

## "DISCIPLESHIP & SPIRITUAL PARENTING"

Zoe Christian Fellowship of Whittier  
Bishop Edward A. Smith

### *INTRODUCTION TO LESSON*

**Life Group Lesson Objective: To understand true discipleship: becoming like Jesus and helping others to be conformed to the image of Christ.**

**Life Group Leader preparation:**

Evangelism is the first step in discipleship: “winning people to Christ” or saying the ‘sinner’s prayer with a non-believer”. Evangelism is extremely important, read Luke 9:1-6; Luke 10:1-9.

“The response of the disciple is an act of obedience, not a confession of faith in Jesus” – Dietrich Bonhoeffer – “The Cost of Discipleship

A disciple is a follower and in this context is a “follower of Christ”.

- Matt 28:18-20 – And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.” – KJV

**Jesus commanded His disciples to continue in what he had practiced and showed them.**

A disciple is a student who memorizes the words, actions and lifestyle of his teacher in preparation to teach others. “The making of a Disciple” – Dr Keith Phillips

Romans 8:29 – For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.
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Paul was a Spiritual Parent: I Tim 1:12 – my true child in the faith; Philemon 1:10 – my child (Onesimus) whom I have begotten.

Week #1: Evangelism vs Discipleship

Group Discussion Questions: What is the difference between evangelism and discipleship?

Evangelism: Proverbs 11:30 – the fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise.

Discipleship: Gal 2:20 – “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me”.

In Matthew 28:18-20 Jesus used the word **teach** twice, meaning the disciples have to give instruction.....

Luke 9:23-24 – Deny himself (discuss denying yourself) Is Jesus asking too much?

Matt 4:18-22 (Jesus calling Peter & Andrew and James & John)

- At once they left their nets
- And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.

**Training His Disciples**

Matthew 5-7 (Sermon on the Mount) – teaching

Matthew 8:14-17 – at Peter’s house

- Mother-in-law healed (confirmation of who he was)
- They observed miracles
- The cost of discipleship

***Let’s be honest – Discussion? Who and how are you discipling? Give an example.***

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Week #2: Discipleship – For God’s Glory

Group Discussion Questions: Reasons for Discipleship

Isaiah 43:7-11 – Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea I have made him.....

- God’s glory is more important!!
- God needs our authority to work in the earth.... Jesus gave us authority when he said “now you go”
- Does Christ have lordship over your life? (for His glory)
- Who are you discipling/who is discipling you?

**John 15:8 – Herein is my Father glorified that you bear much fruit**

- Then shall you be my disciples – because you are bearing much fruit

***Let’s be honest – Discussion: - Is God pleased with your fruit-bearing?***

Week #3: Spiritual Parenting

Group Discussion: Who are you discipling?

Discipleship starts small, like a mustard seed, but grows as it is spread from person to person. Life Groups are a great place to make disciples. Are we inviting others or waiting for someone else to invite them?

Are the men and women in your Life Group becoming spiritual parents or are they still being disciplined? Paul knew he was the spiritual parent of the Corinthians.

- 1 Cor 4:14-17 – I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons, I warn you. For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me. For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.
  - You cannot be afraid, intimidated or ashamed to bring correction...
  - Paul wrote I Cor 13 – the LOVE chapter, so he understood how love works...Spiritual parents should feel comfortable correcting their spiritual children.
- Paul was not being prideful when he wrote “Timothy will remind of my Christ like ways”
  - Cannot be ashamed of the gospel – Roman 1:16 – “I am not ashamed of the gospel...”

Group Discussion Questions:

***Let's be honest – Discussion: Are you confident in calling yourself a spiritual father (or mother)? Why and/or why not?***

Week #4: Spiritual Parenting vs Natural Parenting

Discussion Question:

- We love our natural children... we want what's best for them...

Eph 6:4 – Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord. NLT

How would you describe your responsibilities as a disciple maker or spiritual parent?

Responsibilities as discipleship & spiritual parenting

1. Giving of your time
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

Counting the Cost – Luke 14:27-28 (what is the cost for you?)

You must know God before you can make Him known – Gal 2:20

- A Crucified person has no pride.....
- Love and obedience should be the motivators for our discipling.
- To bring Glory and Honor to God

***Let's be honest – Discussion: What help do you need to become a disciple for Christ and discipling others?***