

While Jesus was conducting his earthly ministry, he sent his disciples on short term trips to spread God's word. One such time is recorded in Luke 10:

“After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road. When you enter a house, first say, ‘Peace to this house.’ If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; if not, it will return to you. Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house. When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is set before you. Heal the sick who are there and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God is near you.’ But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, ‘Even the dust of your town that sticks to our feet we wipe off against you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God is near.’ ...He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me.’ The seventy-two returned with joy and said, “Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.” He replied, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.”

Team-work

He sent them out 2 by 2. Ministry was not meant to be done alone. It can be done alone, but that is not optimal. If we can't minister alongside the young people we are trying to raise up as leaders, we should try to encourage them to get at least one other ministry partner.

Directing

Jesus was very clear and directive when it came to describing the mission goals. He gave them a picture of what he wanted them to accomplish. He even set up possible scenarios and explained how to deal with them. He told them what to say, what to do, where to go, who to look for, and when to leave.

Yet even though he gave so much strategic direction, you still can see the enormous responsibility and freedom he gave to the disciples. Jesus trusted that if they understood the big picture, they would figure out how to do the smaller things.

Vision

When Jesus sent out the seventy-two, he used vision in three ways.

First, Jesus explained their mission in a way that could be visualized. As he explains going from town to town, it is easy to imagine the things they must do. They need to meet a 'person of peace', stay at his house, accept his hospitality for as long as it's offered, and preach the kingdom of God. When they meet someone like this, their "peace will rest on him." As they go from town to town, they go without provisions. It is easy to picture being an empty-handed traveler looking for hospitality from strangers. He wanted them to have the kind of vision that enables them to see what they need to accomplish.

Second, Jesus helped them to understand the potential failure they may face. He wanted them to have the kind of vision that looks beyond superficial circumstances. Maybe there will be people who persecute them. "That's ok," Jesus says, "you can think of them as wolves and yourselves as sheep among them." Maybe there will be people who reject them. "That's ok," says Jesus, "shake the dust off your feet when you leave that place. Your peace will return to you. They are not rejecting you, but me." Jesus does not send the seventy-two out wearing rose-colored glasses. He is very honest about the difficulties they may face, but he wants them to see beyond those things. Appearances can be deceiving. What looks like failure may actually be accomplishing what they needed to accomplish.

Lastly, Jesus looks beyond the natural world into the spiritual world. As the disciples returned full of joy, Jesus encourages their work with a peculiar statement, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven." Something about their work had positive spiritual consequences that could not be seen without God's help. If God permits us to see something like this we should by all means share it. If God does not give us any insight

into the spiritual repercussions of our actions, we must simply persevere in faith that our earthly actions are having supernatural consequences.

As we coach our disciples we want them to see what their mission looks like, the spiritual truth behind difficult circumstances, and the supernatural reality beyond what we experience with our senses.

Practice

It's not enough to practice conversations and teachings in our one on one discipleship time. Young disciples also need to get a taste for doing real ministry. We believe that it would usually be unwise to send a Christian leader out to minister alone without first allowing them to do ministry in a place where we can observe them. Just as Jesus gave his disciples opportunity to minister while he was still physically with them, we also should allow our disciples to begin ministering while they are in close proximity with us.

Goal setting

God does not want us to be aimless. Without ordering our thoughts and intentions, we will often be left in a self-centered rut, occasionally crying out to God for help, yet remaining stuck in our habits. That's why some successful disciplers like to set spiritual goals with their disciples. As the saying goes, "If you never set a goal, you'll make it every time." Spiritual goals are not antithetical to faith. Setting spiritual goals is a practice the Bible affirms. Paul says, "Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air." (1 Cor. 9:26)

In order to avoid "attaining our goals by human effort" (Gal.3:3), we should be careful to place our goals under the sovereignty of God in faith. James explains, "Now listen, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.' Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, 'If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that.'" (James 4:13-15) James isn't against setting goals. He just wants us to set goals in a way that is contingent on the will of God.

Disciple-makers who practice goal-setting with disciples usually have fun and see exciting results, especially when goals are understood under grace. Make sure the goals you set together are achievable and measurable so you can celebrate success together. An example of a measurable goal is, "I want to spend time with one new person each month this year." We could see whether this goal was met or not. It would be much harder to measure a goal like, "I want to be more relational this year."

Consider setting goals in the areas of learning, character, and ministry. Learning goals may be to study certain books, take classes, or memorize a certain amount of scripture. Character goals can range from donating money, to having a conversation completely about another person, to going a whole year without falling into a particular sin habit.

Disciples could set ministry goals both for themselves (in areas like service, teaching, evangelism, leadership), and for their disciples.

Remember when setting goals to practice grace. We can rejoice even if a goal was partially met, because partially-met goals indicate more growth than meeting no goals at all. While being aimless is bad, it's no worse than the opposite extreme of legalism. Spiritual goals are a tool, a means to an end, not the end all and be all. We have to warn disciples that any goals we set may not be met. And we should explain how a person under grace would view such a failure—we simply set new goals and try again.

Persuasion

Paul says, "Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men." (2 Corinthians 5:11) The ability to persuade is of pivotal importance to every Christian worker. In Proverbs we read, "The tongue of the wise makes knowledge acceptable." (Prov. 15:2 NASB) "The wise in heart will be called understanding, and sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness." (Prov. 16:21)

One of the best ways to persuade someone is to prove to them that you understand them. Spend time praying about a friend you want to persuade. Observe and attempt to appreciate your friend more. Listen when he prays, notice when he serves someone, and notice what kind of things bring him down. The ability to understand others is one aspect of wisdom. To be "wise in heart" includes the ability to show others you understand them. We know that spiritual wisdom is available to us from God if we ask. (James 1:5) So, spend the time praying about your disciples, and God will show you what you need to know.

Our persuasion will also increase if we have "sweet speech." Kindness is not flattery. We can tell the truth in a compassionate way. Often when we become harsh with others, we speak more from personal frustration than concern. It's easy for people to pick up on such frustration and discredit what we are trying to say. An even-tempered approach usually affects people in the most potent way. The proverbs also say, "A soft tongue breaks the bone." (Prov. 25:15b NASB) The kind and composed coach is very effective. We are not suggesting that we should never employ emotional heat. Jesus himself rebuked his disciples on a number of occasions (e.g. Mat. 17:17). But we need to be sure our anger is righteous, and be sure to pick our battles. Angry conversations should be rare.

Flattery is not persuasive. Honesty is. "He who rebukes a man will in the end gain more favor than he who has a flattering tongue." (Prov. 28:23) "Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses." (Prov. 27:6) If we tell the truth while retaining the intimacy of friendship, our friends will trust and probably eventually appreciate any hard things we may need to bring up. Flatterers forfeit respect because they seem to be shallow and dishonest.

The Proverbs also teach, "Through patience a ruler can be persuaded" (Prov. 25:15a) Persuasion is not normally a show of force. Commanding someone to do something is

one thing, persuasion is another. Often we need a great deal of patience. Timing is of the essence. God doesn't show us all of our sin at once. We become convicted of different things at different times. Likewise, we can overwhelm disciples when we try to bring up everything at once. Think of the big picture. Ask yourself which things are essential to bring up now, and which things can wait.

Sometimes when we think we are persuading someone, we are actually doing something that more closely resembles begging. Begging and guilt-tripping are only effective for temporary, superficial change. Persuasion is not manipulation.

Coaching involves persuasion in a thousand situations. Our goal is to convince our disciples that a particular approach is right. When we see a disciple taking a wrong approach to a ministry situation, we don't want to simply say, "No, do it the other way." If disciples are continually told what to do, we fail to develop independence. But if we can argue the principle involved, we equip disciples to understand similar situations in the future.

Discernment

Discernment is the ability to judge the difference between right and wrong, truth and falsehood, or wise and unwise. This is a skill any Christian can acquire. Hebrews teaches that, "...solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil." (Heb. 5:14) Mature Christians have been trained to discern through deep study of the bible. This passage implies that all Christians can train themselves to discern.

Without discernment disciple-makers are taken by surprise in ministry. They won't notice that a young disciple is slipping into an alienated state. Then when things get really bad it seems like a slap in the face. Without discernment we may miss opportunities to give preventative advice. Without discernment we may buy into dishonest masquerading. Without discernment we may write off someone with a good heart because of her rough edges. These all result from only looking at the external. "So we have stopped evaluating others by what the world thinks about them" (2 Cor. 5:16a NLT), or in NASB: "Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh" Bible knowledge helps us develop discernment by showing us God's perspective on life. We also need to learn to look beyond first appearances.

Find an older Christian whose discernment you respect and make it a point to go to them for advice. Ask how they came to the conclusions they share with you. Wise disciplers realize that discernment does not always have to come from within. Sometimes the wisest thing to do is go to someone else.

Special Issues with Young leaders:

- Lack of self-discipline (esp. w/ reading!)
- Self-destructive habits (sex, drugs, eating disorders, suicide) <my testimony>

-Emotion-driven (good to be passionate, but our passions are not always the best guide for decision-making)

-Aimless (goal-setting) <Olympic athlete>

We need to:

- a. Point young people toward a worthy goal, or worthy priorities <modeling, study, persuasion>
- b. Give vision for how they could help accomplish this worthy goal <encourage unique skills, communicate urgency (workers are few)> Elton Trueblood wrote, "The glory of the coach is that of being the discoverer, the developer, and the trainer of the powers of other men. But this is exactly what we mean when we use the Biblical terminology about the equipping ministry."
- c. Come alongside in a love relationship offering support and grace. Seek to discover and help with any pressing spiritual needs the person may have.