears that Jerusalem’s walls are in shambles, fasts, prays, says “Lord you have to do something about this.” The King then asks Nehemiah “why are you sorrowful of face, you are not sick, this must be sorrow of heart!” Nehemiah probably thought he might die. His job was to bring wine to the king - I am sure when the king wanted to drink heavily that he wanted a happy person to give him wine. Nehemiah thinks his life is in danger, but the king actually shows him favor - and probably as a result of Nehemiah fasting and praying for that specific reason.

The king shows Nehemiah favor “what do you need, how long do you need to be gone, etc.” Nehemiah says “and can you also write me a note so I can pass through all the provinces and also another note to the manager of your forrest - to give me all the building supplies we need for all the work we will do?” He gets it all.

Immediately what happens? Sanballat and Tobiah come against Nehemiah. Mark 4 tells us that the enemy is against our revelation, but Nehemiah makes it clear - the enemy is REALLY AGAINST our traction! Throughout Nehemiah (chapters 2-6) what you will see over and over is that Sanballat and Tobiah would consistently oppose Nehemiah's WORK:

- They would plan an attack - for the purpose of creating confusion.
- Or they would say they were writing a letter to the king accusing Nehemiah of raising an insurrection. They would accuse him and say "come let's talk now." **The enemy of our souls will try to get us to converse with accusation.**
- In chapter 6:10, Sanballat and Tobiah even send a false prophet. *"Afterward I came to the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah, the son of Mehetabel, who was a secret informer; and he said, "Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple, and let us close the doors of the temple, for they are coming to kill you; indeed, at night they will come to kill you."* Nehemiah answered *"And I said, "Should such a man as I flee? And who is there such as I who would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in!"* Nehemiah had a kingdom mandate on his life - to rebuild the walls. Here is someone trying to get him to not rebuild the walls. Nehemiah didn't know if this prophet was telling the truth. This was a prophet who had been a prophet before but had been secretly hired by Sanballat and Tobiah to tell a lie to Nehemiah and give him a false prophesy. Nehemiah (on principle) because he knows his calling says "I won't stop the work." *"Should such a man as I flee? And who is there such as I who would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in!"* **The church has been hiding in the church way too long.** Do you see how prophetic this phrasing is?

Do you remember the WWII general who showed his soldiers how to take a house that the Germans were in? "Do you see how to do it now? Do you understand???" The darkness should be afraid of the children of light because light always casts out darkness.

Nehemiah out of principle said "I will not flee." Watch what happens: *"Then I perceived that God had not sent him at all, but that he pronounced this prophecy against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him."* **Sometimes you will not get revelation about a situation until you operate in principle.** You think you are going to get a direct word from God, but He says "will you operate in what I've already told you?" THEN Nehemiah perceived!

"For this reason he was hired, that I should be afraid and act that way and sin, so that they might have cause for an evil report, that they might reproach me." The whole purpose was to get the people of God who were doing the work to be afraid - and to act that way and sin! Nehemiah had such a revelation of his calling in God that he knew that if he was to act out of fear - act out of reservations, in a reserved manner - it would actually be sin!

As we start to step more into traction with the things of the kingdom of God, you have to UP your intercession. You will experience more resistance from the enemy (I am not saying to focus on it - it's a small thing). You will experience more traction from the enemy because you are having traction moving forward. Yes, he resists your revelation ... but he really resists your traction.

Notice that in Nehemiah 4, that the people who are building the wall area actually carrying a sword. What's it mean? They have a builder's trowel in one hand and a sword in the other. They are building for the kingdom and interceding with the sword.

That's the call on our lives. You don't step into traction with the things of the kingdom not backed by prayer. You walk in to the things of the kingdom - you are on the front lines and going to take new ground and what do you yell? "COVER ME!" That's the intercession.

+1 / Peers / -1

The Lord has been highlighting mentorship and discipleship to Kenton. The way it works in concept is that there are 3 players in it: the person who is doing the discipling (+1), people who are peers (neutrals), and the person being discipled (-1).

When you are young in the Lord, you have many more +1's. As you grow many of those +1's become peers (neutrals) and you also start being a +1 to others. As we grow older, we lose some of our +1's and gain some more -1's.

Basically mentorship is breaking off a piece of your life and handing it to someone else. It is pulling someone to a higher place. It is taking what we have (our knowledge, wisdom of experience, favor, etc.) and offering it to someone in need of it.

When Kenton was a senior in high school he realized that there were many middle school students who did not have mentorship to help them navigate through those rocky stretches of early adolescence. So Kenton found a few +1's (teachers) who supported Kenton and his peers (0's) in developing a mentorship / discipleship program in which the HS students would mentor the MS students. The HS students would meet weekly, play games, give a short study or talk, worship, and then break into smaller discussion groups facilitated by the HS students. The HS students would listen to the MS, care for them, and pray for them.

The MS students felt believed in and cared for. Some of us need to be that for someone else. We can be a +1 for someone else!

It turns out the ministry Kenton started has continued for 20 years! It is still going strong today - continuing to be one of the more popular and successful ministries at the school.

May we have the humility to receive from +1's, and the courage to gather -1's.

When you only have +1's and no -1's, you become a Dead Sea. Both inputs and outputs are needed for a health body. Find your +1's and humbly receive from them, engage with your neutrals, and have the courage to reach out to your -1's.

My Experience being a -1 with Brad

Brad was the new senior pastor here about 7 years or so ago. We were riding together in a car and he had me read the second half of Proverbs 6:23 "*Reproofs of instruction are the way of life,*"

I think there are two things in that verse: (1) the reproofs of instruction are the pathway you want to take if you want to walk in fulness of life. (2) There is actually a way of life - a way of doing life - that continually engages with those that can offer the reproof of instruction. The reproofs of instruction are THE WAY OF LIFE. Brad was telling me that day "just settle in to this way of life where you are receiving the reproofs of instruction. When you step outside of that, life becomes very difficult. When you stay inside of that, life goes really well. So Brad told me that day that I was praying in tongues too loudly in group prayer meetings. He was totally right. Let me recount some other discipleship / +1 things for you to help make it practical:

Brad and I were praying for the church. Both of us were on our face before the Lord and started to pray. In my gusto I started making petition to the Lord. "Lord do this, Lord bless that ..." Brad kindly interrupted "I really prefer to praise the Lord for a period of time before I make petition if I can. Can we just praise the Lord for a while?" He was teaching me how to pray. What I was doing didn't sit right with him and what he had learned in his years with the Lord so he just adjusted it. How wonderful to learn from someone else's experience!

Another time Brad came over for dinner at our house and dinner was running late. So Brad said "hey guys, I don't want to be anti-social, but since dinner isn't quite ready yet ... I didn't get all the time in the Word I was hoping to get today so could I read the Word out loud as dinner finishes up?" What was Brad doing? He's training us. He has a goal for his time in the Word, he got some of it in but not all of it. He didn't want to be anti-social but he wanted to get his time in the Word done and by doing so he also demonstrated this is how seriously he takes it.

Many many many many times Brad has gone out of his way to tell me his entire scriptural thought-process behind decisions he's making in business, ministry, relationships, etc. I don't even have to pry, he's just offering that insight. He knows I'm listening because about 3 years later I will call him and say "hey I've got this situation ... do you remember when you told me that one story ... is this like that?" Brad will confirm "this is EXACTLY that - this is EXACTLY why I taught you that ... yes you've totally got it ... remember _____ scripture ..." then he would re-teach it.

Brad was praying for me. Do you know how I know he was praying for me - beyond him telling me that he does? Many times he had conversations with me that caused me to move from one place to another very seamlessly. Do you know how you have breakthrough conversations with someone? YOU PRAY for the conversation ahead of time ... really more accurately, you pray for the PERSON ahead of time and sometimes for months.

The Lord has taught me that all of discipleship is on the foundation of prayer for the person you are discipling. If you want to start discipling someone, start praying for them. In person with them, I've found that there are three ways to do it. (Obviously there is the teaching you do in discipleship, but I am talking about the more connective part that often drives the teaching):

1) Pastoral way: "Hey, I've noticed this thing going on in our life for a while ... I had a thought for you ..." Then I share a thought with them, teach them accordingly, and maybe adjust something for them. That is pastoral. I am identifying something for them that's in their life. I see it, they know I see it, I tell them that I see it, and then I address it. PASTORAL.

2) Prophetic way: Another way I'll address things is prophetically. I will have a sense of something. It's not necessarily something I've seen - I just got it prophetically. I was praying for them or thought of them and something just dropped into my heart. I try to be clear with them "it's not necessarily that I see anything, it's just a thought I had for you." PROPHETIC.

*** Many times the Lord will make it clear to me or lead me to minister in either a more pastoral or more prophetic manner. Sometimes He will correct me "I know you got this prophetically originally, but I want you to address it pastorally - more directly." ***

3) Prayer way: Sometimes I will sense "it's not time to address anything." I've been praying for them, and I ask God what I am supposed to do and he may just say "pray more." On time I asked Brad how he handles certain situations and he told me that sometimes the best approach is to just sic the Holy Spirit on them! :) "Holy Spirit move in their life! ..."

Brad had a vision for me and he was often drawing me out or pressing me forward into that vision. This is what disciplers do.

Praise God, by the way, for my earthly daddy ... He set this up so beautifully for me. I have the heart to receive this sort of input perhaps more easily than some because of my wonderful father.

My Experience being a -1 with Mark

Another spiritual father to me has been Mark Crawford. Here's my verse to share to learn something about how he's mentored me: Proverbs 15:14 *"The heart of him who has understanding seeks*

knowledge, But the mouth of fools feeds on foolishness.” The heart of him who has understanding seeks knowledge.

About 5 or 6 years ago, Mark was in town and we had a small prayer gathering. Mark told me after the prayer gather “you need mentoring in the prophetic.” I said “OK ...” He said “I happen to know a guy.” (Mark is a seasoned apostle / prophet.) I said “so you are offering?” He says “I happen to know a guy.” Then he says “but I will *not* track you down.” I said “so should I email you?” Mark calmly says “that would be fine.”

Let me explain to you what is going on behind the scenes there. Mark is in a prayer meeting with me and had the Father’s heart come upon his heart for me, sees that I need mentoring, knows that he can provide it, and probably has more vision for my life prophetically than I do. What does he actually say? “you need mentoring prophetically. I happen to know a guy. I am not going to track you down.” So should I email you? “That’d be fine.”

Co-dependency is caring more about someone else’s development than they care about it for themselves. You need to be careful not to develop co-dependent relationships in terms of discipleship. How do you do that?

One of the first things you need to know is what Proverbs 15:14 says “*The heart of him who has understanding seeks knowledge.*” I am here to tell you something very strong today ... you have received as much discipleship in your life as you’ve wanted.

It says it right there: The heart of him who has understanding seeks knowledge.

Mark was throwing me the softest of pitches - to highlight an opportunity that was available to me. “Are you really going to not develop yourself? Do you realize that you need development?” He as very kindly giving me this one shot. He was saying “I see something in you, I don’t know if you see it in you. I can help you, but I am not going to track you down.” It was a very gentle offer that didn’t create co-dependency but helped in case I was somehow not seeing both my need for mentoring and his availability for it.

After that point, Mark and I started Skyping monthly. Boy it was so helpful being developed prophetically! Brad was so excited about it - he told me “I am so glad you are meeting with Mark consistently.” Do you know why? Brad is a teacher. Brad knew me well - and I can teach - but he knew that I am wired more prophetically. The whole time Brad was discipling me he was thinking “I would love to have Peter have another voice in his life that would get that part of him a little bit better.”

That’s exactly what Mark told me when we started these calls. He said “Peter, so many prophets and prophetic people are mis-understood. When I meet with young prophets it is so important to me

that they know there is someone who understands how they are wired - someone who understands how they process. Someone who doesn't think they are odd that when they see 12:12 on the clock they think God is speaking about sonship!"

(It must mean something! I went to the public restroom and there was a coin in the toilet. It means something!) Maybe! A more teacher-wired person is thinking "OK, whatever, I have the principles of the Word of God ... what's that even needed for" whereas a more prophetically wired person is going to be thinking "it means something!" Because of that us more prophetically wired folks will pick up a lot more ... and sometimes some stuff that wasn't even there! So you need mentoring in that sort of way.

So, Mark's mentoring ended up being very very fruitful for me.

Backstory of being a -1 with Mark

Now, let me give some more back story ...

Two or three years previous to that (so about 8 or 9 years ago), Mark had been in town and had offered to me then to Skype with me monthly - to disciple me. I started Skyping with him. We met a couple times and it was really good.

Then, I missed a meeting. We had a meeting scheduled. I woke up the next morning to a couple emails in my inbox from him. The first said "on Skype when you're ready" and the second said "hey looks like maybe you forgot, we can schedule another time." Very gracious.

We schedule another time to meet. Now Mark had already told me that I had leadership calling on my life. So he of course intended to work on leadership with me some. So at the beginning of this next call (after I had missed a meeting) Mark says "you know Peter, the first step of leadership is self-leadership."

Boy that was a good teaching he gave me! I've run with that ever since then. There are 3 stages of leadership: (1) led well by someone else, (2) lead yourself, (3) lead others.

Many people trying to lead others can't lead others well because they can't lead themselves well. Lord help me! If you think you stand take heed lest you fall. That self-control thing will go out the window when everything is going well and then all of a sudden you wonder why your leadership is out here isn't doing as well so you have to ask the question "are you leading IN here as well?" If not, get back to basics.

If you say "I've just never been able to lead IN here well." Do you know why? Maybe you didn't get that first step - where you learned to be led well by someone else. If you can't take orders, you can't give yourself orders ... and if you cannot give yourself orders, you can't give orders to others.

So Mark tells me that self leadership is the first step of leadership. So sweet! Nothing Mark said in that meeting was offended or anything. He wasn't any less generous or kind toward me during that meeting. He loved me just as much as he loved me before ... but do you know what I did? I shrunk back.

But we are not of those who shrink back! I shrunk back and I stopped pursuing meeting with him. Two years later, we were in a prayer meeting and he says "you need mentoring in the prophetic ... I happen to know a guy ... but I am not going to track you down."

Shame steals discipleship.

Shame ... Saboteur of Mentorship

Shame steals discipleship. Let's look at Numbers 6:24-26 "*The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.*" This is a blessing about the face of God - the face of God being visible to your face ... about His face shining upon you.

Have you ever run into someone you've known before and their face is not shining when they see you? By contrast, you run into another old friend and their face "lights up" when they see you. That's a reality. The heart is seen through the eyes. Their eyes light up when they see you. Their face is shining upon you!

Now let's look at Psalms 34:5. Renee (and I think Brenda too) has been having this word about shame so I'm going after this a little. Psalms 34:5 says "*They looked to Him and were radiant, and their faces were not ashamed.*"

In the Bible, a face that shines is the opposite of shame. They looked to Him (the Lord bless you and keep you ... make His face shine upon you ... lift up His countenance upon you ...) You look to Him, His face is shining upon you, you were radiant, and your faces were not ashamed!

Lack of shame comes from a knowledge of the Father's acceptance of you.

When you know the Father's acceptance towards you, when you know that His face lights up when He sees you, then you don't have shame.

Mark's face was not lighting-up any less because I missed a meeting ... but I drew back in shame. He did not shame me, but I drew back in shame ... because I had a history of shame.

Let's go off the deep end a little bit to go after this shame thing a little bit more.

What is Shame?

Proverbs 11:2 is a really important verse about shame. A lot of scriptural concepts are actually defined in the book of Proverbs. Very helpful! Proverbs 28:26 says *"He who trusts in his own heart is a fool," What's a fool? "Someone who trusts in his own heart."* Similarly, it says in Proverbs 21:24 *"A proud and haughty man— "Scoffer" is his name; He acts with arrogant pride."* It's giving you a definition for who a scoffer is. Knowing this, now whenever else you see "scoffer" in the Word you can think "oh, that's what a scoffer is ... Proverbs 28:26 says it." Proverbs has a lot of definitions.

Let's look at Proverbs 11:2 *"When pride comes, then comes shame."* That's the root of shame. This is really helpful. If you are struggling with shame, you have a problem with pride.

Now, the wounds of a friend are better than the kisses of an enemy. So, I might have wounded you, but that's love.

OK, now, let me tell you what shame is ... Shame is self-imposed relational separation. What did I do with Mark? He told me "you know the first step of leadership is self leadership." That was a blow that was a blessing. That whole revelation I shared about (1) led well by others, (2) lead yourself well, (3) lead others ... that all came from him - what he said that day. About 4-5 years later I got that revelation when I was consulting in education. What I am saying is that was a beautiful thing that he said to me and yet out of MY shame (there was nothing he did to shame me; his face was still shining, he was still setting up more meetings with me). Yet out of that shame, what I did is I went and hid.

Shame is self-imposed relational separation. That's the effect of shame. You'll separate yourself from connection.

Pride and Humility

OK, let's go a little bit deeper.

Let's look at pride. Remember "when pride comes, then comes shame." Pride is finding identity apart from God. That's my definition of pride "identity apart from God." Humility is "identity in God." It's that simple. What's humility? Identity fully in God. What's pride? Identity in some part apart from God.

In other words, pride is identity through separation (relational separation). What's shame? Self-imposed relational separation.

Pride is identity apart from God - or identity through separation and shame is self-imposed relational separation. This sabotages discipleship. It almost did it with me and Mark. Praise God Mark reached back out ... not to create a co-dependent arrangement where he cared more about it than me (he

knew he couldn't track me down about my own growth). This is like Mr. Miagi in the Karate Kid. The kid wants to learn karate from a master. What does Mr. Miagi do? Give him a bunch of seemingly meaningless but actually applicable tasks (paint the fence, wax the car, etc.). What's he actually seeing? "Is this guy serious?" Because there's a truth ... the heart of him who has understanding WILL seek out knowledge. You have experienced as much discipleship as you've sought. And I'm giving you a hint ... a major de-railer of the discipleship train in your life is shame.

We've learned to operate in relational hiddenness instead of relational connection. When you operate in relational connection it provides an opportunity for discipleship.

While we are on this topic (pride being identity apart from relationship and humility being identity in relationship). Now, grace is God's willingness to use His power and ability on our behalf. That's the definition of grace God gave Brad. Brad had been asking God "what's grace ... it's all over the Word ... what is it exactly?" God gave Brad a download "grace is my willingness to use My power and ability on your behalf."

Mentorship is the grace of another extended to you.

Mentorship is their power and ability willingly extended to you. That's mentorship. When you mentor someone, you are extending willingly your power, your ability, your favor, your background - your capacity to them! That's mentorship.

So mentorship is extending the grace that you are carrying to someone else - correct? So being mentored is receiving grace from someone else - right? It's their power and ability and they are giving it to you willingly ... that's grace.

What does God do? I am trying to answer the question of how you establish these +1 / Peer / -1 relationships.

Listen - everyone knows how to do a peer relationship. If you have all peer relationships in a church, you do not have a family, you have an orphanage. In an orphanage, everybody is a kid, but the kids have not yet been afforded the opportunity to be a son or a daughter - because there's an absence of mothers and fathers. If everyone's a peer, it's an orphanage, not a family.

God gives grace to the _____. He gives grace to the humble. Who do you give grace to? How do you identify a -1? They're humble.

God gives grace - He extends His power and ability - on behalf of someone that is humble. Who do you give grace to? Who are you going to extend your power and ability to if you want to be like God - if you want to be like God? To the humble.

What does God do for those who are not humble? He resists them or opposes them. He opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.

In mentorship relationships what do I do with the proud? I oppose them. I resist them.

Honor Releases Reward

Guys, it's so crazy. (You have to hear my heart here ... it's pure). I am carrying a gift of God. In fact, according to Ephesians 4 I (if I am a 5-fold minister) I am a gift from Christ that is expressed in places that I go. It has nothing to do with me. I am carrying it - which is great, fun, and blesses people.

Typically when I go place I have something to give. "Oh yeah because you're so smart?" NOT BECAUSE OF THAT! It's just that the Lord will put something on my heart and I will give it to them. It's happened enough that it has become a way of life for me. I am fine if it doesn't happen, but it happens frequently or me.

Sometimes though I will be in a place for a couple hours and I am thinking "boy there has not been anything really good or revelatory here yet ... He hasn't done that thing where He drops something in my heart exactly." The Bible is clear ... the men prophesied not of their own will but of the will of God ... according to what God gave them! So if I am sitting there I can't develop a prophesy on my own will. "Boy I think they would really like to hear this ... let me say it." No! That's a little like the guy that was hired by Sanballat and Tobiah - we don't want to fall by the error of Balaam.

So I will be in these situations, sometimes for a few hours, and nothing has dropped into my heart for them. Then, they will either honor me or give me a gift. Then within minutes (without me even trying) I get a prophetic word for them. (Again, I know this can sound wrong - my heart is pure.) The bible says that if you honor a prophet, you receive a prophet's reward. He really meant it. People say "yes my heart is right towards them." What else does honor look like?

People have been asking me about where Megan and I give offerings. We give offerings where there is soil that produces the fruit that we are wanting to see more of in our lives. Most people give offerings to places of greatest need. We give offerings primarily to places of greatest fruit. (They may be taking care of needs too). We also give to some benevolence ministries because the bible says that when we "give to the poor, we lend to the Lord." We have this construct:

- Tithes: 10% off the top. First fruits.
- Offerings: where do you give offerings? Wherever you want to (in the Lord). Don't give an offering to Planned Parenthood praise God. The government should hear that too ... it is a murder organization.

- So we give offerings to the poor. But that is not our primary thing because if you only put band-aids on things, you will not produce transformation.
- Our primary place of offerings is to sow into the best soil - not the places of greatest need or the places of greatest begging - the places of greatest fruit. So we sow there.
- An honor offering. You are giving to a place that might not even have need, but they deserve your honor. This is Kingdom. When kings go to kings they bring a gift. The kings don't need the gift, but it's the right thing to do. This is about honor.

Perhaps there is this certain apostle that has been such a blessing to your life, or there is someone who has discipled you in such a way (they've been a true spiritual father or mother to you) and you just feel like you need to honor them. You know they don't have a formal ministry. You know they don't have a 501c(3) ... but that's not what giving is about anyway! They deserve honor. So you cook them dinner "this whole dinner is about honoring you - and what you've poured into my life." When you honor, you receive.

Discipleship is a Family Function

Again, we are talking about +1/ peers / -1.

In Ephesians 3:14-14 we read *"For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,"* God is Father, Son, Holy Spirit. As soon as you talk about God, you are enveloping the concept of family. In God is Father and Son, Son and Father. You cannot talk about God without talking about family. His name is family "Father, Son ..."

So every family on earth gets the family concept from heaven where the family concept originated *"Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named."* Here's the progression. Family at Ephesians 3:14-15 which then leads to classic scriptures about love: *"to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us ..."* Family, done right, produces a revelation of love!

After the revelation of love. Paul goes right into Ephesians 4 which is talking about the 5-fold ministry. *"And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ"* Now what we see is that this will produce a mature man ... *"to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine."* We are equipped for the works of service and every part of the body builds itself up through love.

Now, what's the progression?

- Family
- Revelation of Love
- Leadership within the church: note that you will never fully receive leadership within the church without a revelation of love. Because that's how you learn to speak the truth in love. You are getting the teaching from church leaders on the foundation of love and then you can do the same thing ... speak the truth in love. What this does is it produces growth and maturity in the body.

Here's the point. All the maturity that's happening here, all of the growth that's happening in the body, all the discipleship, all of the +1 / -1 relationships are in the context of family.

Discipleship is a family function.

We are talking about ekklesia. How do you bring the kingdom? The most sustained way to bring the Kingdom is to disciple the next generation of believers who become disciplers of the next generation of believers in every single sphere of society and the kingdoms of this world will gradually become the kingdoms of our God.

How do you do discipleship?

We've been talking about the humility piece, but now there is this piece ... discipleship is a family function. Maturity comes in the context of family.

Fathers are different than instructors. You have many instructors in Christ, but you don't have many fathers. It's a very different gear. I will try to talk more on that next time.

Again, this family concept:

1 Peter 2:2 *"as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby"* BABIES

Hebrews 5:12-14 *"For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."* MILK, BABE, FULL AGE

1 John 2 talks about little children, young men, and fathers. Growing into maturity is presented in the family construct scripturally.

If it is all peers, it's not a family, it's an orphanage. The core goal of family is your maturity through love. The construct of family can produce your maturity more than any instructor is able to do.

Proverbs 4:1 says this *"Hear, my children, the instruction of a father ..."*

Pauls said *"I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn you. For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Therefore I urge you, imitate me."* (1 Cor. 4:14-16)

I am going to be commissioning all of our members to be both discipled and discipling. If you have not been a son or a daughter, you cannot be a father or a mother.

Many of us feel a disconnect when we think about discipling someone and the reason is because the only gear we feel like we have is the instructional gear of discipleship. The instructional gear is not the baseline of discipleship - it's a tool. The baseline of discipleship is a loving family relationship. It's you as a mother or a father to a new-born babe who is earnestly craving the pure spiritual milk of the Word which you are nursing them with.

Do you understand this? It means that what you've digested and made into milk you are feeding to those who can't yet chew their own food.

Where do they get that from? Latched on to *you*.

We live in a culture that says "if I am afraid of connection relationally, don't worry, I will learn it on my own and after learning it on my own I will come back to you." The Word of God is saying, don't do that. It's connection; it's relationship. It's connection; it's relationship.

Fathers and sons ... When you mentor, your identity is never as a father or a mother. You only have one identity. Jesus said "don't call one another father." Your identity is as a son. You can have spiritual fathers and mothers - you understand what they are. But as I am mentoring, I am playing the role of father. How can I play that role? Because I am still just a son.