

Developing Ministry Skills

**Growing Christian Leaders Series
Manual 9**

by

Duane L. Anderson

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**American Indian Bible Institute
Box 511
Norwalk, CA 90651-0511
www.aibi.org**

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Growing Christian Leaders Series

The “Growing Christian Leaders Series” is the result of weekly topics were prepared and e-mailed over a period of years. 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 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.” 1 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.

The Process of Developing Ministry Skills

Christ gave us the greatest example of how to develop ministry skills as he developed the ministry skills of the twelve. That process is seen in the “Four Calls and a Commission” (a diagram by this name is on our web site) that Christ gave His disciples. That process of making disciples is summarized as follows:

- ◆ Come and See (Evangelize) – John 1:39-46; Matthew 9:9-10; Mark 1:30-33
- ◆ Come and Grow (Edify) – Mark 1:16-20
- ◆ Come and Serve (Equip) – Mark 3:13-15
- ◆ Come and Shepherd (Expand the Leadership) – John 21:15-17
- ◆ As you are going, Make Disciples (Extend) – Matthew 28:19-20

To understand how Christ developed the ministry skills of the twelve during each of these stages, we will give a summary in this topic and then expand that summary in future topics. One thing that is important here is to notice the length of time that each of these stages lasted:

- Come and See – about 12 months
- Come and Grow – an additional 9 months (total 21 months)
- Come and Serve - an additional 21 months (about 42 months)
- Come and Shepherd – spoken after the resurrection
- As you are going, Make Disciples – spoken after the resurrection

First, Christ just invited the disciples to come and spend time with him. During this time they traveled with Him to a wedding in Cana (John 2:1-12), the Passover in Jerusalem (John 2:13-3:21), time in Judea (John 3:22-4:3), traveling through Samaria (John 4:4-42) and ministry in the synagogues throughout Galilee (Luke 4:14-44). Throughout the first entire year a group of disciples were traveling with Christ at various times. This included a larger group than the twelve but various members of the twelve were often a part of this group.

During this entire first year, Christ was doing the ministry while the disciples just observed. We will look at some of the things they observed in our next topic. For the most part, Christ did not expect them to do anything except observe. He did allow them to baptize (John 4:2) and he did send them into the city of Sychar to buy food (John 4:8, 27). Other than that they were primarily observers of the ministry of Christ.

Second, after about a year, Christ began inviting the disciples to follow Him so that He could show them how to become fishers of men (Mark 1:14-20; Luke 5:1-13). During this time they spent time visiting the towns of Galilee. Since there were 203 towns and villages throughout Galilee that had a synagogue, this allowed the disciples to observe what Christ was teaching but also to begin to participate.

In Mark 1:29-33, we see that ministry to the multitudes shifted from the synagogue to the house of Peter and Andrew on that particular day. This meant that the disciples were beginning to participate in the ministry because it was happening in their own homes where they would be the hosts. Mark 1:35-39 show that the people were beginning to ask questions of the disciples. Then in Mark 2:14-17 we see that ministry was happening in the home of Matthew so he was participating as the host as Jesus met his co-workers and friends. Here we see that Christ was developing the ministry skill of hospitality during this time.

Third, after a total of about 21 months from the time Christ first started getting acquainted with the disciples, we see that Christ chose the twelve. Luke 6:12-13 says that Christ did this after spending

an entire night in prayer. Mark and Luke both point out that the twelve were chosen from a larger group of disciples. Mark 3:13-15 tells us what the twelve were chosen to do:

- ⇒ He chose the twelve that they might be with Him
- ⇒ He chose the twelve that He might send them out to preach
- ⇒ He chose the twelve to have power to heal sicknesses
- ⇒ He chose the twelve to have power to cast out demons

During this second half of Christ's ministry, the disciples were going to start doing part of the ministry while Christ observed and encouraged them. When Christ sent the twelve out on their own the first time He gave them very specific instructions. Matthew 10:5-11 gives us those instructions, "These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: "Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. "But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. "And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give. "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. "Now whatever city or town you enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and stay there till you go out."

We see that Christ knew they were not yet ready to learn certain ministry skills and so He told them to avoid certain things. He also wanted to teach them to depend on Him to supply what they needed. Notice the following thing Christ focused on:

- They were not to go to the Gentiles – the twelve were not yet ready to learn to cross the barrier of language
- They were not to go to the Samaritans – the twelve were not yet ready to learn to cross the barrier of another culture, religion or ethnic group
- They were given a specific message to preach – the kingdom of heaven is at hand
- They were given a specific ministry of healing – the sick, the lepers and the dead
- They were given a specific ministry of dealing with demons – they were to cast out demons
- They were to give freely
- They were to learn that the Lord would supply what they needed
- They were to stay with someone who was respected by the other people in each city that they visited
- Mark 6:7 also tells us that He send them out in teams of two

Then Mark 6:30-31 tells us a key thing that Christ did after He sent the disciples out for a time of ministry. Those verses say, "Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. And He said to them, "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat." Here we see that Christ did three things with the disciples:

- He listened to what they had done
- He listened to what they had taught
- He emphasized the importance of rest after a busy time of ministry

Later, Christ also sent out 35 teams of 2 in Luke 10. Before Christ sent them out, He also gave them specific instructions. We see the report of the 70 in Luke 10:17-20. There we read, "Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. "Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. "Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven." In these verses we see that Christ did two things:

- He shared the joy of the seventy

- He explained the source of real joy

We see that Christ used the following process to develop ministry skills in the twelve.

- ◆ He took them along and gave them the opportunity to observe what He did
- ◆ He took them along and gave them the opportunity to participate in what He did
- ◆ He had them minister while He observed
- ◆ He had them report so they could begin to realize priorities
- ◆ He then spent nearly two more years in joint ministry
- ◆ He then commissioned them to go out and reproduce themselves in the lives of others

However, before Christ sent them out to reproduce themselves in the lives of others, He gave them the two keys necessary to be effective in ministry when He was no longer physically walking with them. Those same two keys are absolutely necessary for every developing spiritual leader to learn if he or she is going to be effective in ministry:

- ◆ The developing leader must learn to depend on the Holy Spirit for the wisdom to know what to say – John 14:25-26 “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.” Jesus opened the understanding of the apostles in Luke 24:45-48 but they still needed the Holy Spirit to guide them into what to say.
- ◆ The developing leader must learn to depend on the power of the Holy Spirit to be able to minister with boldness – 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.” Acts 4:29-31 plus many other passages tell us that the believers were able to speak the Word of God with boldness as they depended on the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Lord gives each Christian gifts and abilities to minister effectively. However, He gives us the great privilege of showing them how to develop those gifts and abilities. The Lord also gives us the opportunity to show developing leaders both to depend on the Holy Spirit for wisdom and for boldness to share the Word of God by our example of dependence. May the Lord richly bless you as you serve developing spiritual leaders by showing them how to minister by your example.

Developing Ministry Skills Through Observation

In our last topic, we saw that Christ invited the Twelve and many others to come and spend time with Him. In fact, we saw that the Twelve spent time with Christ for about 21 months before they were chosen to be the Twelve. During the first year, they were just invited to be with Christ so that they could observe Him. Today, we are going to see some of the things that Christ wanted the disciples to learn through just observing Him. One of the key things that happened during this time was that Christ was building a relationship of trust with those who followed Him.

We see that the first recorded thing the disciples did with Christ was observe Him in a social situation. In John 2:1-12 Christ and His disciples were invited to attend a wedding. There are two things that we want to notice that relate to observation. John 2:2 says, “Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding.” Here we see that the disciples had the opportunity to go along with Christ and observe. Then John 2:11 says, “This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.” Others did not even know that Christ had performed a miracle. However, the disciples observed it and it caused them to believe in Christ. As we give people the opportunity to observe us in social situations, they will learn a lot about our character.

The next recorded thing that the disciples did with Christ was go with Him to the Passover in Jerusalem. Then meant that they traveled together along the road for several days as they went from Galilee to Jerusalem and later returned to Galilee. They also saw Christ cleanse the temple. They heard Him say that He would raise up this temple in three days. John 2:21-22 says, “But He was speaking of the temple of His body. Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said.”

Just as the disciples remembered several years later what Christ had said, as we take others with us they will remember what we said when they are asked the same questions in a few years. Here we see an example of the fact that people learn what to say to others as they observe what we say to others in various situations. The more time they spend observing us in ministry, the better they will be equipped to answer the questions that people will ask them in the future.

While they were in Jerusalem on this trip, Nicodemus came to visit Jesus one evening. Since John wrote in great detail about this visit in John 3:1-21 (21 verses out of a total of 879 in the entire book), he and some of the other disciples were probably there listening that evening. They had the opportunity to see how Christ explained the Gospel very clearly to one who was depending on his works to save himself. They learned very quickly that even the most religious person can depend on the wrong things for eternal life.

Growing Christians will learn how to explain the Gospel clearly as they hear us explain the Gospel to others. They will also observe how we use illustrations from the Bible to make the Gospel clear. These illustrations will become very familiar to them so that they are equipped to share from the Word of God when they have opportunities to help people understand how to become Christians. A key thing to remember is that the thoughts and ways of God are much better than our thoughts and ways when it comes to sharing the Gospel of any other thing. 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.”

John 3:22 tells us that Jesus and His disciples spent time visiting various areas of Judea. During

this time the disciples had the opportunity to hear Christ share the Gospel with many people in the various towns. In fact, John 4:1-2 says, “Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples).” In addition to hearing Jesus explain the Gospel many times, the disciples were given the opportunity to baptize those who responded to the message of Christ. Since the disciples had only been with Christ a short time, they were still learning what to share but they could participate by baptizing others.

John 4:3-4 goes on to say, “He left Judea and departed again to Galilee. But He needed to go through Samaria.” The Jews had strong feelings of prejudice toward the Samaritans. Christ needed to go through Samaria to begin to change that attitude in the disciples as well as to reach some of the Samaritans. In fact Christ used this opportunity to really expand their vision. John 4:35-36 says, “Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and *then* comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! “And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.” The disciples had their vision expanded and they also had the opportunity to hear that their lives could begin to have an eternal impact.

We also see that the disciples went into Sychar and brought back food to Jesus. Then they saw the Samaritan woman go into Sychar and bring back many people who wanted to know more about Christ. The disciples had the opportunity to observe that the Samaritans needed Christ and were open to Christ. Five percent of the entire book of John is devoted to just this one event. John learned through observation the passion of Christ to reach the Samaritans. Later John and Peter also went to Samaria – Acts 8:14-15, 25. In Acts however, they were the ones who were sharing the Gospel with the Samaritans.

Christ also gave the disciples the opportunity to observe Him in Galilee. In Luke 4:14-15 we read, “Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region. And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.” Christ began in Nazareth but was rejected in His home town according to Luke 4:16-30.

Throughout this period that Christ was preaching in the synagogues in the various towns of Galilee, Christ made His headquarters in the town of Capernaum according to Matthew 4:12-17. In fact Luke 4:31-32 says, “Then He went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and was teaching them on the Sabbaths. And they were astonished at His teaching, for His word was with authority.” Capernaum was very near the town where Peter, Andrew, James and John lived as well as Philip and probably Nathanael – John 1:44. These verses tell us that Christ was teaching regularly in the synagogue in Capernaum. In fact Mark 1:29 tells us that Christ went out of this synagogue and into the house of Peter and Andrew.

Because these towns were so close together, the disciples had the opportunity to go along with Christ to many of the towns of Galilee. This gave them the opportunity to hear Christ preach many times about the kingdom of God. They were observing what Christ said and how He said what He said in the various towns that they visited. They were also seeing some of the miracles that Christ performed.

In Luke 4:42-44 we read, “Now when it was day, He departed and went into a deserted place. And the crowd sought Him and came to Him, and tried to keep Him from leaving them; but He said to them, “I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent.” And He was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee.” In these verses we read that Christ preached in the synagogues throughout Galilee. Then in Luke 5:1-11 and Matthew 4:18-22 we see that Christ invited four fishermen to leave their fishing and become fishers of men.

During the first year between the time that Christ first met the disciples in John 1 and when He called them to become fishers of men in Luke 5:1-11, these men had the opportunity to observe Christ in many different situations as He talked to people from many different backgrounds. The primary way that they participated during this time was baptizing others who became followers of Christ – John 4:2. Other than that, they were given the opportunity to learn primarily through observation.

In the same way, Christ wants us to take Christians along with us as we share the Gospel and minister in other ways so that these Christians can learn what to share and how to share through observation. One of the best places to teach Christians how to explain the Gospel from the Word of God is to go with them to the homes of their relatives, friends, co-workers, neighbors and other acquaintances. As we go with them, they will see how we share the Gospel with the people for whom they have a great concern. They will also have the opportunity to share the joy as some of those people place their trust in Christ. In addition, they will also be learning how to share the Gospel by observation. May the Lord richly bless you as you help people develop ministry skills through observation.

3.

Developing Ministry Skills Through Participation

In our last topic, we talked about the fact that Christ took the disciples with Him for about a year so that they could observe what He taught and how He taught. We saw that the primary way that they participated during that first year was to baptize others (John 4:2) who became followers of Christ. In addition to observing what Christ did and taught, something else was also happening which was even more important. As they observed the character of Christ, He was beginning to develop that same character in their lives.

We also develop character in the lives of those who spend time with us as they observe our lives. Our example of godly character is probably the most important thing they will learn from us. That is even more important than the ministry skills that they will develop as they go along with us as we minister. They will become what we are whether that is good or bad. In fact this is one of the great weaknesses in the Christian world today because most new Christians never get the opportunity to spend time in a variety of situations with a mature Christian.

After the disciples had spent about a year observing Christ, He gave them a second call. In Matthew 4:19 we read, "Then He said to them, 'Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.'" Here we see that Christ said He would show them how to become fishers of men as they followed Him. In Mark 1:32-33 we see that one of the first ways that these fishermen began to participate was by having people into their home so that they could meet and hear Christ. Mark 1:29 and 32-33 says, "Now as soon as they had come out of the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John... At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed. And the whole city was gathered together at the door."

We see in Mark 2:14-15 that the same thing happened with Matthew. Mark 2:13-15 says, "Then He went out again by the sea; and all the multitude came to Him, and He taught them. As He passed by, He saw Levi the *son* of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, 'Follow Me.'" So he arose and followed Him. Now it happened, as He was dining in *Levi's* house, that many tax collectors and sinners also sat together with Jesus and His disciples; for there were many, and they followed Him." We learn some key things about participation from these passages:

- ◆ Christ spent time in the homes of those who became His disciples
- ◆ Christ gave the disciples the opportunity to have their relatives, friends, co-workers, neighbors and other acquaintances meet Christ in their homes
- ◆ Christ recognized that some people would be afraid to come to hear Him because of their past so He gave Matthew the opportunity to invite co-workers and others who were rejected by society to his house where they could be introduced to Christ
- ◆ Christ gave the disciples the opportunity to reach out to many people in this way who might never have come to Christ otherwise
- ◆ Christ gave the disciples the opportunity to lead many others to Christ by participating with Christ in their homes

Here we see that a key way to give new and growing Christians the opportunity to participate both to share the Gospel and also to see their network of relatives, friends, co-workers, neighbors and other acquaintances come to Christ. Since we train growing Christians how to share the Gospel with others by showing them how to share the Gospel, the ideal place to do that is in their own homes. Through the years I have personally met more non-Christians in the homes of their relatives, friends or co-workers than any other single way.

I encourage every new Christian to begin praying daily for the salvation of relatives, friends, co-

workers, neighbors and other acquaintances. Then I tell them that as these individuals begin to show an openness I will be glad to either come to their home to meet these relatives and friends or go with them to the homes of these individuals to share the Gospel with them. In this way new Christians begin to participate in sharing the Gospel with people who are in their network of acquaintances. At the same time they are seeing the Holy Spirit work in the lives of the people in their network.

The first person that Andrew introduced to Christ was his brother Peter – John 1:40-42. The first person that Philip introduced to Christ was his friend Nathaniel – John 1:43-46. In fact this is a very effective way to help those who are interested but not yet Christians to begin to participate in sharing the Gospel. Peter had the opportunity to share with the relatives and friends of Cornelius in his home. Acts 10:24, 27 says, “And the following day they entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them, and had called together his relatives and close friends... And as he talked with him, he went in and found many who had come together.” Because Andrew, Philip and Cornelius participated with Christ, all of these relatives and friends came to Christ.

We also see other ways that the disciples began to participate in the ministry of Christ. In Mark 2:16 we see that the scribes and Pharisees came with their question to the disciples rather than Christ. That verse says, “And when the scribes and Pharisees saw Him eating with the tax collectors and sinners, they said to His disciples, “How *is it* that He eats and drinks with tax collectors and sinners?” Here we see that because the disciples were with Christ that others began to ask them questions.

In this case, Christ answered the question so the disciples learned how to answer this question if it was asked in the future. Mark 2:17 says, “When Jesus heard *it*, He said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call *the* righteous, but sinners, to repentance.” As we take people along with us as we minister, we will see that those we take will also begin to be asked questions. We can either give them a Biblical answer to share with the one who asked the question or with can go with them to the person and answer the question from Scripture. Either way the one who goes with us is participating and also learning how to answer that particular question from Scripture.

John 6:1-14 also shows us a couple of other ways that Christ got the disciples participating in the ministry. First, Christ raised a question for the disciples to try and solve. 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.” Instead of answering the question, Philip gave a financial report. He said that they did not have enough money to buy food for all the people. In John 6:7, “Philip answered Him, “Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little.”

In contrast, Andrew saw a boy with a lunch and he brought him to Christ. John 6:8-9 says, “One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to Him, “There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?” This is the second time we see Andrew. The first time was in John 1:40-42 where he brought his brother Peter to Christ. Andrew was participating by learning to bring people to Christ. The only other time that Andrew is mentioned in the book of John we see that he is bringing some Greeks to Christ. That is recorded in John 12:20-22.

Christ took that lunch and performed a miracle by multiplying that lunch so that there was enough food to feed the entire crowd. However, Christ got the disciples participating in the miracle by having them distribute the food to the people. John 6:10-11 says, “Then Jesus said, “Make the people sit down.” Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about

five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed *them* to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted.” We see that Christ performed the miracle and the disciples carried out the ministry.

Christ also helped the disciples to participate by gathering the food that was left over after everyone had eaten. John 6:12-14 says, “So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, “Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost.” Therefore they gathered *them* up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten. Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, “This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.” This participation caused the disciples to learn two things:

- They learned to conserve the results of what they did
- They learned that Christ was the promised Prophet

We have seen that Christ helped the disciples to learn to participate in ministry both in their homes and in public places. By participating in these areas, they were seeing that Christ could use them any place they made themselves available to Him. That is a key today because many people only learn to lead inside the walls of the church building but are not able to lead people spiritually where they live, work and spend their free time. May the Lord richly bless you as you help others develop ministry skills.

Developing Ministry Skills Through Doing and Reporting – Part 1

In our last two topics, we discussed how Christ developed the ministry skills of the disciples by observation and participation. Today, we will begin discussing how Christ developed the ministry skills of the disciples by doing and reporting. The disciples had spent two years observing Christ as He ministered. They had also participated with Christ. During this two year period, the disciples traveled with Christ throughout Galilee as Christ preached the kingdom of God – Matthew 4:23-25; Luke 4:42-44; Mark 1:35-39. The disciples also traveled with Christ as He ministered in Judea – John 4:1-3. They even traveled with Him through Samaria during this period – John 4:4-42.

In Matthew 10, we see that Christ began the next phase in the training of the disciples as He sent them out to minister. The first time Christ sent the disciples out to minister without Him, He gave them very specific instructions in Matthew 10:5-14. In Matthew 10:5-8 we read, “These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: “Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. “But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. “And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ “Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.” First, we see what Christ told the disciples what they were not to do on this ministry trip:

- They were not to go to the Gentiles
- They were not to go to the Samaritans

In an earlier topic we said that we learn to cross four barriers as we learn to share the Gospel. Acts 1:8 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.” Those barriers are:

- ◆ Jerusalem – the barrier of our own fear (our Jerusalem is our relatives, friends, co-workers, neighbors and other acquaintances)
- ◆ Judea – the barrier of making contacts
- ◆ Samaria – the barrier of another culture, religion or ethnic group
- ◆ The uttermost part of the earth – the barrier of language

As Christ sent the disciples out, they were not yet ready to cross the barrier of sharing the message of the kingdom of God across a language barrier. They were not even ready to share the message across the barrier of culture, religion or another ethnic group. The disciples had already shared about Christ with their relatives, friends, co-workers neighbors and other acquaintances so they had learned to depend on Christ to give them strength. They learned that Christ would help them cross the barrier of fear with people they already knew.

Second, Christ told the twelve that they were to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As a result, on this first ministry trip without Christ physically present with them, they were to learn to cross the barrier of making contacts with Jews that they did not already know. In the same way, once we have helped developing Christians learn to depend on the Lord to witness with boldness to relatives, friends, co-workers, neighbors and other acquaintances, they we want to help them learn to depend on the Lord for boldness to make contacts with strangers of their own culture.

Third, Christ told the disciples what they were to preach. Luke 9:2 says, “He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.” By comparing Mark 1:35-39 with Luke 4:42-44 we see that the disciples have traveled throughout Galilee with Christ as He preached the kingdom of God. Luke 4:43-44 says, “But He said to them, “I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent.” And He was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee.” Here, we see that Christ sent the twelve out to preach the same message that they had

heard Him preach throughout Galilee.

Since the phrase “the kingdom of God” is used 54 times in the Gospels we need to understand what this phrase means since this is the thing that we want people to share when we first send them out to minister in the homes of others. In Luke 17:20-21, Christ explained the meaning of the kingdom of God means for us today. Those verses say, “Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, “The kingdom of God does not come with observation, “nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.”

Here we see that the kingdom of God in this present age is God’s spiritual rule over the hearts of believers. The kingdom of God comes to each believer through repentance and faith. The way to enter the kingdom of God is explained for us in Mark 1:14-15. We read in those verses, “Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.” This is the message that we want to help every Christian learn to clearly explain to those who are not yet Christians. This is the message that Christ told the twelve to preach and this is the message that we are to tell developing leaders to preach when we send them out to minister.

Christ also told the twelve that they have been given signs to verify their message. In Hebrews 2:3-4 we read, “How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard *Him*, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?” Four signs that Christ said would confirm the message of the apostles are listed in Matthew 10:8. That verse says, “Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.” Those four signs were:

- Heal the sick
- Cleanse the lepers
- Raise the dead
- Cast out demons

Since these were the signs of the apostles, Christ led James to write instructions about healing for the church as a whole in James 5:14-15. There we read, “Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.” In these verses, we see that:

- We are to call for the elders of the church
- The elders are all to pray over the one who is sick
- The elders are to anoint the sick
- The elders are to pray in faith
- The Lord is concerned to meet both physical and spiritual needs
- The result of such prayer is glory will go to God and not to man

Christ gave a further instruction in Matthew 10:8 when He said, “Freely you have received, freely give.” Since Christ had just given them four signs to verify their message, there could have been a temptation to charge money for their ministry. That would have caused many people to miss the message of “the kingdom of God”. Christ did not in any way want them to cause confusion about their message. In the next few verses Christ went on to point out that people could share to meet their basic needs but the disciples could not charge for the things that God would do through them to confirm their message.

As we have looked at these verses, we see that Christ gave the disciples very specific instructions

for their first period of ministry when Christ was not physically with them. In the same way most Christians need very specific instructions for their first times of ministry where they are not with another leader. As we help developing leaders, we give them specific instructions as they begin to minister. As they develop as leaders, they will no longer need such specific instructions because they will be learning to depend on the Holy Spirit.

In our next topic, we will see that Christ gave some additional instructions before sending out the twelve. It is a great privilege to be used by Christ to develop spiritual leadership through on-the-job training. Christ will bless our ministry as we follow His example in the way that we develop leaders. May the Lord richly bless you as you develop the ministry skills of developing leaders through observation, participation and on-the-job training.

Developing Ministry Skills Through Doing and Reporting – Part 2

In our last topic, we began discussing how Christ developed ministry skills through doing and reporting. We looked at Matthew 10:5-8 where Christ gave the disciples very specific instructions before He sent them out to minister without Him physically present with them. Today, we will be looking at the second part of those instructions and their report when they returned from their ministry trip.

In Matthew 10:9-14 we read, “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. “Now whatever city or town you enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and stay there till you go out. “And when you go into a household, greet it. “If the household is worthy, let your peace come upon it. But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. “And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet.” In these verses we see that Christ was teaching the disciples that they could depend on Him to supply their needs.

Christ would give them different instructions when He sent them out at a later time but first they needed to learn that Christ was able to supply their needs. As a result, Christ specifically told them that there were certain things that they were not to take with them on this trip. These included:

- Extra money
- A bag for food
- An extra coat
- An extra pair of sandals
- An extra staff

Here, we see that one of the most important lessons that Christ wanted to teach the disciples as they began to minister was that He would supply their needs. This is a key lesson for developing leaders. If a developing spiritual leader does not learn to depend on the Lord for his needs, he will regularly spend time worrying about how he is going to live. Instead of enjoying the peace of God, his life will be filled with fears and worries. Today, many spiritual leaders have never learned this lesson. That is why many leaders measure success by money and people rather than by helping people grow to spiritual maturity and become reproductive Christians.

Next, Christ told the disciples that the first question they were to ask when they entered a new town was who was worthy. Then they were to stay with that person until they left the town. A person who is worthy is one who is respected by the other people of the town or city. A worthy person is one who has contact and influence with many others in that town or city. The first contacts will often determine effectiveness or lack of it in a new area. Christ did not want the disciples to develop additional obstacles for an effective ministry. That would happen if the disciples stayed with someone that none of the rest of the people in the town respected.

Next, we see that the disciples were to stay at the home of the person that was respected by the other people. This would do two things. First, it would give them the opportunity to discuss the kingdom of God with that household over an extended period of time. This would give the opportunity to answer the questions of those in that household. This would be the beginning of the development of spiritual leadership in that community. Second, by staying at the home of a person who was respected by others, that person would also have a network of relatives, friends, co-workers, neighbors and other acquaintances with whom to share the Gospel.

Verse 12 tells what the disciples were to do at each home they visited. We see that they were to

greet the people of the home. Here, we see that the disciples were to take time to get acquainted with those who lived in the home. In Luke 10:5, we see that the disciples were to greet the people in the home by saying, "Peace to this house". This was a Jewish greeting that meant blessing or well being. We see that such a greeting is implied by the statement in Matthew 10:13. That verse says, "If the household is worthy, let your peace come upon it. But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you." By taking time to greet people and get acquainted with them, we begin to build a relationship with them.

Christ also told the disciples how to handle rejection in a home or a city. Verse 14 says, "And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet." Here, we see that we are to help developing leaders handle rejection by turning the rejection over to the Lord. If they spoke words of rejection, they would cause greater rejection. Instead, the Lord said to take an action that would turn any rejection over to the Lord. Verse 15 tells us that when we turn rejection over to the Lord, He will handle it.

Mark 6:30-31 tells us what happened when the Twelve returned from this ministry trip. Those verses say, "Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. And He said to them, "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." We see that Christ did three things when the apostles returned:

- ◆ Christ listened while they told what they had done.
- ◆ Christ listened while they told what they had taught.
- ◆ Christ took them to a deserted place for a time of rest.

We need to do these same three things after we have sent teams out to minister the first time without us being with them.

First, we need to listen to what developing leaders have done as they went out and shared the Gospel with strangers. As we listen, we will see what they have learned and applied. We will also see what things need to be re-emphasized before we send them out again. People will develop best as leaders if they can tell what they have done. They will be encouraged by having us listen to them. By listening, we show that what they have done is important and that we want to hear how the Lord guided them.

Second, we need to listen to what developing leaders have taught as they have shared the Gospel with strangers. In this way we know what teachings they understand clearly and what things need to be more clearly explained. We can then encourage them by letting them know those things that they shared clearly. This immediate encouragement will help them to remember to share those things in the future. We also know what things we will need to explain more clearly in the future. As we explain these things again in future days and weeks, they will become better equipped to share the Gospel.

Third, we need to just spend time alone with developing leaders in times when we rest and relax together. When developing leaders have been busy in ministry, they need to talk about more than just what they did and what they taught. There are at least three things that need to be discussed after these initial times of ministry:

- Their personal spiritual growth
- Their questions
- This is also the time to ask them key questions

The discussion of personal spiritual growth should provide the opportunity for developing leaders to discuss what lessons they learned from their ministry that will help their character development. We want to help developing leaders learn to focus on becoming more like Christ. As we discuss what they did, the Lord will often provide opportunities to discuss how they handled different situations. The problems that were faced usually provide opportunities to discuss how Christ would

have handled those same problems. This helps them to grow in godly character.

After a ministry trip, developing leaders also have a lot of questions because they have faced new situations that they have not faced in the past. As we discuss their questions, we will help them learn to deal with new situations in a Biblical way. The way most people handle new situations is to do what they have done in previous situations. In some situations they applied Biblical principles while in other situations they handled them as they have seen them handled in the past. This provides the opportunity to teach Biblical principles for handling similar situations in the future.

Christ also used the time after a ministry trip to ask key questions. In Luke 9:1-10, we read about Christ sending out the twelve, their return and their report. They were interrupted in their time alone by the multitude and Christ fed the five thousand. However, when they got alone, Luke 9:18-20 gives the questions that Christ asked the disciples. Those verses say, "And it happened, as He was alone praying, *that* His disciples joined Him, and He asked them, saying, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" So they answered and said, "John the Baptist, but some *say* Elijah; and others *say* that one of the old prophets has risen again." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered and said, "The Christ of God." After asking these key questions, Christ began telling the disciples about His coming death and resurrection.

People develop ministry skills as we give them the opportunity to do what we have shown them and in which they have participated. They also learn the importance of depending on the Lord for His guidance and His power. May the Lord richly bless you as you help growing Christians develop ministry skills.

Developing Ministry Skills through Doing and Reporting – Part 3

In our last two topics, we have seen how Christ developed ministry skills in the twelve as He sent them out to minister and then had them report after they returned. Today, we will look at the ministry of a larger group and how Christ helped them develop ministry skills through doing and reporting.

In Luke 10:1 we read, “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.” We see here that there were others also that Christ spent time with in addition to the twelve. Here, we see that Christ sent out a much larger group than He did when He sent out the twelve. This first verse tells us one other thing. The seventy were also preparing the people in these cities for a visit of Christ in the near future.

Although this may not seem important, it is very significant. The seventy had not been with Christ nearly as much as the twelve. As a result, they were not prepared to answer as many questions. However, because they knew that Christ would soon visit those cities and towns, they knew that they could tell people that Christ would answer their questions when He came. One of the greatest fears that people have as they share the Gospel with others is that they might not be able to answer the questions that are asked. Here we see that Christ was providing the backup that the seventy needed as they shared the Gospel. In the same way, we need to be the backup for those that we send out to minister.

Before giving the seventy their instructions, Christ also took time to expand their vision by telling them to notice certain things. These things are given in Luke 10:2, “Then He said to them, “The harvest truly *is* great, but the laborers *are* few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.” We see what the seventy were to see and do as they visited the various cities:

- ◆ They were to see that the harvest was great
- ◆ They were to see the shortage of laborers
- ◆ They were to respond to this shortage by praying
- ◆ They were to ask the Lord to send out laborers
- ◆ They were to recognize that it is His harvest

First, the seventy had to see the size of the harvest. Today, many Christians can drive through a major city and never see the people. Instead, they notice the buildings, the businesses and everything else but they never see the people with eyes of compassion. Before Christ sent out the twelve earlier, Christ made a very similar statement to them. However, Matthew 9:36 tells us what Christ saw before He made the statement. That verse says, “But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.” Only when developing leaders really begin to see people will they be moved with compassion for them. That was why Christ wanted the seventy to see that the harvest was great.

Second, the seventy needed to see the shortage of laborers to share the message of the kingdom of God. It is one thing to hear about the shortage of laborers. It has a much greater impact when people see the shortage and realize how few there are who are sharing the Gospel. However, in order to see that shortage, people have to look so that they notice that there are few laborers. Christ wanted the seventy to really notice the shortage of laborers.

Third, the Lord told them what they were to do as they saw this shortage of laborers. The seventy were not told to begin a recruiting program to try and get more people to volunteer to be laborers.

Instead, they were to begin by praying to the Lord of the harvest and ask Him to send laborers into His harvest. One of the key things that developing spiritual leaders need to learn is that the Lord is true recruiter. As we help people to see the harvest and see the shortage of workers, the Lord will often give those very people the desire to become laborers in His harvest. In fact, every person who goes out for a short term of ministry should be told to look for two things – the size of the harvest and the number of laborers.

Fourth, Christ told the seventy what to ask as they prayed. They were to ask the Lord to send out laborers. When we recruit, many quickly become discouraged and drop out. When the Lord recruits, He puts such a passion in the hearts of people for ministry that people only find real fulfillment in their lives as they respond in obedience to the Lord to carry out the ministry that He has for them. One of the greatest impacts that happens in people's lives as they pray and ask the Lord to send out laborers is that the Lord gives them a passion for ministry.

Fifth, we want developing leaders to recognize that the harvest is the Lord's harvest and not theirs. One of the problems today is the fact that many Christians measure success by the number of people that follow them. If we help developing spiritual leaders focus on effectiveness rather than success, then they can focus on being obedient to the Lord instead of looking for success. Obedience to the Lord means that we focus on making disciples instead of filling a building. Matthew 13:52 defines a disciple as one who:

- Has become the head of a spiritual household – a reproducing Christian
- Has a treasure – the Word of God
- Is able to bring out of that treasure things that are new – is continuing to learn new things
- Is able to bring out of that treasure things that are old – is able to teach the basics of Christianity

If a spiritual leader is focused on making disciples, he is taking a few people along with him and showing them what to say and how to minister just as Christ did. If developing leaders focus on success, they will tell people what to do. If developing leaders focus on effectiveness, they will take a few people with them and show them what to do by what they do and show them what to say by what they say. Christ sent out the seventy to do what they had seen Him do and teach what they had heard Him teach.

In sending out the seventy, Christ gave them very similar instructions to the instructions He had given the twelve. He did add one other thought. Luke 10:3 says, "Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves." The only way a lamb will survive among wolves is if the lamb stands behind the shepherd. By giving the seventy this specific instruction, Christ was telling them that they would only be effective as they depended on Him.

In Luke 10:17, we read about the report of the seventy when they returned. That verse says, "Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, 'Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.'" Here, we see that the seventy saw that they were effective in dealing with demons because they were depending on the Lord and not their own strength.

We see that Christ gave a very interesting answer in Luke 10:18-20, "And He said to them, 'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.'" Christ had defeated Satan and so He wanted His followers to know that He had already also defeated the demons who followed Satan. The seventy did not need to fear demons as long as their dependence was on Christ. Christ reminded them that He is able to have all power over the enemy. In 1 John 4:4 we are promised, "You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world."

However, Christ also reminded the seventy that there was something much more important than the power to cast out demons. He reminded them that their most important thing was that their names were written in heaven. Here we see a key lesson that we want developing leaders to understand. It is very easy to focus on daily happenings. Christ wanted them to realize that much more important than the daily happenings was the fact that they had eternal life. This moved their focus from an immediate exciting event to the eternal results of their decision to follow Christ. We want to help developing leaders learn to clearly distinguish between what is temporary and what is eternal.

As we think about helping Christians who are developing as leaders, we see that it is a process. First, we take them with us so that they can observe. Then we give them the opportunity to participate with us. This is followed by opportunities for them to minister while we observe. After that we send them out to minister and report back so that we know how to best continue to help them in their development. Through this process three things happen (Exodus 18:20):

- They grow in Biblical knowledge
- They are shown how to grow in godly character
- They are shown how to grow in ministry skills

The Lord has given us a great privilege to develop godly reproducing leadership. As we are obedient to the command to make disciples, we will see the Lord multiply our ministry through the lives of each of those disciples. May the Lord richly bless you as you help growing Christians become reproducing Christians.

Developing Ministry Skills Through Joint Ministry – Part 1

In our last five topics, we have looked at how we develop ministry skills by:

- Observation
- Participation
- Doing and Reporting

Today, we will look at the next step in the development of ministry skills. We will see that we continue to develop and improve the ministry skills of developing leaders by participating in joint ministry with them. After Christ sent out the twelve on their ministry trip and then had them report back to Him, Christ then spent eighteen more months in joint ministry with the disciples.

In Mark 7, Christ discussed with the disciples how to understand the heart of a person. The Pharisees provided the opportunity for this time of discussion. In Mark 7:1-13, Christ and the Pharisees had a discussion while the disciples observed. This discussion focused on the religious activities of the Pharisees. Mark 7:3-4 says, “For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash *their* hands in a special way, holding the tradition of the elders. *When they come* from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and hold, *like* the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches.” Today, many people also think they are good Christians because of the religious things they do or avoid.

Christ very clearly told the people the final result of such religious activities. In Mark 7:13, Christ told the Pharisees they were, “Making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do.” Christ then gave the parable in Mark 7:14-16. “When He had called all the multitude to *Himself*, He said to them, “Hear Me, everyone, and understand: “There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man. “If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!”

This parable caused a discussion between Christ and the disciples when they were alone. Mark 7:17 says, “When He had entered a house away from the crowd, His disciples asked Him concerning the parable.” Here we see one of the key values of joint ministry after a person has had an opportunity to minister for a period of time. Christ and the disciples were able to talk together about two key topics:

- The impact of the traditions of man
- The true nature of the human heart

Unless a developing leader has a clear understanding of both of these topics, he will be limited in the effectiveness of his ministry. By the time Christ had finished this discussion in Mark 7:18-23 the disciples had a much better understanding of the nature of the human heart as well as a clearer understanding of the impact of tradition.

Joint ministry also provided an opportunity to the disciples to expand their vision to those who were not Jews. Christ took the disciples with him and traveled to the area of Phoenicia to the cities of Tyre and Sidon. There they met a Greek woman. The disciples were able through this joint ministry to see that Christ reached out to the Greeks as well as to the Jews. Then in Mark 7:31-37 Christ took the disciples to the area of Decapolis (these ten cities were Gentile cities that focused on preserving the Greek culture that they had brought to the area nearly 100 years earlier). The man who had the legion of demons cast out in Mark 5:1-20 had gone through these cities earlier telling the people what Christ had done for him. Through this joint ministry the disciples had the opportunity to be exposed to two different Gentile cultures.

Joint ministry in Mark 8 gave Christ another opportunity to teach the disciples about the impact of

tradition in Mark 8:10-21. One of the things to notice is that when Christ talked about the traditions of men, Christ described the traditions of the Pharisees as being like leaven that spread through the entire lump of bread dough. The leaven of the Pharisees included the fact that they acted with hypocrisy – Luke 12:1. In Matthew 23:3b-4 Christ said, “...for they say, and do not do. “For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay *them* on men’s shoulders; but they *themselves* will not move them with one of their fingers.” The leaven of the Pharisees also included their false teaching – Matthew 16:12, “Then they understood that He did not tell *them* to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”

Christ also talked about the leaven of Herod. The leaven of Herod involved his conduct. In Mark 6:14-29 we see that Herod was living with his brother’s wife in verse 16. Herodias was also Herod’s niece which meant that this relationship also involved incest. Then we see that Herod ordered the death of John the Baptist in order to save face after he had made a rash promise. As a result, we see that the conduct of Herod was both immoral and evil. Christ discussed with the disciples the fact that hypocrisy, false teaching and immoral and evil conduct will spread like leaven in a group of people. As we minister with a team we are also able to point out some of the dangers of these things to the team.

Christ used this time of joint ministry to question the disciples to help them realize what they understood and what they still needed to learn. In Mark 8:27, Christ asked the disciples a question as they traveled along the road. That verse says, “Now Jesus and His disciples went out to the towns of Caesarea Philippi; and on the road He asked His disciples, saying to them, “Who do men say that I am?” This question helped the disciples to focus on what others were saying. Then in verse 29 Christ asked a second question, “He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered and said to Him, “You are the Christ.” In these verses Christ took the disciples from telling what others were saying to what they themselves believed about Jesus.

Once they were able to tell what they believed, Christ could begin to teach them new things. Mark 8:31 tells us, “And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.” Joint ministry allowed the disciples to move in their thinking from who Christ was to the purpose for His coming. Christ also used this opportunity to help the disciples focus on godly priorities instead of worldly priorities by the rebuke of Peter in Mark 8:33.

Christ then began to teach them what it would cost them to be His disciples. Mark 8:34-35 says, “When He had called the people to *Himself*, with His disciples also, He said to them, “Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. “For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it.” In these verses we see that Christ was inviting the entire multitude to be His disciples. Most chose not to follow Christ.

Again, in this period of joint ministry, Christ shared with the disciples that they needed to understand the cost of following Him before they made an empty promise. John 6:66-69 gives the choice that the twelve made. We read, “From that *time* many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. Then Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you also want to go away?” But Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. “Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Here we see that the disciples were learning the importance of helping people count the cost of their commitment to Christ.

If we fail to help people count the cost of their commitment to Christ, many will drop out after a short time and often become inactive Christians. Learning to help people count the cost of serving Christ is one of the key ministry skills that developing leaders need to learn. We help developing

leaders learn to count the cost of their commitment to Christ by helping them to clearly understand what Christ required of His disciples. Next we model that commitment to Christ by our commitment. Only after they have made such a commitment in their own lives do we show then in joint ministry how to help other people develop similar commitments. By this process we will see very few who back away from that commitment at a later time.

An effective spiritual leader is one who has developed a clear understanding of the nature of sinful man. That leader also needs to understand the various kinds of leaven that will destroy such as hypocrisy, false teaching and sinful living. As a leader understands these things he needs to count the cost of being a disciple of Christ and also help others learn to count the cost. May the Lord richly bless you as you help developing spiritual leaders learn these things through joint ministry.

Developing Ministry Skills through Joint Ministry – Part 2

In our last topic, we saw that Christ did a variety of things in joint ministry with the disciples to develop their ministry skills. Today, we are going to learn about one of the key ministry skills that Christ worked to develop in the twelve. That is the ministry skill of being a servant leader. This is one ministry skill that many spiritual leaders never learn. As a result, they greatly limit their ministry. Christ helped the disciples learn to become servant leaders by teaching and especially by example. In order to help developing leaders learn to become servant leaders, we must both teach and demonstrate by our example what it means to be servant leaders.

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.”

In these verses we see that:

- ◆ The style of worldly leadership is to lord it over others
- ◆ The style of worldly leadership is to exercise authority over others
- ◆ Godly leadership is not to have these attitudes
- ◆ Godly leadership becomes great by becoming a servant
- ◆ Godly leadership becomes great by becoming a bondsman to all
- ◆ Godly leadership was modeled by Christ
- ◆ Godly leaders do not expect to be served
- ◆ Godly leaders look for opportunities to serve others
- ◆ Godly leaders follow the example of Christ by giving their lives to minister to others

First, we see that the style of world leadership is to lord it over others. One who tries to lord it over others is one who works to bring others under his or her power. Such a person wants to gain and exercise power over others. In Acts 19:16, we see that the word is translated overcame when a demon possessed man overcame the seven sons of Sceva. It speaks of one who wants control over others. In 1 Peter 5:3 this is specifically forbidden for spiritual leaders. That verse says, “nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.” Here, we see that spiritual leaders lead by example rather than lordship.

Second, we see that the style of world leadership is to exercise authority over others. This speaks of leadership that tries to exercise authority over and dominate others. 3 John 9-10 says, “I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us. Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting *them* out of the church.” A person who exercises authority is one who wants to be the boss. We see that Diotrephes shows us that such leaders do try to gain control in the church.

Paul told the elders in Ephesus the same thing in Acts 20:30. That verse says, “Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.” In Acts 20:28-31 we see that Paul warned that leaders seeking personal power in the church are just as dangerous as false teachers in the church. The most common cause of church splits is someone trying to exercise this kind of power in the church.

Third, we see that godly leadership is not to have these two attitudes mentioned above. That means that when we see these attitudes in the church that the person showing these attitudes is trying to exercise worldly leadership in the church rather than godly leadership. Such a leader is driven by

fear instead of being led by the love of Christ. John 10:12-13 says that such a leader is a hireling instead of a shepherd and does not care for the sheep.

Fourth, we see that a godly leader becomes great by becoming a servant. The word that is translated servant speaks of one who carries out the commands of another. A servant leader is one who carries out the commands of Christ. All of the commands of Christ are summarized in just three commands:

1. The first commandment

Matthew 22:37 – “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.”

2. The second commandment

Matthew 22:39 – “And *the second is* like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” In Luke 10:26-37 Christ said that our neighbor is any person in need – either physical or spiritual need.

3. The third commandment

John 13:34 – “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.” Here we see that a godly leader models the love of Christ by his example so that others are shown how to love others as Christ loves them.

Fifth, a godly leader becomes great by becoming the bondservant of all. A bondservant was one who gave himself up to the will of another to the disregard of his own interests. This means that the greatest desire of a godly leader is to be used by Christ to extend the cause of Christ. Such a leader will do whatever is necessary to serve each person and help each person become more like Christ.

Sixth, a godly leader will follow the example of Christ. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 11:1, “Imitate me, just as I also *imitate* Christ.” Paul did not just say imitate me. Paul said to imitate him because he was imitating Christ. The greatest desire of a godly leader is to become more like Christ. Paul said in Philippians 3:10, “That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.” We will only see that happen in the lives of developing spiritual leaders as they spend time with us and see that we have the same attitude as Paul.

Seventh, a godly leader does not expect to be served. We do not take developing leaders with us as we minister so that they can serve us. Instead we take developing leaders with us so that we can serve them. In fact our first priority when we minister is to show those that we take with us how to minister in that type of situation. When Christ preached to the multitudes, His first priority was not the multitudes. His first priority was the disciples that He took with Him. Mark 4:34 says, “But without a parable He did not speak to them. And when they were alone, He explained all things to His disciples.” The greatest concern of Christ was the disciples that He was serving and training by His example.

Eighth, a godly leader looks for opportunities to serve others. As the disciples traveled with Christ, they saw that He was always ready to serve others. Even when Christ took the disciples aside so that they could get some rest, Christ taught and fed the 5000 when they came to Him in Mark 6:30-44. Christ both showed and got the disciples involved in serving others on that particular occasion. That is why the ministry skill of being a servant leader can only be taught by example. We model servant leadership for those that we take with us as we minister.

Ninth, godly leaders follow the example of Christ by giving their lives to serve others. As you can see, this is first an attitude of heart. Once a developing leader has this attitude of heart, we can help that person develop the skills that go along with serving others by showing them how to help others become more like Christ. This will be the key determining factor of whether we just develop leaders or whether we develop spiritual leaders who are able to develop reproducing spiritual leaders. Until the person has this attitude of heart, that person will develop worldly leaders instead

of godly leaders.

As you can see, a godly servant leader is very different from a worldly leader. Godly servant leaders will usually only develop as they see our example of godly servant leadership. That is why we make the choice to spend as much time as possible in a variety of different situations with developing leaders so that they can see our example in many different situations. Just as Christ chose to invest His time in the future leadership of the church, we make the choice to invest our time in the next generation of spiritual leadership.

The Lord has given us a great privilege to have the opportunity to develop godly spiritual leaders. What we are those developing leaders will become. May the Lord richly bless you as you help developing spiritual leaders develop as servant leaders.

Developing Ministry Skills by Reproduction

In our last two topics, we have focused on the fact that Christ helped the Twelve develop their ministry skills through joint participation with Christ. However, our ministry skills will be limited if we are not becoming reproducing Christians. Acts 8:1, 4 demonstrate a very important principle to us. Those verses 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.”

In these verses, we see that the apostles remained in Jerusalem. The other Christians were scattered because of persecution. Instead of persecution stopping the spread of the Gospel, persecution caused the Gospel to spread to many other areas. Acts 9:31 shows that the Gospel spread throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria, “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.” Acts 11:19-21 shows the Gospel beginning to spread in the area several hundred miles away. The Gospel also began to spread to other cultures. Those verses tell us, “Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only. But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord.” How did this happen?

First, Christ equipped the twelve to reproduce themselves. Then the Twelve equipped other Christians to reproduce themselves. As we show others how to serve the Lord, that training is not complete until they know how to equip others to serve the Lord. Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:2, “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.” Here we see that Paul focused on a second, third, and fourth generation of spiritual leadership – Paul, Timothy, faithful men and others also. Paul had developed Timothy by:

Observation

Participation

Doing and Reporting

Joint Ministry

Reproductive ministry – 1 Cor. 4:15-17; 2 Tim. 2:2

Now Paul was telling Timothy to do the same thing with a next generation of spiritual leaders and equip them to develop the following generation. Many spiritual leaders do all the work and never show anyone else how to minister. When they die, they leave no one prepared for spiritual leadership. Some spiritual leaders tell people what to do but do not show them how to serve the Lord in love. This will produce leaders who are driven by fear instead of being led by the love of Christ. A few spiritual leaders show other Christians how to serve the Lord in love but they do not show them how to reproduce themselves. Finally there are a very small number of spiritual leaders who show Christians how to serve the Lord in love and show them how to develop a third and a fourth generation of spiritual leaders. That is what Christ calls us to do in 2 Timothy 2:2.

In Acts 6:1 and 6:7 we see that the number of disciples multiplied. In Acts 9:31 we see that the number of churches multiplied. In between those two passages is the statement that we mentioned in Acts 8:4 where we saw that those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the Word. From this we see that the goal that Christ has for us is for us to multiply disciples that the Lord can then use to multiply churches. In fact that is our Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20.

That brings us to the question, How do we develop reproductive spiritual leaders? As we take people with us as we are serving the Lord, we do at least the following things.

- ◆ We spend much time praying for those that we lead – Luke 6:12
- ◆ We continually help them focus on the next towns – Mark 1:38-39
- ◆ We take them with us to the next towns – John 4:1-8
- ◆ We continue to expand their vision – John 4:35
- ◆ We ask them questions to see what they understand – Matthew 16:13-16
- ◆ We give them further explanation of the things they don't understand – Luke 24:27
- ◆ We open their understanding to the Scriptures – Luke 24:45
- ◆ We teach them the importance of depending on the Holy Spirit – Luke 24:49, Acts 1:8
- ◆ We show them how to walk in the Spirit – Galatians 5:16, 25, be led by the Spirit – Galatians 5:18, be filled with the Spirit – Eph. 5:18 so that their lives bear the fruit of the Spirit – Galatians 5:22-23.

Ephesians 4:11-13 also tells us something else that happens as people go along with us. 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 these verses we see that spiritual leaders are to equip the saints for the work of the ministry.

As people go along with you and observe you, they will learn from your example. If you are effective at sharing the Gospel with others, they are being shown how to share the Gospel with others. If you are effective at ministering to people who are hurting in their personal lives, they are being shown how to minister to hurting people. If you are effective at making Biblical truth clear to others, they are being shown how to make Biblical truth clear. After you have ministered to others, take the time to let those who are with you share what they learned as they watched you minister to others. At this point you are equipping and showing them how to do the work of the ministry and they are observing and learning how they will minister in similar situations in the future.

As people go along with us in ministry situations, these verses also say that equipping the saints will result in building up the body of Christ. The people who are with us are growing in at least two ways. First, they are growing in their knowledge of the Word of God. Second, they are growing in their understanding of how to apply the Word of God to specific situations. At the same time they are also seeing our dependence on the Lord as we minister. They will learn from our example the importance of depending on the Lord and not trying to serve in their own strength (as long as we are showing by our example the importance of depending on the Lord). As we focus on equipping the saints for ministry, the Lord will continue to build the body.

Ephesians 4 also tells us that the goal of the Lord is to see every Christian become mature and not to remain as spiritual toddlers. As Christians mature, they learn to speak the truth in love. They also learn to recognize that Christ is the head and that they must depend on Him and not themselves. This results in every Christian learning to work effectively.

Ephesians 4:16 tells us the result when Christians learn to recognize Christ as the head, “from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.” In these verses we see that as Christians learn to recognize Christ as head that:

- They are joined and knit together
- They each become like a joint that supplies what other parts of the body need
- They learn to work together effectively

- Every part learns to do its share
- This causes growth in the body
- This causes the body to build itself up in love

From this verse, we see that Christ wants every Christian to learn to function as a healthy part of the body. That does not happen automatically. Instead, it happens as we commit ourselves to show Christians how to function and serve the Lord rather than just tell them. Our example is so important because individuals must see and experience love in order to know how to build others up in love. The disciples knew that Christ loved them because they had experienced that love all of the time that they had walked with Him. In the same way, others will experience our love as we take them with us and show them how to become reproductive Christians. May the Lord richly bless you as you show other Christians how to reproduce themselves in others.

Developing Wisdom as a Ministry Skill

In the New Testament, wisdom is most often used to speak of the ability to understand the Word of God and the will of God and to skillfully apply that understanding to life. We see that wisdom involves three things:

1. Wisdom speaks of the ability to understand the Word of God
2. Wisdom speaks of the ability to understand the will of God
3. Wisdom speaks of the ability to skillfully apply that understanding to life

First, we see that wisdom requires that a person learn to understand the Word of God. Many people think that because people have become Christian leaders that they understand the Word of God. We see from the Scriptures that such an assumption may not be true. The disciples walked with Christ for more than three years. They heard Him teach and they saw Him perform miracles. However, that did not mean that they understood the Word of God. Luke 24:44-45 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."

The disciples were very familiar with the Old Testament but they did not understand what the Scriptures taught about Christ until Christ opened their understanding. Today, there are many people who have a knowledge of the Word of God but they lack understanding. Of course we know that is true for all those who are not yet Christians. 1 Corinthians 2:14 says, "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."

However, it is also true that many Christians do not understand the Word of God. Just three verses later, 1 Corinthians 3:1 says, "And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual *people* but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ." Ephesians 4:14 says, "That we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting." Then Hebrews 5:11-14 adds, "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. For everyone who partakes *only* of milk *is* unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, *that is*, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." In these verses, the word that is translated babe or child speaks of one who is not yet able to speak clearly. We might call such a person a spiritual toddler.

Christ knew that the disciples lacked understanding of the Word of God. That is why He gave them a promise the night before His crucifixion. In John 14:26 Christ promised, "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." We see that one of the ministries of the Holy Spirit is to teach us and give us understanding of the Word of God.

In 1 Corinthians 2:9-10 we are told, "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." In these verses we see that Christians can only really understand the Word of God when God reveals the meaning through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit carries out this ministry by comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 1 Corinthians 2:13 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.” Christians will only have wisdom to understand the Word of God as they depend on the Holy Spirit to teach them.

Second, in addition to understanding the Word of God, wisdom means that we also learn to understand the will of God. 1 John 5:14-15 gives us a wonderful promise, “Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.” In these verses we see that the Lord promises to answer our prayers. There is only one condition to this promise. The condition is that we pray according to the will of God. That means we must understand the will of God in order to pray according to the will of God.

In order to understand the will of God, we have to understand those passages of Scripture that talk about the will of God. The word that is translated will in 1 John 5:14 is used 64 times in the New Testament. For example, 1 Thessalonians 5:18 says, “In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” In verse 18 we see that it is the will of God to give thanks in every situation. Paul and Silas demonstrated that they understood that it is the will of God to give thanks in every situation. Acts 16:25 says, “But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.”

In Colossians 1:9 Paul prayed, “For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.” In this verse Paul prayed that the Colossians would become filled with the knowledge of the will of God so that they would have all wisdom and spiritual understanding. In the same way, we need to pray both for ourselves and for others that they would be filled with the knowledge of the will of God.

Third, wisdom speaks of the ability to skillfully apply that understanding to life. Christians can understand the Word of God and even the will of God and yet not know how to skillfully apply that understanding to life. Each day we all face many different situations. Here we see that true spiritual wisdom will give us the ability to apply the Word of God to each situation so that we act in a Biblical way rather than a worldly way. Many Christians have never even realized that the Word of God shows us how to think and act Biblically.

Earlier we quoted Colossians 1:9 to show that Christ wants us to be filled with the knowledge of His will. Colossians 1:9-12 also tells us what the results can be as we skillfully apply what we have learned from the Word of God about the will of God. Those verses say, “For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing *Him*, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.” As we are filled with the knowledge of His will, these verses tell us that:

- ◆ We are to walk worthy of the Lord
- ◆ We are to be fully pleasing to Him
- ◆ We are to be fruitful in every good work
- ◆ We are to be increasing in the knowledge of God
- ◆ We are to be strengthened with all might according to His glorious power
- ◆ We are to have patience and longsuffering with joy
- ◆ We are to give thanks to the Father

We will only be able to do these things as we ask Christ to guide us through His Spirit. 1 Corinthians 2:12-13 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."

Many Christians make decisions and act based on their own human wisdom or the wisdom of others. In these verses we see that we are to depend on the Holy Spirit to give us godly wisdom to make decisions and then depend on His strength to carry out those decisions. The Holy Spirit will guide us to make wise decisions as we pray and ask what Scriptures would apply in this situation. Then as the Holy Spirit recalls various Scriptures to our minds, we will know how Christ guided His disciples and the New Testament church when they faced similar decisions. Then we can ask Christ to help us to apply that wisdom to the particular situation that we are facing. The Holy Spirit will guide us to make a wise decision that is based on the Word of God. Then the Holy Spirit will give us the power to carry out that decision.

The Lord will greatly use those that we are training as we help them learn to develop godly wisdom rather than depend on human wisdom. Then we get to enjoy the privilege of seeing how the Lord works in and through their lives just as he is working in and through our lives. May the Lord richly bless you as you help developing spiritual leaders grow in godly wisdom so that they are becoming equipped to do the Lord's work in the Lord's way.

Developing Boldness as a Ministry Skill

In Acts 4:31 we read, “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.” In this verse, we see that the Christians were sharing the Word of God with boldness. This resulted in continuing growth in the church. What was it that made it possible for the early church to speak the Word of God with boldness? Why is it that many Christians do not have that same boldness today and how do we develop that boldness. That will be the focus of our topic today.

The example of Peter shows us both what causes Christians to be fearful and also what causes Christians to be able to share the Word of God with boldness. We will look at several key incidents in Peter’s life to understand how we develop boldness. In Mark 14:29, Peter told the Lord that he would be bold in speaking for Christ. That verse says, “But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet *will* not I.”

In Luke 22:31-34 we read, “And the Lord said, “Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift *you* as wheat. “But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to *Me*, strengthen your brethren.” But he said to Him, “Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death.” Then He said, “I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me.” At this point Peter said that he was ready to die for Christ.

The next incident we will look at happened a few hours later. John 18:10-11 says, “Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant’s name was Malchus. So Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?” Luke 22:54-55 tells us what happened a few minutes later, “Then took they him, and led *him*, and brought him into the high priest’s house. And Peter followed afar off. And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them.” During the night, Luke 22:56-61 tells us that Peter denied Christ three times. Verse 62 says, “And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.”

Peter felt like such a failure because he had denied Christ three times that he decided to go back to fishing. In fact, John 21:1-3 tells us that six of the other disciples also went fishing with Peter. Christ had to minister to Peter by letting him know three times that Peter could still be used by the Lord to minister to others. John 21:15-17 says, “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.” 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.”

Then Luke 24:45-49 gives us some key things that Christ taught the disciples in order for them to be able to witness with boldness. Those verses say, “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.”

In these verses we see several key principles that we need to develop in developing spiritual leaders if they are going to serve the Lord with boldness. To serve the Lord with boldness, Christians must:

- ◆ Understand and comprehend the Scriptures
- ◆ Understand the importance of the death and resurrection of Christ
- ◆ Understand that their message is both repentance from sin and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ
- ◆ Understand that they must depend on the Holy Spirit for power and boldness rather than themselves

First, developing leaders must understand and comprehend the Scriptures if they are going to serve the Lord with boldness. We saw in an earlier topic that Christ made sure that the disciples knew what they were to say and what they were to do when He sent them out two by two. Luke 9:2 says, “He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.” Then Luke 9:6 tells us what happened, “So they departed and went through the towns, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.” In the same way we must make certain that developing spiritual leaders understand and comprehend the Scriptures if they are going to serve the Lord with boldness.

Second, developing leaders must understand the importance of the death and resurrection of Christ if they are going to serve the Lord with boldness. Peter demonstrated he understood the importance of the death and resurrection in Acts 4:8-10, “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.” Peter was depending on the power of the resurrected Christ. 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.”

Third, developing leaders must understand that their message is both repentance from sin and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ if they are going to serve the Lord with boldness. Acts 20:20-21 says, “How I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, “testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” When Christians lack boldness, they will often only share half of the message even when they share the Gospel. They will fail to include the need for repentance toward God because they are afraid to talk about the need to turn from sin and turn back to God. Developing spiritual leaders must understand that they need to deal with sin and the need for forgiveness if they are going to minister to others with boldness.

Fourth, developing leaders must depend on the Holy Spirit for power and boldness rather than themselves if they are going to serve the Lord with boldness. In John 18:10-11 Peter was as bold as a lion when He was standing next to Christ. However, when Peter depended on himself and followed afar off he ended up denying Christ three times. In Acts 2:14-40, Acts 4:8-13, Acts 4:31 and many other passages we see that as Peter and the other disciples depended on the Holy Spirit for power and boldness that they spoke the Word of God with boldness. Acts 4:8 begins, “Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them...” In Acts 4:29-31 we read that the disciples prayed for boldness. Acts 4:31b says, “...and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.” In Ephesians 6:18-20 Paul says, “Pray...that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.”

We see that there are at least four things that we show developing leaders how to apply daily in their lives if they are going to serve the Lord with boldness:

- We show them how we have learned to depend on Christ to help us understand and comprehend the Scriptures

- We show them by our continuing emphasis on the death and resurrection of Christ as we minister that this must also be their emphasis if they want to serve the Lord with boldness
- We show them as we share the Gospel with others that we focus on both the need for repentance toward God as well as faith in our Lord Jesus Christ
- We show them by our example that we are depending on the Holy Spirit for power and boldness to minister and are not depending on our own strength

The Lord will use our ministry greatly as we show others how to serve the Lord with boldness. They will learn to serve the Lord with boldness as they see that we are depending on the Holy Spirit to give us boldness in our ministry. May the Lord richly bless you as you help others develop boldness in their ministry for the Lord.

Developing Vision as a Ministry Skill

As Christ chose disciples to follow Him, one of the things that Christ did was to develop and expand their vision. Christ wanted to help the disciples begin to see the world as He saw the world. In the same way we want to help developing leaders begin to see the world as Christ sees it. We will see how Christ and later the disciples developed vision in the lives of those that they were developing.

We have mentioned in previous topics that the disciples already had a limited vision for others as soon as they met Christ. New Christians usually have this same limited vision when they first trust Christ. If not, we begin by helping them develop a vision for the spiritual needs of:

- Relatives – John 1:39-42
- Friends – John 1:43-46
- Coworkers – Matthew 9:9-10
- Neighbors and other acquaintances – Mark 1:30-33

These are the four groups of people that people usually know when they first become Christians. New Christians nearly always have a concern for the salvation of people in these four groups. However, that vision will only continue if they begin to immediately pray for the salvation of people in these four groups. I usually give new Christians the two page outline “Driven by Fear or Led by Love” (available at www.aibi.org) soon after they become Christians. It has a place for new Christians to list when they began praying for the salvation of individuals in each of these four groups and a place to write the date when God answers their prayer by drawing each person to Himself.

In addition, I tell the new Christian that I will go with him to share the Gospel with the individuals for whom he is praying as each one becomes interested. These things do several things in the development of the vision of a new Christian. The new Christian:

- ◆ Focuses on people in his network of contacts who are not Christians
- ◆ Begins to pray for people in that network
- ◆ Learns how to share the Gospel (what to say and what to do) as he observes how someone else shares the Gospel with his relatives, friends, coworkers, neighbors and other acquaintances
- ◆ Sees God answer prayer as some of those in his network become Christians
- ◆ Now has other Christians within his network
- ◆ Can be encouraged to go with these new Christians to share the Gospel with their networks

This approach to helping new Christians develop a vision for their network of acquaintances also has some benefits for you. You will be able to:

- Visit these new contacts as a friend of their relative or friend
- Be introduced as someone who has good news to share
- Expand your own network of contacts with those who are not yet Christians
- Understand and be able to help the new Christian more effectively as you become acquainted with his network

Once Christ had the opportunity to help the disciples develop a vision for their networks of relatives, friends, coworkers, neighbors and other acquaintances, Christ began to expand their vision to people that they did not know. In Mark 1:38-39 we read, “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 began to develop the vision of the disciples for the next towns as He took them with Him as He

shared the Gospel in those towns. In these verses, we see that Christ:

- Developed the vision of the disciples for the next towns
- Let them know what He would be doing in the next towns
- Helped them to begin to understand the purpose for His coming
- Showed them how to share the Gospel with people of their own culture

Since they traveled throughout Galilee, the disciples heard Christ share the Gospel many times. In this way, they were learning what to say and learning how to make contacts with strangers of their own culture. In addition, their vision was being expanded to everyone of their culture. Matthew 9:35 says, “Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.”

Throughout this time, Christ was helping the disciples to begin to see people as He saw people. We see how Christ saw people in Matthew 9:36. That verse says, “But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.” The disciples were with Christ and they both heard and saw His concern for the multitudes. In the same way, developing leaders will begin to develop our vision as they hear and see our concern for others.

Christ also expanded the prayer life of the disciples. Matthew 9:37-38 says, “Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest truly *is* plentiful, but the laborers *are* few. “Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.” In this verse Christ points out that the harvest is much greater than the laborers available to gather in the harvest. However, instead of telling us to become recruiters working in our own strength, Christ calls us to pray so that He will send forth laborers into the harvest. There is a total difference between recruiting through human effort and asking the Lord to recruit people for the harvest. By the way, those who prayed also became those who were sent out in the next verses. Part of our ministry is to get more people praying the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers.

We also see that Christ took time to expand the vision of the disciples to other nearby cultures. In John 4:4 we read, “But He needed to go through Samaria.” One of the reasons why Christ needed to go through Samaria is given in John 4:35. That verse says, “Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and *then* comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!” One reason Christ needed to go through Samaria was to expand the vision of the disciples to see that the Lord also saw a harvest among the Samaritans. Christ knew the only way to help the disciples to see the harvest was to take them to Samaria and then get them to really look around them.

Christ also expanded the vision of the disciples to the Greeks. Christ took the disciples with Him when He went to Tyre. Mark 7:26 tells us about the woman Christ and the disciples met there. That verse says, “The woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by birth, and she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter.” Christ healed the daughter but He also showed the disciples the importance of reaching out to the Greeks.

As Christ prepared to return to heaven, He again helped the disciples to focus on expanding their vision. In Matthew 28:18-20, Christ gave the disciples what we know as the Great Commission. Those verses say, “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.” The word that is translated nations is the same word from which we get our word ethnic. Here we see that the Lord wants us to help developing leaders expand their vision to every ethnic group in the

world.

In His final words to the disciples before He left this earth and returned to heaven, Christ focused one more time on vision. His final words on this earth are recorded for us in Acts 1:8. Acts 1:8-9 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.” Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.” A vision for the world was the focus of His final words to the disciples.

As you probably noticed, Christ expanded the vision of the disciples to a larger and larger group. He began by helping them develop a vision for their own relatives, friends, coworkers, neighbors and other acquaintances. Then He expanded their vision to the next towns. Later He expanded their vision to Jews throughout Israel. Christ then began expanding their vision to people of other ethnic groups, cultures and religions. Finally Christ expanded their vision to every ethnic group in the world.

The way Christ expanded their vision was equally important. He expanded their vision by taking the disciples with Him as He reached out to these other cultures. In the same way we will develop vision as a ministry skill in the lives of developing leaders as we take them with us as we reach out to people of other ethnic groups, cultures and religions. May the Lord richly bless you as you help developing leaders develop vision as a ministry skill.

Developing a Personal Strategy as a Ministry Skill

When Christ began His ministry, He had a strategy that guided Him throughout His ministry. As Christ called the disciples to follow Him, Christ also began to help them develop a strategy for their future ministry. In the same way we want to help developing leaders develop a strategy that will guide them throughout their ministry. That will be the focus of our topic today.

Christ had known the disciples for about a year when He said called them in Mark 1:17-18, “Then Jesus said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.” They immediately left their nets and followed Him.” In this call, Christ gave us three principles that He was using to help those men to begin to learn to develop a personal strategy. Christ said:

- Follow me – Christ knew that they would develop a strategy by observing Him
- I will make you – Christ promised to develop something in their lives
- You will become fishers of men – Christ told them that they would learn some life changing principles for their lives

First, Christ knew that the only way that the disciples would develop a strategy for their lives was to observe Him as He carried out His strategy. As they observed, they would see that He had a purpose for everything that He did. By His actions Christ would show them the things that are important if they wanted their lives to have an impact on others. One of the things that they were going to see is that Christ chose to invest His life in the twelve men that chose to follow Him rather than the multitudes. In the same way our impact on the next generation will come through the people in whom we choose to invest our lives.

Second, Christ promised to develop something in the lives of these men. Christ said that He would help them to become something that was not presently true in their lives. Christ calls us to do the same thing in the lives of each of those that we are developing. Paul explained how people become something that is not presently true in their lives. In 1 Corinthians 11:1 Paul said, “Imitate me, just as I also *imitate* Christ.” We help people develop a strategy for their lives as we invite them to imitate us. However, this verse gives us one qualification for that to happen. We must be making it our goal to imitate Christ. This is the difference between busyness and effectiveness. Busyness is keeping ourselves busy. Effectiveness is inviting people to spend time with us so that they can learn to imitate us as we imitate Christ.

Third, Christ told the disciples that they would become fishers of men. A person is not an effective Christian leader if he has not become a fisher of men because he can never show others how to fish for men if he is not fishing himself. Christ did not tell these men at this point how they would catch men but He did promise them that they would learn to fish for men. In actual fact the two men to whom Christ gave this call became effective at fishing for men in two different ways. Every time we see Andrew in the book of John, he is bringing someone to Christ. In John 1:42 he brought his brother to Christ. In John 6:8-9 he brought a young boy to Christ. In John 12:20-22 Andrew brought some Greeks to Christ. In Acts 2:14-41 we see that Peter preached and 3,000 people came to Christ. We might say that Christ taught Andrew how to fish for men with a hook and a line while he taught Peter to fish for men with a big net.

As a part of helping these men develop a strategy for their lives, Christ defined a disciple for them in Matthew 13:52. Christ said, “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 here is the same word that is translated “Make Disciples” in Matthew 28:19. In these verses we see that a disciple is one who:

- ♦ Is instructed concerning the kingdom of God – can explain to others how to become a Christian (a part of that kingdom)

- ◆ Is the head of a spiritual household (a householder) – has one or more spiritual children
- ◆ Is one who has a treasure – the Word of God
- ◆ Is able to bring out of that treasure things that are new – has a learner’s attitude so that he is continuing to learn new things from the Word of God
- ◆ Is able to bring out of that treasure things that are old – is able to teach others the basics of Christianity

Later, Christ told the disciples that an effective personal strategy for life involves more than just becoming fishers of men. In John 21:15-17 Christ told Peter and the other disciples, “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.” 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.” In these verses we see the following:

- Effective ministry is based on loving Christ more than things
- Effective ministry involves feeding Christ’s lambs
- Effective ministry involves tending Christ’s sheep
- Effective ministry involves feeding Christ’s sheep

First, Christ showed a developing spiritual leader will only have an effective ministry when it is based on loving Christ rather than things. Peter had to make a choice about what he loved the most. Did he love Christ or did he love fish? Today, the world focuses on success. The world usually measures success by things. Many Christians have accepted the thinking of the world. Here, Christ showed Peter that He wanted effectiveness rather than success. That effectiveness would only happen as Peter loved Christ more than things.

Second, Christ said that an effective ministry is based on feeding Christ’s lambs (new Christians). The disciples first had to become fishers of men who were reaching people for Christ. Then they needed to learn how to feed those new Christians. Unless the new Christians are fed properly they will not experience healthy growth. Every developing spiritual leader needs to learn how to feed new Christians effectively whether he is sharing one to one with a new Christian, teaching a Bible study or is one of the leaders of a church.

Third, Christ said that an effective ministry is based on shepherding Christ’s sheep. Notice that the sheep are Christ’s sheep and are not the possession of the person shepherding them. In the definition of a disciple we saw that every disciple is a householder (head of a spiritual household). To be the head of a spiritual household a person must have one or more spiritual children in whom he or she is investing his or her life. Just as a loving shepherd tenderly cares for his sheep, a loving spiritual parent will tenderly care for spiritual children and help them grow to maturity.

Fourth, Christ said that an effective ministry is based on feeding Christ’s sheep. We feed the new Christians to help them begin to grow. However, that is not the end of our feeding ministry. Once a new Christian becomes a growing Christian we want to feed him so that he matures and learns to serve others. We also want to show him how to become a spiritual parent to one or more Christians as he continues to mature.

One of the things that an effective personal strategy of ministry does is help a developing leader

focus on the development of healthy reproducing Christians. In 2 Timothy 2:2 Paul told Timothy, “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.” Here we see four spiritual generations: Paul, Timothy, faithful men and others also. Each developing leader who develops such a strategy will see the Lord multiply his ministry far beyond what he ever dreamed the Lord would do through him. That is due to the fact that such ministry now involves multiplication rather than addition.

In Matthew 28:19-20 we read, “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.” That commission was given to all Christians not just a select few. When we help a growing Christian develop a personal plan to obey that command by developing a personal strategy about the way the Lord will use him or her to make disciples, we both multiply our ministry and their ministry. May the Lord richly bless you as you help developing leaders develop a personal strategy as a ministry skill.

Developing a Team Ministry as a Ministry Skill

When Christ began His public ministry, one of the things that He began to do was build and train a team so that the team would be prepared to carry on His ministry when He returned to heaven. Christ gives a variety of gifts to Christians. However, no Christian has all of the gifts so every Christian needs to learn to function as a part of a team. As a person is in the process of developing as a spiritual leader, he needs to learn how to become a team leader and develop a team to minister with him in the particular ministry that the Lord gives him. Unfortunately many Christians have never learned to develop a team and so they wear themselves out trying to do everything themselves.

Today, we will focus on how to help a developing leader learn to develop a ministry team. Then our next series of topics will focus on how that leader exercises leadership with that ministry team. However, this topic will focus on how a person selects the people to be on the team as a ministry skill. Many Christians limit their ministry because they never learn how to build a team. This limits their ministry because they can only do a certain amount of work. It limits their ministry in a second way because no one is equipped to carry on that ministry when the Lord promotes them to heaven.

From the time that Christ first met the men who would become His disciples until He said to them in Mark 1:14, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men," was a period of about a year. Then Christ spent nearly nine more months before we read in Mark 3:13-15, "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, and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons." The first principle that we notice about the way Christ developed a team was that He spent time getting to know those men before He chose them to be on the team. It takes time for godly character to develop and be recognized in individuals.

A second principle that we see in these verses is that Christ chose those that He wanted to be on the team rather than asking for volunteers. Paul illustrates this same principle in Acts 16:1-3a. There we read, "Then he came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, *the* son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father *was* Greek. He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium. Paul wanted to have him go on with him..." You may have the question, "How will I know who to choose to be a part of a team?" We will look at some Biblical principles to see some things about the men that Christ chose to be a part of His team.

First, Christ looked for people who were faithful. 1 Corinthians 4:1-2 says, "Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful." The verses mentioned in the previous paragraph show that Timothy was well spoken of by the brethren. He had already proved himself faithful in his local area before the Lord led Paul to take him along to serve in other areas. Before Christ chose the disciples He had spent time with them. As we spend time with people we will begin to see who is faithful.

Second, in the book of Mark we see that Christ chose people who were workers to be a part of His team. Every person that Christ called in Mark was called while He was working. Many times Christians think that the ideal person to choose to be a part of a team is someone who is not working because that person will have a lot of free time. There are cases when this is true especially when the person is retired from his or her work and is looking for opportunities to serve the Lord. However, people who are working when they become a part of the team will be good

workers as they serve on the team.

Third, we see that Christ chose responders. This is illustrated by Andrew and John. In John 1:35-39 we read, “Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, “Behold the Lamb of God!” The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, “What do you seek?” They said to Him, “Rabbi” (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), “where are You staying?” 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).” Here we see that the two disciples responded when Christ invited them to come and spend time with Him.

Fourth, we see that Christ chose people who had a learner’s attitude. The verses quoted above also show this learner’s attitude. The two disciples wanted to know where Christ was staying so that they could spend time with Him and get their questions answered. Saul showed this same learner’s attitude when the Lord stopped him on the road to Damascus. Acts 9:4-6 says, “Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” And he said, “Who are You, Lord?” Then the Lord said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads.” So he, trembling and astonished, said, “Lord, what do You want me to do?” Then the Lord *said* to him, “Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”

In these verses we see that Saul asked two questions:

- Who are you, Lord?
- Lord, what do You want me to do?

A person who has a learner’s attitude will be a person who wants to get to know Christ better. Some people are much more interested in talking than they are in learning. A person with a learner’s attitude will also have a desire to get to know other people. He or she will ask questions so that he can get to know other people and learn about their interests. This is a key to the building of healthy relationships. This will also help the person know how to serve others more effectively in the future.

Fifth, Paul’s second question shows a fifth key characteristic to look for as we build a team. The second question shows that Paul wanted to know what he could do to serve the Lord. Today, many people want others to serve them. A much smaller number want to know how they can serve others. Those who wanted to be served do not make good team members because they are very self-centered. In contrast, those who want to serve others will usually be looking for opportunities to serve both the Lord and other team members.

We might also say that Paul showed a teachable attitude. He wanted to learn to do the Lord’s work in the Lord’s way. Many people want to do the Lord’s work but they want to do the Lord’s work in their own way or by following the world’s way. Paul wanted to know what Christ wanted him to do and how Christ wanted him to do it. A person with a teachable attitude will want to learn Biblical principles to know how to do the Lord’s work in the Lord’s way. This attitude will determine whether what is done is done to bring glory to God or to bring glory to man.

A quick way to summarize these five things is to focus on looking for FAT people with a learner’s attitude and a servant’s heart. The FAT stands for the following:

- ◆ F Faithful
- ◆ A Available
- ◆ T Teachable
- ◆ With a learner’s attitude
- ◆ And a servant’s heart

The Lord will greatly use those leaders who learn how to build and develop a team to minister with them in ministry. Such team building will multiply the effectiveness of a developing spiritual leader in at least two ways. First, more will be accomplished in the present because there will be a team working together instead of just one person. Second, more will be accomplished in the future because the team will carry on the work of the Lord when the leader is promoted to heaven. May the Lord richly bless you as you help developing leaders learn how to develop a ministry team.