

# Paradigm Discipleship

CC @ UNM FOUNDATIONAL RESOURCE SERIES

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE DISCIPLE-MAKERS**

*Discipleship is a skill, and as such there are characteristics in a good disciple-maker's life that make him or her more effective. Use this list as a measuring stick in your own life as you assess areas that you need to grow in and as a tool to help those you are investing in.*

### **✓ A Dynamic & Intimate Relationship with Jesus**

Nothing is more attractive in a person and nothing is more important to be passed on than this; and nothing is as quickly “caught” as a hunger for God. When a person is aflame with the presence of God, all are either awed or repulsed by the bright light shining on the hilltop.

### **✓ Their Lifestyle is an Example to be Followed: “Followability”**

We have all heard the saying, “Practice what you preach.” Effective disciple-making is modeling. Paul was excellent at this. He was always taking people with him and was not shy about commanding those he wrote to follow his example. An effective disciple-maker is trustworthy, respectful, a person who is respected for their honesty and integrity, a good listener, humble, kind, teachable, consistent and a servant. An effective disciple-maker is one who imitates Christ, who practices spiritual disciplines and who can lead others to an intimate walk with Christ. If we can't lead others where they desire to go, they won't follow.

### **✓ A Person of Passionate Prayer**

This speaks beyond emotion to the actual condition of the heart. An effective disciple-maker will pray with urgency for those he or she leads. The desire for the honor of God in the world and Christ's love for the lost have become so intense in their heart that their life has become one unutterable cry for Christ's Kingdom to come.

### **✓ Diligent in the Relationship**

Faithfulness to any meeting, faithful to hold them accountable, faithful to pray for them, consistently willing to speak the truth in love, and consistently pursuing a genuine friendship are all essential to effective discipleship. You must demonstrate that you are in this for the long run and that you take their spiritual growth seriously.

### **✓ Available**

To earn trust in someone's life, they must believe that you are accessible and willing to walk with them through good times and bad. They must believe that you are not only willing, but that you desire to hear about their victories, pray for their needs, and agonize with them through their griefs.

### **✓ Effective in Exhortation**

The gift of encouragement is often misunderstood. Yes, we need to encourage one another with positive, uplifting and loving statements. However, when the writer of Hebrews challenges us to “encourage one another daily,” he does not simply mean make each other “feel better.” A better word might be to exhort one another, to challenge one another, to *speak truth* lovingly yet boldly so that we are motivated to fix our eyes on Jesus. This takes meditation on the word of God, deep prayer for those we invest in, and a true desire to see our fellow believers “fight the good fight of faith.”

### **✓ Patient in the presence of the Lord**

If there is one thing we must all learn as children of the King it is the transforming posture of waiting on the Lord. Lingering long in prayer, mostly in stillness as we listen for His voice, is more than simply a means to the end, it is experiencing His presence. That long, silent pause between prayers **is** a most wonderful experience of Him in and of itself. Our hunger for Him is stirred, His empowerment is felt, and a clear, crisp presence of mind is a result. We must allow the Holy Spirit to take us deep into the Father's heart through silence and stillness. Then we will have something of Him to offer those we lead.

People are desperate for a word from God; we must diligently seek Him and wait for Him on their behalf.

### ✓ **An active witness to Christ's kingdom**

The most effective disciple-makers are the ones who are engaged in the battle. These disciple-makers are active in ministry and therefore have somewhere to go with the ones they lead. It becomes more than theory and vision casting. The one you are investing in gets to see you in action and learn how to become engaged in the battle themselves. Notice as Paul exhorts Timothy to pass on the things he has learned in 2 Timothy 2:2, he says, "And the things you have learned from me ***in the presence of many witnesses...***" Timothy got to observe Paul in action and it was these things that Paul wanted him to pass on.

### ✓ **A Life Saturated with the Word**

More than simply knowing the Word, effective disciple-makers abide in the Word of God. They make their homes in the Word, they evaluate their lives by the Word, they eat, sleep and drink the Word, and it becomes to them their sustenance and their delight. By reading, meditating, memorizing, studying, praying and especially proclaiming the Word, we allow the Holy Spirit to take the words of Jesus and plant them deep into our spirits and souls so that the life of Jesus may take root and grow and become our life.