



THE DISCIPLED WORSHIP LEADER

The goal of a discipling relationship is twofold: to make your life known to another and to grow in spiritual maturity and obedience to Jesus.

BEING KNOWN

The things in your life that are hidden cannot be healed. They must be brought out into the open, from the darkness into the light. There are two ways this can happen. Either you can expose these things to someone else that you trust, or these things may be exposed by someone else or some other circumstance.

Whenever things remain hidden, the chasm between who you are on stage and who you are off stage gets wider. Eventually, the guilt and shame that comes with hiddenness makes leading others in worship terribly difficult. The only way to reconcile your life on stage with your life off of it is to let someone into your life that will help you live out the way of Jesus.

Discipleship isn't simply a remedy for addictions like alcohol, pornography, or you fill in the blank. It's a relationship in which both parties are committed to following the way of Jesus at all costs, including the cost of vulnerability.

While you may not struggle with popular besetting sins, you may seethe with anger towards others, or harbor resentment towards those who have hurt you in the past. A discipleship relationship is a safe place to be honest about who you really are. In his book, *The Gift of Being Yourself*, David Benner writes that, "...until we are prepared to accept the self we actually are, we block God's transforming work" in us.

While discipleship can be restorative, it is also preventative. Just because we may not find ourselves in the throes of temptation and crisis now does not mean we are prepared to stand firm amid temptation and crisis when it comes.

We believe that there are three core elements to all effective discipling relationships:

KEY ELEMENTS OF DISCIPLESHIP

1. Discipleship must be sought out. In some cases, a person may come along and offer to disciple you. But in many others, you must approach the person you want to go on the journey with. This is much like how Jewish students would "apply" to come under the study of a Rabbi.

2. Discipleship requires regular and intentional time. While irregular coffee meetings with trusted mentors is an absolutely vital part of our journey into Christlikeness, the likelihood of hiddenness grows the longer you go in between these meetings as the one mentoring you is more and more removed from you and the current context of your life.

3. Discipleship requires depth and vulnerability. The reason depth is critical is that discipling relationships are most helpful when no part of yourself is hidden from the one discipling you. Here's why: we all need someone who really knows us. Like all of us. I think we are probably all guilty at some point of holding back our real selves even from people we trust when we meet irregularly. We need someone who knows our gifts, our vices. Our tendencies. Our triggers. If there is no one like that in your life, there are parts of you that are still in hiding. And this goes beyond just being known. We need the person who knows us to show us the way of Jesus in every season.

GROWING IN MATURITY

In addition to being in a discipling relationship, regular study of God's Word and the engagement of the spiritual disciplines are vital and necessary to our growth as followers of Jesus. The disciplines are one of the primary ways that we remain connected to "the Vine" (John 15:5).

Richard Foster in, *The Celebration of Discipline*, reminds us that:

"God has given us the disciplines as a means of receiving His grace. The Disciplines allow us to place ourselves before God so that He can transform us."

The spiritual disciplines do not earn us anything. Instead, they serve as the doorway to spiritual growth. Foster gives this analogy:

"A farmer is hopeless to grow grain; all he can do is provide the right conditions for the growing of grain. He cultivates the ground, he plants the seed, he waters the plants, and then the natural forces of the earth take over and up comes the grain. This is the way it is with the spiritual disciplines - they are a way of sowing to the Spirit. The disciplines are God's way of getting us into the ground; they put us where He can work within us and transform us. By themselves, the spiritual disciplines can do nothing; they can only get us to the place where something can be done. They are God's means of grace."

Another companion on this journey, Dallas Willard, writes this in *The Spirit of the Disciplines*:

“... in our efforts to avoid the necessary pains of discipline we miss the easy yoke and light burden. We then fall into the rending frustration of trying to do and be the Christian we know we ought to be without the necessary insight and strength that only discipline can provide.”

Willard’s simple “discipleship program” was to order and live our lives in the same way that Jesus ordered and lived His. We simply cannot hope to behave on the spot as He would if we don’t live our lives like He did.

Below is a list of spiritual disciplines that you can begin practicing today! Before you begin, a read through Richard Foster’s *Celebration of Discipline* and Dallas Willard’s *Spirit of the Disciplines* will prove helpful.

- Prayer
- Fasting
- Study
- Simplicity
- Solitude
- Submission
- Service
- Confession
- Celebration