

**Developing
Leaders Who
Are Becoming Like
Their Teacher**

**Growing Christian Leaders Series
Manual 13**

by

Duane L. Anderson

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Growing Christian Leaders Series

This series of manuals is the result of a series of weekly e-mail topics that have been prepared and e-mailed over a period of years. They originally started out as a one page topic that gradually grew to the point where most topics are about three pages in length.

This series is especially designed for those who are already Christian leaders to give them Biblical principles for the development of additional godly spiritual leaders. Because they give Biblical principles for growth in spiritual leadership, they are also helpful for Christians that want to grow and become godly spiritual leaders.

Mark 10:43-45 says, "Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." In these verses Christ taught that godly spiritual leaders do not have the attitudes of leaders in the world. Worldly leadership is based on power and authority and is designed to benefit the leader and place him above others. In contrast, godly spiritual leadership is designed to help every Christian reach their full potential in Christ. The following three statements give a summary of three styles of leadership.

If we drive people, we will drive them until they can get out of our way.

If we lead people, we will be able to lead them as far as we have gone ourselves.

If we serve people, we will help each person develop their full God given potential and equip each person for the ministry that Christ has prepared for every Christian.

In the world people often measure success by the amount of things that they accumulate in this world before they die. However, they are unable to take any of those things with them when they die. Mark 8:36-37 says, "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" Success produces rewards until we die but it produces nothing for eternity.

In contrast, God measures effectiveness by our faithfulness and obedience. Matthew 6:19-21 says, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Effectiveness produces eternal rewards. Mark 10:29-30 says, "So Jesus answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time--houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions--and in the age to come, eternal life." I Corinthians 10:31 says, "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." The Growing Christian Leaders Series is designed to make your life count for eternity by bringing glory to God.

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1.

Jesus Knew His Followers Would Become Like Himself

Today we are beginning a new series of topics. This series of topics will be titled, Developing Leaders who are becoming like their Teacher. The word that is translated Teacher is used 58 times in the New Testament. In Luke 6:40 we read, “A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher.” Christ was training the twelve so that they would become like Him. By the time He came to the night before His crucifixion, Christ was able to say in His prayer to the Father in John 17:4, “I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.”

This is a key principle to remember as we help Christians grow and mature. When they are fully trained they will become like us whether that is good or bad. That is why we must continue to grow so that we are becoming more and more like Christ who is our Teacher. That is why Paul said in I Corinthians 11:1, “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.” If we are going to develop leaders who are becoming like Christ, we must choose to make it our goal to imitate Christ so that as they imitate us they will become like Christ.

In Ephesians 4:11-13 we see that teachers are among the group of leaders that are to equip the saints for the work of the ministry. Those verses say, “And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

In other topics we have said that the apostles and prophets are the foundation of the church with Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Cornerstone – Ephesians 2:20. The evangelists equip the saints to share the Gospel. The pastors equip the saints to minister to one another. The teachers equip the saints to teach and apply the Word of God. Since every Christian is called a saint, we will see that every Christian is to be equipped to teach and apply the Word of God and we will see how Christ taught His followers to teach and apply the Word of God to their lives and ministry.

As Christ ministered to His disciples the night before His crucifixion, He explained how He was equipping them to teach others. John 13:13-14 says, “You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.” Christ did not give the disciples a lecture on how to serve one another. Instead He gave an example for the disciples to follow. In verse 17 He said, “If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.” In these verses Christ said the disciples would be blessed if they followed His example. Christ wanted them to do the same thing and teach others by their example.

A few minutes later Christ gave the disciples a new commandment. John 13:34-35 says, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” Again Christ had shown the disciples how to love one another by the way that He had shown His love to

them over the previous three and a half years. He did not just tell them what to do. Instead He invited them to imitate His example.

Christ also began to teach His disciples the importance of prayer right from the time that He invited them to follow Him and become fishers of men. Soon after Jesus called them Mark 1:35-37 says, “Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed. And Simon and those who were with Him searched for Him. When they found Him, they said to Him, Everyone is looking for You.” One of the very first lessons that Christ taught His disciples by example was the importance of prayer.

Christ continued to provide this example of the importance of prayer throughout His ministry. We see that this example caused the apostles to set certain priorities for their own ministries. They explained these priorities in Acts 6:4 where we read, “But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” The disciples had watched the example of Christ for His entire public ministry. As a result, prayer was one of their two key priorities in their ministry.

The second priority of the apostles also came from the example of Christ. In Matthew 5:1-2 we read, “And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:” The multitudes had the opportunity to listen on this occasion but the priority of Christ was teaching His disciples. The impact of the teaching of Christ that day is seen in Matthew 7:28-29 where we read, “And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.” A study of that sermon will show why Christ taught with authority. The thing that Christ did was explain and apply the Word of God to the situations that the people faced in their daily lives.

In Matthew 5:23-26 Christ explained to the disciples how to resolve a conflict between themselves and someone else. However, just telling the disciples once did not mean that the disciples knew how to resolve conflict. As a result, Christ told them again in Matthew 18:15, “Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.” However, just telling the disciples a second time did not mean that Christ had taught the disciples the principle. Christ had to demonstrate the principle both by word and action for the disciples to really understand.

In Matthew 20:20-28 James and John had their mother speak for them and request that her sons have the privilege of sitting on the right and the left hand of Christ when Christ came into His kingdom. Matthew 20:24 says, “And when the ten heard it, they were greatly displeased with the two brothers.” To help the disciples learn to work as a team, Christ explained the Biblical principle of servant leadership. Matthew 20:25-27 says, “But Jesus called them to Himself and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave--.” In these verses we see that Christ explained the principle of servant leadership to help the disciples learn how to resolve conflict.

However, then Christ did one more thing. Matthew 20:28 says, “Just as the Son of Man did not

come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” In this verse we see that Christ used His own example to illustrate the principle of servant leadership. The disciples learned from the example of Christ what they did not learn from just hearing Christ teach. In Acts 2:44-47 we read, “Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” The disciples had learned the principle of servant leadership from the example of Christ and were now showing the new Christians how to apply that principle by their own example.

In Matthew 6:25-34 Christ taught the disciples seven principles about why they did not need to worry. The fact that Christ had taught the principles did not mean that the disciples had learned the principles. Instead they had to be shown by the example of Christ that they did not need to worry. Peter learned that lesson so well that he later wrote about it. I Peter 2:23 says, “Who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously.” Christ had shown by His example that He could trust the Father to complete His work.

Peter had seen the example of Christ and that had an impact on Peter’s life for the rest of His life. Acts 12:4-6 says, “So when he had arrested him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four squads of soldiers to keep him, intending to bring him before the people after Passover. Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church. And when Herod was about to bring him out, that night Peter was sleeping, bound with two chains between two soldiers; and the guards before the door were keeping the prison.” Peter had learned that he could trust the Lord even when he knew that he faced death the next day. He was sleeping so soundly that the angel had to hit Peter in the side to even wake Him.

These are just a few illustrations that Christ taught lessons in at least two ways. First, he taught the disciples through His teaching. Second, He taught the disciples through His own example. Jesus knew that His followers would follow His example. In the same way, an effective teacher will do as Paul did in I Corinthians 11:1 and invite people to imitate him, “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.” May the Lord richly bless you as you help developing leaders learn to teach others both by their teaching and by their example.

2.

Jesus Showed how to Develop Godly Character

In our last topic we talked about the fact that Jesus knew that His followers would become like Himself. One of the things that Christ both taught and demonstrated in His life was godly character. He demonstrated that character and He spent much of His ministry showing the disciples how to develop that character. Paul later taught Timothy the importance of teaching godly character by example. In I Timothy 4:11-12 we read, "These things command and teach. Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity." In our study today we will see how Christ developed these things in the lives of the apostles.

First, we see that Timothy was to be an example to the believers by the words that He spoke. In Matthew 12 a large multitude followed Christ and His disciples. As a result, Christ began to teach the multitude. In Matthew 12:34-35 Christ made a very important statement to the Pharisees, "Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things." In this passage we see that Christ made it very clear that the thing that controls the words that people speak is the heart or the inner man.

Christ provided an example for His disciples in Luke 9:54-56 where we read, "And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, 'Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?' But He turned and rebuked them, and said, 'You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them.' And they went to another village." Christ taught the disciples that their words came from what was in their hearts. Then Christ modeled by both His words and His actions that they were to be an example in word. Christ explained that His purpose was not to destroy the lives of men but to save them. Then Christ modeled this godly character by backing His words with actions. He did this by taking the disciples to another village rather than giving them the opportunity to do what they had suggested by their words.

Second, we see that Timothy was to be an example to the believers by his conduct. Christ also taught the disciples to be an example by their conduct. In John 13:16-17 we read, "Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them." Christ had just served the disciples by washing their feet. Now He was encouraging them to follow His example and serve others. Peter and the other apostles demonstrated the attitude of a servant many times in Acts. In Acts 10:29 Peter asked Cornelius, "Therefore I came without objection as soon as I was sent for. I ask, then, for what reason have you sent for me?" He showed a servant's attitude by asking how he could help them. His comment in Acts 15:10-11 shows again his desire to serve the Gentiles, "Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they."

Third, we see that Timothy was to be an example to the believers by his love. Christ also taught the disciples to love by His love for them. In fact the new commandment speaks of the love that Christ had for His disciples. John 13:34-35 says, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." Christ asked them to love one another in the same way that He loved them. He had modeled love for them and they were to show others how to love by their example.

Peter passed on that same commandment. I Peter 1:22 says, "Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart." John also passed on this commandment. I John 4:7, 11 say, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God...Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." Peter, John and the other apostles also provided an example of love for new Christians. Acts 2:46 says, "So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart." The early church was being shown how to show love by example.

Fourth, we see that Timothy was to be an example to the believers in spirit. Christ also showed the disciples how to be an example in spirit. We see that the disciples had much to learn in order to be an example in spirit. Luke 9:54-56 says, "And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, 'Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did? But He turned and rebuked them, and said, 'You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them.' And they went to another village."

In these verses we see that Christ rebuked the disciples for their spirit of retaliation. In contrast, Christ provided an example of a spirit of love and concern for the salvation of the Samaritans. Acts 8:25 shows us that Peter and John developed this same spirit of love for the Samaritans. That verse says, "So when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans." Instead of continuing to have a spirit of retaliation and a desire to get even with the Samaritans, John had developed the same spirit of love that Christ had shown toward the Samaritans. He wanted to share with them the message of salvation and forgiveness of sin because he learned from the example of Christ.

Fifth, we see that Timothy was to be an example of faith. Christ provided an example of faith for the disciples. In Luke 17:3-5 we read, "Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him." And the apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith." Christ was teaching the disciples how to forgive. However, they also realized another very important lesson. They had to have Christ increase their faith in order to forgive as Christ forgave.

Christ responded in Luke 17:6, "So the Lord said, 'If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you.'" Christ helped the disciples to realize that it was not the size of their faith. The key was that their faith was in Him. If they would yield their lives to Him, He would give them the faith to do

whatever needed to be done. We see that the disciples learned from the example of Christ. In Acts 3:6-7 we read, "Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength." The disciples had learned that their faith must be in Christ and that it was not the size of their faith.

The word that is translated faith also speaks of faithfulness. Peter and the other apostles had also learned that Christ was faithful. In fact in I Peter 4:19 Peter wrote, "Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator. Peter knew that Christ was a faithful Creator.

Sixth, we see that Timothy was to be an example in purity. Christ provided an example of purity in all areas of His life. We see that the disciples learned the importance of purity from the example of Christ. I Peter 2:11-12 says, "Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation." Peter had realized that the godly example of purity of Christians was one of the most powerful ways to reach the Gentiles for Christ.

There are also many other areas where Christ helped the disciples develop godly character by His example. The key is that Christ chose to teach godly character by both teaching and example. As leaders, we want to help developing leaders learn both from our teaching and also from our example. We want to help developing leaders learn to teach Biblical principles that help others to develop godly character. At the same time we also want to help developing leaders learn to illustrate those Biblical principles in their own lives. That will only happen as we provide an example of godly character for leaders to follow. May the Lord richly bless you as you help developing leaders learn to teach Biblical principles for godly character both as they teach the Word of God and also as they demonstrate godly character by their lives.

3.

Jesus Showed How to Develop Priorities in Ministry

In our last topic we talked about how Jesus developed godly character in the life of His disciples. Today we will see that Jesus showed His disciples how to develop priorities in their public ministry. In I Timothy 4:13 Paul told Timothy, “Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.” In this verse we see that Paul gave Timothy three priorities in his public ministry. We will also see that Christ showed the disciples the importance of developing these same priorities in their public ministry.

First, we see that Paul told Timothy to give attention to the public reading of the Word of God. We see that this was a very important part of the public ministry of Christ. Luke 4:16 says, “So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read.” Here we see that Christ regularly read the Word of God in the synagogue in His hometown of Nazareth. A Jewish boy began taking His turn reading the Old Testament in the services in the synagogue when He reached the age of twelve. Since there were seven to nine passages read in each service, this allowed several men to read in each service. This verse tells us that Christ regularly took His turn reading the Scripture.

Christ called His first disciples in Matthew 4:18-22. Then Matthew 4:23 says, “And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.” Christ had the opportunity to give His disciples many opportunities to see His example as He publicly read the Scriptures in the synagogues throughout Galilee. We see that the disciples followed the example of Christ and both read and quoted the Scriptures every time that they had an opportunity to speak.

The only detailed description of a service in the early church is given in I Corinthians 14:23-40. There we see that it was common for most of the men to participate in the early church services through reading or explaining Scripture. That would be the result of the example of the early leaders of the church. One of the things that we need to remember when we have a worship service is the fact that God is the audience and we are the participants. One of the things that we need to encourage by example is to have several Scripture readings in each public service so that various men and teenage boys can get involved in reading Scripture publicly in each service. Remember, Hebrews 4:12 says that the Word of God is living and powerful. Isaiah 55:8-9 says that the thoughts and ways of God are higher than our thoughts and ways.

Second, we see that Paul told Timothy to give attention to exhortation. The word that is translated exhortation means to comfort, to console, to encourage, to exhort, to intreat or to call to one’s aid. Christ demonstrated the importance of encouraging and comforting others many times as the disciples traveled with Him. In John 11 we see Christ providing comfort to Martha and Mary following the death of Lazarus. One of the ways that Christ provided this encouragement was by reminding Martha of the resurrection. John 11:25-26 says, “Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?”

Christ also provided encouragement to His disciples. In John 13 Christ told the disciples that He was going to leave them. John 14:1-3 says, "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also." In this case we see that Christ provided encouragement to the disciples by reminding them of His return to take them to heaven with Him.

Then Christ provided additional comfort to the disciples a few verses later. John 14:16-18 says, "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever--the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you." In this case Christ promised the disciples that He would provide them with comfort and encouragement through the ministry of the Holy Spirit living in their lives.

Another way that Christ provided encouragement was through the Word of God. Romans 15:4-5 says, "For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus." Here we see that the Word of God also gives encouragement. In Luke 24:27 we read, "And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." Then in Luke 24:32 we read, "And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?" These two disciples received great encouragement as Christ shared the Word of God with them.

Luke 24:44-45 shows that Christ encouraged the disciples the same way later that evening. Those verse say, "Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me." And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures." Christ taught the disciples the importance of encouraging people with the Word of God by His example as He encouraged them from the Word of God.

Third, we see that Paul told Timothy to give attention to doctrine. Paul had used this word earlier in I Timothy 4:6 which says, "If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed." Paul told Timothy that he would be an effective leader for Christ if he would help the brethren receive spiritual nourishment by teaching them good doctrine.

Christ was continually teaching His disciples good doctrine. In Matthew chapters five through seven Christ spent much of the Sermon on the Mount explaining the Old Testament to His disciples and helping them learn how to apply it in their daily lives. Matthew 5:1 says, "And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him." We see that this sermon was really a time of teaching His disciples while the crowds had the opportunity to listen.

Christ also taught the multitudes with parables. However, He would then explain these parables to

His disciples. Mark 4:33-34 says, “And with many such parables He spoke the word to them as they were able to hear it. But without a parable He did not speak to them. And when they were alone, He explained all things to His disciples.” The crowds had the opportunity to hear the parables of Christ but only the disciples had the opportunity to have each of the parables explained to them. This reminds us of the fact that teaching and training His disciples was a great priority in the life of Christ.

The most detailed account of Christ teaching His disciples is His teaching the night before He was crucified. This is recorded for us in John 13 through 17. In chapter 13 Christ taught the disciples by His own example. After washing the feet of the disciples, Christ said in John 13:14-15, “If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.” He showed them that good doctrine includes putting what is taught into practice.

In John 14 Christ taught the disciples by answering their questions. In John 14:5 Thomas said, “Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?" Then in John 14:8 Philip said, “Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.” Judas asked his question in John 14:22 where we read, “Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?”

In John 15 Christ taught the disciples that their lives would only be fruitful as they learned to abide in Him. He also helped them to understand that they now had a new relationship with Him. John 15:13-15 says, “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.” Christ changed their status from servants to friends and shared His plans with them. Then in John 20:17 Christ changed their status from friends to brethren and in verse 21 sent them as the Father had sent Him.

In John 16 Christ taught the disciples by preparing them for the future. Then in John 17 Christ taught the disciples about His concern for them as He prayed to the Father for them. John 18:1 tells us that this prayer happened just before they went to the garden where Christ again prayed, this time alone, to the Father.

Christ showed the disciples three key priorities in public ministry as He showed them by example the importance of the public reading of Scripture, the importance of encouraging others and the importance of teaching sound doctrine. May the Lord richly bless you, as you help developing leaders grow in their understanding of the importance of these three key priorities in their public ministries.

4.

Jesus Showed How to Develop Equipping Gifts

Christ equipped the disciples for ministry and showed them how to equip others. This is a key area of importance if we are going to develop healthy reproducing leaders. In I Timothy 4:14 we read, “Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.” As an older spiritual leader Paul realized the importance of reminding a younger spiritual leader of the need to exercise the equipping gift that the Lord had given him. II Timothy 4:5 tells us, “But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.” Here we see that Timothy was instructed to exercise His gift of evangelist and equip others to share the Gospel.

We also see that Christ equipped the disciples for ministry and showed them how to equip others. Ephesians 4:11-12 says, “And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” The apostles gave us eyewitness testimony of the resurrection of Christ – Acts 1:21-22. The prophets gave us the written Word of God – II Peter 1:19-21. Those two gifts provide the foundation on which other spiritual leaders equip the saints – Eph. 2:19-22. Evangelists equip the saints to share the Gospel. Pastors equip the saints to minister to one another. Teachers equip the saints to teach and apply the Word of God. Christ showed the disciples how to equip others for effective ministry.

First, Christ showed the disciples how to equip others to share the Gospel. The first thing Christ did was show the disciples what to share and how to share the Gospel. This began as soon as Christ called His first disciples. Matthew 4:22-23 says, “And immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him. And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.” Christ took the disciples with Him as He preached the Gospel throughout Galilee. As the disciples traveled with Him, they learned what to share. They also saw from the example of Christ how to share the Gospel in the synagogues.

Christ also showed the disciples how to share the Gospel in homes. As soon as Matthew followed Christ, Luke 5:29-32 says, “Then Levi gave Him a great feast in his own house. And there were a great number of tax collectors and others who sat down with them. And their scribes and the Pharisees complained against His disciples, saying, “Why do You eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?” Jesus answered and said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.” In this case Christ showed the disciples what to share and how to share the Gospel in homes. He also showed them the need to share the Gospel with those that society rejected.

After showing the disciples how to share the Gospel for a total of about 21 months, Christ sent the disciples out in teams of two to share the Gospel with others. Mark 6:7 and 12 say, “And He called the twelve to Himself, and began to send them out two by two, and gave them power over unclean spirits... So they went out and preached that people should repent.” The disciples had learned what to share and they preached that people should repent. Then in Luke 10:1 Christ sent out the seventy

two by two, “After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go.” This gave the twelve the opportunity to begin equipping others to share the Gospel.

Second, Christ showed the disciples how to equip others to minister to one another. We have already seen that the disciples traveled with Christ throughout Galilee. In addition to showing the disciples how to share the Gospel, Christ was also showing them how to minister to others. Christ showed them how to minister both to physical needs and also to spiritual needs. He showed them how to minister to physical needs as He healed people with many different kinds of sicknesses and diseases.

He also showed them how to minister to spiritual needs as He showed them how to minister to those who were demon possessed. In Matthew 17:18-21 we read, “And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, “Why could we not cast it out?” So Jesus said to them, “Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.” Here Christ showed them that they were not the ones who had the power to cast out demons. Instead they needed to pray and fast and let God cast out the demons.

He also showed them how to minister to spiritual needs as they watched Him provide comfort to Mary, Martha and many others who were in sorrow. In John 11 Christ showed them the need to give hope by reminding those in sorrow of the resurrection. He also showed them the importance of weeping with those who weep. Of course the greatest way Christ taught the disciples to minister to one another was when He said in John 13:34-35, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” The disciples were being both shown and taught the importance of loving one another as they ministered to one another.

The disciples had learned how to minister to Christians wherever they met them. Acts 2:46 says, “So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart.” The disciples had learned the importance of ministering to people in their homes and so they made it a point to visit people and minister to them in their homes. They also realized that they must equip the new Christians to know how to minister to one another in their homes.

Third, Christ showed the disciples how to equip others to teach and apply the Word of God. Christ began by spending much time helping the disciples learn to teach and apply the Word of God to their own lives. Matthew 5:1-2 says, “And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:” In the next three chapters we see that Christ took various passages from the Old Testament and taught the disciples how to apply those passages to their lives.

The most extensive passage where Christ taught His disciples was John chapters 13 through 17. He taught them both by words and by example. However, he made one very important statement early

in His teaching that night. John 13:17 says, “If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.” In this verse Christ pointed out that it is important to know what Christ teaches. However, true blessing will only come as we obey what we know so that it changes and transforms our lives. Christ equipped the disciples to teach the Word of God and apply it to their lives.

However, Christ also taught the disciples the importance of equipping others to teach the Word of God and apply it to their lives. Christ said in Luke 6:40, “A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher.” Christ was showing and equipping the disciples by the way that He taught them. Christ also explained to them that when they were fully trained that they would become like their teacher and they would show and equip others by the way that they taught others.

We see that the disciples had learned from Christ the importance of teaching and equipping others. Immediately after 3000 repented and were baptized in Acts 2:41, Acts 2:42 says, “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.” They immediately start teaching these new Christians by getting them into Bible studies. However, they also equipped these new Christians to begin teaching others. This is clearly seen by the accusation that the religious leaders made against the apostles. Acts 5:28 says, “saying, “Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!” Many other Christians were now equipped to teach and apply the Word of God with the result that they were teaching others and filling Jerusalem with their teaching.

Christ equipped the disciples and then showed them how to equip others. As a result, they were equipped to preach the Gospel, minister to others and teach and apply the Word of God. The disciples followed the same process and equipped others for these ministries. Later Paul told Timothy to continue to equip still others. II Timothy 2:2 says, “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” The early church was focused on the development of godly leadership for a third and fourth generation. May the Lord richly bless you as you develop and equip people to equip others also.

5.

Jesus Showed how to Develop Commitment

Christ invited the disciples to follow Him and promised that He would change and transform them so that they became fishers of men. As the disciples followed Christ, they developed a strong commitment to Christ in their lives and they were shown how to develop that same commitment in others. Paul did the same thing with the people that he helped to develop and mature in their spiritual lives. In I Timothy 4:15 we read, “Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all.” Jesus showed the disciples how to develop commitment in others. Paul followed the example of Christ and did the same.

First, Christ showed the disciples how to meditate on the things that He was teaching them. In Matthew 5 through 7 Christ taught the disciples what is known as the Sermon on the Mount. Although the crowds were listening, Matthew 5:1-2 makes it clear that the primary concern of Christ was His disciples. Those verses say, “And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying.” As Christ concluded His teaching, He said in Matthew 7:24, “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock.” Christ told the disciples that if they wanted to be wise men they had to both hear His Word and then do what He taught.

In order for the disciples to do what they had heard, they had to meditate and think about the things that Christ had taught them. Moses gave similar instructions to Joshua many years earlier. Joshua 1:8 says, “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.” Joshua was told to meditate on the Word day and night so that he would be able to do what was written in the Word.

People can become committed to a lot of different things. However, Christ knew that if the disciples were going to be able to show others how to develop commitment to Him, they had to meditate on the things that He taught and then do the things that He taught. We will never develop effective godly leaders unless they meditate on the things that Christ taught and then do the things that He taught. It takes time for people to learn the Word of God and meditate on it. Then it also takes time for them to be shown how to obey what they have learned.

That is why among the qualifications given for spiritual leadership I Timothy 3:6 says, “Not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil.” If a new Christian is given a position of spiritual leadership, this verse tells us that there is a great danger of pride. Such a person has not yet learned to yield to the Holy Spirit and then do things in the power of the Holy Spirit. Instead such a person will try to lead in his own strength. Instead of providing true spiritual leadership, such a person will lead others in the world’s way instead of following the example of Christ. Mark 10:42-45 tells us that godly leadership leads in exactly the opposite way of worldly leadership.

Second, Christ showed the disciples how to commit themselves entirely to the things that He was

teaching them. That was why Christ both taught them and showed them how to obey the things that He taught so that they would develop a true commitment to what He taught. Many people know what the Word of God says but they have never been shown how to obey what they have learned. Christ said in John 13:13-15, "You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you." Christ had told the disciples in various ways that they were to serve one another. However, none of them really learned to serve one another until they had seen the example of Christ.

One of the other things that Christ was showing the disciples was the importance of loving one another. In addition to being committed to Christ, He also wanted the disciples to be committed to one another. After showing the disciples for more than three years how much He loved them, Christ gave them a new commandment. John 13:34-35 says, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." Christ knew that true commitment to Christ and His teaching must come from a motivation of love.

In II Corinthians 5:14-15 we read, "For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again." People will only develop true commitment to Christ and His teachings if they are motivated by the love of Christ. Otherwise their commitment will be based on a fear of people. All people are motivated by one of two things. In the world people are motivated by fear. It is very easy to get people to do what you want if they are motivated by fear. However, what is accomplished through fear will never bring glory to God.

Fear was not the way that Christ developed true commitment in His disciples and it is not the way that we will develop true commitment. If we drive people by fear, we will be able to drive them until they can get out of our way. If we lead people by the love of Christ, we can lead them as far as we have gone in our own spiritual development. If we lead people by the love of Christ and also serve them by showing them how to love by our own example, they will be able to develop their full potential for Christ because we have shown them by our example how to serve others instead of drive others. People are either driven by fear or led by love. We need to regularly examine our own lives to make sure that we are committed to lead others in love and not drive them with fear.

Third, Christ helped the disciples to develop the kind of commitment that made their progress evident to all. This is illustrated very clearly in a couple of places in the book of Acts. Acts 4:8-13 says, "Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, 'Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.' Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.'" Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus." In these verses we see the commitment of Peter and John. They were committed to:

- ◆ Depending on the Holy Spirit.
- ◆ Preaching about Jesus Christ.
- ◆ Sharing the Word of God.
- ◆ Teaching that Christ is the only way to have salvation.
- ◆ Speaking with boldness as they depended on the power of the Holy Spirit.

The commitment of these men to Christ and His Word was so clear and evident that the Jewish religious leaders were amazed as they saw the boldness of Peter and John. They realized that these men did not have the formal training that the Jewish religious leaders had received. They realized that being with Jesus had changed and transformed these men. Our goal is to develop this same kind of commitment in those that the Lord gives us to train. That will only happen as we show that kind of commitment by our own example.

Acts 5:27-29 shows another example of this commitment as the apostles are again brought before the religious leaders. Those verses say, "And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them, saying, "Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!" But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men." The apostles made it very clear that they were committed to obedience to God and that as a result they had no fear of men.

The disciples learned how to pass on this commitment to others by their example. Acts 5:41 says, "So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name." By their example they were able to pass on this same commitment to those who had become Christians through their witness. Acts 8:1, 4 say, "Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles...Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word. The newer Christians had a commitment to preach the Gospel wherever they went. They did that without fear because they had been led by the example of the apostles.

These verses show us that commitment to Christ and His Word is best taught by example. We will not develop that kind of commitment if we are driven by fear and drive others. However, we will develop a similar commitment in others as we are motivated by the love of Christ and lead others to follow our example. May the Lord richly bless you as you provide an example of commitment to Christ and His Word by your own example.

6.

Jesus Showed How to Develop Spiritual Life – Part I

Christ taught the disciples many things. One of the things that Christ showed the disciples was how to develop their spiritual life. Many people develop a great knowledge of the Bible and they know many facts about the Bible but that knowledge has not changed and transformed their lives. The Jewish religious leaders in the time of Christ had a great knowledge of the Old Testament but they had no spiritual life. Some of the Jews that became Christians had spiritual life but they had not grown. Hebrews 5:11-12 says, “Of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food.” They had been Christians long enough that they should have been able to teach others but they had become dull of hearing and still needed the basics.

In contrast, John wrote all of the books that he wrote about sixty years after Christ called him to be a disciple. As he began the book of First John, the first thing that John wrote about was the need for fellowship with the Father and with Christ because he realized how that had changed his life. I John 1:3 says, “That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.” The second thing John wrote about in that book was the need to have fellowship with one another in the body of Christ. I John 1:7 says, “But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”

Christ had showed John how to develop his spiritual life and he realized that only happens when people learn to develop their fellowship with the Father and with the Son. That had such a great impact on the life of John that was the first thing he wrote as he began his first letter. In the same way, the first thing we want to help both developing leaders and new Christians learn to do is develop their spiritual life by learning to have fellowship with the Father and with the Son.

In order for us to develop our spiritual life as Christians, the first thing we must learn to do is develop our fellowship with the Father and with the Son. Christ taught His disciples how to develop fellowship with the Father by His own example. Mark 1:35-37 says, “Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed. And Simon and those who were with Him searched for Him. When they found Him, they said to Him, “Everyone is looking for You.” In these verses we see that Christ taught the disciples by His example the importance of fellowship with the Father. Mark 1 shows that this happened very soon after Christ invited these men to follow Him.

Many times new Christians are told the things that they should not do as new Christians. They may be told some things that they should do. However, many new Christians are not shown how to develop their fellowship with the Father and with the Son for many years and many Christians have never been shown how to develop their spiritual life. As a result, many Christians think that they are good Christians because they don’t do certain things and they do other things. Many times new Christians are told to pray and read their Bibles. However, they are never shown how to pray or shown how to understand what they read.

One of the first things that people have to be shown to develop their spiritual life is the difference between saying prayers and learning how to pray. Before most people even become Christians they have learned how to say prayers. Matthew 6:7-8 says, "And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him." Christ made it very clear that we do not develop our spiritual life by just saying prayers. Many new Christians are told that they should pray. If they have been saying prayers before they became Christians, they think that to pray means to say prayers and so they may continue to say prayers for years.

Christ let the disciples see and hear Him pray. They saw that His prayer life was not just saying prayers. As a result, Luke 11:1 tells us that the disciples asked Christ how to pray and not just say prayers. That verse says, "Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples." Instead of giving them a prayer to repeat, Christ gave them an example of how to build their relationship with the Father through prayer.

Luke 11:2-4 says, "So He said to them, "When you pray, say: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." Christ said that we build our relationship with the Father by:

- Recognizing our personal relationship with Him – Our Father
- Recognizing that He is the One who is over all – in heaven
- Recognizing that He is holy – Hallowed by Your name
- Praying for His work in the world – Your kingdom come
- Praying for His will in the world – Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven
- Praying for our daily needs – Give us day by day our daily bread
- Praying for forgiveness – And forgive us our sins
- Praying for strength to forgive others – for we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us
- Praying for victory over temptation – And do not lead us into temptation
- Praying for victory over Satan – deliver us from the evil one.

Christ showed the disciples how to develop their spiritual life by learning to talk to the Father and share their life with Him and not just say prayers. Christ did this by giving them many opportunities to listen as He talked and shared His life with the Father. Christ knew that He must show the disciples the difference between saying prayers and sharing His life with the Father.

Christ also showed the disciples the difference between reading the Bible and letting God lead and guide them through the Word. In Luke 24:27 we read, "And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." He helped these disciples realize that they could only understand the Old Testament if they understood that it was talking about Christ and not just their Jewish history. Luke 24:45 says, "And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures." Christ knew that the disciples needed more than knowledge to develop their spiritual lives. They needed to understand the spiritual truths in what they were reading and studying.

Christ had given them this understanding while He was with them day by day. However, He knew that He was returning to heaven. In John 14:25-26 we read, ““These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.” Christ made it very clear that spiritual understanding of the things that Christ had taught must come from the Holy Spirit.

Christ also helped the disciples realize that the Holy Spirit would teach them many more things in the future after He returned to heaven. John 16:12-13 says, “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.” The Holy Spirit would guide them and lead them so that they would continue to grow in their spiritual life. He also showed them what to write in the New Testament.

Many Christians do not understand the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. I Corinthians 2:12-14 says, “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” Just as many people said prayers before they became Christians, many people also read the Bible before they became Christians. Just like the Jews in the time of Christ, people view the Bible as a history book before they are given the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation.

That is why I Corinthians 2:9-10 says, “But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.” We need to show new Christians by our own example the importance of asking the Lord to give us understanding and wisdom as we study the Word of God. We also need to help developing leaders learn the importance of showing new Christians by their example the importance of asking the Lord for understanding and wisdom so that the Holy Spirit will give them that understanding.

Jesus showed the disciples by His example how to develop their spiritual life as they built their relationship with the Father and with the Son. May the Lord richly bless you as you help developing leaders develop their relationship with the Father and with the Son and show them how to help new Christians develop their spiritual life.

7.

Jesus Showed How to Develop Spiritual Life – Part II

In our last topic we saw that John wrote the books that he wrote nearly 60 years after Christ returned to heaven. The very first thing that he wrote about in I John was the need for fellowship with the Father and with Christ. The second thing that John wrote about was the need to have fellowship with one another in the body of Christ. I John 1:7 says, “But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” A key part in the development of the spiritual life of new Christians is to learn how to enjoy fellowship with other Christians in the body of Christ. As a result, we want to show developing spiritual leaders how to help new Christians learn to develop their fellowship with other Christians.

In Acts 2:41-42 we read, “Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.” Here we see that the apostles helped the new Christians learn to focus on four key priorities to develop their spiritual life. In this verse we see that Bible study and fellowship are placed together because Bible study should include fellowship and times of fellowship should include sharing what the Lord is teaching us from His Word.

The question that this immediately raises is how could the apostles immediately get 3,000 new Christians all involved in Bible studies and fellowship? This takes us back to the way that Christ developed His disciples and the apostles. Throughout the first half of His ministry Christ was continually inviting people to become His disciples. About a year after Christ met His first disciples in John 1, Christ began to invite some of these disciples to spend more time with Him so that he could begin to train them for ministry. In Mark 1:14-20 Christ invited the four fishermen that had already gone many places with Him to come with Him and learn how to become fishers of men. In Mark 2:14 Christ said to Matthew, “Follow Me.”

Then about six to nine months later Mark 3:13-14 tells us, “And He went up on the mountain and called to Him those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach.” Luke 6:12-13 records this same event but describes it this way, “Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles.” The twelve apostles were chosen from the larger group of disciples to be witnesses of the resurrection – Acts 1:21-22.

Here we see that there was a larger group of disciples but only twelve of them were chosen to be apostles. This larger group had already been traveling various places with Christ during that first year (to a wedding in Cana – John 2:1-12, to the Passover in Jerusalem – John 2:13-25, to ministry in Judea – John 3:21, 4:1-3, to ministry in Galilee – John 4:4-42). In Luke 9:1-10 Christ sent out the Twelve two by two to give them experience in ministry. In Luke 10:1-12, 17, and 23 we see

that Christ sent out the seventy two by two to give part of this larger group of disciples experience in ministry. In Acts 1:15 we see that this larger group of disciples included 120 people.

Christ gave the definition of a disciple in Matthew 13:52 where we read, "Then He said to them, "Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old." The word that is translated instructed is the same word that Christ used in the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20 where it is the command to "Make Disciples". Matthew 13:52 says that a disciple:

- Has been instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven.
- Is the head of spiritual household.
- Has a treasure (the Word or God or as it is called in Acts 2:42, the apostles' doctrine).
- Is able to bring out of that treasure things that are new – is continuing to learn.
- Is able to bring out of that treasure things that are old – teach the basics of Christianity.

Christ had developed both the apostles and the larger group of disciples the same way. He had taken them with Him as He ministered – Luke 8:1-3. He had explained His parables to His disciples. Luke 8:9-10 says, "Then His disciples asked Him, saying, "What does this parable mean?" And He said, "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables, that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand." The context makes it clear that Christ had a larger group of disciples than just the twelve with Him at this time. As we have already mentioned, Christ later sent out the seventy in teams of two on a team.

This background helps us to answer the question mentioned earlier, "How could the apostles immediately get 3,000 new Christians all involved in Bible study and fellowship?" By Christ's definition in Matthew 13:52 the 120 disciples were equipped to lead a spiritual household and teach the basics of Christianity. This meant that each disciple would have only had to lead 2 Bible study groups of 12 or 13 and all 3,000 of the new Christians would have been in a Bible study and fellowship group.

When the disciples followed Christ one of the things that they had to learn was how to resolve conflicts between themselves. We see how two of the disciples had caused one of these conflicts in Matthew 20. Matthew 20:20-21,24 describes this conflict, "Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him. And He said to her, "What do you wish?" She said to Him, "Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom...And when the ten heard it, they were greatly displeased with the two brothers." This could have made it very difficult for the disciples to learn to work as a team.

Christ handled this conflict by teaching the disciples the nature of spiritual leadership. Matthew 20:25-28 says, "But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him 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." He taught the disciples to

apply Biblical principles to their conflicts. Then He showed how to apply this Biblical principle by His own death on the cross.

Christ also let the disciples hear His prayer as He prayed both for them and also for us. John 17:20-23 says, "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me." Christ showed by His example the importance of praying for oneness in the body of Christ. Because Christ gave the disciples many examples of how to handle conflict in the church, they learned to solve conflicts.

Acts 6:1-4 gives us an example of how the apostles showed all of the believers how to resolve a conflict. Those verses say, "Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word." The apostles focused on Biblical principles and Biblical priorities. The same thing happened in Acts 15.

Christ also showed by His example the importance of learning to love one another. He demonstrated it throughout His ministry so that He was able to say in John 13:34-35, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." The disciples learned from the example of Christ that Christians can solve conflicts in love as they fellowship together.

Acts 2:44-47 show that the disciples taught the same things to the new believers by example. Those verses say, "Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved." The fellowship with the body became a key in the development of the new Christians.

The Lord will use your ministry as you help developing leaders learn to help new Christians learn to fellowship. May the Lord richly bless you as you help Christians learn to fellowship with one another.

8.

Jesus Showed how to Develop Their Doctrine

In our last two topics we have seen that Christ showed the disciples how to develop their relationship with Him and how to develop their relationship with one another as they obeyed Him. Today we see that Christ also helped the disciples learn how to help others develop their doctrine. Paul did the same thing with the leaders that He developed. Paul told Timothy in I Timothy 4:16, "Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you." Both Christ and Paul wanted to make sure that the leaders that they developed understood their doctrine so that they knew what they believed.

Today many Christian leaders do not know what they believe about many of the major doctrines of the Bible. Since they do not know what they believe, they fail to teach those key doctrines to those that they are leading. As a result, they provide very confusing teaching to those that they are leading and in many cases are leading people astray from the truth. In contrast, Christ took time to teach and show the disciples how to develop their doctrine. That way Christ knew that the disciples would be effective teachers as the church began to develop.

Immediately after Christ called His first disciples, Christ took them with Him as He went to teach in the synagogue at Capernaum. Mark 1:21-22 says, "Then they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and taught. And they were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." The disciples saw that Christ taught with authority instead of quoting everyone else as the scribes did.

The next morning Christ spoke to the disciples in Mark 1:38-39, "But He said to them, "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth." And He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons." Christ took the disciples with Him so that they could hear what He taught throughout Galilee. Matthew 4:23 also tells us about this ministry trip. That verse says, "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people." The disciples heard Christ preach and teach about the gospel of the kingdom in many different towns and villages.

Christ began helping the disciples to develop their doctrine right from the beginning of His ministry. In the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew chapters 5 through 7 we see that Christ focused on teaching His disciples the meaning of many things being taught from the Old Testament. Especially in Matthew 5 several sections will begin, "You have heard that it was said to those of old..." Then the next verse will begin, "But I say to you..." In each case Christ helped them learn to understand and apply the teaching from the Old Testament.

When Christ first sent out the twelve to preach, He gave them very specific instructions about what to preach. We see that they were to preach exactly what they had heard Christ preach. Luke 9:1-2 says, "Then He called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases. He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick." When the disciples went out they knew exactly what they were to preach and teach. When they

returned Mark 6:30 says, “Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught.” Christ listened to them as they told what they had taught.

In Luke 10 Christ sent out the seventy in teams of two. Again He gave them very specific instructions about what to teach. Luke 10:9 says, “And heal the sick there, and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’” They knew that they were to preach the kingdom of God. When the seventy returned from their ministry trip, they gave Christ a report about their ministry. After hearing their report, Christ said in Luke 10:21, “In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, ‘I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight.’” Christ made sure that the disciples knew what to preach and teach when He sent them to the nation of Israel.

As a result of the teaching ministry of Christ to the disciples, they also knew what to teach when the church began. Because of what Christ said in Mark 16:15, the disciples knew that they were to preach the Gospel (defined more completely in I Corinthians 15:1-6), “And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.’” The sermon of Peter in Acts 2 shows that they knew that they were to preach the death and resurrection of Christ. Acts 2:41-42 says, “Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.” The focus of the teaching in the early church was the apostles’ doctrine. They made sure that these new believers learned the things that Christ had taught.

The disciples not only knew what to teach; they also knew how to teach what they taught in the power of the Holy Spirit. When Peter and John were brought before the religious leaders, Acts 4:8 and 4:12-13 tell us, “Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, ‘Rulers of the people and elders of Israel...Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.’” Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.” Because they were depending on the Holy Spirit they were able to speak the doctrine that they taught with boldness.

The religious leaders were not happy with their teaching and threatened them. Acts 4:18 says, “And they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.” Because the apostles knew both what to teach and how to teach in the power of the Holy Spirit, they replied in Acts 4:19-20, “But Peter and John answered and said to them, ‘Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.’” Christ had shown them what to teach and how to teach and nothing could stop them.

The next time the religious leaders arrested the disciples, they put them in jail until the next morning. However, the Lord had other plans. Acts 5:19-20 tell us, “But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, ‘Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life.’” Suddenly this message in Acts 5:25 was delivered to the religious leaders, “So one came and told them, saying, ‘Look, the men whom you put in prison are

standing in the temple and teaching the people!" They knew what to teach and were obedient to the instructions of Christ.

We see what happened next in Acts 5:28-32 when they were again brought before the religious leaders where the high priest questioned them, "Saying, "Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!" But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him." When they were accused of filling Jerusalem with their doctrine, instead of defending themselves they just taught what Christ had told them to teach.

Their teaching was so clear that the whole early church knew what to preach and how to preach in the power of the Holy Spirit. Acts 8:4 says, "Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word." Verse one tells us that the apostles stayed in Jerusalem but the rest of the Christians knew what to teach wherever they went. They just scattered and taught what Christ had taught and then gathered believers into churches. Acts 9:31 says, "Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied." In Acts 6 we read that the disciples multiplied and in Acts 9 we read that the churches multiplied throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria.

Several years later Luke joined Paul at Troas and he also learned to teach the doctrine of Christ. Acts 16:10 says, "Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them." Luke later made it clear that many had learned to teach the doctrine of Christ with authority. Luke 1:1-4 says, "Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed." Here we see that every leader was teaching developing leaders what to teach and how to teach in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Today the Lord has given us the privilege of showing developing leaders how to teach the doctrine of Christ. We are to show them what to teach as we take them with us so that they know what to teach. Then we are to show them how to teach in the power of the Holy Spirit so that they will be able to speak with authority. May the Lord richly bless you as you show developing leaders what to teach and show them how to teach in the power of the Holy Spirit.

9.

Jesus Showed How to Teach in the Power of the Holy Spirit

In our last topic we talked about the fact that Christ showed His disciples how to develop their doctrine. Today we are going to see that Christ showed the disciples how to teach in the power of the Holy Spirit. It is easy for us in our lives to depend on our own strength and when we do John 15:5 tells us that we will accomplish nothing, “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.” That is why Christ made it very clear to His disciples that they must learn to teach in the power of the Holy Spirit and not in their own strength.

In John 7:16-18 Christ made a very important statement about what He taught. Those verses say, “Jesus answered them and said, “My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me. If anyone wants to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority. He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him.” Christ made it very clear that everything that He taught was taught in agreement with the Father. By doing that He was showing His disciples the importance of depending on the Spirit so that the things that they taught were from the Father and not their own ideas.

In fact Christ also made it very clear to His disciples why they should not teach their own ideas or teach in their own strength. Verse 18 makes it clear that those who speak their own ideas or and speak in their own strength are actually seeking their own glory instead of bringing glory to God. If we are going to help people become effective spiritual leaders, we need to help them understand this passage so that they make it their purpose to bring glory to God in everything that they do including in their teaching.

To help the disciples grow in their understanding of the importance of teaching in the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ took time to help His disciples understand the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit in their own lives. John 14:26 says, “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.” Christ taught the disciples that the Holy Spirit was their Helper. He taught them that the Father would send the Holy Spirit in His name. He explained to them that the Holy Spirit would be their Teacher in the future. He explained that the Holy Spirit would bring to their memory the things that Christ had taught them.

Then John 16:13-14 says, “However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.” Christ had said earlier that He spoke what the Father told Him to speak. Christ shared with His disciples that the Holy Spirit would not teach or act independently of the Father either. Instead He would guide them into all truth because everything that the Holy Spirit would teach would be in agreement with the Father and the Son. Since neither Christ nor the Holy Spirit taught anything that was not in agreement with the Father, that is why the people who share primarily their own ideas instead of the Word of God are seeking to bring glory to themselves and not to Christ.

Isaiah 55:8-9 says, "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says the Lord. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." The thoughts of God are much higher than our thoughts. When people share their own ideas they are teaching the people the thoughts of men instead of the thoughts of God.

In teaching we need to help people gain both knowledge of the Word of God and also understanding of the Word of God. The disciples of Christ had gained knowledge but still lacked understanding of certain things. As a result, after Christ rose from the dead, Christ said in Luke 24:44-45. "Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me." And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures." They needed the understanding that we now receive from the Holy Spirit.

I Corinthians 2:12-14 says, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." We can gain a human understanding of the Bible and it will be a history book to us. In contrast, the Holy Spirit can teach us by helping us learn to compare spiritual things with spiritual. The result will be spiritual understanding.

However, Christ also taught His disciples the importance of learning to teach in the power of the Holy Spirit. Luke 24:49 says, "Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high." Christ taught the disciples that they had to depend on the power of the Holy Spirit to teach the Word of God or to do anything else. They would not be effective if they taught in their own strength. The same is true today. We will accomplish nothing in our own strength.

The last words that Christ spoke to the disciples before He returned to heaven are recorded for us in Acts 1:8. That verse says, "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Acts 1:14 tells us that they obeyed by praying and waiting for the Holy Spirit, "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers." They waited until the Holy Spirit came and gave them the power to teach the Word in Acts 2:1 and following.

Acts 2:5-7 tell us the impact when they waited until the Holy Spirit came and then taught in His power. Those verses say, "And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans?" Here we see that the disciples were able to teach the Word of God with power because they were depending on the Holy Spirit for that power and not trying to speak in their own strength.

As Peter concluded his message a little later that day, he told the people gathered that they would receive the Holy Spirit as a gift when they repented. Acts 2:38 says, "Then Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'" Peter knew that Christ would also give all that believed the Holy Spirit as a gift to equip them to teach the Word of God.

We see that the 120 disciples mentioned in Acts 1:15 were all able to teach the new believers the things that they had been taught by Christ. Even though there were 3000 new believers, the 120 were able to gather all the new believers into groups and help them learn the teachings of Christ because the 120 were all teaching in the power of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:42 says, "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers." The new believers became disciples and the number of disciples multiplied. Acts 6:1 and Acts 6:7 say, "Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution... Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith."

Although the apostles stayed in Jerusalem, Acts 8:4 says, "Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word." The new believers had learned to share the Word of God in the power of the Holy Spirit. They had learned to pray and they had learned to yield to the Holy Spirit. Acts 4:31 says, "And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the Word of God with boldness." Romans 6:13 says, "And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God." As they prayed and yielded their lives to the Holy Spirit, they were able to speak the Word of God with boldness because they were not depending on their own strength.

As you help developing leaders learn to pray and learn to yield the control of their lives to the Holy Spirit, they will be able to teach the Word of God with boldness. The Holy Spirit will help them to compare spiritual things with spiritual instead of sharing their own ideas. May the Lord richly bless you as you help developing leaders learn to teach the Word of God in the power of the Holy Spirit.

10.

Jesus Showed How to Teach Through Parables

Jesus taught His disciples in many different ways. He also showed them how to teach others in a variety of different ways. One of the ways that Christ taught them to teach was through parables. We see that Christ used parables to teach some very specific lessons to His disciples. Today we will learn that one of the things that we want to teach developing leaders is how to teach and explain the parables.

We see that after hearing Christ give a parable to the crowd, the disciples asked Christ privately why He spoke to the crowd in parables. Christ gave a very interesting answer. Luke 8:9-11 says, "Then His disciples asked Him, saying, 'What does this parable mean?' And He said, 'To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables, that 'Seeing they may not see, And hearing they may not understand.' "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.'" Here we see that Christ told the disciples that He spoke in parables to hide the truth from those who did not believe and to reveal the truth to those who followed Him.

This raises a very important question, "Why would Christ want to hide truth from those who did not believe?" This is especially important to understand since Christ said in Mark 4:33-34, "And with many such parables He spoke the word to them as they were able to hear it. But without a parable He did not speak to them. And when they were alone, He explained all things to His disciples." In the passage in Luke Christ said that He was talking about the mysteries of the kingdom of God. A mystery was something that was previously hidden that was now being revealed.

We see here that Christ is talking about the future and He is only revealing the future to those who believe. Many of the parables do reveal things about the future but those are not things that an unbeliever will understand. As a result, Christ chose to reveal them to His followers in parables. In this way we see that one reason to teach in parables is to hide truth from those who reject while revealing truth to those that believe. This was especially true when Christ was teaching about the future.

However, Christ also spoke parables that many in the crowd could understand. An example of this is the parables that are given in Luke 15. Luke 15:1-2 tell us, "Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, 'This Man receives sinners and eats with them.'" In this case Christ had two unbelieving groups listening to Him while the disciples observed. One group included the tax collectors and sinners while the other group included the Pharisees and scribes.

The tax collectors and sinners were able to understand all three parables in Luke 15. The people in this group knew that they were sinful. The Pharisees and the scribes were continually rejecting them. As the tax collectors and sinners heard the parable about the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost sons, it was very clear to them that the Lord loved them and was actively looking for them to bring them into His fold and into His family. In contrast, the Pharisees and scribes probably never understood that they were like the older son who thought that he was righteous because of his own

efforts. They probably never understood that the older son represented them. They never understood that they were refusing to come into God's family so that they could enjoy fellowship with Christ. In this case part of those who were not followers of Christ realized that they were being given an invitation to follow Christ.

Sometimes Christ spoke a parable to rebuke a specific sin in the lives of those to whom He was speaking. Luke 14:7-11 says, "So He told a parable to those who were invited, when He noted how they chose the best places, saying to them: "When you are invited by anyone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in the best place, lest one more honorable than you be invited by him; and he who invited you and him come and say to you, 'Give place to this man,' and then you begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit down in the lowest place, so that when he who invited you comes he may say to you, 'Friend, go up higher.' Then you will have glory in the presence of those who sit at the table with you. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." Here Christ made it clear to all that He was rebuking the sin of pride so that people could examine themselves.

One of the things that Christ did when He used a parable to rebuke sin is that He avoided using any names so that people were called to examine their own heart attitudes. In Luke 18:9 we read, "Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:" Here we see that Christ was using a parable to rebuke those who were depending on their own righteousness. By using a parable, Christ was forcing them to examine their own lives. This is why it is so important to teach developing leaders the various ways that Christ used parables. Here He shows a developing leader how to help people in a group examine their own hearts without condemning any particular person.

Christ even used this approach to help specific people examine their own lives without condemning them. Luke 10:25 says, "And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" The lawyer even knew how to answer Christ with the right answer but Christ knew he had the wrong attitude. Luke 10:26-29 says, "He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?" So he answered and said, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbor as yourself.'" And He said to him, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live." But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

Christ knew the inner attitude of the lawyer. Instead of condemning the lawyer, Christ just told the parable of the Good Samaritan. Then Christ said in Luke 10:36-37, "So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?" And he said, "He who showed mercy on him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise." Christ never criticized the lawyer. Instead Christ just told a parable, asked a question, let the lawyer give the answer and then told the lawyer to put his answer into practice. Here Christ used a parable to answer a specific question and provide an opportunity for the lawyer to make his own decision about what was right. Then Christ encouraged the lawyer to follow his own answer.

Christ also used a parable to help people make a choice at the end of His Sermon on the Mount. Matthew 7:24-29 says, "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and

the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall." And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." Christ left the decision to each person in the audience to decide whether to be like the wise man or the foolish man.

As the disciples traveled with Christ, they saw that Christ spoke with parables in many different situations. He used parables when He wanted to hide information about the future from those who were rejecting Him. He used parables to hide truth from one group while revealing truth to another group. He used parables to force people to examine their own inner attitudes. He used parables to help people realize the choices that they faced in their lives. He then encouraged them to make wise choices.

Christ usually used things that the people clearly understood as the basis for His parables. Mark 4:1-2 says, "And again He began to teach by the sea. And a great multitude was gathered to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat in it on the sea; and the whole multitude was on the land facing the sea. Then He taught them many things by parables, and said to them in His teaching:" Since the people were gathered on the hillside next to the lake, all of the parables talked about things you could see from the hillside as Jesus was talking.

Christ used very simple things that people clearly understood to explain very profound spiritual truths. This is one of the keys to being an effective teacher. We want to use things that people clearly understand to explain deep spiritual truths that they do not understand. It would be foolish to talk about driving on the freeway to a person who had never been out of the jungle just as it would be foolish to talk about surviving in a jungle to a person who had never been out of a large city. Christ chose parables that fit the people to whom He was talking. He used the daily occurrences of their lives to explain things that they did not understand. We need to help developing spiritual leaders learn to do the same so that they can communicate effectively. May the Lord richly bless you as you show developing leaders how to teach using the parables.

11.

Jesus Showed How to Teach Through Sermons

Jesus taught the crowds many times with sermons. Each time that Christ gave a sermon to a large crowd the disciples were there to see how He used sermons to speak to the people. As the disciples watched how Christ taught the people, they were learning how to teach the people through sermons. We can see that Peter learned from the example of Christ by studying his sermons in the book of Acts. In the same way, we want to show developing leaders how to teach through sermons.

Probably the best known sermon of Christ to the multitudes is the sermon known as “The Sermon on the Mount”. We will use this sermon to illustrate many of the principles that Christ showed to the disciples about teaching effectively.

In Matthew 5:1-3 we read, “And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” The first thing that we notice is that Christ sat among the people as He taught them. Although just the first of the beatitudes is quoted here, we see that Matthew 5:3-12 has what we call the beatitudes. Christ begins by giving the attitudes that people can develop in their lives if they want to be blessed. Christ was showing by example a very important lesson.

- ◆ A thought becomes an attitude.
- ◆ An attitude becomes an action.
- ◆ An action becomes a habit.
- ◆ A habit becomes a lifestyle.
- ◆ A lifestyle determines a destiny.

Christ showed by His example in this sermon that to be an effective teacher we must begin with the thoughts and attitudes of people if we are going to be effective in transforming their actions, habits, lifestyles and destinies. Romans 12:2 expresses this thought so well when it says, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” People are only changed as their thinking is changed. If we are going to develop teachers that transform lives we must help them learn to teach to affect the thoughts and attitudes of those that are listening.

The second thing that Christ did as He taught was to help those who were listening begin to understand that their lives affected others according to Matthew 5:13-16. Christ showed His disciples how to help people realize the impact that they have on others. To do this Christ compared those who were listening to salt and light. Salt can add flavor, preserve and heal. However, if salt loses its savor it becomes useless. Christ showed the disciples how to add flavor, preserve and heal through their sermons. Light can give light to the world or it can be hidden. Christ showed the disciples that as people saw their good works that this would cause them to glorify the Father in heaven. Here we see that Christ helped His disciples to realize that their actions would have either a positive or a negative impact on people.

The third thing that Christ did as He taught was show the disciples that He came to fulfill the law

(Matthew 5:17-20) and to show the disciples how to explain the law to others. In His sermon Christ quoted and then explained several of the commandments. Christ showed that a person can kill with words just as easily as with a weapon in Matthew 5:21-22. Then Christ taught the importance of reconciliation when there have been angry words in Matthew 5:23-26. Christ taught that adultery begins in the heart long before it leads to actions in Matthew 5:27-32. Christ taught we are not even to make oaths but become people that can be counted on to keep our word in Matthew 5:33-37.

The law allowed an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. Christ showed the disciples through His sermon how to begin to practice the new commandment that he would give them the night before His crucifixion. He explained the importance of returning love for evil instead of evil for evil. In addition to explaining the importance of returning love for evil, Christ also gave several practical illustrations of ways to show love in Matthew 5:38-48.

Christ next explained the difference between outward religious practices and inner heart attitudes. The world wants their good works to be noticed. Christ taught the importance of doing our good works in secret in Matthew 6:1-4. The world wants their religious practices to be noticed. In that day many people would make long public prayers so that they could be seen by other people. Christ taught the disciples to pray to the Father instead of trying to impress people in Matthew 6:5-8. He taught the disciples how to pray instead of say prayers in Matthew 6:9-15. Then He taught the disciples how to fast in Matthew 6:16-18.

Christ went on to explain that there are two main masters in the world in Matthew 6:19-24. People choose to serve God or they choose to serve things. The thing that people choose to serve tells what is in the heart because people will show what is in their heart by who or what they have chosen to serve. When people serve things, those things will cause them to worry. As a result, Matthew 7:25-34 gives seven reasons not to worry:

- God gave you life – He will provide your needs.
- God provides for the birds – God will provide your food.
- God says you cannot change your height by worrying so why worry.
- God provides for the flowers – God will provide your needs.
- God knows the things that you need.
- God will provide as you put Him first in your life.
- God says we have no idea what will happen tomorrow so why worry about what might not happen.

Next Christ showed the disciples the importance of encouraging people to examine their own lives instead of judging others in Matthew 7:1-6. Christ said it is very easy for people to find fault with others especially if they are guilty of doing the same things. As a result, Christ showed the disciples how to help people examine their own lives first.

Then Christ taught that God will answer prayer in Matthew 7:7-11. The disciples needed to realize that when they had a need that they needed to learn to pray and ask God to meet their need. Christ reminded them that the Father loved them much more than their human father and that the Father would certainly meet their need. Christ showed them how to be proactive in Matthew 7:12 by helping them to understand that they would fulfill the Old Testament by treating others the way that

they wanted to be treated. Then He reminded them in Matthew 7:13-14 that they had to make a choice – either the wide way or the narrow way.

Christ taught the disciples how to recognize false teachers by the fruit that their lives and teachings produce in Matthew 7:15-20. False teachers will always produce bad fruit. Then Christ warned the disciples that not everyone that claims to follow God is actually following Him in Matthew 7:21-23. Such people will often point to their works instead of their relationship with the Father. Christ concluded His sermon by telling the people that they could choose to be wise or they could choose to be foolish in Matthew 7:24-27. We see that this sermon had a great impact on the people because Christ spoke with authority and did not speak like the scribes in Matthew 7:28-29. The scribes would quote other scribes. In contrast, Christ had shown the disciples how to explain the Word of God. When explained and applied, the word will transform lives.

The disciples had the opportunity to see what Christ did to teach to change lives. Over a 3½-year period they heard Christ preach many other sermons. In each of His sermons Christ was showing the disciples how to change lives. We could give the following summary of some of the things that Christ showed the disciples by His example. He showed them:

- ◆ The importance of dealing with inner attitudes.
- ◆ The importance of their own example by their actions.
- ◆ The importance of dealing with conflicts in relationships.
- ◆ The importance of explaining the meaning of the law.
- ◆ The importance of showing love even to those who did evil.
- ◆ The importance of serving others.
- ◆ The difference between saying prayers and praying.
- ◆ The way to have treasure in heaven.
- ◆ The seven reasons why they did not need to worry.
- ◆ The danger of judging others.
- ◆ The importance of bringing their requests to the Father.
- ◆ The way to treat others.
- ◆ The importance of choosing which way they would follow.
- ◆ The way to recognize false teachers.
- ◆ The fact that not all who claim to follow God actually follow Him.
- ◆ The importance of choosing whether to be wise or foolish.
- ◆ The power of teaching and explaining the Word of God rather than just quoting others.

It is a great privilege to show developing leaders how to teach the Word of God so that it will change and transform lives. The Word is living and powerful and will do its work as we learn to follow the example of the way that Christ taught the Word. May the Lord richly bless you as you help developing leaders learn to teach through sermons.

12.

Jesus Showed How to Teach Through Questions

One of the ways that Jesus taught His disciples was through the use of questions. This is illustrated many times in the Gospels. One day Peter was asked if his master paid the temple tax. Christ used that opportunity to help Peter learn by asking a key question. Matthew 17:24-25 says, "When they had come to Capernaum, those who received the temple tax came to Peter and said, "Does your Teacher not pay the temple tax?" He said, "Yes." And when he had come into the house, Jesus anticipated him, saying, "What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth take customs or taxes, from their sons or from strangers?" Here we see that Christ was helping Peter to understand in a new way Christ's relationship to the Father.

Then after letting Peter think about His question and answer it, we read in Matthew 17:26-27, "Peter said to Him, "From strangers." Jesus said to him, "Then the sons are free. Nevertheless, lest we offend them, go to the sea, cast in a hook, and take the fish that comes up first. And when you have opened its mouth, you will find a piece of money; take that and give it to them for Me and you." Christ made certain that Peter understood. Then Christ helped Peter to carry out his words by providing Peter with the temple tax both for Peter and for Himself.

In Matthew 16:13-16 we see another example of how Christ taught the disciples with questions. Those verses say, "When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" So they said, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." In these verses we see that Christ used questions to give the disciples the opportunity to tell the opinions that they had heard from others. However, in the last question, Christ changed from the opinions of others to the convictions of the disciples themselves.

Matthew 16:21 tells us that based on the answer of Peter, Christ began to teach the disciples about His coming death. That verse says, "From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day." In this case the question was like a quiz. The disciples had to recognize that Christ is the Son of the living God before they could begin to learn about His coming death and resurrection. In this case Christ used His questions to get the disciples to tell what they believed about Christ.

Christ also asked a question to show the new relationship that He had with His disciples. In Matthew 12:47-50 we read, "Then one said to Him, "Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You." But He answered and said to the one who told Him, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?" And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother." By asking this question, Christ helped His disciples to begin to understand the new relationship that they had with Him.

Christ also used questions to help His disciples learn how to think and not just tell them what to

think. In John 6:5-6 we read, "Then Jesus lifted up His eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do." The disciples had to begin to learn to think from the viewpoint of Christ instead of just giving their opinions. Christ knew what He was going to do but Philip had never thought about what Christ could do.

Philip shows by his answer that he still had to learn a lot in order to learn how to think. John 6:7 says, "Philip answered Him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little." Philip did not even think through the question that Christ had asked him. Philip answered that they could do nothing because they didn't have the money. Instead of thinking through who Christ was and what Christ could do, Philip just said it was impossible to help. To help Philip and the other disciples learn to think in a new way as a result of His question, Christ told the disciples in John 6:12, So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, "Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost." Jesus showed them that they had to think who was asking the question instead of thinking about what they had.

Christ also used two questions to get two of His disciples on the road to Emmaus to think. Luke 24:17-19 says, "And He said to them, "What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?" Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, "Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?" And He said to them, "What things?" So they said to Him, "The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people." When Christ asked the question, "What things?" the two quickly told Christ both what had happened and what they thought about what had happened.

They showed by their answer that they did not really believe what the women had told them about the resurrection. That gave Christ an opportunity to explain the Scriptures to the two. Luke 24:25-27 says, "Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." As a result of His questions, Christ was able to explain many things to the two. In fact Luke 24:32-33 shows that those two questions changed their lives. We read, "And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?" So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together." Here we see the power of questions to change lives.

Christ also used some other questions after His resurrection to change lives. Peter and six other disciples went back to fishing because Peter felt that he had failed when he denied Christ. Christ used just three questions to restore Peter and transform his life. The first is found in John 21:15 where we read, "So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs." Christ just asked Peter if Peter loved Him more than the 153 fish that they had just caught. Even though Peter did not answer with the same word for love, Christ told Peter to feed His lambs.

Christ followed that question by asking the same question two more times. John 21:16-17 says,

“He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep.” Peter had denied Christ three times and now Christ had used those questions to tell Peter three times that he still had a ministry of serving Christ.

Jesus asked Peter one more question later that morning to help Peter realize that he had to focus on the priorities that Christ gave him for his own life. In John 21:21-22 we read, “Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, "But Lord, what about this man?" Jesus said to him, "If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me.” Jesus used a question to let Peter know that his priority was not to find out what would happen to the other disciples. Instead his priority was to follow Christ.

Christ took a question of the disciples and in the answer showed the disciples what was to be their priority for the rest of their lives. Acts 1:6-8 says, “Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” The last words of Christ on earth helped the disciples to focus on their spiritual priority and not a political priority. They were to begin sharing where they were and take the Gospel to the ends of the earth. Christ wants us to have the same priority in our lives today.

Questions are a very powerful way to make people think and help them develop their spiritual priorities. May the Lord richly bless you as you help developing leaders learn how to think by asking them key questions that can change and transform their lives.

13.

Jesus Taught to Transform Thinking

In Exodus 18:20 we read, “And you shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and show them the way in which they must walk and the work they must do.” In this verse we see that God told Moses three things that he was to do in order to equip the people for ministry so that they could share the work with him. Moses was told to teach the people the Word of God. He was told to show the people how to walk. He was to show the people how to do the work of ministry.

We might say that balanced teaching and equipping transforms the head (knowledge), the heart (character) and the hands (ministry). In our next three topics we will see how Christ focused on all three of these things and not just knowledge. Today we will see how Christ helped the disciples to grow in their knowledge of the Word of God so that it was able to transform their thinking.

As Christ finished what we call the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 7:28-29 says, “And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.” In Matthew 28:18 we read, “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.” Christ was able to teach with authority because all authority has been given to Him. However, it was based on that authority that Christ said in Matthew 28:19-20, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.” Christ commanded us to make disciples based on the fact that He has all authority.

The phrase “teaching them to observe all things” is a key phrase for us to understand if we are going to be obedient to Christ and teach as Christ did so that it transforms thinking. The word “observe” means to guard, to keep or to obey. It means that we are to teach people how to obey the Word of God. Notice that the scribes and Pharisees taught the Word of God but they did not teach and show people how to obey it. Matthew 23:1-3 uses this same word when it says, “Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, saying: “The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do.”

In these verses we see that the scribes and Pharisees taught what Moses said in the Law. However, Christ pointed out that they did not teach to transform thinking. The scribes and Pharisees taught one thing and did another. What they were teaching had not transformed their thinking, their attitudes or their actions. They taught like they were teaching history that only says, “This is what Moses said and this is how various teachers have explained what Moses said.” They spent their time telling what other people said about what Moses wrote and did not show the people how to obey the Word of God by their actions. Today we have many people that are doing exactly the same thing. We are called to follow the example of Christ and not the example of the Pharisees as we teach to transform lives.

Christ did not just tell people to forgive. Instead Christ showed how to forgive by His own

example. We have a perfect example of how Christ showed people to forgive by His words and actions on the cross. Luke 23:34 says, "Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." And they divided His garments and cast lots." Here we see that Christ showed them how to forgive by asking the Father to forgive the people for putting Him on the cross.

The disciples needed that example because they had to learn how to forgive by seeing an example that they could follow. Luke 17:3-5 says, "Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him." And the apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith." The disciples had to be shown how to forgive and not just hear they should forgive. As a result, Christ gave them a perfect example of how to forgive as He hung on the cross.

Jesus did not just tell the disciples that they should share the message of repentance. He showed them how to share the message of repentance. Matthew 9:10-13 says, "Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, "Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" When Jesus heard that, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." Christ went to where people were, sat down and ate with them and while eating with them shared with people the way to repent of their sin.

The disciples were shown many lessons by the example of Christ. He could have preached many sermons about taking the Gospel to the lost. Instead He just showed the disciples how to spend time with the lost and share the message of repentance with them. Christ also showed by His example the importance of accepting people by eating with the tax collectors and sinners. In this case he was teaching them how to accept others by example and the Pharisees showed their lack of acceptance of tax collectors and sinners by their example. The disciples quickly saw that Christ did what he taught while the Pharisees did not.

Another example of the way that Christ showed the disciples how to transform their thinking is given in the new commandment. John 13:34-35 says, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." For more than three years Christ had shown the disciples how much He loved them. They had seen that love by His actions throughout the time that they followed Him. In this new commandment Christ is saying, you have seen the way that I have loved you. Now you imitate my example and love one another in the same way. His actions over those three years had shown them how to love before He commanded them to love one another.

Perhaps the greatest area where Christ had to transform the thinking of the disciples was to show them that they could not depend on their own strength. When Christ was on the mountain with Peter, James and John where He was transfigured, the rest of the disciples were being asked to cure a boy that had seizures because he was demon possessed. The disciples learned that they were

powerless to help. As a result, the father spoke to Christ when He came down from the mountain. The father said in Matthew 17:16, "So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him." The disciples had to realize that they were powerless in their own strength.

We go on to read what happened after Christ healed that child. Matthew 17:19-21 says, "Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting." The disciples had to learn to pray and let God work because they could do nothing in their own strength.

As Christ spoke to the disciples the night of His resurrection, He reminded them again that they did not have the power to share the message of His death and resurrection in their own strength. Luke 24:44-49 says, "Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me." And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things. Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high." Christ had to transform their thinking by reminding them that they were powerless in themselves.

Christ said a very similar thing just before He returned to heaven. Acts 1:4-5 says, "And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." Christ wanted them to understand clearly that they must witness in the power of the Holy Spirit and not their own strength. Then the final words of Christ before returning to heaven are given in Acts 1:8 where we read, "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." They would have power to witness as they yielded their lives to the Holy Spirit. May the Lord richly bless you as you help developing leaders learn to transform their thinking by learning to obey the Word of God and learning to yield their lives to the Holy Spirit.

14.

Jesus Taught to Transform Character

In our last lesson we saw that Moses was told how to transform lives through his teaching. Exodus 18:20 says, "And you shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and show them the way in which they must walk and the work they must do." We saw that balanced teaching and equipping transforms the head (knowledge), the heart (character) and the hands (ministry). Today we will see how Christ showed us that effective teaching transforms the heart and develops godly character.

Christ began right at the beginning of His public ministry to tell individuals how their character would be transformed as they allowed His teaching to penetrate their hearts. In John 1:42 we read, "And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, "You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas" (which is translated, A Stone)." Cephas was the Aramaic word for stone and Peter was the Greek word for stone. Here Christ was telling Peter the very first time that He met him that Peter would become like a rock.

Nearly a year later we read in Luke 5:4-8, "When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." But Simon answered and said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net." And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" As Peter saw the power of Christ, he realized his own sinfulness. Christ taught him a very important lesson that day that was needed in order for him to become like a rock.

Another lesson that Christ taught His disciples is found in Matthew 9:36-38. Those verses say, "But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest." Christ first taught the disciples compassion by His own example. Then He taught them how to show compassion by first praying in Matthew 9 and then going in Matthew 10. They could only learn these lessons by observing the example of Christ.

When Christ sent the disciples out to preach in Matthew 10, He also taught them another lesson that would help to transform their character. That lesson was to help them learn to live by faith. Matthew 10:9-10 says, "Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts, nor bag for your journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor staffs; for a worker is worthy of his food." Later as Christ looked back and talked about this time of ministry to the disciples, He said in Luke 22:35, "And He said to them, "When I sent you without money bag, knapsack, and sandals, did you lack anything?" So they said, "Nothing." They had to learn to live by faith because they would be living that way for the rest of their lives. We need to help developing leaders learn that same lesson from our example.

Peter and the other disciples learned many other lessons that transformed their character as they

saw the example of Christ and listened to Him teach. Two of these lessons are seen in Matthew 16. Matthew 16:13-18 says, "When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" So they said, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." Here we see that Peter had transformed his thinking and realized that Christ is the Son of God. This was important in the life of Peter because it meant that He would recognize the authority of Christ in his life.

The second lesson in that chapter is found in Matthew 16:21-23. There we read, "From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!" But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men." Here we see that Peter had to have his character transformed so that he began to think from God's viewpoint instead of from a worldly viewpoint.

Jesus also had to deal with the spirit of anger and revenge in His disciples. Luke 9:53-56 says, "But they did not receive Him, because His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem. And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?" But He turned and rebuked them, and said, "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them." And they went to another village." Jesus had to show them by His example how to accept rejection and continue to love those who reject.

The Lord also had to deal with a spirit of pride and a desire for power in the lives of His disciples. Mark 10:35-37 says, "Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying, "Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask." And He said to them, "What do you want Me to do for you?" They said to Him, "Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory." Then Mark 10:41 says, "And when the ten heard it, they began to be greatly displeased with James and John." Here we see that all twelve had the same pride and the same desire for power.

Christ used this opportunity to teach the disciples about servant leadership. Mark 10:42-45 says, "But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." Christ showed by His own example that spiritual greatness comes by becoming a bondservant to all. One of the greatest needs in Christianity today is people who are showing others how to serve instead of be served.

Perhaps the greatest example of godly character was shown to the disciples on the night before Christ was crucified. Matthew 26:48-50 says, "Now His betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him." Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed Him. But Jesus said to him, "Friend, why have you come?" Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him." Even in the very act of betraying Christ, Christ still showed love and acceptance to Judas. When Christ said to Judas, "Friend, why have you come?" Jesus continued to show love to His betrayer. The other disciples saw that Christ was able to show godly character in every situation. The reason that they were able to see was due to the fact that Christ had taken them with Him when He went to the garden to pray.

Godly character can never be learned in a classroom. Godly character can only be learned by the example of those who show godly character in difficult situations. Christ took the disciples with Him so that they could learn by observing His example in many different situations. In the same way, people will only learn to develop godly character as they see it modeled in our lives. This is why it is so important for mature Christians to take newer Christians with them so that the newer Christians can observe them in many different situations. We teach godly character by example and not by a sermon or a Bible study.

Just as Jesus showed the disciples by His own example that their lives and character could be transformed, Christ calls us to do the same. That will only happen as we take developing leaders with us in many different situations. They need to have opportunities to see how we handle rejection. They need to have opportunities to see us when we face very difficult situations. That will only happen as we make it our goal to transform lives by providing an example of godly character that others can see and imitate. Paul said in I Thessalonians 1:6-7, "And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe." The new Christians learned to develop godly character by watching the example of Paul, Silas and Timothy. In turn they became an example for others to follow. May the Lord richly bless you as you help developing leaders develop godly character in their lives because they are following your example as you follow the example of Christ.

15.

Jesus Taught to Equip for Ministry

In our last lesson we saw that Moses was told how to transform lives through his teaching. Exodus 18:20 says, "And you shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and show them the way in which they must walk and the work they must do." We saw that balanced teaching and equipping transforms the head (knowledge), the heart (character) and the hands (ministry). Today we will see how Christ showed us that effective teaching transforms the hands by equipping people for effective ministry.

In the time of Christ there were two main models of teaching. One was the Greek model and the other was the Hebrew model. The Greek model is teaching by telling. The Greek model has become the model that is most commonly used around the world. That is the classroom model of teaching. Students are gathered in a classroom and given instruction. In many colleges people talk about the classroom lectures because the teacher does all the talking while the students take notes. This helps students grow in knowledge but it does not develop godly character or equip people for ministry.

As a result, Christ used the Hebrew model. The Hebrew model is teaching by showing. In Matthew 4:18-20 we read, "And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." They immediately left their nets and followed Him." Instead of having a class on how to share the Gospel with others, Christ just invited the disciples to follow Him as He carried out His ministry. Christ promised them that as they followed Him that He would change them from fishermen to fishers of men.

Immediately after calling Peter, Andrew, James and John, Matthew 4:23 says, "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people." Here we see that Jesus took the disciples with Him as He taught in the synagogues throughout Galilee. As a result, the disciples were being shown how to share the Word of God with people.

They were being shown both in the synagogues and also in many other places. Matthew 5:1-2 says, "And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. Then He opened His mouth, and taught them saying." Here we see that Christ was showing them how to teach in places other than the synagogues. The disciples were being shown that they could teach the Word of God at any place and at any time. They were being shown that they did not need to limit their teaching to the synagogues. This was important because the time would come when they would be rejected in the synagogues but that did not need to stop them from teaching. Because they had been shown by Christ that they could teach anywhere, it did not hinder the ministry of the disciples when they were rejected in the synagogues. As a result, they were never limited by a lack of buildings.

However, Christ did more than just show the disciples where to teach. He also showed them how to interpret the Word of God. One of the key things that Christ showed the disciples was the fact that

the Bible is the best interpreter of itself. One day Christ was talking about John the Baptist. Instead of just talking about John the Baptist, Christ quoted the Old Testament to explain the ministry of John the Baptist. Luke 7:27 says, "This is he of whom it is written: 'Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You.'" This was a quotation from Isaiah 40:3. Today many people quote what others say about the Bible but they often fail to quote what the Bible says about itself.

Christ wanted to equip the disciples to teach the Word of God with authority. He knew that would only happen as they saw Him use the Word of God to explain the Word of God. As a result, Christ backed up many of His statements by quoting from the Old Testament. The Word of God has power to change lives while the words of men do not have that power. Hebrews 4:12 says, "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." The words of people speak to the mind of man. In contrast, the Word of God speaks to the spirit.

The disciples learned to use the authority of the Word of God to effectively communicate the message that Christ gave them to teach. This is illustrated over and over again in the book of Acts. In the sermon of Peter on the day of Pentecost recorded in Acts 2, we see that he backed up nearly every statement that He made with quotations from the Old Testament. During the time that Peter and the others had walked with Christ and listened to Him teach, they had been shown how to use the Old Testament to back up everything that they said.

Peter and John illustrated this so well when they were questioned by the Jewish religious leaders. Acts 4:10-12 says, "Let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. "This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.' "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." Peter was able to illustrate both the fact of who Christ is and also the rejection of the religious leaders because He knew the Word of God and was able to use the Word of God to interpret what was happening. This had a great impact on the religious leaders because Acts 4:13 says, "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus."

However, the disciples had learned from the example of Christ that the Holy Spirit would help them to understand spiritual truth. In Luke 24:45-48 we read, "And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, "and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. "And you are witnesses of these things." Christ took the time after His resurrection to show the disciples what the Old Testament taught about His death, His resurrection and how that was the key to the forgiveness of sins.

After opening their understanding of the Old Testament Scriptures, Christ told them that the Holy Spirit would give them the power to interpret the Scriptures. Acts 24:49 says, "Behold, I send the

Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high." Christ had earlier given them the promise in John 14:26, "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you." The disciples showed that they were depending on the power of the Holy Spirit when they spoke to the religious leaders with boldness. I Corinthians 2:13 reminds us that the Holy Spirit will also give all Christians wisdom to interpret the Scriptures. That verse says, "These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual."

In addition to showing the disciples where to teach and how to interpret and explain the Scriptures, Christ also showed them how to apply the Scriptures. Christ often showed the disciples how to apply the Scripture to the lives of those with whom He was talking. When a lawyer questioned Christ about how to inherit eternal life, Christ answered by telling the parable of the Good Samaritan. The disciples listened as Christ showed them how to apply what He had taught. Luke 10:37 says, "And he said, "He who showed mercy on him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise." Christ showed the disciples how to apply the teachings of Christ to the lives of those who were listening.

Peter showed that he had learned from the example of Christ by the way He concluded his sermon in Acts 2. Acts 2:37-38 says, "Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Peter and the rest of the apostles told them that the way to apply what they had heard was to repent and their sins would be forgiven. The apostles showed that they had learned from Scripture.

Jesus showed us how to help developing leaders learn the Word of God, learn to interpret and explain the Word of God and learn how to apply the Word of God. In the same way we are to show developing leaders how to learn, to interpret, to explain and to apply the Word of God because they have seen by our example how to share the Word of God in a way that people can apply the Word to their lives so that the Word is transforming them. May the Lord richly bless you as you equip developing leaders to interpret, to explain and to apply the Word of God to others.

Jesus Taught the Disciples How to Develop Reproducing Christians

In our last topic we talked a little about the difference between the Greek method of teaching and the Hebrew method of teaching. We saw that the Greek form of instruction was to give classroom instruction. We saw that these are often called class lectures. The Greek form of instruction focuses primarily on giving knowledge. The Greek form of education has become the most common form of education today.

In contrast, the Hebrew form of instruction was instruction by showing. Christ invited the disciples to go along with Him so that He could show them how to minister. Christ wanted the disciples to gain more than just knowledge. He wanted to show them how to develop godly character. He wanted to show them how to do effective ministry as they learned to understand and apply the knowledge that He was sharing with them. In the same way Christ wants us to teach by showing so that we help people to gain and apply knowledge, grow in godly character and grow in effective ministry.

Let's look at the difference that this makes when we apply it to the passage known as the Great Commission. In Matthew 28:18-20 we read, "And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age." Amen." In the Great Commission we have one command that is to be carried out by doing three things. The command is: Make Disciples. Doing three things carries out this command: going; baptizing; and teaching.

Christians that have been taught through the Greek form of instruction have interpreted the Great Commission in several different ways. Some have changed the command in their thinking and interpret the command as help people to make decisions and profess to become Christians. Those that have done this feel that they have fulfilled the Great Commission when they get people to come forward in a church service or when they get a person to repeat a prayer after them. Such individuals have interpreted the Great Commission to say that we are to evangelize the lost. We are to evangelize the lost but that is only a small part of the Great Commission.

Others place their focus on what happens after a person makes a decision. They feel that they have disciplined a person when they have taken that person through a series of topics. With some people these are a series of doctrinal topics. With others it is taking the person through a series of study books on different topics in the Christian life to help the new Christian gain knowledge of these topics. These individuals have interpreted the Great Commission to mean that a person has been disciplined when he or she has gained knowledge of certain doctrines or of certain topics on the Christian life. We are to help new Christians learn these things but these are also only a small part of the Great Commission.

Probably the greatest misunderstanding of the Great Commission is to think that the Great Commission is only given to a few Christians. This seems to be the attitude of the majority of

Christians who feel that they have done their part when they have gone to a church service, sang some songs, put something in the offering, heard a few announcements, heard a few prayers, and heard a sermon preached and then gone home until the same time the next week when they repeat the same pattern again. These groups of people think that they have done their part by going to the service and listening to a sermon. That is why the example of Christ is the opposite of the Greek model of teaching.

A true disciple is a person that has become a reproducing Christian. Let's see how Christ provided an example of how to obey the Great Commission by His example. Christ gave an invitation to all to follow Him. Some followed and others did not. Mark 10:22 says about the rich young ruler, "But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions." The rich young ruler made the choice not to follow Christ. Christ allowed him to leave and did not try to make it easier for him to follow Christ.

However, there were also those that did follow Christ. When Christ met Andrew and John in John 1:39, "He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour)." About a year later Christ said to these same men, "Come and grow." Mark 1:17 says, "Then Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." Between six and nine months later Christ said, "Come and serve." Mark 3:13-14 says, "And He went up on the mountain and called to *Him* those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach." After His resurrection, Christ invited Peter and the others to, "Come and shepherd." John 21:16 says, "He said to him again a second time, "Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep." Throughout a period of three and a half years Christ had been showing the Twelve how to become disciples and how to make disciples that reproduced.

It was only after showing the disciples by His example what to do that Christ gave the Great Commission to Make Disciples. The disciples knew what to do and what to teach to make disciples because Jesus had shown them how to make disciples. They had also learned that they could do nothing in their own strength but had to depend on the power of the Holy Spirit working in and through their lives. One of the last things Christ said to the disciples is recorded in Luke 24:49 where we read, "Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high." Christ's final words are recorded in Acts 1:8 where we read, "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." They had been shown how to make disciples and then were given the power to make disciples.

Christ had shown the disciples what to do to make disciples. This included three main things. First, as they were going, they were to be sharing the Gospel wherever they went. They were to do this in the power of the Holy Spirit and not in their own strength. Mark 16:15 says, "And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." They shared the Gospel wherever they had the opportunity. Acts 2:46-47 says, "So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily

those who were being saved.” They also showed those who became Christians how to share the Gospel. When persecution came, the apostles stayed in Jerusalem. However, Acts 8:4 tells what happened to the rest of the believers. That verse says, “Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.”

Second, there are at least eight kinds of baptism mentioned in the New Testament. All eight deal with identification. The disciples were helping the new believers to become identified with a group of other believers where they could all grow together. Acts 2:41-42 says, “Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added *to them*. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.” The apostles helped the new believers to identify with Christ and His body, the church, both by the act of baptism and by gathering them in groups small enough so that they could enjoy regular Bible study and fellowship together with the breaking of bread and prayer. The disciples understood that true identification with Christ meant helping the new believers to identify both with Christ and also learn to function as a part of the body through Bible study and fellowship, breaking of bread and prayer.

Third, the disciples understood that the process of making disciples included helping all that believed learn to obey what they learned. This meant that they had to learn to depend on the power of the Holy Spirit. The disciples knew that would happen only as the earlier disciples showed the new believers how to yield to the Holy Spirit so that they would have the power to obey what they were learning from the Word of God. Acts 4:23-24 shows how the disciples reacted to persecution. Those verses say, “And being let go, they went to their own *companions* and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: “Lord, You *are* God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them.” Acts 4:31 gives the results, “And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.” The evidence of being filled with the Holy Spirit was speaking the Word of God with boldness.

The period of Acts 3-5 covers a period of about five or six years. Acts 6:1 tells us the results of showing people how to become disciples, “Now in those days, when *the number of* the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution.” Here we see that the number of disciples was multiplying because they were being shown how to serve Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. The disciples immediately took action to solve the problem. The results are seen in Acts 6:7, “Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.” Acts 9:31 adds a few years later, “Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied.”

We see that Christ showed the disciples how to make reproducing disciples. To make disciples involves the process of showing a person how Christ can change and transform his or her life as that person sees your example. It then includes leading that person to Christ. It also includes helping that person identify with a group of Christians that will help that new Christian grow. Then it includes showing that person how to obey all that Christ has commanded through the power of

the Holy Spirit. The process is only complete when that person has become a reproducing Christian. That is what the Lord has called us to do. May the Lord richly bless you as you show people by your example how to become reproducing Christians and equip them to do the same.

Jesus Showed the Disciples How to Develop Praying Christians

In our last two topics we talked about the difference between the Greek style of teaching and the Hebrew style of teaching. We saw that the Greek style of instruction was primarily classroom instruction. In contrast, the Hebrew style of instruction was to show people by example. The Greek style of education increases the knowledge of people. The Hebrew style of instruction shows people how to live and use the knowledge that they learn as they are taught by example. Today we will see that Christ showed the disciples how to develop their communication with the Father through prayer.

In the book of Mark we see that Christ began showing the disciples how to pray as soon as He called them to follow Him. In Mark 1:16-20 we see that Christ said to four fishermen, "Follow me and I will make you to become fishers of men." Christ began teaching the disciples about prayer immediately. Mark 1:35-36 says, "Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed. And Simon and those *who were* with Him searched for Him." Here we see that Christ began immediately to teach the disciples about the priority of prayer.

People only learn about the importance of prayer as they see others pray. Since the verse says that Christ had risen and gone out to pray a long while before daylight, one or more of the disciples had heard Christ leave the house. In fact one or more had seen what direction He went because they knew what direction to go to find Him. When the disciples found Christ that morning, they found that He was praying. They began to realize immediately the importance that Christ placed on praying and communicating with the Father. Through the following three years, they found Christ praying many times. They began to realize that Christ felt prayer was one of the most important things that He did. That was something that they could only learn from the example of Christ.

In Luke 9 Christ sent out the twelve in teams of two to preach the kingdom of God. Then in Luke 10 Christ sent out the seventy in teams of two. In Luke 10:17-20 the seventy returned to give a report about their preaching. The disciples had learned many lessons from these two periods of ministry. This led to the disciples making a request of Christ in Luke 11. Luke 11:1 says, "Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, *that* one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples." The disciples had been observing the prayer life of Christ for nearly two years and they realized that Christ really prayed. As a result, they also wanted to learn to pray and not just say prayers. As a result, Christ taught the disciples several lessons about prayer.

Before Christ had sent out the seventy, Christ had said in Luke 10:2-4, "The harvest truly *is* great, but the laborers *are* few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. "Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves. "Carry neither money bag, knapsack, nor sandals; and greet no one along the road." Christ told them to pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers and then He answered their prayer by sending them out as laborers into His harvest. However, in answering their prayer for laborers, Christ also showed them that they were going to have to depend on Him to be effective. They were like lambs among wolves and

they had no extra money, food or clothes. They had to learn to pray both for Christ to provide protection and for Christ to supply their needs. That is what had caused them to come back and ask the Lord to teach them how to pray.

Christ responded to their request by helping them to learn to really pray. Luke 11:2-4 says, “So He said to them, “When you pray, say: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as *it is* in heaven. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, For we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one.” Instead of giving the disciples one or more prayers to pray, Christ gave a summary of things about which they should pray. Christ showed them first of all that prayer is a relationship between a Father and His children. Real prayer is based on understanding this relationship. Only as we realize that we can come to our heavenly Father freely will we have a healthy relationship with Him. We also need to realize that He is holy and that we are able to come to Him because Christ has made us holy by forgiving our sins.

Many Christians only talk to God about their needs. That is self centered or selfish prayer. Prayer that is usually self centered is a sign of spiritual immaturity. It is interesting that this request to learn how to pray came after the disciples had been sent out on ministry trips. They had learned as Christ sent them out that they could depend on Him to supply their needs. However, they had also learned that they needed to learn how to pray in order to see God work in their lives and through their lives.

Christ showed us by His example that as we talk to our heavenly Father that we need to focus on His work and His will in the world before we even talk about our own needs. The disciples were shown by example the importance of praying for God’s work. Then they were shown the importance of praying for God’s will in the world. Only after that did they see that they could also pray about their own physical needs, their need for forgiveness so that they would continue to enjoy fellowship with the Father. They also learned to pray for victory over temptation and their need for victory over the evil one.

However, after giving the disciples a summary of the things about which to pray, Christ went on to show them the importance of persistence in prayer. He did this by giving a parable about a friend that came at night with a need. Interestingly enough, his need was to meet the need of another person. He showed that the friend would keep knocking until the need was met. Then Christ said in Luke 11:9-10, “So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. “For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.” Christ told them to keep asking in prayer until the Father answered their prayer.

Then Christ explained how the Father would answer them since they were His children. Luke 11:11-13 says, “If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if *he asks* for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? “Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!” Instead of telling them that the Father would give them things, Christ said that the Father would give them the Holy Spirit to guide them. After His resurrection, Christ told them in Luke 24:49, “Behold, I send

the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.” They were promised that the Holy Spirit would teach them, guide them and give them power. That was why it was so important that they had learned how to pray.

As we go to the book of Acts we see that the disciples had learned how to help other Christians learn to really pray. In Acts 1:14 they showed the 120 disciples that were gathered the importance of prayer. Acts 1:14 says, “These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.” The eleven were showing the rest of the disciples the importance of prayer by their example. They were also showing them by example the importance of praying for the work of God and the will of God rather than focusing on their own needs.

When 3,000 people became followers of Christ of the Day of Pentecost, the disciples immediately began showing the new believers the importance of prayer. Acts 2:42 says, “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.” In every Bible study the disciples were showing the new believers by example how to pray. In Acts 3:1 they showed the believers the importance of gathering together for prayer by their example. That verse says, “Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth *hour*.” When the Lord used them to heal a crippled man on the way to the temple to pray, the Lord used the occasion to give the apostles the opportunity to show the other believers how to handle opposition by prayer.

Peter and John spoke boldly to the religious leaders and focused on the death and resurrection of Christ. They were threatened by the religious leaders and then allowed to leave. They immediately showed by example the importance of handling opposition by prayer. The apostles showed the new believers by their example the importance of praying for the work of God and the will of God to be done instead of focusing on their own needs. Acts 4:29-31 says, “Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, “by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.” And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.” They handled opposition by praying that the work and will of the Lord would be done.

Today God calls us to show both new Christians and developing leaders by our example the importance of prayer. Just as the apostles showed others how to pray for the work of God and the will of God, we need to show others the importance of praying for the work of God and the will of God to be done in our day. May the Lord richly bless you as you help developing leaders learn how to pray and depend on the power of the Holy Spirit to work in their lives and then through their lives.