**EE Practicum – Session # 7**

**The Making of a Disciple**

**Luke 6:40**

1. **Introduction**

* In our last session we dealt with the process of **evangelism** and discussed ten characteristics of an effective witness. The basic definition of a **witness** is to “share what a person has seen, heard or experienced”. We saw how the woman of Samaria impacted a whole village with her testimony of who Jesus was. She gave witness to the townspeople that she had met the Messiah and that her life was forever changed.
* In this session we want to move a person from being a **convert** to being a **disciple** through what we have called an “establishing process”. What all does this involve?
* What the Apostle Paul wrote in Colossians 2:6,7 describes this “establishing process” that we want to have happen in the life of a new believer. **“Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith just as you were instructed and overflowing with gratitude”.** A great deal is covered in this one short sentence but it describes what we want to see happen in the life of a new believer.
* In Evangelism Explosion we place a high priority on the follow up process and begin it immediately upon a person making a profession of faith. One of the greatest tools we have for this is the little red booklet called “Partners in Growing.” Walking through the spiritual birth certificate helps clarify and solidify the decision the new convert just made.
* People have brought this little certificate back to me ten years after their conversion and it still serves as a stake that helped secure their decision for Christ though they went through difficult times of testing and discouragement as a result of that decision.
* One of the things that we train our EE people to do is give out a little follow up book that we give out in addition to the little red booklet. Part # 1 of the book has a short explanation on “How to Receive Eternal Life” and also “How to Walk as a Christian.” Part # 2 of the book is the 21 chapters of the Gospel of John. Part # 3 is an explanation of “How to Spend 21 Days with God” along with two questions for each chapter they read, “What has God taught me today” and “what was the most helpful verse.
* Their assignment for our 7-day call back appointment that we set before we leave them is to begin reading one chapter each day and answering those two questions. Now I wish I could report that every new convert that comes through our EE ministry follows this pattern but I will say the ones who do began to grow spiritually immediately.
* We are committed to going back as a team for three weeks and hopefully by the end of those three weeks we have gotten the new convert to attend church with us and have become a part of our New Beginnings Class that runs seamlessly throughout the year.
* In the back of the little book is a reading program they can follow to help them read through all 27 books of the New Testament. The first three weeks of a new believer’s life is critical to the spiritual progress they can have for the rest of their life.
* I want our EE teams to be as committed to helping new believers grow in their walk with the Lord, as we were to share the gospel. Jesus didn’t command us to go and make converts but to **“go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit teaching them to observe all that I commanded you and lo I am with you always even to the end of the age.”**

1. **The Establishing Process includes Five Things:**

1. **The Bible** – Old Testament (39 books); New Testament (27 books)

* New converts need to understand the **lifeline** to their faith is God’s Word. Paul says in Romans 10:17 that **“faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God.**
* One of the first needs a new convert has is **assurance** of his or her faith. I John 5:11,12 reminds us that **“these things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may KNOW that you have eternal life.”** This is not a “think so” or “hope so” kind of thing but a “know so” reality.
* The new convert needs to know for sure that he has truly been born again. I have seen people “make decisions” but when I tried to help them grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, I discovered they were still dead in their trespasses and sins. They had no spiritual life. It is impossible to disciple a person who is spiritually dead.
* The Apostle Paul stated, **“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come”** (II Corinthians 5:17). In order to identify a genuine convert, you must see in him or her a change of attitude toward Jesus Christ and a change of attitude toward sin. When Christ takes up residence in a person’s life, He changes your want to doer. The things you did before lose their appeal and there is a desire for the new things to take precedence.
* Now we all know this doesn’t happen over night but there is a gradual shift to those things that please the Lord. A sure sign of new birth is a hunger for God’s Word. Peter says that **“new born babes desire the sincere milk of the Word that they may grow thereby”** (I Peter 2:2). This desire indicates the seed is taking root in “good soil.”

1. **Prayer** – Jesus modeled that prayer was based on a relationship with God

* A new convert needs to see that prayer is an on-going communication with his Heavenly Father. Prayer isn’t a stiff and meaningless repetition of words but an intimate communion with the creator of life. Paul says **“in Him we live and move and have our being.”** John 10:10 contrasts the plan of Satan with that of Christ’s saying, **“the thief comes to rob, kill and destroy, but Christ came that we might have life to the full.”**
* That full and meaningful life is filled with love and laughter. A new convert needs to be accepted into his or her new family called the church. The church is to be a place where life is experienced in community. It’s a place where sorrows are shared as much as the happy experiences of a family. Life finds it’s greatest fulfillment in community.
* The new convert needs to see the “one anothers” played out in real life: to love one another, to pray for one another, to encourage one another, etc. The church is to be a place where masks come off and honesty prevails. Love and acceptance are foundational for a new believer to grow. Jesus makes authentic living possible.
* Ephesians 1:6 says, **“to the praise of the glory of His grace wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved.”** We can come to God warts and all and know that He desires to be with us. Paul demonstrated love and acceptance to the Thessalonians when he wrote, **“we loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only in the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become very dear to us”** (I Thessalonians 2:8). Effective disciple-making involves “life on life”!
* Paul adds in verses 10 and 11, **“You are witnesses and so is God of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children.”** Genuine love!

**3. Worship** – Adoring God is both an individual and a corporate endeavor!

* Often when we think of worship we are prone to limit this word to what we do corporately in church worship services. I find it’s important for us to help new convert understand the personal side of the word worship.
* In Romans 12:1 we read, **“Therefore I urge you brethren by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.”**
* Worship can be understood as “worth” ship; God is truly worthy of our personal sacrifice that is fleshed out by the use of our bodies for His glory. God is honored when we offer up our talents and abilities in service of Him.
* God takes how we use our bodies as an expression of holy offerings so that literally my daily activities can be acts of worship. Helping a new believer be able to see that what he does for a living can be a holy offering. Whether I am a butcher, a baker or a candlestick maker what I do can literally be seen as an offering to the Lord.
* I may work in a factory but I am there for the Lord. We are the only **Jesus** that some people will ever see. When I truly understand that my every day life can my worship it makes what I do for a living take on a whole new meaning and purpose. One brick layer can only see himself laying bricks while another man understands that he is building a cathedral. The difference is in the perspective each man has of his work.
* Worship is a vital aspect of growth and when we commune with Him throughout each part of our day He is honored. Paul says in I Corinthians 6:19, **“Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. Therefore honor God with your body and your spirit which are God’s.”**
* Obviously the new convert needs to get connected to strong Bible teaching church and get involved in corporate worship with other Christ followers.

**4. Fellowship** – The new convert now has a new extended family

* Our new Christian has been born into a family and needs the fellowship of his or her brothers and sisters in Christ. The body of Christ is made up of people from every language, color, and ethnicity from all of the peoples of the world. The new Christian needs to understand Paul’s teaching on the body of Christ as it relates to the church.
* Paul says in I Corinthians 12:12,13, **“For even as the body is one and yet has many members and all the members of the body, though they are many are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.”**
* It will take a little time but if our new convert becomes an integral part of a small group within the church he will have a particular place for his spiritual gifts to be observed and released for service. The sooner a new believer can begin using his spiritual gift in the body of Christ the sooner the joy of the Lord can become his strength.
* In a safe place the new believer can begin to deal with the hurts of his past and be able to pour out the contents of his heart and see how the people who love him can blow away the chaff of his heart and help him or her move in to a healing place where the balm of God’s amazing grace can wash away every stain!

**5. Witness –** The privilege and responsibility of sharing the good news of the gospel!

* A new convert needs to understand that his friends in the world will be watching changes take place in his life and before long they will test him to see if this is just a phase he’s going through or if in fact the change is for real.
* Help him or her understand that their friends may not like the changes they see so they need to be ready for opposition and even hostile responses.
* Help them realize they will need to ask the Lord for help to learn how to respond to attack the way He did. They will need to learn how to turn the other cheek and not to attack back. Jesus said to **“let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven”** (Matthew 5:16). He didn’t say, “shine your light”! Let them see the difference.
* Help them resist the temptation to point out wrong things in the lives of their friends and go to their prayer closet and pray the Lord will make them curios as to why he is so happy and that his life seems to have a new set of priorities and values. Help them realize that some of their friends may no longer want to be around them.
* Help the new convert lean into his new relationship with the Lord and realize that the Lord is **“a friend that sticks closer than a brother”** (Proverbs 18:24) and that the Lord has promised to **“never leave or forsake him”** (Hebrews 13:5).
* Help your new convert focus on the new things the Lord has brought to him; forgiveness of sin; a sense of release from the weight of sin; a new peace and a new sense of purpose. Now is the time to help your new convert develop his testimony and have it well rehearsed so that when a friend or family ask him to explain his new found joy that he will have a ready answer. Here’s what I was before, here’s what I am now, Jesus made the difference. Are you interested?
* I Peter 3:15 says, **“But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give a reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.”**
* We are witnesses whether we realize it or not for Jesus said, **“you will be my witnesses.”** The only choice we have is whether we will be a good witness or a bad one. Remember that a witness merely shares what he has experienced. Now would be a very good time to involve your new convert in your EE training ministry. Help him or her see that witnessing for the Lord is merely sharing the joy of what it means to know for sure that your sins are forgiven and that if he or she should die they know for sure they would be with the Lord in heaven. Wow! How exciting!

1. **Conclusion: How do you know when your convert has become a disciple?**

* There is no set time when one officially reaches the level of being a disciple. We must remember that a disciple is defined as a “learner” or a “follower”. Spiritual maturity takes a long time to occur in one’s life. A simple formula for maturing in Christ is:

**The Word of God + Obedience + Time = Spiritual Maturity**

* It took the Son of God three years before He felt His disciples were ready to carry on His work when He was gone. Those of us who have been Christians for a long time realize that we are continual learners and will be for a lifetime. Peter said, **“But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”**
* This is a lifelong adventure and we always need to be open to the new things God desires to teach us. God never stops stretching and growing us and He often uses difficulties and trials to do so. He wants us to depend on Him and not on ourselves.
* One of the first things that we want a disciple to know how to do is to lead a person to Christ. His friends and family members need to know how to receive the gift of eternal life and he is the person who needs to be able to share that good news with them.
* Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived said in Proverbs 11:30 that **“the fruit of the righteous is a tree of life and he that winneth souls is wise.”** Jesus had a deep love for lost people and there is not a person that we can lay eyes on who doesn’t matter to God and if he or she matters to God, he or she must matter to us.
* Jesus was a **friend of sinners** and we need to emulate His passion. A genuine disciple is a fisher of men, women, boys and girls. Pray for a genuine love for the lost!

**Two Books to Reference:**

1. “Essentials of Discipleship” by Francis M. Cosgrove; ISBN 0-89109-442-3
2. “Multiplying Disciples the New Testament Method for Church Growth by

Waylon B. Moore; ISBN 0-89109-481-4