

The Goal

The question must be asked, "What was Jesus seeking to develop in the lives of His Disciples?" The goal of discipleship is not only teaching ministry skills, but developing someone to be like Christ. You can teach ministry skills to almost anyone, but true discipleship is not so much what we do but who we are.

Jesus sought to develop three qualities in the lives of His disciples, qualities that He Himself manifested and which were also cited by the apostle Paul: Faith, Hope and Love. These three virtues were the template for the lives of His disciples. They must become the pattern for our lives and the lives of those we disciple, as well!

Faith

Dr. Howard Hendricks observed that the "only thing Jesus rebuked His disciples for was their lack of faith." Those who like to portray Jesus as 'meek and mild' should do a search of those times when His disciples fell short of His expectations. He expected them to trust God ... to believe that nothing was impossible with God and that His Word was True!

Christ used every day events to develop His disciples' faith. Observe the following episode found in Mark 4.

- 35 On that day, when evening came, He said to them,
"Let us go over to the other side."
36 Leaving the crowd,
they took Him along with them in the boat,
just as He was;
and other boats were with Him.
37 And there arose a fierce gale of wind,
and the waves were breaking over the boat
so much that the boat was already filling up.
38 Jesus Himself was in the stern,
asleep on the cushion;
and they woke Him and said to Him,
"Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?"
39 And He got up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea,
"Hush, be still."
And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm.
40 And He said to them,
"Why are you afraid?
How is it that you have no faith?"

Mark 4:35-40

A Caution

Beware of getting too caught up on ministry skills. Don't get me wrong. Learning how to share one's faith, how to help others grow in Christ and how to train them to help still others is crucial in Discipleship, as are the skills of studying the Bible and sharing its Truths.

But as important is the development of a life of Faith (trusting in God to do what He promised), Hope (seeing God's eternal perspective in all things) and Love (valuing God and the things He values). These are the things that keep people discipling!

Discipleship is simply allowing yourself to be used by God to help others become what God wants them to become in order that they will do what He wants them to do!

Observations

- Circle when this takes place. (v 35)
Underline what Jesus said. (v 35)
Circle who took whom in the boat. (v 36)
Circle what arose during the crossing. (v 37)
Circle what the waves were doing. (v 37)
Underline how this affected the boat. (v 37)
Underline what Jesus was doing. (v 38)
Circle what the disciples did. (v 38)
Underline what they said to Jesus. (v 38)
Underline what Jesus did. (v 39)
Circle what Jesus said to the sea. (v 39)
Underline what resulted. (v 39)
Underline what Jesus asked His disciples. (v 40)



Psalm 104:5-7
Psalm 89:-9

1. What is significant about the timing of their crossing? _____

2. What is significant about the phrase 'they took Him along with them in the boat'? _____

3. What is significant about what Jesus was doing during the storm? _____

4. What did the disciples imply by their question in verse 38? _____

5. What is significant about how Jesus handled the storm? _____

6. What is the reason behind Jesus' questions in verse 40? _____

7. Where should have the disciples' faith been placed? _____

This stormy trial reads like a parable for the turbulent times in our own lives. Before we piously criticize the disciples' actions, how many times do we fail to trust Christ when our lives are swamped by waves of adversity and misfortune. Maybe you haven't verbally accused the Lord of not caring, but you may have thought it. Perhaps these times of tribulation are God's tests revealing the misdirection of our faith and His attempts to refocus it on Himself.

Like Jesus' disciples, we find it easier to trust in ourselves ... what we can see and what we are able to do. But God wants us to trust in Him ... in what He is able to see and to do. Though at times doing so is difficult, doing so is also the wisest course of action, for God alone is able to see the 'end from the beginning' and 'do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think'.

According to the apostle Paul, Faith is not the 'greatest' virtue, but it is the necessary virtue, for the others rest upon it. Unless those we disciple have Faith that God exists and rewards those who 'diligently seek Him', they will never experience the Hope and Love such Faith cultivates.

Testing Their Faith

Jesus did not hesitate to test His disciples' faith. That is certainly what seems to be taking place in the episode with the storm. He was really testing their hearing and whether they believed Him when He said they would go to the other side, and not to the middle and sink.

We must test our students as well. One way I do it is to take them to share Christ with total strangers. I am really testing whether they believe Jesus when He said He would be with us whenever we 'go and make disciples'. There is nothing that tests a Christian's faith more than sharing the Gospel with strangers.

That experience will solidify a new Believers' faith more than any other!

Cultivating Faith

There is a kind of faith that comes from seeing the miraculous workings of God, a faith based on what is seen. Then there is a Faith that comes from hearing God's Word, a faith that is based on what is heard. It is this kind of faith that we must aspire to, for we must 'walk by faith, not by sight'.

The apostle Paul taught that this kind of faith 'comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.' (Romans 10:17) God favors this kind of faith, for it is a pure faith and not one tainted by the necessity to see or experience something before we will believe.

Hope

Successful athletes know that there can be no victory without disciplined training, and that the key to enduring that training is to set their sights on the finish line, and the ultimate prize at the end. Christians who desire to become disciples need to learn that lesson. As someone observed, the Christian life is not a sprint but cross country. It requires an endurance only those whose eyes are fixed on the ultimate prize will be able to achieve.

Because a life of Discipleship requires discipline, Christians must look beyond the trials and hardships of this life, away from the temptations and distractions of this world, and persevere, because they are convinced that the final outcome is worth all these momentary sacrifices! Christians possess a Hope to which nothing else compares., a Hope that surpasses every sacrifice they make. It is this of which the apostle Paul writes in the passage below.

- 20 For the creation was subjected to futility,
not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it,
in hope
- 21 that the creation itself also
will be set free from its slavery to corruption
into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.
- 22 For we know that the whole creation
groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.
- 23 And not only this, but also we ourselves,
having the first fruits of the Spirit,
even we ourselves groan within ourselves,
waiting eagerly for *our* adoption as sons,
the redemption of our body.
- 24 For in hope we have been saved,
but hope that is seen is not hope;
for who hopes for what he *already sees*?
- 25 But if we hope for what we do not see,
with perseverance
we wait eagerly for it.

Romans 8:20-25

1. How does this Hope help us endure times of Temptation and Trial?

2. Describe a life that is devoid of any hope? _____

Observations

- Circle what Creation is subjected to. (20)
Underline what it will be freed from. (21)
Underline what it will be freed to. (21)
Underline what it does 'until now'. (22)
Underline what we have. (23)
Circle what we do within ourselves. (23)
Underline what we eagerly wait for. (23)
Circle what kind of hope is not hope. (24)
Underline how we eagerly wait for our
'adoption' and 'redemption'. (25)



Genesis 3:17-19

Hosea 4:3

2 Corinthians 5:2-4

Our Eternal Hope

When Man sinned, all of creation suffered its consequences. Not only did all of mankind become subject to death and decay, but everything around them as well. But the secret is that all who possess God's Spirit will one day be glorified as God's adopted sons with new immortal and glorious bodies, equaled in beauty by a transformed creation that will reflect in unrivaled brilliance its Creator. This heavenly existence awaits all who love and trust God through Christ! This is the Christians' destiny and future ... the Hope for which we live and endure.

Love

The apostle Paul declares that 'the greatest of these (virtues) is Love'. Forget the images of romantic affection or sentimental emotions. This Love is none of that. The virtue of Love speaks of what is valued, esteemed and treasured. It describes that to which we devote our heart at its deepest level.

Jesus defined that to which every Disciple must devote themselves in the following passage:

Memorize



- 36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?"
37 And He said to him,
"YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD
WITH ALL YOUR HEART,
AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL,
AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.'
38 "This is the great and foremost commandment.
39 "The second is like it,
'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR
AS YOURSELF.'
40 "On these two commandments
depend the whole Law and the Prophets."

Matthew 22:36-40

1. Describe what it means to love God to the extent Jesus expressed above.

2. Why is this called the 'greatest ... commandment? _____

3. How is the second like the first? _____

4. What did Jesus mean by verse 40? _____

OBSERVATION

Underline what was asked of Jesus.
Underline what Jesus said 'you shall do.

Circle with what we must 'Love the Lord (our) God'.

Circle whom else we shall love.

Underline how we must love them.

Underline on what depends on these two commandments.



Deuteronomy 6:5, 10:12
Leviticus 19:18
Romans 13:9-10

In this passage, Jesus reveals what must be at the core of our lives ... a complete, unconditional and absolute devotion to God. The truth is that we all devote ourselves to some thing or some one. We were created to worship, and Jesus is pointing us to the only One worthy of our worship. To love God is to worship Him ... to make Him the preeminent and absolute focus of all we are and do.

The second commandment is related to the first, not that we are to worship those around us, but to value them because they are created in God's image.

Our goal in discipling others is to develop committed Christians who are not only competent in 'winning, building and sending others for Christ', but who also display the character of Christ in their lives. Discipleship involves the multiplication of not only ministry skills, but of the life of the Master Himself through ours!

The Goal

List key Truths and Principles you learned from this study:

- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____

In light of what you have learned, list what you will do.

- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____

Memorize 

*“But now abide faith, hope, love, these three;
but the greatest of these is love.”*

1 Corinthians 13:13