

DISCIPLESHIP ESSENTIALS

"Sharing the Wealth"

11/4/12

Verses from New Living Translation unless noted.

At age **16** a young **Hungarian pianist** named **Andor Foldes** had **mastered** and was **performing** some of the most **difficult** piano **compositions**. But that year **one** of the most **renowned** pianists of the day came to his city of **Budapest**.

Emil von Sauer was famous **not only** for his **abilities**; he was also the last **surviving pupil** of the great **Franz Liszt**. The master, Von **Sauer** invited young **Foldes** play for him. The boy obliged with some of the **most difficult** works of **Bach, Beethoven, and Schumann**.

When he **finished**, von **Sauer** got up, **walked over** to the young student, took his **head** in his hands and **kissed** him on the **forehead**. "**My son,**" he said, "when I was **your age** I became a student of **Liszt**."

He **kissed** me on the **forehead** after my **first lesson**, saying, 'Take **good care** of this kiss--it comes from **Beethoven**, who **gave it** to me after **hearing** me play.' I have **waited** for years to pass on this **sacred heritage**, but now I feel **you** deserve it."

Andor Földes **rose** to the **expectation**. Beethoven's kiss **miraculously lifted** him from the **high level** at which he was performing and **put** him on a level of **real greatness**.

The incomparable **greatness** and uniqueness of **Ludwig von Beethoven survives** in many ways, but **none** more **personally** or more **powerfully** than through the **mentoring** of those touched by this **symbolic kiss**.

I **share** this **illustration** because we are **coming** to the **end** of our series **Discipleship Essentials**. And the **next step** when we have **completed** the **initial** discipleship **training** is to gather a **small group** in a **quad** or a **triad** and **pass on** what you have learned to **others**.

Jesus began with just 12 men and **then** sent them **out**. Two **thousand years** later the **message** is still spreading.

Our **effectiveness** in **fulfilling** Christ's Great Commission, in making **disciples** in all nations is **dependent** on **four** things. First our **efforts** must be

1ST GENERATIONAL

By **generational** I mean **continuing** to **pass** it on.

2 Timothy 2:2 **"You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others."**

This is Paul's **last** NT **letter** and he is giving **final instructions** to a young man he **led** to Christ, **discipled** and **installed** as a pastor of a prominent **1st Century** church.

Paul is **nearing** the **end** of his life. His **ministry** on earth will soon come to **an end** and he wants to **make sure** that the **riches** that he received from **Jesus** and passed on to **Timothy**, will **continue** to be **passed down** to succeeding generations.

You see, **Paul** was a very **wealthy** man; and his wealth was **far above** earthly riches. He was an **heir** to the riches of **heaven**; **God's** riches.

Listen to what he says in **Galatians** 4:7. **"You are no longer a slave but God's own child. And since you are his child, everything he has belongs to you."**

Under **Roman law** an **adopted** child had all the **rights** and **privileges** of a natural child—all **legal right** to the father's **property** and **possessions**, even if formerly a **slave**. The **moment** you and I **chose** to become **disciples** of Jesus Christ, God **adopted** us into his **royal** family.

Paul says that **because** we are **now** God's children and because **he** is **owner** of the entire **universe**, **all** he has **belongs** to us. We are children of **enormous wealth**. There is **nothing** in all creation that **does not** belong to us.

Now **some** of you may be **thinking**, I don't feel **wealthy**. I'm still **struggling** to pay my **bills**. Well **before** you **leave** this morning I want to **make sure** you know how to **access** your **fortune**, so **hang** around.

That's what Paul is **telling** the **Galatians**. **No** more feelings of being a **pauper**; of being **deprived**. We now have **access** to the **wealth** of the universe. But Paul explains:

"Think of it this way. If a father dies and leaves an inheritance for his young children, those children are not much better off than slaves until they grow up, even though they actually own everything their father had. ² They have to obey their guardians until they reach whatever age their father set. ³ And that's the way it was with us before Christ came. We were like children; we were slaves to the basic spiritual principles of this world."

Galatians 4:1-3

Paul is saying that **as children** we are **not** much **better off** than **slaves**, until we **grow** up. The **master** provides for his **slaves**, but **they** don't have **access** to the **inheritance**.

But when the children **grow up** and they know **how to handle** their father's **wealth**, things **change**. As **adult** children of God we are **expected** to use our God-given wealth with godly **maturity**.

We don't have to **plead** or **beg** for what we need. He **knows** our needs and we can **relax** in his **provision**. We can **wear** our wealth with **pride** but we must be **generous** and **share** the wealth.

Now the verse in **2 Timothy** denotes **four levels** of discipleship.

1st there is **Paul**, a man **uniquely** chosen by God to **share** the **wealth** of Christ all across the **Roman Empire**. Paul **faithfully** does this, **planting churches** along the way and leaving **trained leadership** in each city.

Apart from Jesus, **Paul** is probably the **most influential** leader in the **founding** and **rampant proliferation** of the 1st century church.

The **2nd** level of discipleship is **Paul to Timothy**. Paul **led** Timothy to **Christ** but then began to **teach** him what it meant to be a **fully devoted** disciple of Christ. As you **follow** their story through the pages of the **NT** you see how **committed** Paul was to this **mentoring** relationship.

3rd Paul instructs Timothy to **share** all he has **learned** with other **trustworthy people** who will (**4th level**) **pass** it on to others. There is **Paul, Timothy, trustworthy people** and **others** – four levels.

This was **not** just instruction for Jesus' **first disciples** or Paul's, but **every follower** of Christ is **expected** to share the **wealth, pass on** to others the things **we** have **learned**. Only then can we really **enjoy** the **wealth** that is ours.

So **how** do we **accomplish** this; just how do we **go about** sharing the wealth, **passing** it on? **First** it is **generational**. 2nd it is

2ND RELATIONAL

Effective discipleship is relationally **intensive**. It's relationally **demanding**. That's why it **can't** be done on **Sunday** morning. Me standing up here passing on **information** will **never** accomplish the **task**. Information is **good** but **not** enough.

Ephesians 5:1-2 says, "**Follow God's example in everything you do, because you are his dear children. Live a life filled with love for others, following the example of Christ, who loved you and gave himself as a sacrifice to take away your sins.**"

Paul sets the **bar high**. You **can't** get the bar any higher than this. Paul in this verse **doesn't** say follow **my** example. He says follow **God's** example because he's our Father and we are his children.

Paul **later** describes numerous **characteristics** of this new life **style**, but he **begins** with the **supreme** example – **sacrificial love** for others. And he gave us a **human example** of this, Christ, so we would **know** exactly what he's **talking** about.

How do **we** sacrifice our lives for **others**? I think this is **exactly** what we do when we **respond** in **obedience** to **go** and make **disciples**. The **process** of making disciples like Jesus did will **require** that we **abandon** selfish **pursuits** and **ambitions**.

Sexual **immorality**, impurity, **greed** and other such **sins** must be completely **eliminated**. And a life of **love** and thankfulness must **develop** and grow. We know how to live this life because he has put **his light** in our hearts so we have **no excuse** and he has given us His **Holy Spirit** to empower and control us.

Near the **beginning** of his ministry Jesus **called 12** men "**that they might be with him**" (Mark 3:14) and for the next **3 years** they were together **24/7**.

Jesus understood how important mutual accountability and transparency is. There are no **Lone Ranger** disciples. It just **doesn't work** that way. We are **mutually** dependent. We **need** each other.

One of the benefits of the quads and triads is the richness of learning from one another.

Matthew 23:8 **"Don't let anyone call you 'Rabbi,' for you have only one teacher, and all of you are equal as brothers and sisters."**

Jesus **warned** that the **hypocritical Pharisees** loved to be greeted in the **marketplace** and to have men call the **"Rabbi"**. A **Rabbi** in Hebrew **culture** was an **exalted** teacher.

Jesus **condemned** the prideful seeking of **position** and **recognition**. It **wasn't** that Jesus didn't **recognize** the role of authentic **leadership**—he did.

And **later** in the NT the Apostle **Paul** pointed out that some would have a **special gift** of **teaching** (Ep 4:11). He also referred to **himself** as the **spiritual father** of the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 4:15). The **error** and the **point** Jesus is making is the **blunder** of self-**exaltation** and self-**importance**.

Jesus **points** out that we have **but one** teacher and that is **him**. He is the **master teacher** for the disciples and his **Holy Spirit** who lives **in us** will be our teacher and **lead** us into **all truth**.

When we talk about **disciple making**, we're **not** trying to make for **ourselves**. We are just **trying** to help others to become **authentic disciples** of Jesus.

But **because** we are all **indwelt** by the Holy **Spirit** and on the same **level**, we can **teach** each other.

Paul says, **"Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives."** Colossians 3:16

Effective discipleship is generational, relational and 3rd, it is

3RD INTENTIONAL

Before Jesus called his **first group** of disciples he went up onto a **mountain** and spent the **entire night** in prayer. Jesus knew the importance of this decision. He knew that he would one day entrust his entire redemptive plans to a few ordinary men.

Many feel that the **mission** of the church is to merely be **witnesses** to a lost world. It is **true** that we are to bear witness of the risen **Christ** and His **transforming** power.

We are told in **Acts 1:8** that we are to be His **witnesses** to the ends of the **world**. Again we are told in **Mark 16** to preach the Gospel to every creature.

At the **1968** World Congress on **Evangelism** John **Stott** said, “the Church **engages** in evangelism today, **not** because it **wants** to or because it **chooses** to or because it **likes** to, but because it has been **told to**. Evangelistic **inactivity** is **disobedience**.”

It is **easy** to determine when something is **aflake**. It **ignites** other **material**. **Any** fire that does **not spread** will eventually go **out**. A **church** without **evangelism** is a **contradiction** in terms; **just** as a fire that does **not burn** is a contradiction.

While the **preaching** of the Gospel is our **responsibility**, **evangelism** in and of itself is **not** the **complete mandate** of the Great Commission. Evangelism is **just** the **beginning** of the commission. Jesus clearly says we’re to **make disciples**.

What is a **disciple**? According to the ancient **Hebrew Talmud** a disciples was a **student** or **learner**. The **NT** uses the word disciple not only of **Jesus’ followers** but also those who followed **Moses** (John 9:28), the **Pharisees** (Mark 2:18), John the **Baptist** (Mark 11:2) and of **Paul** (Acts 9:25).

A Disciple is **one** who has a **desire** to learn from His **Master**; One that **attaches** himself to a given **teacher**. The original word was used **first** of those that learned a **trade**.

If you wanted to become a **craftsman** in a certain trade in **biblical** times you would **apprentice** yourself under the **discipline** and **instruction** of a master craftsman of that trade.

In the movie **Karate Kid**, young **Daniel** asks Mister **Miagi** to teach him **karate**. Miagi agrees under **one condition**:



Daniel must **submit** totally to his **instruction** and **never question** his methods.

Daniel **shows up** the next day **eager** to learn. To his **chagrin**, Mister Miagi has him **paint** a **fence**. Miagi **demonstrates** the precise **motion** for the job: up and down, up and down. Daniel takes days to finish the job.

Next, Miagi has him **scrub** the **deck** using a **prescribed** stroke. Again the job takes **days**. Daniel **wonders**, What does this have to do with **karate**? but he says **nothing**.

Next, Miagi tells Daniel to **wash** and **wax three** weather-beaten **cars** and again **prescribes** the motion. **Finally**, Daniel reaches his **limit**: "I **thought** you were going to **teach** me **karate**, but all you have done is have me do your **unwanted** chores!"

Daniel has **broken** Miagi's **one condition**, and the old man's **face pulses** with anger. "I **have** been **teaching** you karate! **Defend** yourself!" Miagi **thrusts** his **arm** at Daniel, who **instinctively** defends himself with an **arm motion** exactly like that used in one of his **chores**.

Miagi **unleashes** a vicious **kick**, and again **Daniel averts** the blow with a **motion** used in his chores. After Daniel successfully **defends** himself from **several more** blows, Miagi simply **walks away**, leaving Daniel to **discover** what the master had **known** all along.

Skill comes from **repeating** the correct but **seemingly mundane** actions. It was at **this point** Daniel **ceased** being a **student** and became a **disciple** of Mr. Miagi.

Luke 6:40 "Students are not greater than their teacher. But the student who is fully trained will become like the teacher."

Disciples of Jesus must **embrace** spiritual disciplines; the practice of **daily time** in God's **Word**, daily time in **prayer**, the **scripture memory**, and the **willingness** to be **vulnerable** and **accountable** to others for personal growth.

Paul in **Ephesians** 5:1 says, "Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children..."

Dearly loved children **naturally** try to **imitate** their fathers but the **standard** Paul offers **couldn't** be **higher**. We don't just try to **act** like God; we must **train** to be **Christ like**.

We must develop **training** disciplines, set **goals**, submit to **coaches**, work with a **team** and make **time** for training. Godly living is **counter** our broken and **sinful nature** and faithful **practice** of spiritual **disciplines** is the **only road** to recovery.

First we **challenge** others to make the commitment to discipleship. **Then**

Discipleship is **generational**, it's **relational**, it's **intentional** and it's

4TH TRANSFORMATIONAL

In Matthew 4:19 Jesus said "**Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.**" That **verse** can be **broken** down into **three** parts.

1st Follow me – that's the **invitation**. **2nd** I will make you – that's **transformation**. That's what Christ **will do** in us as we follow. The **3rd** part is the **mission** – that's what we will become; fishers of men.

The **2nd part**, the **transformational** part focuses on **change**. The **cool** thing about **Christianity**, the **unique** thing is that Jesus **unlike Mohammed** or **Buddha**, Jesus is **not** dead. He's **not** in a **grave** somewhere. He's still **alive** and one of the **clear evidences** is changed lives.

People are **still** being **changed** by him. Drug users get clean. Alcoholics get sober. Porn addicts leave their addictions for a life of purity.

They **respond** to his **invitation** to follow and their **lives** are changed. Changed into **what?** Romans 8:29 says, "**For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.**"

God **foreknew** them; he **knew** in **advance** who would **choose** to follow his Son. **How** did he know that? I don't know, but he knew. And he **planned** in advance that they would become **like** his **Son**, like Jesus.

That's **how** we **know** that a person is really an **authentic** follower of Jesus. They are **changing**; they are becoming **more** and more like him.

They become **fishers** of men. They **take** on the **character** of their **master**. **Jesus** came to **seek** and save those who had **lost** their **way** and he came to **make** them into **disciples**.

We who are his **followers** do the **same** thing. I ran across a great **verse** in **Acts 20**. **Paul** is on one of his missionary **journeys** and **Luke** who wrote the book of **Acts** describes what's going on.

Acts 20:4-5 "**Several men were traveling with him (Paul). They were Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Berea; Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica; Gaius from Derbe; Timothy; and Tychicus and Trophimus from the province of Asia. They went on ahead and waited for us (Luke) at Troas.**"

I count **8 disciples** there of Paul. And this is a **list** of **only** some of the men Paul **gathered** and **disciples** as he **went**. He took them **with** him and then **sent** them out on special **assignments** or assigned them as **elders** in various cities.

In **v.28** he reminded the **elders** from **Ephesus** to **feed** and shepherd God's **flock** – over whom the Holy Spirit had **appointed** them. **Feed** and **shepherd** – that's **discipleship** again.

And **Paul** shows no **hesitancy** in ascribing **his efforts** to the work of the **Spirit** through him. Though Paul **recruited** and **trained** these men, he **knows** it's really **God** working through him.

As **we** do our work **assigned** to us, whatever it is, we must **remember** to take others **with us**, as Paul did. We all **do certain** work but **all** of us are called to **disciple**.

Jesus and **Paul** were **models** and **examples** for us to follow. The **kingdom** of God spreads **fastest** through **relationships**, intentionally **developed** to train his **followers** and **multiply** disciples.

Effective discipleship is generational, relational, intentional and transformational. If you take the first letter of each word you spell GRIT. That's what it takes to make disciples.

G - generational

R - relational
I - intentional
T - transformational

But remember, there's no such thing as a grit. It's grits, they don't come by themselves. Disciples are made in groups.

Four hours, that's all it took for **Army** cook **Albert Gitchell's** symptoms to show up in **dozens** of others at Camp **Funston** in **Fort Riley**, Kan.

The mess **sergeant** awoke shortly before **breakfast** with a **103-degree** fever, **burning** throat, **aching** muscles and **throbbing** head. Minutes after he **reported** to the camp **hospital**, **another** soldier walked in with the **same** ailments; Then **another**, and another.



Before **noon** that day, **107 others** would be **stricken** with this mysterious **illness**. Bu the **week's** end, **522** men would catch it.

And within a mere **eight months**, it would **kill** a staggering **20 million** people **worldwide**, spread by **troop movements** of the 1st **World War**.

Camp Funston Hospital Ward

By the **end** of its brief yet **devastating** run the **1918 influenza Pandemic**—a.k.a. the "**Spanish Flu**" virus—world affect more than **one in four** people living on the **planet**, killing an estimated **20 to 50** million people, making it one of the **deadliest** natural **disasters** in human history.

Today we use the word **viral** to **describe** everything from a **YouTube** hit to a **tweet** to a **Trojan worm** to a **marketing** sensation.

A **viral video** is one that becomes **popular** through the process of **Internet** sharing, **typically** through **websites**, **social** media and **email**. Some of you may remember "**Charlie Bit My Finger.**"



But long **before** any of this, **Jesus** created the **first** truly "**viral**" social **phenomena**. And like **any** virus it started **small** and seemingly **insignificant**.

For **Peter**, Andrew, **James** and John it began on **smelly** fishing **boats**, For **Matthew**, it was at his tax **booth**. For **Zacchaeus**, it was in a **sycamore** tree in **Jericho**. **Each** of these men heard a **simple** viral message: "**Follow me.**"

Like an **infectious** agent **implanted** deep inside, the call gripped their **hearts** and quickly **took** over. Those 11 of those **handpicked** men known as the **first disciples** proved to be **contagious** carriers.

Two thousand years later almost a **third** of the earth claims to be **infected** with this **divine virus**. Whether those **exposed** today to the **Jesus virus** are as **contagious** as His **original strand** is an important **question**.

Just **how viral** is **your** faith? Is what **you carry** inside so **contagious** that **non-carriers** see you and **wish** they had "**it**"? **Are you** such a **disciple** of Jesus that I **look**, sound, **talk**, act, and **think** like Him?

Do you **allow** the Holy **Spirit** to come **pouring** out of you when you're in **contact** with others? God is **still using** humans to **transmit** this **viral faith** and **we** have the privilege of being his **carriers**.