

“Upon this Rock I will Build My _____”

Part 9: What Makes a Good DiscipleR (part 2)

PETER DEWITT
AGATHOS CHURCH
JULY 1ST, 2018

Full Text (for reading on your own)

Discipleship Testimony!

From Sam and Kelly

Last time we had dinner, do you remember us telling you about an old childhood friend who has recently come to know Jesus? We had challenged her to reading the Bible straight through, and she started right away! For at least a couple of months now, she's been texting and calling us with all sorts of questions each week from her readings. Example: "When you have a moment, I would like to talk about burnt offerings, wives, and other religions vs ours." LOL.

Recently, we've seen the questions move into relational discovery, and it's so so beautiful. "So when you were in this process of knowing Jesus, it didn't just poof happen right?? I want to trust in him completely find strength in him and feel like I am more and more but I still have a hard time with it or I do things (sin) and take matters into my own hands. I know he is real and with me but how do you let him take over and surrender? How did you? Did it take a long time?"

What beautiful questions! What do you notice about this testimony through the lens of "what makes a good disciple?" There is humility. There is "being known." They are asking questions which relates to hunger.

*And one of our favorites from last week... "What do you think about giving money to the church? I haven't given any money to the church yet and I feel like at some point I should probably reach out and help or do my part with serving others." ...To which Sam and then tagged-teamed on a call about tithing :). The result: Her first time ever tithing was on Father's day. (What a perfect day to start giving to her Heavenly Father!) AND then I received this message mid week: "Kelly, this may sound like crazy but I gave money for the whole month last Sunday and I just got a random check from Nissan (where I lease my car) for the **same amount plus thirteen cents that I just gave to the church** and I don't even know why I am getting a check from them.*

God is so GOOD!

Characteristic #1 of a Good DiscipleR: A Vibrant Connection with God

A good discipler has a vibrant connection with God - everything flows out of that. In John 15:4-8, Jesus says *"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you^[b] will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples."*

He's the vine, we are the branches. Apart from Him, we can do nothing - that includes ministering. Apart from Him we cannot minister. My effectiveness comes through my connection to Him. My connection to Him is found in His Word and prayer. If I notice other things pushing my time in the Word to later in the day for instance I will ask myself "what's the big hurry? Get in the Word. Get the Father's heart for the day.

A lot of people make to-do lists before they get in the Word. If we commit our work to the Lord, He will establish our thoughts ... He will put them in order. You commit your work to the Lord and trust that after that time and during that time as ideas and to-do's come to you, those items get put onto paper and you start to form your to-do list.

Then, you operate in your to-do list out of a place of peace!

You may think this is unrelated to having a vibrant connection with God but I don't know anything else that keeps more people out of the Word and out of prayer than time commitments and time constraints. These are supernatural secrets about how to breakthrough time constraints!

How many of you have not gotten your to-do list to DONE in a given day before? All of us! The key is you operate in your to do list out of peace. The Lord says in Isaiah that He makes our task-master (the one managing our tasks ... our to-do list) peace. So you are governed out of a place of peace. Let the peace of the Lord RULE in your heart. His peace surpasses our understanding.

So He establishes our thoughts early in the day and His peace leads us throughout the day.

Characteristic #2 of a Good DiscipleR: Demonstrates Results

John 10:31-38 *"Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, "Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?" The Jews answered Him, saying, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God." Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, "You are gods" '? If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), do you say of Him*

whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him."

When you are discipling you are actually going to make a really bold claim ... I am going to tell that believer that they are a son or daughter of God! I am also going to tell them "I'm a son of God." The religious spirit does not like that. That's what happened here ... Jesus told the religious that He was the Son of God. What was Jesus' response? "If you don't believe Me, believe the works."

If I demonstrate results in my life that look like fruit that can only come from Heaven, it makes it much easier for the person I am discipling to receive the truth that they ARE a child of God, that they ARE a new creation in Christ Jesus!

If I have stories about backs, shoulders, and knees being totally healed through the laying on of hands ... Or if I give them a prophetic word that leaves them thinking "how did you know that? It's like you were answering the question I was asking to the Lord ..." When you demonstrate results, it opens their heart up to the revelation of who they are in God. A good discipler not only abides in Christ, but bears fruit and so proves themselves to be a disciple. By this the Father is glorified. It's natural that you bear fruit as a disciple. It proves that you are a disciple and it shows them that this is what being a disciple looks like.

Do you remember the 3 miraculous things that happened with Megan and me before I got saved? First Megan loved people like I hadn't seen before. That's miraculous ... it only comes from Heaven. Second she prayed for the hand tremors I had since I was a kid and they went away and I did not need to take medicine any more. The third was that on the night I got saved I had a demonic vision. We prayed in Jesus' Name and it went!

Demonstrate results. What's the action item? Catalog and share your testimonies. Ps. 78 talks all about it. You want the next generation to know your testimonies! Every testimony I have in the Lord I bet 10-15 people end up hearing it. I get excited to share what I've seen. If people hear your testimonies it prophesies it into their life. Catalog and share your testimonies. When God gives you a testimony, makes sure others hear it (unless He tells you for some reason not to share that one ... which He can do).

Characteristic #3 of a Good DiscipleR: Share Process & Thought Process

Sharing **PROCESS** ... Paul says in 1 Tim. 1:12-17 *"And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an [d]insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ*

Jesus. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen."

Notice that Paul did not stop at v.12 about God counting him "faithful" and "putting him into the ministry." Watch what happens next ... Paul clarifies FROM WHERE HE CAME! Blasphemer. Persecutor. Insolent man. Chief sinner.

Do you see what that does for the person you are discipling ... when you share your process? They can't know where you came from if they didn't know you then!

I had anxiety so bad someone recommended that I get OCD medication. It's helpful to know that's how I used to be!

If you are discipling someone you need to share your process with them. (Maybe you don't share everything with them ... they may not be faithful enough to hear some of the things) ... but you have to share some of it. They need to know where you came from or else you will actually imprison them to your success ... because they don't see the pathway to get to where you've got.

Sharing **THOUGHT PROCESS** ... Acts 20:18-20 *"You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you, serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews; how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house,*

Paul was very deliberate as a discipler. He kept back NOTHING that was helpful. Let me give a hypothetical scenario that is very plausible ... Let's say I am discipling someone and we are meeting at Starbucks.

(By the way, if you are a disciple ... if you are receiving from someone ... pay for their order at Starbucks. It's not a law but it is honor. Don't you want to receive their reward? You can honor them in your heart but you can also honor them by buying their drink. They are doing you a tremendous favor by meeting with you and they are happy to do it! But you in honor can go out of your way to act as the Kingdom and buy their drink. Even if they make \$500/hr. and you make \$5/hr ... save up your money and buy their drink for them each week. I am just telling you the heart of the Kingdom. God will make sure you no longer make \$5/hr but instead much more than that because they are pouring into your life and it's going to produce results. Honor that person that is pouring into your life. A good way to do that is to just buy their drink. I would never ask for this honor b/c we love cheerful givers but speaking to you all as disciples I just want to encourage us that that is the right

heart attitude. Not a rule of law. Just a heart-stance of honor. The old saying “put your money where your mouth is” holds true here. If you really honor that person then you will do something that shows it. That’s all.)

So again, let’s hypothetically say I am discipling someone and we are meeting at Starbucks and the lady behind the counter has a hurt wrist and I just say “sometimes when I pray for people they are healed ... could I pray for your wrist ... I actually mean like right now ... I will just hold your hand and pray for your wrist.” They say “OK sure.” I pray and ask if she feels anything. She reports warm sensations going through her wrist as I pray and that it feels some amount better. The disciple is right there and they are buying my drink and we go sit down.

When we sit down for our hour together that day if I **don’t** spend the first 10 minutes sharing my thought process and answering “under the hood / behind the scenes” questions about praying for that worker’s healing I AM CRAZY! They just saw me do it! If they are hungry, they ought to have questions about it if that’s not something they typically do. Secondly, I should make a point to share my thought process with them from start to finish so that they can go do it tomorrow!

So, share you process overall and share your thought process.

Characteristic #4 of a Good DiscipleR: Intentionally Relational

In Genesis 1:26 God said *“Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”*

Is Heaven isolation-al or relational? Even God is relational in the Trinity. You can’t represent God correctly in a non-relational basis. Paul said in 1 Cor. 11:1 *“Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.”* As a discipler you have to model a relational basis with the person you are discipling. What you’ve received from the Father about how He relates to you ... about how He speaks with you ... about how patient He is with you ... about how He works with you ... about how He doesn’t pull away when you are struggling but instead draws near to you ... that’s exactly what we want to imitate with them so that they can imitate that from us. *“Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.”*

So we are actually modeling Heaven when we operate relationally with people.

The other half of this commentary on being intentionally relational is the word INTENTIONAL. 1 Corinthians 15:46 *“However, the spiritual is not **first**, but the **natural**, and afterward the spiritual.”*

You may say “I don’t have many encounters with the Lord.” Do you schedule time for encounters? “I haven’t been getting that much revelation from the Word.” Do you schedule time for the Word? That’s what this verse from Corinthians is saying. When you naturally schedule something in your

physical planner you can set yourself up for a supernatural encounter. First the natural then the spiritual.

Some people that you'll disciple will be really good at the informal thing. You may start to think "it would be really good if we could meet ... this is not quite a text message question." Do you know why that is rubbing you a little bit wrongly? Because you know the Father. You know He is relational. You know that He's intentional. Something about how they are operating is not quite intentional. It's sort of flippant. They send you a quick text message. "Can't you respond to that deep question about the nature of God in like 3 sentences using emojis? Because I can't think ahead a week to get my schedule together to ask you for an hour of your time at a certain time. I know that you said you're available but I can't yet actually plan myself." So if you are a seasoned believer and it doesn't sit right with you that they are only doing things informally ... the likely reason it doesn't sit right with you is because it's not right!

When something doesn't sit right with you ... as iron sharpens iron so one man sharpens another ... you are actually going to help them by addressing that. You are not going to help them by not addressing that.

So I may respond I can re-orient towards a more formal meeting or phone call. I don't need to address all those things in their heart I just need to do first the natural then the spiritual ... ask them for a meeting time. "Hey I think I could respond to your question much better if we could meet." Do you know what that will help their heart do? Be a little bit more formal and intentional in how they are seeking the Lord.

Conversely there are some people that are awesome and the formal, purposeful meet-up. "Tell me when to meet ... I will be ready for THE meeting!" They will pray in tongues for an hour beforehand so they feel really spirit-filled and look really good to you ... but they don't want you to talk to them during the week when they are having panic attacks. Those people need to see the heart of the Father too ... specifically that He doesn't draw away when you are having trouble ... He will meet you at ANY point in your week!

If you notice one person will only be formal, work with them on the informality of relationship. If you notice that a person will only be informal, work with them on the formality, planning, and intentionality of relationship. What you've learned from the Father you will be demonstrating to them and by addressing natural scheduling things you will be helping to release spiritual breakthroughs in their life! First the natural, then the spiritual.

Characteristic #5 of a Good DiscipleR: Patient

1 Corinthians 13:1-8 says *"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels ... have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body [a]to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. Love suffers long (is patient) and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, [c]thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails."*

Love is patient. When you are discipling somebody, showing them the love of the Father is being patient with them. It's just going to take time.

God is so long suffering with each of us and He wants us to be so with one another.

Megan was so patient with me as God worked me through anxiety. It wasn't that I wasn't changing. Quite the opposite. I was invested in the Lord. I was drawing near to God. I was being transformed. But there were layers with that anxiety thing for me. She was so patient with me.

By the way, check out this amazing verse on patience: 2 Tim. 4:2 *"Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering (patience) and teaching."* Teaching second? Patience first? Paul told the pastor of the church at Ephesus "convince, rebuke, exhort with all patience and when necessary teaching."

The action item here is to pray for them first and then teach. God will do the work in their heart.

Characteristic #6 of a Good DiscipleR: Has a Vision for the Disciple

The thing that helps you have patience with your disciples is having a vision for them. The first part of that vision is knowing who that person is IN CHRIST (2 Cor. 5:16-17) ... that we regard them no longer according to their flesh but according to being a new creation in Christ!

But the second part of having God's vision for your disciple is having God's vision specifically for THEM as a person. Who has God made them to be? You can get that vision by praying for them. Sometimes God will just drop things on your heart for them.

When I was going through anxiety stuff Megan KNEW that wasn't who I was in Christ which gave her patience and confidence that the Lord would do the work. If I continued going to the Lord, God would do the work!

Remember when Jesus called Andrew and Peter? *"And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were*

fishermen. Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." They immediately left their nets and followed Him." (Mt. 4:18-20) Jesus had a vision for his discipleship of them!

Characteristic #7 of a Good DiscipleR: Directs the Disciple to the Lord!

John 8:31-32 " Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Newsflash: if they abide in His word they are HIS DISCIPLES not yours! Now you can be a shepherd and there is a chief shepherd. I am not saying to not see them as your disciple. Paul modeled that ... but if you are discipling them well you are discipling them into the Lord - not into yourself!

How can I guarantee that? Remember the first point? If I am abiding in the Lord, who am I going to connect them to? The vine! So much as I am abiding in the vine, what will happen naturally is I will connect them to the vine. There are reasons for that I believe but suffice it to say "that is what will happen!"

The goal of parenting is not to stop mentoring them once they are an adult but it is that you get them to adulthood! They should mature.

You do not want to be someone's God. Teach them how to receive from the Word. Teach them how to pray. Teach them how to hear God. Connect them to the vine.

All these things you do by example.

When I was first knowing the Lord Megan and I would read the Word together and I would ask "what does this mean?" and she would answer and explain.

You all have so much scripture that the Holy Spirit has cross-referenced in your heart so it is really important that you spend time reading the word with your disciple so that they can develop an understanding that is backed by more fullness that you have!

Conclusion & Activation (from Megan)

When we think about being a good discipler we tend to think of #7 pretty much being it. Characteristics #1-6 are actually all the things that set the table for the meal! Without you having a vibrant relationship with the Lord, having testimonies, having patience and vision for them ... all of those things set the table for the actual meal, which is being in the Word, prayer, and hearing from the Lord.

I know many of you are probably feeling inadequate. "I can't disciple somebody. I don't have all of this stuff going. There are so many places in my life where I am not seeking the Lord." Let me just

encourage you from John 6:3-12 *“And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples. Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near. Then Jesus lifted up His eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, “Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?” But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do. Philip answered Him, “Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little.” One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to Him, “There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?” Then Jesus said, “Make the people sit down.” Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed them to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted. So when they were filled ...”*

Did they have enough food in the natural to feed all those people? Not even close! Do we out of our natural ability have enough to feed those who are around us? We absolutely do not! BUT YOU HAVE SOMETHING and it is ENOUGH! Do you know when it’s enough? When Jesus said “what do you have?” and you give it to Him.

Do this ... stand up. Symbolically hold out your hands and say “Lord this is what I have and I’m going to give it to you.” Jesus gives thanks to God for what you have! Any revelation that you have, any experience you have in Him ... He gives thanks to God that you have that.

What you are holding in your hands right now is representing the revelation you have that could possibly be used to feed the multitudes that are coming toward Jesus right now! He is saying “YOU feed them. YOU give them something to eat!” We say “I don’t have this ... I don’t have that ...” but Jesus is asking you right now “but what DO you have?”

What you are doing right now is holding out in your hands what you DO have. It may feel like not much but you are holding it out to Him. Perhaps you only have one revelation. Perhaps you only have one experience with Him. Before I was a believer Megan told me “God knows your thoughts before you have them.” I was ministering that to someone before I was a believer and they were weeping in a car. That was the only loaf I had! It wasn’t even my bread but I had heard it! And I wasn’t even a believer!

Jesus gives thanks to Our Father for what YOU have!

Even if what you have is 5 barley loaves with 5,000 on their way, he is actually thanking the Father for the exact thing you are holding out in your hands right now. That one revelation you have of God ... He’s thanking the Father what it is that you have.

Then Jesus gives it back to you and says GO GIVE IT AWAY! The multiplication did not happen in Jesus’ hands. It happened in the disciples’ hands!

The Word of God is in you. It is in your mouth. And He wants you to give it away. If you bring it to Him and say “God this is all I have” He will give thanks for what you DO HAVE and give it back to you ... and as you give it to others it WILL multiply!

Do you know what happens after that? After you minister you get a whole basketful back! You get more than you even had to begin with. (In fact in this particular story the disciples only had someone else’s bread to start with - not even their own!) They gave it to God, God gave thanks for it, they gave it away, and then there were 12 basketfuls left over! Everyone got more than what they had originally.

If you feel like you have just a little bit. Give it to God. He’s going to thank the Father for it and He’s going to give it back to you. You are going to give it away and it will be multiplied back to you.