



The Disciplers' Manner

The Discipler's Model grows out of a Christian view of leadership. The way we lead is an integral part of our teaching ministry. Whether we are a pastor, staff minister, or lay leader, we will be more effective in discipling God's people if we give attention to the teaching implications of our leadership style.

Further, if we wish to lead in a manner worthy of the Lord, we must understand how Jesus led and follow His example. In this chapter we examine leadership principles Jesus revealed as The Leader of the Twelve. Contemporary case studies, all true situations drawn from experiences in education ministry, illustrate the principles. While most of the cases focus on pastor or staff leadership situations, the lay leader/teacher will benefit from these principles as well.

Divine Logos

When I think of Jesus, my first thoughts are Divine Logos, the Son of God, the Master Teacher, Lord. In some respects it is easy to see Jesus as, in the words of Alfred Ederhiem (*Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, [Oxford, 1886], Reprinted by Eerdmans, 1969), a "Benevolent Tyrant" -- and take that as our model. His words were sometimes harsh and biting as he denounced the indifferent (Mt 11:21). He called himself "Lord of the Sab-

bath" (Mt 12:8, NIV) and equated himself with God (Jn 20:30). He drove the money-changers out of the temple with a whip (Mt 21:12). He taught in such a radical manner that people were "amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law" (Mt 7:28-29, NIV).

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He demonstrated divine power through his ability to heal "all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, the epileptics, and the paralytics" (Mt 4:24, NIV). He fed the multitudes of listeners on at least two occasions with small amounts of food (Mt 14:15ff; 15:38ff). He taught spiritual truth with power and clarity (Mt 13:54). Jesus was, and is, One Who has authority and power. But it is so fascinating to watch how he used that power!

Human Leader

But Jesus was also Human Leader as he walked this earth. He led men and women in a way that released them to become all they

were intended to be. He chose twelve un-schooled men and in three years had molded them into the leaders of his Church. He drew them together into a spiritual Family -- a 'team' -- and ignited them with a passion for God's Kingdom. Jesus' favorite title for himself was "Son of Man." While he was strong in much of his teaching, he was a Serving Leader. He used his power, not to rule, but to serve his Father and minister to people as he announced the coming of the Kingdom of God.

tions Jesus took as he led the twelve will provide insight into principles of leading that is both effective and Christian, "for he knew what was in man" (Jn 2:25, NIV). No other person in history has so perfectly meshed leading and serving, power and love, integrity and forgiveness, the rod and the staff!! Twelve principles are organized in nine sections with fourteen case studies. With sensitive awareness we tread on sacred ground, let's look closely at the principles surrounding how Jesus led the twelve.

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The impact of his leadership and teaching transformed history and continues to reshape men and nations. Surely a study of the ac-

1. **THE INDIVIDUAL IS IMPORTANT**

At a time when power politics was the norm, enforced through the military might of Rome, Jesus exalted the worth and dignity of the individual. He loved persons. He ministered to them one by one, despite their social rank. Think how he spoke with the Samaritan woman, or how he praised the faith of the centurion, or how he accepted those hated tax collectors Matthew and Zacchaeus! One soul is worth more than the whole world (Mt 16:26).



Crowds surrounded Jesus on every side. They wanted him to be their King. They wanted the Teacher to protect them and feed them and heal them and, most of all, to free them from the Roman Yoke. But He did not change to please the crowds. He was interested in more than mere numbers. He ministered to persons at their particular point of need.

Principle One

The discipling minister places importance on the worth of individuals. He sees people, not as mere groups, but as persons of worth.

George

Ever since George arrived at First Church six months ago he had heard complaints about Mrs. E's Sunday School teaching. Some of the ladies in her class had made a point of telling George that they received very little from the Bible study hour. George had noticed that she never attended workers' meetings, and she had not come to the special teacher training seminar he had offered several weeks before. One member told him, "in confidence", that Mrs. E literally dominates the entire Sunday School hour. "No one can say a word because she does all the talking!" Another mentioned that all class activities are planned by her. George checked the records and found that the class had changed little in years.

But George has also noticed that Mrs. E writes notes to her members when they are absent for a couple of weeks. She visits her members from time to time --especially if they are ill or have some problem. She calls them on the phone periodically. The class

enjoys this contact from her.

But the weak teaching on Sunday morning is a problem. One member says she's looking at other churches and will change membership "unless someone does something!!" George knows who that "someone" is!

Alternatives.

What should George do? What would YOU do in light of our first principle? Let's look at two extreme approaches.

Confrontation. George believes he must make a firm stand in this situation. The members of the class want good Bible study and his job is to provide it. The ladies of the class are upset about the situation and appropriate action is needed. It is clear from the record that there has been no numerical growth in the class. There is also indirect evidence that the class has not grown much spiritually either. George could decide to confront Mrs. E with the problem and ask her to resign as teacher of this class. He could then enlist and train someone else to do a more effective job in Bible teaching. He thinks, "She has other interests in the church which will balance the loss of this responsibility. And, there may be some who disagree with my actions, but I cannot neglect my duty to improve the Sunday School program."

Hands-Off. George believes he should back away from the problem give the situation time. The more formal name for this approach is *laissez-faire* [lah-zay fayr]. George knows that this problem is a long-standing one. The situation is deeply rooted in the church and is not likely to go away quickly. He does not want to hurt the feelings of Mrs. E. She has taught this class many years and loves 'her' members. He will not

do anything about the situation and see what happens. Maybe he'll get an opportunity to do something about this later. He thinks, "There may be some in the church who think I'm weak and indecisive," but his concern for Mrs. E outweighs his fear of gossip.

Situation Analysis. George's problem really has two parts. The first part of the problem focuses on Mrs. E and her worth as a church member, teacher, and child of God. Whatever action he takes, he needs to consider her sense of worth and dignity as a person. Her ego is tied to the ladies' class and the activities they share. Forcing her to give this up would remove an important part of her life -- no matter how many other activities and responsibilities she has. Mrs. E deserves to be treated with respect.

The second part of George's problem focuses on the spiritual needs of the class members. They are not receiving the benefits of good Bible study. But, they are being ministered to. The concern of Mrs. E shines through every visit and call. Even her worst critics appreciate her warm concern for the members. Her contacts make up a large part of their sense of belonging in the class. Scenario one ignores the first part of the problem, scenario two the second part. Here are some suggestions to consider:

Do not arbitrarily remove Mrs. E from the class. Give yourself time to pray and consider the best approach to the problem.

Begin to build rapport with Mrs. E. Since she doesn't yet come to teachers' meetings, do this in other contexts: fellowships at church, talks in the hallways, visits. As you do this, find out how she feels about the class and her teaching.

Listen carefully to the complaints made about Mrs. E. by her class members. Show a sincere interest in the problem but also remind the complainer --gently-- about all Mrs. E does for the class. Class members often take for granted the positive things teachers and leaders do.

Plan alternative Bible study times, such as Church Training, weekday studies, and so forth. Be sure to invite the complainers to these special Bible study times. If their complaint really centers on Bible study, this provides other options for them.

These steps minister to the worth and dignity of each person involved and establishes a positive atmosphere in which the problem can be solved.

As opportunity permits, share suggestions with Mrs. E to help her improve her teaching. This might be done in response to a question from her, or by way of a general handout to all teachers. If these suggestions are effective and helpful to her, you may be able to draw her into more formal training sessions.

These steps minister to the worth and dignity of each person involved and establishes a positive atmosphere in which the problem can be solved. Mrs. E is helped and supported. Class members are given other opportunities to study the Bible. And the Silent Majority of the class, who have said

nothing about this, aren't disrupted by a change in teachers they didn't want.

George Revisited. But George didn't do this. He called Mrs. E into his office the next Sunday and asked her to resign. She left his office in tears and went directly to her class. There she shared the conversation with exaggerated emotion. She and half the class decided to leave the church that week. A few of the class members dropped out of church altogether. Several, including two of the most active complainers in the class, remained in the church and criticized George for his "impulsive" action and lack of sensitivity for "our" teacher. The whole unpleasant scene was kept alive in the imagination of many through rumor and counter-rumor until George left for another church ten months after he had arrived.

As "program leader" George felt he had the support of his job description, the members of Mrs. E's class, and the church. There may have come a time in working with Mrs. E that George would have had an opportunity to replace her. But he did not have it here, nor did he have the relational base with her or her class to replace her as he did. George failed to balance concern for the program with concern for individuals.

2. RELATIONSHIP IS IMPORTANT

Jesus was no existentialist: each person a law unto himself. While individuals were important, relationship among individuals was central. God created us to be with Him and with each other. When sin entered the world, it separated us from Him and isolated us from each other. Relationship is the central pillar of the Disciplers' Model be-

cause it is the central pillar of the church. Remember how Jesus condensed the Law and the Prophets into two statements of relationship?

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.

and

Love your neighbor as yourself.

(Mt 22:37,39, NIV)

The heart of the Kingdom lives in the vertical and horizontal dimensions of relationship. The whole of scripture underscores the importance of togetherness. Jesus was quoting Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18 in his answer to the scribe. Jesus taught that His family, His "blood kin," consists of those who obey the will of the Father (Mt 12:46-50).

Power or Relationship?

Yet in every human organization there is a hierarchy of position and power. Moses discovered the necessity of hierarchical delegation when he was overwhelmed by details (Ex 18:13-27). There are leaders and followers, employers and employees, directors and workers. The world places importance on the influential, the powerful, the wealthy. But look what Jesus told his disciples!

The greatest among you must be your servant. Whoever makes himself great will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be great. (Mt 23:11-12, NIV)

Jesus is Lord. He is Teacher. Leader. Servant. Friend (Jn 15:15). All of us who name the name of Jesus serve Him as Sovereign. We teach in order to obey Him. We lead in order to follow Him. We minister according to His example. Then how should we lead? Or teach? Or minister? Jesus answers:

You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. **Not so with you!** Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave--just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many. (Mt 20:25-28, NIV)

The greatest leaders in the Kingdom are those who give themselves away, in terms of time, talent, and resources, as a ransom for others. The only valid hierarchy in Christ's Kingdom is the hierarchy of serving others.

Service builds relationship. A dangerous misconception seminary graduates can carry to their first church is thinking their degree gives them both the authority and the ability to lead. My experience was that my degree was more a hindrance than a help in the beginning. Folks look on educated beginners with suspicion. There is the distinct possibility of knowledge without wisdom, shine without substance. This natural resistance can frustrate the best efforts of the enthusiastic young minister.

**The message of service
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Give people time. As relationships develop, your education will be a great asset to you. But you need to build bridges to people first. These bridges are built through sacrificial service. Jesus set the example for servanthood. He washed the feet of the disciples (Jn 13:2-15) and prepared them breakfast on the

beach (Jn 21:12-14). He served them in many ways through their three years together. His supreme sacrifice was His willingness to bear in His body, as **Leader**, the sins of His followers, and of the whole world.

The message is drowned out in the drumbeat of me-first religion and success-oriented ministry. But the message is clear: service in Jesus' name, rendered out of sincere gratitude for what Christ has done, is the only route to fulfilled living. Service is the way to a life of influence for Christ's Kingdom, for "whoever loses his life for me and the gospel will save it" (Mk 8:35, NIV). Mutual service among the individuals of a congregation draws the Church Family together. The discipling leader enhances the growth of relationships through service.

Principle Two

*The discipling minister
builds koinonia
among individuals.*

The key to this cohesiveness is leading members to relate to God as Father and to church as Family.

Frank

When Frank first arrived at his new church, he was appalled by the lack of communication among the workers in the Sunday School. It seemed that each department operated as if it were isolated from the Sunday-School-as-a-whole. Classes hesitated to intermingle at department fellowships. This problem of communication and sharing had deeper implications: teachers were not making plans for Sunday School with department directors. Each teacher did "what was right in his own eyes" in his class. There seemed to be little regard for the department as a whole,

or other classes within the department. As a result of this, team spirit among Sunday School workers had long since vanished. The Sunday School had lost its dynamic, its unified direction and its true purpose.

Situation Analysis. The law of diminishing returns lies at the heart of this problem. The primary goal of many teachers is to “cover the lesson” on Sunday morning. Meeting this goal does require a definite amount of study time. Most teachers are good about setting aside ample time to “prepare their lesson.” But activities beyond this, like meeting with other teachers and the director, preparing a variety of approaches, visiting with members, result **in what appears to be** smaller returns on the additional time expended. Volunteer teachers in our Sunday School organization have many demands on their time. Unless they can be led to see the importance of departmental planning to themselves as well as their classes, they will drift away from it. Why? Because they can still ‘cover the lesson’ when they don’t do these things!

This situation, while understandable, suggests a problem in the Bible study program. Fellowship is restricted to “my class” or “my department.” This, in turn, limits the quality and quantity of personal life experiences that can deepen Biblical understanding. Isolated teachers cannot profit from the ideas and activities used by others. Classroom learning is separate from department activities and the Sunday School hour becomes disjointed. “Family” within each department suffers.

In some way Frank must motivate Sunday School leaders to embrace the larger aspects of Bible study. He needs to encourage and expand positive relationships among teachers, directors and general officers. These re-

lationships create a spirit of team work essential for communicating the Word of God to all ages.

Frank Revisited. Frank began meeting with key leaders. Some of these meetings were at church: after worship, before Sunday School, during a time of fellowship. Other times he met in places and at times that were most convenient for them: at lunch, during coffee breaks, in their homes. As he strengthened his relationships with these leaders, he shared his vision of the “Sunday School team.” He encouraged leaders to promote a spirit of team work in their department meetings. The Sunday School Council initiated an annual banquet for all teachers and directors to reinforce their sense of belonging to an important ministry of the church. From time to time he led spiritual retreats for Sunday School workers to build relationships Godward and manward. Through these and other efforts he strengthened team spirit among Sunday School leaders throughout the organization.

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Frank built bridges to people through general meetings and personal conversations. He provided a model for building bridges from leader to leader. He motivated leaders by his own example to take their tasks more seriously. Success has been gradual but consistent, and the changes are rooted in the lives of the people he’s touched.

With little fanfare Frank gradually improved team coordination within the Sunday School. Isolated classes were drawn into the larger scope of the total Sunday School effort. Classes and departments began doing more planning together. After two years, the process is not complete, but the emotional tones of "Family" are evident throughout the organization. The church is reaping a variety of benefits from a more dedicated, related and organized Bible teaching staff.

3. JESUS PRACTICED HUMILITY

Despite His obvious power and authority, Jesus discarded the tinsel trappings of powerful people. He shunned pomp. He possessed a dynamic humility. He taught us to serve others, but not for the public recognition this service brings. The best Kingdom service is hidden service.

Jesus said,

Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen of them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have already received their reward in full. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be done in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you (Mt 6:1-4, NIV).

Jesus' actions, as well as His teaching, reflected humility. Upon healing two blind men, He "warned them sternly, 'See that no

one knows about this.'" (Mt 9:30, NIV) After His transfiguration Jesus told Peter, James and John, "Don't tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead" (Mt 17:9, NIV). Again Jesus shows radical humility when He restored two men who were possessed by demons [Note: Edershiem writes, "the demonized, who is specially singled out by St. Mark and St. Luke, as well as a less prominent companion (Matthew 8:28), came forth to meet Jesus." Vol I, p. 607.] He cast the demons into a herd of swine which were owned communally by a nearby town. They immediately ran down a steep embankment into the lake and drowned. The townspeople were so angry over their loss --and so afraid of the power of Jesus-- they demanded that He leave immediately. Without apparent personal defense of any kind "Jesus stepped into a boat, crossed over and came to His own town" (Mt 9:1, NIV). How many times have I vainly tried to explain the 'rightness' of my actions when confronted by disgruntled church members?

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The dynamic humility of Jesus was neither self-depreciation nor self-glory. He did not kick the dirt apologetically when He was praised. He did not discount His abilities. Nor did He brag about his abilities or power or wise interpretation of Old Testament scripture. Self-depreciation questions God's creative wisdom and will. Self-glory presumes upon one's own goodness and ability. Both attitudes hurt the minister's ability

to build relationships. Self-glory makes one proud and insensitive. Self-depreciation makes one hypersensitive and critical.

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Christian humility grows from a balanced and realistic appraisal of one's strengths and weaknesses. The effective minister is aware of his abilities and uses them to further the Kingdom of Christ. He is also aware of his weaknesses and applies God's power and promises to decrease their harm. By cultivating a proper mental attitude of humility the minister is freed from insensitivity (the result of self glory) and defensiveness (the result of self depreciation). This proper attitude undergirds his conscious efforts of building relationships with those he leads.

Principle Three

*The discipling minister
holds power and humility
in tension.
This produces a
dynamic servant-leader style.*

A discipling minister has learned not to manipulate people by spectacular programs that spotlight him. He sees the long term benefits of a gradual process of equipping others. The discipling minister uses his influence to further the Kingdom of Christ rather than

gain public recognition or build a personal kingdom.

Don

Don has served First Church as pastor for ten years. Each year he attends a workshop for single staff pastors. He never fails to bring home at least one "sure-fire" program that will set his church on the road to growth again. This year is no different. He stands before the congregation after the morning message on "being do-ers of the Word" to promote his latest idea: "If you will join with us faithfully in this program, we can actually double our (budget, Sunday School attendance, Church Training enrollment, mission action participation, education space, etc.). Next Sunday we'll provide a free meal to all who will help us in this effort. I want to see YOU next Sunday afternoon."

The congregation has heard this "success if only" sermon before. They've heard it so often that few really listen to what he says. Next Sunday the faithful few sit down to eat together. There seems to be little joy or excitement in what they are doing. They have the uncomfortable feeling that they are being used to forward a program that will produce little change or growth. Yet they come out of a sense of duty. They will do their best but their efforts already have the earmarks of failure.

Don is satisfied that he is doing the best he can. He has made the effort to bring back programs that have worked in other churches. "If the ideas don't work here, then it must mean that the people aren't committed to the Lord and His work. Maybe we need a new program in commitment!! We could really turn this church around if everyone would just **commit themselves** to (whatever the current program is)!!"

Situation Analysis

Don has little rapport with members in his congregation. Years of hyperbole and oversell have garbled communication lines to church members. The problem may be rooted in Don's concept of leadership. He sees himself as "the leader," but in the doing of it he becomes a manipulator. Don is afraid of what people might say if he gave them the chance. He has few friends in the congregation. He uses "programs" as a buffer between himself and the congregation and, in the process, as an excuse for failure. He uses the formal power of his pastoral position to badger people into participation. He does not understand that Christian leadership flows most freely through the informal power of service to others.

Larry

Larry is loved by many and respected by most of the people in his congregation. He gives the appearance of a "natural" leader with obvious skills in working with people. Actually he's worked quite hard to develop listening skills and sensitivity toward others.

Larry uses ideas as seeds that he plants in the minds of people in the congregation. Larry uses some of the same programs Don uses, but he adapts them and translates them with the help of lay leaders to fit the needs and resources of the congregation. He and the leaders dream together for the organizations under their supervision. Programs and plans that grow from these dreams possess the seed of Larry and the enthusiasm and support of the church.

Overt recognition is directed to the lay leaders in charge of the various church ministries, rather than to Larry. But plans are made

and implemented. The seeds germinate and grow. The results of this type of ministry are blooming ministries producing spiritual fruit in the lives of leaders as well as members.

Larry possesses a reservoir of informal power with people because of the gentle manner in which he deals with problems and personnel. Larry has the kind of influence that Don, the "leader," will never possess. Why? Because when Don begins to gain this kind of influence, he uses it to manipulate his congregation into some new program under his leadership. This is what "success" means to Don. Larry uses his influence to serve others more effectively. Don desires the spotlight at center stage and the applause of the crowd, but it seldom comes. Larry works best behind the scenes, enabling others to perform at the peak of their potential.

The discipling minister forsakes the pedestal and moves among the people as servant-leader. By doing this he forgoes political power but gathers for himself dynamic spiritual influence.

4. *JESUS MET PEOPLE'S NEEDS*

Jesus was quick to help people in need. One day He was teaching on the subject of fasting. Suddenly, servants of Jairus, ruler of the synagogue, interrupted Jesus' teaching. Jairus' daughter was ill, and the servants had come to summon Jesus. Jesus broke off His teaching session and went with him immediately (Mt 9:18-19). On the way to the religious leader's home He was interrupted by a "woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years" (Mt 9:20), making her ceremonially unclean (Lv 15:19-27) and a social outcast among her people. Jesus gives

no evidence of irritation at these interruptions. The Father is in control! Jesus stopped to help the lady. Then He continued on the Jairus' house and brought his daughter back to life. The interruptions of our routine are often the best opportunities for ministry.

Jesus was moved with compassion as He considered the masses of people (Mt 9:36; 14:14; 23:37). He did not condemn them for their lack of faith. Rather He strengthened what little faith they had, and in so doing He fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy: "A bruised reed he shall not break, and a smoldering wick he will not quench." (Is 42:3; Mt 12:20, NIV).

The interruptions of our routine are often the best opportunities for Christ-centered ministry.

One example of this faith-strengthening quality is found in His conversation with the Syro-phoenician woman. He recognized her faith and granted her request (Mt 15:23-28). Jesus' harsh words to the woman are explained in the fact that she was a pagan who could not understand Jesus' messianic mission beyond His power to heal. Edershiem writes, "To have granted her the help she so entreated would have been, as it were, to reverse the whole of His teaching, and to make His works of healing merely works of power." He could not yield to her request without first teaching her the real meaning of Messiah. Her response (v. 27) spoke of her understanding. "Heathenism may be like the dogs, when compared with the children's place and privileges; but He is their Master still, and they are under His table; and when He breaks the bread there is enough and to

spare for them." In responding in this manner, she is no longer under the table but had "sat down at the table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and was partaker of the children's bread" (Vol II, 37-42).

Jesus' openness to children further illustrates His concern for people. "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." (Mt 9:14, NIV)

The many recorded healings of Jesus point to His compassion for the needs of people. He cleansed a leper (Mt 8:2ff), healed Peter's mother-in-law (Mt 8:14ff), healed a paralytic (Mt 9:1ff), restored sight to two blind men (Mt 9:27ff), and healed "every kind of disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd." (Mt 9:35, NIV) He healed a man's hand on the Sabbath and showed through this act that mercy is always appropriate (Mt 12:9ff). He healed an epileptic (Mt 7:15, NIV) and restored the severed ear of a temple guard during His arrest (Lk 22:51). So much did Jesus do in meeting people's needs that if "every one of them were written down. . . even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written." (Jn 21:25, NIV)

Repeatedly we find Jesus using His power and authority to serve the Father and meet people's needs. He did not exalt Himself with His authority, though He was tempted to do just that at both the beginning and the end of His earthly ministry. Edershiem comments on the beginning, when Jesus was taken to the pinnacle of the Temple by Satan:

"In the Priests' Court below the morning sacrifice has been offered. The massive

Temple gates are slowly opening, and the blasts of the priests' silver trumpets is summoning Israel to a new day by their appearing before the Lord. Now then let Him descend, Heaven-borne, into the midst of priests and people. What shouts of acclamation would greet His appearance! What homage of worship would be His. The goal can at once be reached, and that at the head of believing Israel. . .but not the Divine Goal, nor in God's way. . .

"And thus once more Jesus is not only not overcome, but He overcomes by absolute submission to the will of God" (Vol I, p. 304).

**Jesus did not exalt Himself
with His authority,
even though He was tempted
to do just that
at both the beginning
and the end
of His earthly ministry.**

And again, at the end, the temptation to save Himself confronts Him, on the cross. They challenged Him. "He saved others, but he cannot save himself! He's the King of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross and we will believe him." (Matt 27:42) Here the leaders echo Satan's suggestion at the Temple wall. What more proof of His Messiahship could Jesus render than to come down off the cross? But again this route was not God's. Jesus' road to glory led through death. For the needs of people.

Jesus met the needs of people in life and in death. He used His power and authority to

that end. He continues to do so today. The discipling minister is more concerned about his flock than his own career. He serves people because in serving others he serves Christ.

Principle Four

*The discipling minister
responds to the
needs of people.
He maintains priorities
in ministry
that are person-centered.*

Jack

Jack had a problem with the Discipleship Training program of his church. He had only been at his new church a few weeks when he realized that Discipleship Training was not what it should be. Attendance was low. He knew that before he accepted the call to the church. But he was beginning to see that the attendance problem was only a symptom of deeper problems. He could find little enthusiasm for leader training efforts in the church. It was not that training was unnecessary: he found that the teachers, committee chairmen, deacons, as well as other leaders, needed further training in their area of ministry. New members were coming into the church without a structured introduction to its ministries, doctrines, or operations.

Mr. G. had been elected director of the Discipleship Training program back in Training Union days twenty years before. Under his leadership the program flourished until about three years ago. Since then, Mr. G. has resisted attempts to change the program in format, content, or direction.

Jack knows that Church Training falls directly in his staff responsibilities, but he's

not sure what to do here. He knows that Mr. G. is a kind man. He is respected by most members of the congregation. Yet for some reason he has stymied proposed changes that might improve the church's training efforts -- at least in the last three years.

Alternatives.

Let's look at four possible scenarios for solving Jack's problem.

Confrontation. Jack develops a list of problems related to Church Training and meets with Mr. G. to review them. Jack also thinks of several changes that need to be made soon. In the meeting, Mr. G. becomes increasingly defensive as Jack directly attacks his program, and indirectly attacks his leadership. Mr. G. resists the suggested changes and insists that the program remain as it is.

Laissez-faire. This is Jack's first church position. He is twenty years younger than Mr. G. He hesitates to meet with Mr. G. because he's not sure what to say or how to say it. It would be nice for Mr. G. to step down voluntarily, but Jack isn't even sure how to suggest such an idea to him. Besides, he has no way of knowing how this kind of change so soon would affect the church -- and this makes him apprehensive. While a few members have complained about the lack of a good training program in the church, most seem to accept the program as it is. Jack drifts along with Mr. G. without providing much guidance at all. As time passes, he discovers a tensing sensation in the pit of his stomach each time he sees Mr. G. Feelings of inadequacy, and later failure, begin to develop.

Take-the-bull-by-the-horns. Without consulting with Mr. G., Jack implements the changes himself. He enlists new teachers and orders new materials. He publicizes the "new

improved Discipleship Training program" through newsletter articles and by pulpit announcements. He does not invite an open conflict by calling a meeting, nor does he let the matter drift along aimlessly. He is the church's minister of education and acts aggressively on that basis by bypassing Mr. G. altogether.

Meeting-needs-of-individuals. Jack calls Mr. G. for a lunch appointment at his office. After discussing mutual interests of family and hobbies, Jack asks Mr. G. about the early years of the Church Training program. "Since arriving here I've heard several people say that Church Training attendance used to be higher. The church seemed more enthusiastic about classes. What do you think is the problem now?" Mr. G. shares some of the highlights of past training events. "Everything was going very well until several years ago when we called a new minister of education. He forced some changes on the program that nearly killed it, and then left for another church. I've nurtured the thing back to what it is now, but I know we could be doing a lot more!" Jack detects a feeling he had not detected before.

Mr. G. has both a deep concern for church training and a lingering hurt brought on by an old conflict. As they continue to share, they become more open: Jack is listening to and understanding the needs of his Church Training director. Mr. G.'s confidence in Jack is growing. Continuing conversation allows new ideas to be shared and discussed. Jack undergirds the ideas of Mr. G. and suggests alternatives. The two are on their way to improving the Church Training program.

Situation Analysis

Jack loses in scenario one. Even if he wins the battle with Mr. G. over program changes, he will most likely lose the "war" of continu-

ing church ministry. The relationship he has begun with Mr. G. will be vaporized in the heat of embarrassment and anger. Jack's solution may be a good one but this will do little to alleviate the feelings of bitterness and distrust on both sides for a long time.

Jack only delays the solution in scenario two. This approach is frustrating to the minister, the organization and the whole church. Jack finds himself trapped between job description and Church Training ineffectiveness. He will become an emotional time bomb. Unless he can take some affirmative action toward a solution to the problem, the tension may cause him to explode eventually -- at home, where it's "safe," or at other leaders in the church. Or, he may simply burn himself out under a load of tension he cannot resolve.

"If you can't solve a problem quickly, bypass it. The end justifies the means. The task is more important than one's relationship with church leaders. Get the job done!"

But of course this isn't the example Jesus gave us.

Scenario three repudiates the servant role of the minister and clings to the "can-do" leader role. It's the American Way! If you can't solve a problem quickly, bypass it. The end justifies the means. The task is more important than one's relationship with church leaders.

Get the job done! But of course this isn't the example Jesus gave us. He met the needs of individuals and in so doing brought in the Kingdom. When Judas the betrayer approached Him in the Garden, He called him "friend." Jack's actions in scenario three paint Mr. G. as a problem, not a friend. Yet Mr. G. is far less damaging to Jack than Judas was to Jesus.

In scenario four we see Jack treating Mr. G. as an individual with gifts and experience and hurts. He is interested in the program, but first interested in the program leader. Behind most "people problems" are unmet needs. Mr. G.'s unmet need was a lingering hurt from a previous minister. Once this was discovered and worked through, the problem of "program" fell of its own weight. This is a large part of the minister's task, which is helping people discover, and unlock, hidden problems. We do this so that they can become effective in Kingdom service.

5. *JESUS SUPPORTED HIS FOLLOWERS*

Jesus did not use his disciples to make a name for Himself, nor exploit them to establish His program. He gave Himself for them. He supported them and strengthened them. He grew them through practical teaching and daily experience to the place they were able to sense the dynamic of His kingdom. For Jesus, people are the ends, not the means, of his kingdom. The Kingdom is more process than product: making disciples and growing them into the image of Christ. How we do this is the very heart of Chapters One and Two.

Jesus supported His disciples in many ways.

Matthew recorded for us the detailed instructions Jesus gave before sending the twelve on their first evangelistic campaign (Mt 10). He did not send the twelve out to do His work so He could rest. He did not stop at supervising the work of others. When He had sent them out, "he went on from there to teach and preach in the towns of Galilee" (Mt 11:1, NIV). He led by example and shared in the work. His actions reinforced the sharp contrast between His kingdom and the religious establishment. He said,

The teachers of the Law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. They tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them. Everything they do is done for men to see. . .they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; they love to be greeted in the marketplace and to have men call them "Rabbi." (Mt 23:2-7, NIV)

Jesus gave His disciples a different model: Do not bind heavy burdens on people in the name of the Kingdom but serve the King by washing feet and binding up wounds.

Jesus' support permeated the group. Their sense of freedom in His presence is one evidence of this personal support. They freely chose to follow Jesus (Mt 4:18-22; 9:9) even when the requirements were harsh (Mt 8:18-22 and Mt 10:16-23). The rich young ruler was sincere in his behavior and attitude (running and kneeling), reverent in addressing Jesus ("Teacher"), upright in his lifestyle ("All these I have kept") and religious in his question ("What must I do to inherit eternal life"?). Yet he freely chose not to follow Jesus -- **and**

Jesus allowed him that choice! No guilt trip. No pressure. No 'one more next Sabbath!' Jesus let him go.

Beyond freedom of choice to follow Jesus we find personal freedom in the relationships of the disciples. They clearly enjoyed the freedom to speak their minds, even if at times their words betrayed a lack of humility. When Mary of Bethany poured precious ointment over Jesus' head, the disciples were "indignant. 'Why this waste?' they asked. 'This perfume could have been sold at a higher price and the money given to the poor'" (Mt 26:8-9, NIV). Peter's rebuke of Jesus (Mt 16:21-22) and the request for heavenly position by James and John (Mk 10:35) affirms the freedom of expression enjoyed by those closest to the Master. Had Jesus been an autocratic ruler, His disciples would have been less free in their speech and behavior.

**The rich young ruler
freely chose
not to follow Jesus.
Jesus allowed him that choice!
No guilt trip. No pressure.
Jesus let him go.**

**How often I've heard it said,
"fast growing churches
require autocratic pastors."
Here we see the wrong means
tied to the wrong end.**

Two of the disciples provide a vivid contrast in their response to the loving leadership and support of Jesus. As Judas approached

Jesus to betray Him in the Garden, Jesus called him “friend” (Mt 26:50, NIV) and accepted his kiss of greeting. Peter denied knowing Jesus, though he had bragged earlier of his devotion (Mt 26:69-75). Both betrayed their Leader. Judas had never really understood Who his Leader was and in desperation hanged himself (Mt 27:3-5). Peter lived to experience forgiveness and a recommissioning to Kingdom service (“Feed my sheep” Jn 21:17).

This example of Jesus as Servant-Leader burned so deeply into Peter’s soul that nearly forty years later this rugged fisherman would write to church leaders, “Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, serving as overseers. . . **not lording it over those entrusted to you**” (1 Pe 5:2a,3, NIV). How often have I heard it said that “fast growing churches require autocratic pastors.” Here we see the wrong goal tied to wrong methods. From these ideas come three principles.

Principle Five

The discipling minister supports his followers. He does not use them merely to accomplish his programs but nurtures them into the service of the Kingdom.

The leader protects and strengthens the followers. He teaches and loves them. He gives his own life, in terms of time, talent, emotion, and energy, for their benefit. He is willing to work as a member of the team. He multiplies his ministry by delegating specific responsibilities to organization leaders.

Bill

Bill had given his life to the Lord and to the ministry. Now he could only shake his head in disbelief as he surveyed the wreckage of

his situation. His wife had left him suddenly and he was bewildered. She claimed he was more married to his “job” than to her. He had given little attention to her or the children. But the ministry is more than a job! It’s a calling!! His primary responsibility was to his call, his work, his church! Or so he had thought. Surely the Lord had not intended his ministry to replace his marriage.

But that wasn’t the end of his problems. He began to reflect on the progress the church had made under his leadership the past four years. He could note few significant gains. The church had not developed a reservoir of leaders as he had hoped. He was still carrying much of the essential work of the organizations of the church. He attended all committee meetings and approved all their decisions. He **personally** handled problems in the educational organizations. This was the only way he knew to “serve people.”

Situation Analysis

Bill had become a bottleneck to those under his charge. His share of the workload became greater the longer he stayed at the church. His workdays became longer and his family time was torn away. Bill could not delegate. He had difficulty trusting the leaders of his organizations to carry out their assigned tasks without his own personal supervision.

He had not only destroyed his own home life. He had developed an attitude of passivity in the church. Members of the church had not developed skills of leadership. Bill served as a “do-er” more than an “enabler.” He now faced the bitter consequences of that misunderstanding on two fronts: at home and at church.

Control vs. Delegation. What will you

do to relieve the tension between ministerial control and delegation to lay leaders? In what specific ways will you encourage initiative and freedom in the members of your congregation? How will you balance home and church responsibilities? Here are some areas to consider:

Delegation is essential. It allows leaders to use their own talents for God's Kingdom. It releases creative forces in the leaders of the church. It multiplies the time of the staff minister.

Church leaders ignore this in churches where congregational government has been replaced by an autocratic pastor and/or staff who "proclaim God's will" and demand church obedience.

This flies in the face of our historic congregational polity that holds that the congregation, under the pastor's leadership, through prayer, can discern the will of God better than any one person.

Supervision is not autocratic control. If a committee or the congregation does not accept your position on a given issue, this does not mean you have failed. The good

leader helps the group see all sides of the issue and come to the position which is best for the church. This may not be the minister's preference. Church leaders ignore this principle in churches where congregational government has been replaced by an autocratic pastor and/or staff who "proclaim God's will" and demand church obedience. This flies in the face of our historic congregational polity that holds that the congregation, under the leadership of the pastor, through prayer, can discern the will of God better than any one person.

Leadership training is essential for church life and growth. The processes of delegation and supervision provide "hands-on" experiences for leaders. The minister who spends time today training leaders is laying the foundation for a stronger church tomorrow.

Initiative grows as freedom grows. Proper delegation and supervision are activities of freedom and trust. The minister who balances these permits church members to grow in their own initiative in ministry. There is no grace without freedom. Suspicion, fear and distrust repress creativity and initiative. "The leaders will do the thinking. You simply do what we say." This is religious totalitarianism.

Distributing tasks relieves tension between church and home. Tasks are performed by an ever-widening number of church members. Time can be spent at home with one's spouse and children. Remember, God instituted the home long before the Church.

Principle Six

The discipling minister fights the tendency to become self-centered and self-important.

“Creeping Pharisaism” is a continuing danger to ministers. Its temptation to bind burdens upon people through rigid rules, human hierarchy, and arbitrary structure is subtle and pervasive.

Henry

Henry is an effective minister of education because he knows he has come to his present position through God’s leading and sustaining. He is serving in a church larger than he had dreamed possible a few years ago. He is a man of simple beginnings. He had diligently sought God’s will for his life, and step by step he had been led through experiences that prepared him for this place of service. Like Nehemiah, he knows God’s hand is upon him. That knowledge humbles him.

It is, therefore, rather easy for Henry to be a serving leader. He is grateful for his opportunities to minister. He is open to the suggestions and opinions of others. He does not lock his sense of self-worth into the programs he designs. This allows him to listen clearly to constructive criticism and accept the good that is in it. He is easy to talk with because he gives the appearance of being comfortable in his work. He is also easy to agree with and easy to follow.

Because of Henry’s own spiritual growth, he encourages lay leaders to dream and pray and plan and work as the Lord leads them. There are few problems in this delegation because communication channels are open. His knowledge that God’s hand is on his ministry does not make Henry arrogant. On the contrary, that knowledge makes him want

all the more to serve others so that they too might discover the joy of ministry.

Proper delegation and supervision are activities of freedom and trust.

There is no grace without freedom. Suspicion, fear and distrust repress creativity and initiative.

Some fellow ministers cannot understand why Henry has so much influence over the lives of lay leaders and church members. But Henry simply applies Jesus’ teaching in his everyday responsibilities. “Whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all” (Mt 20:26-27, NIV). The power resting on Henry does not change his leadership style from servant to ruler. He consciously places himself in the position of servant. The result is increasing cooperation and loyalty from those he serves. He leads as he earns the right through service. Henry is a man of dynamic humility, active servanthood, and powerful leadership in Jesus’ name.

Principle Seven

The discipling minister builds an atmosphere of freedom and trust among his followers.

The discipling minister is sure enough of himself to be able to accept praise or criti-

cism. He is not thin-skinned or easily threatened. Such a leader encourages frank, open discussion with church leaders. The easy exchange of ideas helps him develop a realistic view of the church's mission, the groups' tasks, and the role of each lay leader. However, such freedom makes the leader vulnerable to attack by disgruntled church members. It is also fervently avoided by leaders who prefer to control the actions of others. But Jesus demonstrated the effectiveness of freedom in training leaders.

Leroy

Leroy left the meeting of the Sunday School Council feeling very good. He had worked hard on his proposal for a new organizational structure. He gathered as much information as he could find from other churches and ministers. He organized his findings into a professional presentation that had left the Council speechless. With little comment or discussion they voted approval for the organizational change. Leroy felt great relief to see the Council's response to his leadership. The sense of accomplishment warmed him as he drove home.

Meanwhile several of the Council members had gathered at a local cafe for a round of coffee. "Why didn't you speak up in the meeting if you're so opposed to the idea?!" It was not **the idea** that bothered two of the Council members but the way it was presented. "What good would it have done to question Brother Leroy? It would only make him think we're not committed to improving the Sunday School -- he almost said as much tonight." There were still many unanswered questions. How will these changes to be made? When will they to be presented to the church? Who will implement them and be responsible for them? None of these questions had been asked at the meeting. "I used

to feel I was doing something important for the Lord through my Sunday School work, but I'm not doing anything now. This just may be my last year on the Council. I want to be more than a "rubber stamp".

Leroy had showered and was getting into bed. The glow from his recent success made him warm and drowsy. As he fell into an easy sleep, he could not foresee the problems he would soon face -- problems that were building momentum across town.

**The discipling minister
leads out,
but not too far ahead
of his flock.**

**He nurtures the flock
but does not stagnate
in playing it safe.**

Situation Analysis

Leroy had not brought his Sunday School leaders into the process of developing the proposed change. He had not built an atmosphere in the Council sessions that permitted an open exchange of ideas and options. The vote on this night, without debate or dissent, did **not** show the true level of acceptance of Leroy's leadership. Rather it reflected a sense of **apathy and indifference**. This is the death-knell of teamwork and koinonia. Leroy had won his battle by default, but the long term prospects of peace are soon to be dashed against the realities of resignations and withdrawal.

The discipling minister lives in the tension between 'too fast' and 'too slow'. He leads

out, but he does not run too far ahead of his flock. He nurtures, but does not stagnate in playing it safe. Where this balance falls depends on your particular congregation and your own particular style. But long-term effectiveness will belong to the one who seeks the proper balance.

6. THE DISCIPLES WERE ORGANIZED

Jesus' love for individuals and His desire for "agape" relationship (Mt 22:37,39) drew the disciples into a cohesive group. His tenderness for the disciples shines through His prayer in Gethsemane (Jn 17:6-19).

The Twelve Divided

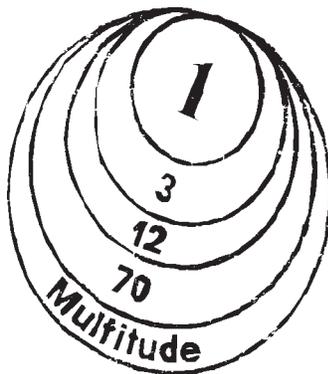
It appears that the disciples were organized into smaller groups, each group having its respective leader. These lists present the disciples in stable groups of four. The **first group** consisted of Simon Peter, James, John and Andrew. Peter is always listed first. The **second group** consisted of Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas. Philip is always listed first in this second group. The **third group** consisted of James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddeus (Luke calls him Judas, the son of James), Simon the Zealot and Judas Ischariot. James is listed first in this grouping. (See Mt 10:2-4, Mk 3:16-19, Lk 6:14-16, and Acts 1:13)

Special Attention to Three

Of these twelve, Jesus gave special attention to Peter, James and John. Every Gospel lists these three in the top four positions.

They were present with Jesus when he healed the daughter of Jairus, ruler of the synagogue. The other disciples apparently remained outside (Mk 5:37-38). These three witnessed the Transfiguration of Jesus while the others remained at the foot of the mountain (Mt 17:1-9). These three were asked to accompany Jesus into the Garden of Gethsemane and there to watch and pray with Him, while the others remained just inside the gate (Mt 26:36-38). It is interesting to me that all three of them overcame short tempers and large egos as they were loved by Christ and as they loved Him -- the brash fisherman and the "sons of thunder." It was not the anni-

hilation of their egos but the reigning in of their egos, for Christ, that made the difference in their lives. These three made significant contributions to the spread of the Gospel around their world. Peter evangelized the Jews, James pastored the church in Jerusalem until his martyrdom and John pastored in Ephesus. Their letters of encouragement to the churches strengthened the faith of millions in Jesus Christ, and as part of our New Testament, continue to do so.



The Special Status of Peter

Then further, Jesus concentrated his teaching and leading most directly on one of the three: Simon. He gave him the new name of Petros ("the rock") which symbolized what he would become (Mt 16:18). He allowed Peter to do an adventuresome thing and fail (walking on water. See Mt 14:29-33). He rebuked Peter when he resorted to violence (Jn 18:10-11). And, as we've noted already, we see the climax of Jesus' earthly nurture and training of Peter on the beach as He forgives

and recommissions Peter to Kingdom service. Notice the progression. As the group gets smaller, the relationships grow deeper.

**The group, thus
organized, trained and led,
marched out to
turn their world upside-down
with the Gospel.**

From Many to One

Jesus taught the multitudes. From these He chose 70 to send out witnessing. From these 70 He chose 12 for special instruction. Of the 12 He chose 3 for intensive training. And of these three, He concentrated on Peter. The group was One. It was a Body of several members fitted together with Christ as Head. The group, thus organized, trained and led, marched out to turn their world upside-down with the Gospel.

Principle Eight

*The discipling minister
organizes his ministry
to give attention,
support and training
to people who are willing
and ready to learn.*

The discipling minister serves the crowd by equipping the few who are ready to learn. He knows he cannot do everything himself. He therefore multiplies his effectiveness by ministering to people through people.

Virginia and Joan

Virginia made it a rule in her work as minis-

ter of education to avoid favoritism. She had seen what "favorites" could do to destroy the sense of community in a church. She stressed ministry (training, planning, and such) in large group settings. She avoided personal conferences. She turned down most invitations to dinner parties and social events (unless they were church-wide) for fear some might suspect she was playing favorites with one group or another. Virginia was lonely but considered this part of her ministry.

Joan made many people feel they were her "favorite." She provided special help to anyone who asked for it. She met with leaders and workers as her time permitted. She used her gifts of enthusiasm, motivation, and delegation to inspire the leaders and workers in her many areas of responsibility. She was frequently in the homes of church members and developed friendships with people of all ages. Joan shared both responsibility and authority with leaders of her organizations. Plans were built out of the synthesis of minister and leaders. Joan relied on the leaders to share their excitement with workers under their supervision. She was a leader of leaders and teacher of teachers. She reached out to every member of the church, but gave particular attention to those who carried on major educational programs. She was loved by those she worked with most closely, and respected by the membership at large. Her ministry was multiplied again and again as her ideas permeated the education programs.

Virginia has changed churches three times in five years. She has been unable to effect any long-term change in those churches because she has failed to build rapport with those leading church programs.

Joan has served in the same church for six years. She has been nourished by the rela-

tionships she has developed. She has made significant contributions to the church as a whole and to many individuals. She has developed strong friendships and built open channels of communication to every level of leadership -- formal and informal. She is able to evaluate the progress of educational programs in a natural, friendly way. Her work is really just beginning and she's looking forward to the next six years in the same church Family.

Situation Analysis.

Virginia tries to minister to everyone "equally." She was afraid to give special attention to individuals. Without the required relational bridges between herself and lay leaders, she is unable to make any lasting progress. Stagnation of church programs and personal loneliness take their toll. The result of this attitude has been frequent moves from church to church. Searching for the "ideal" situation in which to serve, she carries her most critical problem with her wherever she goes.

While being open to all, Joan focuses her attention on those most willing to learn. She multiplies her efforts as these learners become effective leaders. Just as Jesus focused increasing attention on the twelve and the three and the one, so Joan increases her influence by organizing her ministry. From time to time she is criticized for her "obvious favoritism." But her response is always the same: "Are you interested in joining our training group? Wonderful! We'd love to have you!" And another learner is added to the list of those on their way to more effective service.

7. JESUS' AUTHORITY TO LEAD

The major source of Jesus' authority was His total dependence on the Father (Jn 5:17-19). A second source of authority lay in Jesus' profound and intimate knowledge of scripture. This knowledge is displayed prominently in the Gospels as a weapon against Satan's attacks (Mt 4:4,7,10), in His condensation of the Law and the Prophets (Mt 22:37,39), and in His fulfillment of its letter and spirit (Lk 4:16-21). These two sources of authority allowed Him to be consistent in His dealings with others.

**Our lifestyle
is to be seasoned with salt
--pungent and powerful--
but it is to be filled with grace,
with self-giving love
for those we lead.**

Jesus promised rewards to those who left behind their old ways to follow Him (Mk 10:29-30) and stressed the need for rest (Mk 16:31). Above all else, Jesus saturated everything He did with agape love. He commanded all who call Him Lord to live in this way. "My command is this: 'Love each other as I have loved you.'" (Jn 15:12, NIV) We love others based on their need rather than on our feelings. Our lifestyle is to be seasoned with salt --pungent and powerful-- but it is to be filled with grace, with self-giving love for those we lead. Three principles are drawn from these ideas.

Principle Nine

The discipling minister is firm in his conviction concerning the Written Word, and his own personal relationship with the Living Word.

This conviction provides strength for daily living and daily leading. However, he does not confuse strong convictions with a dominating attitude toward others.

John

John has been minister of education in his church for seven months now. Summer is approaching. He has been told that the church traditionally moves the Royal Ambassador program from Wednesday night to Saturday morning during the summer months. This is done to allow the boys and their parents to participate in the city softball league that plays all its games on Wednesday evenings.



John disagrees with this policy. He believes it shows a distortion of values in the congregation. He feels he must end this practice to provide a better model of commitment in the church.

Alternatives.

The question is how best to make the change. Let's again look at some polar options.

Confrontation. John stands firm in his convictions and announces that the R.A. program will not be moved to Saturday mornings this summer. He was called to improve the educational programs of the church and this is a good place to start. John is afraid that too much flexibility at the beginning of his ministry may cause problems later. It is better to stand firm at the beginning to let people know that he is serious about his work. Members who disagree with his position are "obviously spiritually immature." He is willing to weather the storm that will follow his decision. He believes that things will eventually return to normal and the boy's program will have the priority it deserves.

Dominating others with an "I'm the leader, You're the follower" attitude reduces long-term influence

Laissez-faire. John does nothing. This has been a policy in the church for a long time and he doesn't want to "rock his new boat." He will work with the Saturday R.A. program and strengthen it all he can during the summer. As his Wednesday duties permit, he may even attend a few of the games to cheer on "his boys." He wants to build

bridges, not walls. **The Tight Rope.** John does not demand that the policy of the church be changed. He is an enabler, not a ruler. He begins to build open communication channels with R.A. leaders and parents. This approach may mean another summer of Saturday R.A.'s, but he hopes to influence these leaders toward change of the policy the following year --if this is determined to provide a real gain for the church and the community..

Situation Analysis.

The danger of scenario one is its disregard for relationship. John may survive this situation (particularly if his pastor is in support of his action), but things might not go as well when he confronts another problem the same way. We lead as examples to the flock, says Peter, not as lords. Trust level is critical to constructive ministry. Dominating others with an "I'm the leader -- you're the follower" attitude reduces trust level and, in turn, long-term influence.

The danger of scenario two is its lack of leadership. John appears more concerned about himself than he is about the boys or the church's witness. As we have noted before, laissez-faire leadership eventually leads to mediocrity. The danger of scenario three is the apparent lack of progress. John is doing something, but it may not seem so to the congregation at large. This approach requires more time than direct confrontation. Though John is laying the foundation for meaningful change, his reputation may deteriorate with those who want to see fast action.

What would you do in this situation? Which scenario is most appealing to you?

Principle Ten

The discipling minister has a fluent [articulate, well-versed] understanding of the Bible, and seeks to make decisions in light of that understanding.

He uses its principles in everyday situations. His knowledge of the Bible is not a static collection of stories and facts. It is living knowledge -- objective, subjective, behavioral -- that expresses itself in transformed living. This living knowledge allows him to solve problems and make decisions in line with spiritual truth.

Steve

Steve was confused. God had called him to this church. He had been trained in educational programming and teaching skills. His goals were clear: improve the church's educational programs and increase participation in these programs.

His problems were like the Red Sea. He prayed that they would part, but they plagued him all the more. His leaders lacked interest in training programs. Like Moses and Elijah he had pointed them to God as the Great Motivator. Yet they remained apathetic. Like Paul he called the leaders to action. They seemed to shun him. The actions of the heroes of the Bible were so clear and the results seemed so immediate. Why didn't God answer **his** prayers?!

Situation Analysis.

Steve's knowledge of the Bible is broad and shallow. He knows a lot of Bible stories. He has an abundance of conviction about the Scripture. But he does not have a fluent understanding of the depth of truth shining from its pages. He has not developed biblical wisdom by properly applying scripture in "the now."

The discipling minister studies the Bible, not to build around him a fortress of information with which to defend his positions. He studies to learn what God has said. Not in bits and pieces. But as a whole. His living knowledge does not lift him out of the real world to some vague place of otherness. It helps him fuse the realities of the material and spiritual worlds together. He is sensitive to real world problems and spiritual solutions.

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studies the Bible,
not to build around him
a fortress of information
with which to
defend his positions.
He studies to learn
what God has said.
Not in bits and pieces.
But as a whole.**

Rethink Steve's situation. What will you do to avoid his example? What are you doing to develop an approach to Bible study that will make you more biblical in our actions and lifestyle?

Principle Eleven

*The discipling minister sees himself
as a perpetual learner.*

The discipling minister, as a perpetual learner, views his own spiritual status as "in process." This dynamic spirituality produces fruit in his life and work as he surrenders

daily to the lordship of Christ. He lives on the cutting edge of faith.

Roger

Roger has become calloused. He has served two churches in the past eight years and found his work, inevitably, becoming less satisfying, more demanding, and more frustrating year by year. Demands from organization leaders, fellow staff members and home have drained him. He feels as if he has no more to give. The spark that burned so brightly through seminary and the early years of ministry is gone. The discovery of flaws inherent in people -- all people, including himself! -- struck a blow from which he has never fully recovered. The innocent optimism with which he entered vocational church work has turned to sour pessimism. He feels he is at a dead end with no way to turn.

Situation Analysis

Roger approaches his work more as a technician than an artist. He sees his work as mechanics. It is little wonder that he became depressed when he learned that the machinery was unreliable. His preoccupation with program details overshadowed his devotional time. He slipped from the cutting edge of faith and love to the trailing flap of past experiences and former plans. He lost touch with the Lord as he spent increasing amounts of time and energy wrestling with job description and budget requests.

Roger is no longer a learner. He has closed himself to channels of spiritual refreshment that are necessary for maintaining dynamic leadership.

Consider your devotional style. It is nurturing you each day? Is it a rigid habit or a flexible retreat? Does it meet you spontan-

eously as you go about your tasks or mechanically as part of the day's routine? Giving yourself for their benefit of others for

I might succeed as a technician of church programs. But I will eventually burn out unless I avail myself of life-long learning opportunities.

long periods of time is possible only by continuous renewal through prayer and devotional Bible study. I might succeed as a technician of church programs. But I will have difficulty performing quality ministry and may eventually burn out unless I consciously open myself to lifelong learning and growth.

8. *JESUS KNEW NO FAILURE*

Jesus' ministry included a multitude of people who followed Him and listened to Him. They wanted Him to be their King (Jn 6:14). Who better could throw off the Roman yoke and reestablish David's kingdom than the One Who could heal diseases and infirmities, feed thousands with a small lunch, and speak with unrivalled authority? But Jesus rejected their call. This was not God's path for Him (Jn 6:15). From that point until His death we see -- with human eyes -- His downward plunge into failure. He was attacked by the educated and religious. He was rejected by the masses. He did not "fit" their notions about God's plan. Even His own disciples deserted Him in the end. Turned over to pagan authorities, He was

tried, scourged, and crucified. In dying He hung on rough nails driven into raw wood between two criminals. No one seemed to understand Him or the Gospel He had proclaimed for three years. WHAT A FAILURE!

But wait! The story isn't finished. Jesus did not measure success by the masses, or religious leaders, or disciples! He measured His mission's success by His Father's will for His life (Jn 5:30, 36-40; 6:38; 8:28-29). So the only way He could ultimately fail was by acting outside that will to attempt to reach spiritual objectives by human means.

We noted Jesus' triumph in three major tests: the temptations in the Wilderness, the prayer-struggle in Gethsemane, and the taunts of the crowd at Calvary. Each time Jesus weighed the evidence and found nothing more important than doing the Father's will. On one arm of the balance lies rejection, persecution, abandonment and the agonies of an unjust and cruel death. On the other lies the resurrection! There was no failure in the life of our Leader! There was only success as He faithfully carried out God's will.

The only way Jesus could ultimately fail was by acting outside the Father's will to attempt to reach spiritual objectives by human means.

We would lead more confidently and consistently if we could focus more on God's will for our ministry and focus less on the inevitable criticism, misunderstanding, confron-

tation, and miscommunication that occurs when people work together in a common cause. We pray for sensitivity to the "still small voice" that leads us. On the other hand, we should guard ourselves against the danger of mistaking **emotional** or **social** or **political** pressure as "God's will." Jesus knew the Father's will precisely. We struggle by faith to know even part of His will for us (I Cor 13:12). Therefore I must exercise great care lest I mistake my own personal feelings (or ego needs, or materialistic desires) or pressure from leaders or members in the church for the will of God.

Further, we have the promise that, though we will inevitably fail in some aspect of our work (for all . . . fall short of the glory of God), He can work all things together for our collective good (Rm 8:28). The events of my life are like beads on a string. I tend to look at them one at a time. This one's good. This one's not so good. The good events lift me up and the bad events tend to depress me. But when I look at the entire string by faith, I can see how all the beads together produce a beneficial mosaic of life.

The resurrection gives us hope if we will but receive it. Not only hope for the future in heaven, but hope for daily living right here and now. Whether we face unjust criticism or gossip that undermines reputation, or outright opposition, God can resurrect us to His service -- just as Jesus did with Peter. He can give us greater resources, more influence, and a deeper understanding of Christian leadership if we will trust in and cling to Him day by day.

Principle Twelve

The discipling minister views failure redemptively.

When failure finds meaning it is no longer failure. The discipler retains active hope even when he fails because he knows and follows the Risen Christ.

Fred

Fred had made an error in judgement and it had already cost him several nights sleep. He had acted too quickly, without sufficient knowledge of the facts, and without meeting personally with the parties involved. Now a powerful group within the church were crusading against his actions. What made him feel worse was knowing that he HAD made a mistake. And further -- though he had tried to make amends -- he knew the sting of the incident would haunt his ministry for a long time. His leadership had been compromised because some members would hesitate to trust him as fully as they had before.

Should he remain at this church to minister as best he can and overcome, in time, the bitterness and prejudice now leveled at him? Or should he seek another place of service and carry with him the hard-learned lessons that will fashion him into a more effective and loving minister?

What would YOU do? Whatever decision Fred makes, he is confident that the grace of the Risen Christ will ultimately bring good out of his failure. The death of Jesus on the cross was seen by disciples, Roman soldiers, and Jewish leaders as His life's final chapter, the ultimate failure. But it was only Prologue to the greatest success story in history.

We all face failure from time to time. But in Christ, the resurrection always comes -- if we will but wait. Remember the difference between Peter and Judas? One waited and was forgiven. In that we can place our hope

and confidence.

9. REFLECTIONS FROM PETER

In the years following Jesus' ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit, churches were established throughout the known world. Problems concerning church organization and government began to rise when it became apparent that Jesus would not return immediately.

No disciple spent more time with Jesus -- nor received more personal attention from Jesus -- than Peter. In writing guidelines to church pastors, Peter records his perceptions of the major elements of Jesus' leadership style. He makes the following key points in his first letter.

The Church is the Body of Christ

"...a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God" (I Pe 2:9, NIV). It is not a religious hierarchy whose power resides in the "clergy."

The Christian leader nurtures the church.

"Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers -- not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve" (I Peter 5:2, NIV). The Christian leader is a shepherd, not a hired hand. Jesus clarified the difference:

"The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because

The Christian Leader:

- ✓ is a shepherd, not a hired hand
- ✓ is an example, not a lord
- ✓ is humble, not proud
- ✓ depends on God
- ✓ is in control of himself
- ✓ faithfully stands



he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep" (John 10:11-1, NIV). The Christian leader is a shepherd, not a hired hand.

The Christian leader is an example

"Not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock" (I Peter 5:3, NIV). The Christian leader is an example, not a religious ruler.

The Christian leader is humble toward others

"Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble'" (I Peter 5:5b, NIV). The Christian leader is humble, not arrogant.

The Christian leader is humble before God

"Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time" (I Peter 5:6). The Christian leader is not self-centered. He does not rebel against or resist experiences in life, but accepts God's hand upon him.

The Christian leader depends on God

...for strength as he leads each day. "Cast all

your anxiety on him because he cares for you" (I Peter 5:6, NIV).

The Christian leader is in control of himself

"Be self-controlled and alert" (I Peter 5:8a, NIV). He is aware of his environment and the circumstances surrounding his ministry as he leads. He is firmly in touch with reality.

The Christian leader faithfully stands

...resisting the evil that attempts to deter him from accomplishing his task. "Resist [Satan], standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kinds of sufferings" (I Peter 5:8, NIV).

The discipling minister resists the world's models of leadership that tout arbitrary power and material success. These models produce religious rulers who use training and experience to dominate God's people for personal goals. Jesus' example shows us the possibility (indeed, the necessity) of servant leading.

In Summary...

We are called as program leaders

We are called to serve by a church that assumes we possess sufficient knowledge, training, and leadership ability to improve their ministries. Our training in seminary provides materials, patterns and ideas which we use to strengthen the work of this church. We are expected to be "experts" in our chosen field -- or at least expected to be willing to develop that expertise as we serve. We are called to lead. It is a calling that implies a position out ahead of those we lead.

We are called as servants

We are called to serve by a church that assumes we possess sufficient spiritual maturity and relational skills to help individuals grow in Christ. We are expected to treat each person as an individual with unique gifts and minister to their needs as they live in a hostile world. We are called to minister. It is a calling that implies sensitivity and caring and giving.

The Tension. . .

We are pulled by these two roles -- first one way and then the other. We may find ourselves conflicting with individuals when we attempt to improve a program. We may become so benevolent toward individuals that organizations lose their capacity to function and accomplish little for the Lord. It is in this tension that we live and work -- we cannot escape it if we are to be effective.

. . .is Resolved in Christ!

Paul wrote "We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone in all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me" (Col 1:28-29, NIV).

We work with people, not titles on organization charts. We love them and serve them, minister to their needs and help them discover and use their gifts.

We serve as examples of what we desire to see in them. We teach as we want them to teach. We lead as we want them to lead. We build relationships in Jesus' name. We provide opportunities for leaders to share their joys and frustrations naturally -- in their homes, on retreats, or in informal meetings.

THE DISCIPLER'S MODEL

The disciplers' model presents the content areas of my education ministry. The **manner** by which I lead God's people is as much a part of my teaching ministry as the words I speak. The disciplers' model is my guide to leading leaders, teaching teachers, and ministering to ministers. I try to lead by example. I attempt to train disciplers by discipling them.

Form follows substance. Task follows relationship. Leading follows serving. Numerical growth follows spiritual growth.

The focus is on the gold, silver, and precious stones of walking with Christ, in His yoke.

The focus is on producing fruit, not leaves. May God bless you as you absorb the disciplers' model and use it in your everyday ministry. Open yourself to Him and to those you lead in Jesus' name. Lead as you teach, and teach as you lead. Work toward balance as a leader-servant.

There are
no
established patterns
to follow.
The fabric
of the minister's work
is woven each day
from the threads unique
to the
congregation
and
his own personality.

We are called to give away
our lives as ransoms
for those we lead.

*Let not mercy and truth forsake thee:
bind them about thy neck;
write them on the table of your heart:*

*So shalt thou find favor and
good understanding
in the sight of God and man.
(Proverbs 3:3-4)*

May God bless you on your journey!