

1.4 — DISCIPLESHIP TO DISCIPLE OTHERS

Leadership Habit Three



CHRISTIAN MATURITY WITHIN OUR CHURCH CONTEXT

With a GROW topic 'discipleship', you might have assumed that we would begin the study by diving straight into common practices like 'one-to-one ministry 'or 'mentoring 'but we are going to start in a completely different manner. As leaders within our church, it is important to spend some time in this study looking at how discipleship is imperative not just to your individual growth this year throughout the GROW course, but how it fits within the broader context of our Church. For this reason, we are going to start by looking at our church cultural context.

STUDY GOALS

By the end of the study we will:

- Have developed a biblical definition of the term discipleship and how discipleship will impact current and future ministries in our church.
- Have examined Jesus' own methodology for discipleship as revealed in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark.
- Have discussed a range of practical guides for how to disciple others and
- Been given the task of identifying someone to begin (or continue) the disciple relationship with.

GROW is a crucial part of our Church Vision Statement: Connect, GROW, Serve, Go. What are we already doing as a church to grow the body of Christ?

What do we expect to see in the lives of mature Christians within our church family? Tip: Think both personal and relational

What are some general signs of immaturity that we see within our church family?

Let's have a look at some statistics that give us greater insight into our church culture. See Appendix A for the 2016 National Church Life Survey results.

What are the positive results of the survey? What are the concerning results that point to our need for further growth?
NOTE: If you are doing this at a partner church: How do you think your stats might compare to ours?

RETHINKING GROWTH IN OUR CHURCH

Church growth and training for a few hundred years has become highly institutionalised and program-based. When there is a need for growth recognised, the church often answers the need with an event, demographic-based program (think children, youth, men's, women's ministries) or a large group approach to maximise efficiency and span of impact. These have advantages but relying too heavily on these programs and neglecting relational growth has many disadvantages.

When critically analysing the results of program based ministries with limited relational support, the disadvantages fall into 2 main categories:

1. The effectiveness of the ministries in enacting real change and growth towards Christlikeness.

We have already looked at some statistics that focus in on our own Church members. Remember that only 37% of our congregation felt that they had experienced much growth within our church in a 12 month period, 10% reported no growth at all. Despite overall satisfaction with the Church and overall satisfaction with individual involvement in church activities and ministries, there are still some big gaps in Christian maturity in our congregation and this is only from the statistics that are available to us. There seems to be a disconnection between people being 'inspired' within a church service (or at church events) and growing in their relationship with God and his Church.

Organised church events do not always provide the opportunity for us to live out the relational components of our love and faith as shown throughout the New Testament. How often do we see or participate in conversations after such events that expose our own need for rebuke, training and righteousness? How often do those conversations lead to prayer with others for our own heart condition and the heart condition of others? How often do these events turn our hearts to

“works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” Ephesians 4:12-13.

Perhaps it is more the norm that we simply consume knowledge at events and small groups and then move on with our lives?

2. Effectiveness for growing God's kingdom in evangelism.

Another aspect of effectiveness in event based organisation can be seen in the organisation of evangelistic events as the focal point of church mission to the greater community. According to Payne and Marshall¹,

'In our post Christian, secular age, most unbelievers will never come to our events. Even our members are patchy in their attendance...Yet despite the work they involve, in some respects, events are a centralising tactic: they're convenient and easy to control for the leader/organiser, but they require unbelievers to come to us on our terms. '

They propose that a much better, though more chaotic, approach would be to concentrate on the training and support of individuals to be better gospel communicators in the relationships that exist or will exist in their world. This need is certainly present in the statistics from our own church where only 16% of our church congregation actively look for opportunities to share their faith with others.

3. The well-being and growth of those leading event and program based ministries.

'Far too often, Churches treat those serving in the church as a commodity. We adopt a consumerist approach to our relationships, and we use people to get ministry done' — Thomas and Wood²

I am certain that all of us have heard something similar to the following: “we are struggling to find a leader to replace _____ in this ministry. It is hard to find someone who is right for or willing to do the role.” Sound familiar? There can be a greater focus on the maintenance of a ministry rather than the strategic, raising up and growth of leaders. When there is a push to maintain ministries, leaders and ministry workers can be under-equipped and provided with limited practical support and training. This can leave the ministry leader feeling isolated, overwhelmed and perhaps even worse; feel unable to share personal discipline failures, faith struggles, sinfulness and doubts,

¹ *Trellis and the Vine* – pg.18-19

² *Gospel Coach: Shepherding Leaders to Glorify God* pg.22-23

knowing that 'their' ministry role needs to be fulfilled. People in this position can easily burn out and then the church finds out the hard way that they have failed in developing the person's Christian life and ministry potential.

Conclusion:

We do not need MORE church PROGRAMS to grow God's kingdom...we need to rethink how we see ministry, how we do ministry and how we build upon the unified family relationship that God has given us as the body of Christ. If we are to be fully fledged followers of Jesus, we don't want to just look at what Jesus taught (though we do not in any way want to minimise his words), we also want to look at HOW he taught. We want to genuinely follow Jesus, to be transformed by the Holy Spirit into his likeness, and that includes following his discipleship methodology.

A NEW CHURCH CULTURE BASED ON DISCIPLESHIP

Read Matthew 4:18-21.

What do you notice about Jesus' calling of the first disciples? Who, What, When, Where, Why?

As we read these verses, there are three main components to Jesus' calling. Did you notice them?

1: Follow me... First and foremost, Jesus is the example, the leader, the one to know, the one to obey, the one to follow. When he says "Follow me" it is a command, yet obedience is a choice.

Application Note: When we are discipling, we are not trying to guide people to follow us; we are pointing them towards Jesus.

2: And I will make you... Jesus promises to be the one to turn the ordinary into the extraordinary...we will read more about HOW he makes this change in their lives as we read through Luke in a moment. It is an exciting promise though...HE WILL make them NOT 'you will become,' 'through your hard work' or anything else unsure or self-focussed. I WILL MAKE YOU!

Note: We know that it is the full and complete work of Jesus by which we are saved (Eph 2:8) and that when we are in Christ, the old self has passed away and we are made into a new creation (2 Cor 5:17). Discipling is Jesus work in you and through you. This is exciting stuff! He transforms us into disciples just as he transformed Peter and Andrew.

3: Fishers of people... Jesus will save and redeem them; we know that their sins will be paid for, that they will have a deep relationship with their saviour but here, before the work of the cross, Jesus already offers them a new identity, a new life purpose, a practical outworking of their obedience. He will make them fishers of men. They will follow Jesus so that others will know and follow Jesus too.

Note: Praise Jesus! He is the life changer, the one who gives a new identity and purpose in life. Pray that this transformation will continue in your own life and the lives of those you lead to him.

DISCIPLESHIP IN THE BOOK OF LUKE:

In small groups, skim through/read assigned chapters of Luke's gospel starting at chapter 5. In the table in Appendix 2, jot down anything you notice about how Jesus ministered and related to his disciples. For example: What does he say to them? What did he do with the time he spent with them? What does he allow them to see of his own life? Does he give reasons for his disciple ministry methods?

We will be sharing our observations in a large group so that we can all have a broad overview of Jesus Discipleship ministry.

Read Matthew 28:16-20.

Jesus has spent years teaching, training, leading and living side by side with these men. Jesus, Son of God, has died for them; he has risen from the dead and stood before them again! Now, as he prepares to ascend:

What does Jesus call them to do?

What promises are they given as they answer this call?

How great a joy it is to know that Jesus, the one with ALL authority in heaven and on earth is the one who calls us to follow him, who transforms us into his disciples and is with us as we make disciples for him. We are disciple makers because Jesus fulfils his promise in Matthew 4; he died to pay for our sin, resurrected; he has all authority and power; he has made us disciples so that we will also go and make disciples – do we do that alone? NO! He is with us till the end of the ages.

After taking note of how Jesus made disciples how does this impact your view of the great commission and discipleship?

Our Definition of a Disciple is:

Being a follower of Jesus; relying on his power to transform us so that we may lead others to also follow Jesus.

Our Definition of Discipleship is:

The relational process where one intentionally invests in the spiritual growth of another, helping to equip them to follow Jesus and lead others to Him.

DISCIPLESHIP: A METHODOLOGY CONTINUED BY PAUL

Discipleship as displayed in Paul's letters and leadership, particularly in his relationship with Timothy. Paul refers to Timothy as his 'true child in faith' (1 Timothy 1:2) and Timothy spent years with Paul, learning from him, on missionary trips with him, working alongside him. Timothy was given Paul's authority to go to churches to teach, admonish and pass on personal messages for Paul (1 Corinthians 4:17). In Philippians 2: 19-24 Paul writes:

¹⁹I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. ²⁰I have no one else like him, who will show genuine concern for your welfare. ²¹For everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. ²²But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel.

When Paul is not with Timothy, he sends letters (1 & 2 Timothy) giving encouragement, further teaching and sharing wisdom about the sinfulness and dangers of the world, false teachers and conflicts within the Church. The love that Paul has for Timothy is obvious in 2 Timothy 1:3-4:

"I thank God, whom I serve, as my ancestors did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers.⁴ Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy.

Paul inputs into Timothy's life for his own growth and maturity in Christ but more than that, he trains and equips Timothy to train and equip others:

That is why we labour and strive, because we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Saviour of all people, and especially of those who believe.¹¹ Command and teach these things. ¹²Don't let anyone look down on

you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.¹³ Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching.¹⁴ Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through prophecy when the body of elders laid their hands on you.¹⁵ Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress.¹⁶ Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.

1 Timothy 4:10-16

Paul's relationship with Timothy is a clear example of how Jesus' discipleship methodology had continued on in the early church. One of the key components of this method is that the disciple is trained up to also disciple others. Disciples make disciples who make disciples. If we are to replicate this methodology, it must be more than about you and your growth; this is about the culture of growth in our entire church family. Throughout this GROW course you will be a disciple, so that you will raise up more disciples who also disciple...Excited about your identity and mission? We hope so!

CHURCH CULTURE RECAP:

Remember our first question; what are we as a church already doing to grow the body of Christ? How would these ministries be different if they had a relational discipleship focus?

How can you see relational discipleship helping us as a church to tackle our immaturities and together grow more Christlike with the power of the Holy Spirit?

FRAMEWORKS FOR DISCIPLESHIP

When we disciple, we are interested first and foremost with the person's relationship with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. After all, it is Christ Jesus that we want them to be a disciple of (not a disciple of ourselves) and it is their relationship with King Jesus that will transform them into the strong and mature believer, follower and fisher of men. Remember that we are leading them to follow Jesus, not ourselves. We do well to remember 1 Corinthians 3:6-7:

⁶I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. ⁷So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. ⁸The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor. ⁹For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building.

GETTING STARTED

Set realistic expectations:

When approaching someone for discipleship, be clear on how regularly you will formally meet up. Set a realistic time frame for discipleship then reassessment for example; 6 months or 1 year of weekly, fortnightly or monthly meet ups. At the end of the agreed time, decide together if you will continue for another period of time or if there is someone else better suited to spurring the person on in faith, life and ministry skills.

Spend the first discipleship session getting to know each other:

A great place to start is sharing each other's testimony:

- How did each of you become a Christian?
- What is God doing in your heart right now?
- What opportunities have you had for sharing your faith?

Getting to know the person's habits and skills:

- What habits does the person already have for bible reading, prayer, sharing the gospel? How can you support them to prioritise and grow in their relationship with God through these habits?
- What areas of your life and/or ministry do you feel least equipped to follow Jesus? What skills, resources, knowledge would be helpful in equipping them in this area?

This information will help you get to know the person you will be discipling. It will help guide your methods for discipling, it will help guide your prayers for the person. It will help you praise God for the work of transformation that he has already begun in this follower of Jesus.

HOW TO STRUCTURE A DISCIPLESHIP SESSION

Your Discipleship sessions should include Bible reading, prayer and life sharing but can be structured in one of the following ways:

3THIRDS DISCIPLESHIP

First Third - Look back

Care:

- Share any highlights or lowlights since you last met.
- Pray for any needs in the group.

Worship:

- Find a simple, relevant way to worship God: read a passage of the Bible and respond to God in prayer; or sing songs of worship.

Accountability:

- How did you obey the lesson from last time?
- Did you pray with anyone who was in need?
- Who did you share your story and/or Jesus' story?

Casting vision for reaching lost people and making disciples:

- Share an encouraging challenge to reach people far from God.
- Pray for people you know who are not following Jesus.

Second Third - Look up

- Read a Bible story or passage.
- Without looking at the text, retell the passage in your own words.
- What does the passage teach us about God?
- What does it teach us about people?
- Is there a command to obey or an example to follow?

Final Third - Look forward

Set goals and pray:

- What do you need to do this week to obey what you've learned?
- Who could you share this passage with?
- Pray.

THE 4 C'S APPROACH:

Bible: Select a book of the Bible to work through together in your sessions. You can use a Bible study guide, the Fallen Condition/Redemptive Focus approach as taught in this course, the Swedish method as seen below, or another simple method that helps guide your exposition of God's word together.

Swedish Bible Study Method

(Focus on good Observations)



Light Bulb

"Light Bulb" should be anything that "shines" through in the passage. What stuck out to you or seemed interesting? This might be something significant (facts, details), it might be the way something is talked about (as a simile, metaphor or image) or a literary device used (lists, repetition, contrasts, comparisons, quotes, etc).



Questions

"Question Mark" is for any questions that come up in your study that aren't clear or you would want to ask the author or the Lord. It's good to come up with some questions even if it seems real basic. Good question-asking is a hallmark of solid Bible study. How does this connect with the rest of the Bible? The answer might be in the content of the study passage, the context of the passage, in a cross-reference in the rest of the Bible, knowing about the culture, or in a commentary.



Cross

The "Cross" is looking at how the passage relates to Christ. Where is Christ in this passage? How does this passage relate to the person, nature, character or work of Christ? Luke 24:44 says all of Scripture is about Christ. So, how does your study passage help you see more of who Christ is, what He has done, or allows you to love Him more?



Arrow

The "Arrow" is our "so what?" This is our application arrow of applying the Scripture to our own lives. How can I apply this passage to my life today? Make your applications personal and practical. One helpful acronym is SPECK. In this passage, is there a SIN to avoid, a Promise of God to claim, Example to follow, Command to Obey, or a Knowledge of God or Self that I need to learn.



Talk Bubble

The "Talk Bubble" is a reminder that God's word is HIS SPOKEN WORD to us! So we need to SPEAK it to others! Who is one person that could benefit from you sharing what you learned in this passage today? Write down that name and pray for an opportunity to share it! It might be sharing God's truth with another believer for encouragement or sharing it with a non-believer hoping it is a bridge for the Gospel to change their heart for salvation!

Why did God put this verse/passage in the Bible?

Image from: <https://ymyouthblog.com/2018/07/19/coma-bible-study-method/>

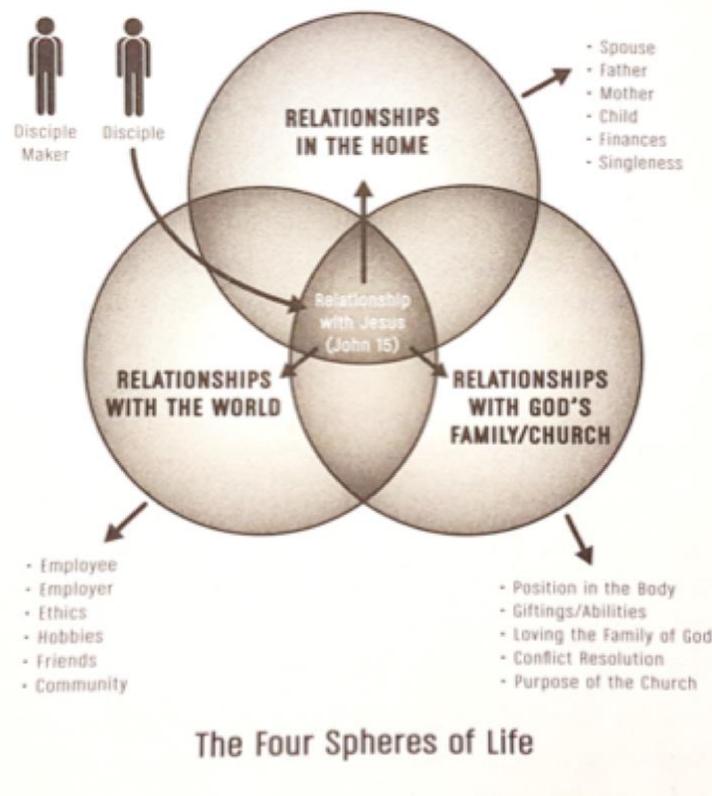
After reading the Bible together, use the 4 C's below to guide the rest of the discipleship session.

- Calling – How are they living out their new identity and calling in Christ Jesus.
- Character – Their personal godliness, being transformed by Jesus.
- Conviction – Their growth in biblical and doctrinal understanding
- Competency – Equipping in skills that allow them to serve God's family and make disciples of others.

You will be familiar with these terms of discipleship (because they are in your GROW introductory booklet)

Pray together as you conclude your time.

THE HEAD, HEART AND HANDS APPROACH:



The above diagram shows how our lives can be defined by four spheres.³

Note how the person's relationship with God is central to everything. It is the core that will transform all other spheres in their life because it is not us that enacts change in our lives, but Jesus who transforms (remember, I WILL MAKE YOU).

Within a discipleship session, each of the Home, Church and World spheres (shown above) can be examined through a Head, Heart and Hands approach as described in chapter 4 of *Discipleshift* (Putman, Harrington and Coleman).

Bible: Select a book of the Bible to work through together in your sessions. You can use a Bible study guide, the Fallen Condition/Redemptive Focus approach as taught in this course, the Swedish method or another simple method that helps guide your exposition of God's word together.

Head: Does the disciple know what the bible teaches about the Church, specific home relationships and with relationships and interactions in the world? How can their knowledge be built up in these areas?

Heart: How is the disciple showing a willingness to rely on God to transform them, the seeking of forgiveness where sin is revealed in their home, church and world relationships? How can you be praying together for the heart to be transformed?

Hands: What practical skills do they need to implement changes in their life e.g. to build Christ-like habits, new skills for ministry within the church family, skills for godly parenthood or family leadership, evangelism skills. In what ways can they be supported to see, learn and implement these skills?

³ Pg.84 *Disciple Shift* (Putman, Harrington and Coleman)

TEACHING MINISTRY SKILLS THROUGH RELATIONAL DISCIPLESHIP

Relational teaching of ministry skills can follow a formula like this one:



David and John Ferguson, referenced on Pg.126 Disciple Shift (Putman, Harrington and Coleman)

Note how much conversation takes place within this process. At every step, there are additional explanations given and opportunities for feedback and questioning. The skill is practised and developed under guidance and then once the skill is 'mastered' it is then passed on to someone else...disciples are always discipling!

We saw Jesus use this method in training his followers and we should be seeing this constantly within our church ministries. Every leader should be training junior leaders in this manner. It is critical for the growth of our church, the growth of our ministries.

There are many more methods that can be used in the discipling process. This is by no means a comprehensive list, simply a starting point to help equip you to begin (or continue) the disciple process. As you get to know the needs of those you lead, the strategies and methods you use may change.

DISCIPLESHIP IN PRACTICE

Hopefully by now, you are already feeling excited, passionate and sold out on the mission of discipleship (probably even daunted). Perhaps you already have someone you are meeting with on a regular basis to disciple (that is awesome!) and this study has reaffirmed, strengthened and given fresh purpose for how to meet up with, do life with and train that person. Perhaps someone you are ministering with has popped into your mind that you can come alongside, train up and disciple...or perhaps your mind is drawing a blank on a suitable person who you can disciple (we can help with that one!).

As a part of the GROW course habits, you will each need to identify one person within the month that you will begin (or continue) a discipleship with. You will need to:

- Identify someone who you will disciple: preferably someone that you can lead in a ministry you are already involved in. (Consult with the GROW leadership team if that person is under 18yrs of age).
 - ▶ Ask them if they would agree to meet up with you, for you to disciple them and to the agreed frequency and number of sessions
- You will be reporting to the leader who is discipling you. They will be your practical guide as you navigate this role.
- We are asking for a brief update in the GROW google docs document with a few dot points of each session (time date place what happened).
- In addition to this, we are also asking that you provide a recap of the discipleship process at the end of this year. We will ask you to share how you have seen your disciple grow in key areas of faith, ministry practise and personal godliness (without sharing private information), what frameworks or methods you found most helpful in discipling, examples of how you 'did life 'alongside your disciple and how you have grown as a disciple-er, your struggles and triumphs as you live out this Christ given calling.

Please know that you are supported in this process. Firstly, you have Jesus Christ as your leader and your guide. Secondly, you have your Mentor/Disciple-er to train, support and pray for you. Thirdly, you have the others in this group that you are growing alongside. Our prayer is that you will be strong in your identity as a disciple maker and be excited (and yes, maybe daunted, but mostly excited) about the mission of encouraging and supporting growth in others for our great God's glory.

Let's spend some time together praising him in prayer.

