

## 8. A Servant Who Leads Shows People What to Do

In order to be an effective servant who leads, we must make the choice to follow the example of Christ. Christ gave us a good example of showing people what to do by the way He trained the disciples. If we are going to be effective in obeying Christ's command to "Make Disciples", we will make the choice to make disciples in the same way Christ made disciples.

In the time of Christ, there were at least two basic patterns of teaching and training people. The Greek pattern of teaching was to gather people in a group and tell them what to do. This pattern was effective at helping people gain knowledge. The Hebrew pattern of training was to invite people to go with you, so they saw why and how you did what you did. This pattern of training is actually based on Exodus 18:20, where we read: "And you shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and show them the way in which they must walk and the work they must do." Here, we see that the Hebrew pattern of training is concerned about three areas of learning, rather than just knowledge. The Hebrew pattern of training helps people grow in:

- ♦ knowledge – teach them the statutes and laws
- ♦ character – show them the way to walk
- ♦ ministry skills – show them the work to do

As Christ developed the disciples, He began by inviting them to spend time with Him. In John 1:37-46, and Matthew 9:9, we see that Christ gave invitations to several different men to begin spending time with Him. Over the next year, those men spent time with Christ and went with Him as He visited various places. During that year, they had time to observe Christ's character, hear what He taught, and see what He did.

After going places, and doing things, with those men for a year, Christ invited those men to become apprentices and learn to say and do what He was saying and doing. Mark 1:16-20 says, "And as He walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then Jesus said to them, 'Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.' They immediately left their nets and followed Him. When He had gone a little farther from there, He saw James the *son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also *were* in the boat mending their nets. And immediately He called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after Him." In these verses, we see that Christ did three things as He began to show these men how to reach others:

- Christ went to where the disciples were working
- Christ invited the disciples to follow Him
- Christ promised to show them what to do

From these verses, we see that Christ did not ask for volunteers for leadership. Instead, Christ chose to invite these men to become apprentices. Christ gave these men a choice, when He said, "Follow me." They could follow Him with no money promised, or they could continue to fish and make money. Christ did promise them that, if they chose to follow Him, He would make them into something different. Christ said, "I will make you become fishers of men." When we invite people to start going with us, we are not promising them worldly success. Instead, we are inviting

them to be changed, so they can help change the world. Christ was going to begin to show them how to reach others.

Later, in that same chapter, Mark 1:38-39 tells us that Christ said to these men, “‘Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth.’ And He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons.” Christ took those men with Him, so they could observe His character, learn what to say, and see what to do.

Christ was also expanding the vision of the disciples, so they began to see people who were not Jews. In John 4:35, we read, “‘Do you not say, “There are still four months and *then* comes the harvest”?’ Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!” Christ had sent the disciples into the town, and they came back with food, because they did not see people who needed to know Christ.

Christ sent a sinful woman into the same town an hour or so later, and she came back, bringing a whole group of people who wanted to know Christ. John 4:39-42 says, “And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, ‘He told me all that I *ever* did.’ So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. And many more believed because of His own word. Then they said to the woman, ‘Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard *Him* and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.’” Christ knew that the disciples had to develop a concern for more than just the Jews. In Matthew 15:21-28, Christ later did the same thing with a Gentile woman.

In addition to helping the disciples develop vision for the lost, Christ also had to show them, by His own example, the need to have compassion for the lost. After the disciples had known Christ for about twenty-one months, and had been apprentices for about nine months, Matthew 9:35-38 tells us, “Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, ‘The harvest truly *is* plentiful, but the laborers *are* few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.’” In these verses, we see that:

- the disciples saw what Christ did and taught
- the disciples saw the compassion of Christ
- the disciples were told to pray for laborers

During their nine months as apprentices, the disciples were able to observe and to participate. Then, in Matthew 10:1-8, Christ sent the disciples out on their own for the first time. In Matthew 10:5, Christ told them what not to do. “‘Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans.’” The disciples were not yet ready to cross the barriers of language, culture, or another religion. That would come later.

Then, in Matthew 10:6-8, Christ told the disciples what to say and do. “‘But go rather to the lost

sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, preach, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.” They were to share good news, and they were to reach out to the needs of people who were hurting.

In Mark 6:30-31, we see what Christ did when the disciples returned from this trip. “Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. And He said to them, ‘Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.’ For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.” Here, we see that part of the ministry of developing apprentices is giving them an opportunity to report what they have done and what they have taught.

Later, we see that Christ sent out a larger group of seventy of his followers. Luke 10:1-2 says, “After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go. Then He said to them, ‘The harvest truly *is* great, but the laborers *are* few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.’” Verses 3-12 also tell us that Christ gave the seventy instructions about what to do and what to preach.

Luke 10:17, 20 show us that Christ also gave this larger group the opportunity to report what they had done and what they had taught, “Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, ‘Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.’ ...<sup>20</sup>“Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.” The seventy had also been observing Christ over the previous two years, but they still had to grow in their understanding of what was most important.

Today, most Christians have never led another person to Christ. There are two closely related reasons for this. First, they have been told what to do, rather than being shown what to say and do. Second, because they have never been shown what to do, if they do try to witness, they often witness in their own strength, because they have never been shown the importance of depending on the Holy Spirit and praying for boldness.

Christ showed the disciples His prayer life. Mark 1:35-36 says, “Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed. And Simon and those *who were* with Him searched for Him.” Christ helped the disciples realize they could never minister effectively in their own strength. As a result, we see that the disciples prayed, rather than depending on themselves. Acts 4:31 says, “And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.”

Christ calls us to follow His example and make disciples whose lives are transformed, because they have been shown how to develop godly character, how to minister effectively and what to share as they minister to others. May the Lord richly bless you, as you help other Christians grow in godly character, Biblical knowledge, and effective ministry, because you have provided a living

example of total spiritual development, rather than just growth in knowledge.