Understanding How Jesus Selected & Developed His Disciples – Part 2
(Understanding Open & Closed Disciple-Making Groups)

Introduction: This is our 12th week in this spring semester on our journey together in becoming better followers of Jesus. The goal of disciple-making is to seek out the lost and bring them into a relationship with Jesus through the ongoing process of discipleship. Discipleship is the training and motivating process in which one bestows one’s experience and expertise to another. The method in which we disciple others is the same method that Jesus selected and developed His disciples – in a closed group. The difference between the open group and the closed group is the level of commitment given by the members. A closed disciple-making group is comprised of a leader and up to 12 people who are committed to make disciples and eventually lead disciple-making groups of their own.

Key Memory Verse:

“I have given you an example that you should do as I have done for you.” (John 13:15)

This Coming Week’s Reading: John 14-16; Proverbs 22-28

Objective: That participants will learn effective principles that will help in forming a group of twelve and begin the process of discipling in a closed discipleship group.

Key Definitions or Concepts:

In his book, The Master’s Plan of Evangelism, Robert E. Coleman identified 8 principles that one must accomplish in order to begin the process of making disciples. By understanding and participating in these principles, you will be effective in making disciples who make disciples. Tonight we want to study principles 5-8 that Dr. Coleman identifies from the ministry of Jesus.

3 Minutes - Table Exercise 1: Table Facilitation

• 1 Minute - Select a table facilitator for tonight:
  The person at your table who has had their driver’s license the longest number of years.

• 2 Minutes – Review the roles of table facilitator and table participants:
  Role of a table facilitator is to:
  o read the table exercise and invite the table to participate in it (refrain from answering first)
  o keep the conversation moving around the table
  o assure everyone at the table has the opportunity to participate in the conversation
  o listen well (not talk more than the table participants)

  Role of table participants is to:
- monitor their own talk time
- be fully engaged
  - be attentive to and supportive of participants comments
  - not condemn or judge
- be open to sharing their own thoughts and feelings
- not engage in cross-talk
  - cross talk is:
    - talking when someone else holds the talk time
    - giving attention to a cell phone, other electronic device, purse, etc.
    - instead of the person talking
    - regularly leaving the table

20 Minutes - Table Exercise 2: Review Last Week’s 4 Principles
Summarize the 4 principles in last week’s lesson, the ways Jesus selected and developed his disciples – Selection, Association, Consecration, and Impartation. Write your summary on Flip Chart paper and post it on the wall.

**Principle 5: Demonstration (John 13:12-15)**

A. Jesus spent time with His disciples in ways we will never be able to duplicate. It is likely that the disciples ate numbers of meals with Jesus as well as stayed with Him where ever He traveled. This is an extreme example of how far discipleship leads us into interaction with others.

B. The people you disciple will learn how to devote themselves to making disciples by how you live. All of us are called to submit to the authority of Jesus and those over us in leadership. Because we model this, we can direct people to do the same as they become disciplined in reaching out to the lost. It is impossible to ask someone to do something that you have not or would not do yourself.

C. What practices should we demonstrate to our disciples?

1. **Prayer** – Take the lead and pray for your group members. It is even better to pray for your people out loud in their presence. Remember that Jesus showed His disciples how to pray (Matthew 6).

2. **Scripture** – Jesus used Scripture throughout His ministry to demonstrate that His ministry was from above. In the same way be familiar with Scripture in order that you might share it with those who are in need of teaching, encouragement or rebuke.

3. **Winning People** – The disciples learned to reap the harvest from the Lord who prepared it. Every time Jesus spoke was for the benefit of reaching the lost. Share with your disciples the times you witnessed to others so that they might see that it is a daily part of your life.

4. **Natural Teaching** – Jesus believed that class was always in session. Although He went to parties and banquets, Jesus was constantly teaching His disciples. Jesus knew that the best examples are the ones from real life. We never stop being a disciple maker.

5. **The Joy of Christian Life** – One of the best things we can demonstrate is the joy that we have in our salvation. Sharing this joy will demonstrate more truth of the Christian life than any sermon or lesson.
Principle 6: **Delegation** (Matthew 10:1-15)

A. A leader is only as good as the people who follow him/her. The truth is none of us will live forever. All of us will leave this earth someday. However, our impact on this earth never has to leave. We may not think about it this way very often, but all of us are directly linked to Jesus somehow…through the influence and witness of one of His disciples!

B. The Master taught His disciples how to make disciples. Jesus was limited by the constraints of a physical body. There was no way that He could have taken the Gospel throughout the world while He was on earth. However, Jesus delegated the task of discipleship to His disciples.

C. Jesus sent His disciples throughout the area to preach the Good News. By doing this, the Gospel was spread throughout Israel in a shorter time frame. The goal of discipleship is to not only work hard, but to work more effectively. 12 people can do 12 times the work of 1.

D. A disciple maker must trust his/her disciples to carry out tasks that the disciple maker is unable to do. Who leads the discipleship group when the leader is sick or out of town? Jesus called His 12 to lead the Church when He died and ascended into Heaven. You cannot do it on your own. Your 12 must be people that you trust to delegate responsibility to. If you cannot trust them then you are wasting your time as well as their time.

Principle 7: **Supervision** (Mark 8:13-21)

A. We are responsible for our disciples. Although they have the freedom to choose the path they take, it is our responsibility to supervise and help direct the path that Jesus leads them to take. Discipleship is not handing someone an instruction manual and leaving. True discipleship is becoming an example in which people follow.

B. The best way to lead by example is to have interaction with those whom you are discipling. By interacting with them, you are supervising their methods of making disciples. Discipleship is not easy. Sometimes we have to lovingly rebuke our disciples in order to insure that they are following God’s Vision of discipleship.

C. One of the main goals of supervision is to instruct the disciple in the area of patience. There are two primary forms of patience. The first is the most common form that we experience: waiting. By supervising our disciples we can encourage them that their harvest with God is assured. We have to build people up who are struggling to see the benefits of discipleship.

D. The second form of patience is slowing down. Sometimes we have the fortunate task of guiding our disciples to slow down. Some people are so excited over the Vision that they fail to learn the Vision before they venture into it. Without supervision, we will witness hard work that yields either no fruit or non-ripened fruit. Remember, discipleship is a life-long process of training. There are no short cuts in making disciples.

Principle 8: **Reproduction** (John 15:1-8)

A. A disciple’s ministry will be defined by that disciple’s legacy. In other words, the true achievement of a disciple is not found in his/her work but in the work carried out by his/her disciples. Why do we affirm Jesus as the Christ? Well the truth is, we affirm the Lordship of Christ because someone affirmed it in their life and shared the Word with us.
B. True reproduction does not take place by having offspring. If those offspring were to die out then your line will end as well. However, if your offspring have offspring then your line carries out another generation. Jesus’ ministry survives because His disciples made other disciples who eventually developed you.

C. When forming your 12, the single most important principle is the ability for your disciples to reproduce. All of your time, energy and devotion will be lost forever if it is not passed down to the next generations.

D. Reproduction is the only way we can discover the effectiveness of our ministry. How will we know if our disciples have grasped our teachings? How will we know if they have benefited from our supervision? The only way we will know is by the fruit that they bare. We will know that they know when they live the life of a disciple maker and make disciples themselves.

**Conclusion:** The task of disciple making is long and difficult as so much is invested. It is beneficial to understand that it is often wise to wait until one is beginning to reproduce before investing fully into the principles of forming him/her into your 12. By selecting those who bear good fruit, we are wisely selecting those who are prepared for true discipleship.

**15 Minutes – Table Exercise 3 – Team Day Presentation**

**Scenario:** Dr. John Seaman, the Michigan District Superintendent, has asked your table to make a presentation at Team Day that inspires pastors and lay leaders in other churches to follow Jesus’ closed group method of disciple-making.

**Assignment:** Prepare a 4-minute presentation and share it with another table when instructed.

**12 Minutes – Exercise 4 - Sharing Your Table’s Message**

Tonight’s session facilitator will pair tables. When instructed by the session facilitator, join your paired table. Each table facilitator will then give their respective table’s presentation.

**15 Minutes - Prayer Around Tables**

Pray for God to help you in selecting and building your group of 12.