

Diving Into Discipling



The Heart of Discipling Women
Introduction Guidebook

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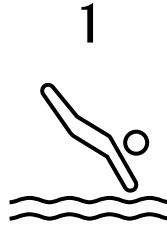
All names and identifying information have been altered in the true discipleship stories shared in this series.

And the things you have heard me say
in the presence of many witnesses
entrust to reliable people
who will also
be qualified to teach others.

2 Timothy 2:2 (NIV)

Table of Contents

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. In The Beginning**
- 3. Passing Treasure On**
- 4. The Challenge**
- 5. Diving Into Discipleship**
- 6. The Great Discipler**
- 7. Get Real**
- 8. Getting Started**
- 9. The Work Of The Ministry**
- 10. It's War!**
- 11. Discipleship In 15 Minutes**
- 12. Get Ready For Grandkids!**
- 13. Initiating**
- 14. About the Author**



Introduction

In 1 Thessalonians 1:8, the apostle Paul writes, “Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well.” Discipleship is so much more than passing on tools or even doing Bible study together. It occurs life on life as you share the journey together.

When I meet one-on-one with women, they aren’t only learning content. This is something discipleship programs often miss. The women I meet with are picking up soft skills as they see me modeling them.

As I listen to a woman, attuning to where she is at emotionally, seeking to hear as she shares her heart and especially as I respond to her, she learns how to have a heart that listens. In his book, The Lost Art of Listening, Michael P. Nichols affirms we learn how to listen by being listened to.

But this isn’t only true for listening.

As the woman I meet with experiences me being patient with her, extending grace when she struggles, continuing to love her as her weaknesses are exposed when God’s living Word penetrates (and especially as she sees my weaknesses exposed and witnesses how I am patient with myself, honest about still needing Jesus every moment of every day, not only to save me for eternity but also from the brokenness of life) she begins to grow a heart that is patient.

But what if I’m not patient with myself? That will get passed on, too! The saying, “More is caught than taught,” is true for both positive and negative traits.

The women I meet with can also pick up soft skills that aren't good. But this doesn't mean no one should ever seek to disciple another until they reach perfection. If that were the case, discipleship from one person to another would never occur. Until the day we die, we all have room to grow. Remember, the goal is to become like Jesus. But until He returns or we go to be with Him, Romans 3:23 is true, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Even in our brokenness, we have the opportunity to model gospel reality for those we meet with.

We need to come to discipleship with a humble awareness that no matter how long I've walked with Jesus, there is always more room for me to grow. The beauty for both of us is God is the great discipler! We join in with what He is doing in another's life. And as we do this, He is at work in us, too.

Remember, any woman you meet with who is a believer has the Holy Spirit in her. Be sure to come to your times together eager to hear what Jesus wants to say to you through her.

When my son was in middle school, my husband was diagnosed with clinical depression. It was a difficult season in all of our lives. But as my son witnessed his dad get the help he needed through medication, counseling, and healing prayer, he witnessed his dad being transformed by Jesus and set free. This was a tremendous gift! In a broken, fallen world, we all need to learn to process pain. Seeing how the Lord was at work bringing good out of so much hard had a big impact.

Never come to discipleship pretending to have it all together or feeling like you must have all the answers. Even the apostle Paul stated at the end of 1 Corinthians 13, "Now I know in part." If he only knew in part, how much do we know?

It can be so freeing when this view of discipleship is embraced. Whenever I meet one-on-one with a woman, we are intentionally creating space for both of us to hear from Jesus, to learn, and to grow.

That season of my husband's depression was one of the most challenging times in our marriage. At one point, my heart felt like it'd been shattered into a thousand pieces and was bleeding out. In the middle of this, there was a knock at the door. A young woman arrived for our weekly time together. I remember praying, "Jesus, I am so broken, I have nothing to give. If you don't show up, this will be a disaster. The only reason I am going to open that door is because I believe you exist and reward those who earnestly seek you."

Not only did the Lord show up, but the words he gave me to share were precisely what I needed to hear. I was in awe. If I hadn't been meeting with her, I doubt I would've made space to get in the Word and hear from the Lord. Time and again, my life has been impacted as I am "discipling others."

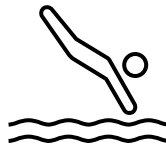
I believe discipleship is a gift not only to the woman being discipled but also to the older woman. We are both being discipled by Jesus, often through each other, as we share our journeys and lives.

You can start wherever you are and invite another woman to share the journey with you. You don't have to be older than her! The woman who discipled my mentor, Jean Fleming, was only a year ahead of her in school. Joyce Sackett prayed for a year, asking the Lord to bring someone into her life to invest in. She shared it was a gift to both of them when He answered that prayer through Jean.

The one prerequisite for being a disciplemaker is to be Jesus' disciple. The Greek word used in the New Testament for disciple μαθητής (pronounced *math-ay-tes'*) means a follower as well as a learner. Do you see your need to learn? Are you willing to follow Jesus however he leads so you can be with Him and grow? Have you surrendered to Him so even when He leads in a way that you don't want to go, you are willing to trust Him and keep following Him?

If so, then you are ready to join in with what He's doing, helping to disciple others. And when you do, when you seek to disciple with Jesus, don't be surprised when it's Miracle-Gro for your own soul, too!

2



In The Beginning

I became a Christian my first week at The University of Florida. When the Lord rescued me from the dominion of darkness and brought me into the kingdom of the Son He loved – the difference was incredible! Not only did I have a huge hunger for His Word, but I wanted to share about Him with anyone who'd listen!

Well, almost....

During the first week of class, I was given a Public Speaking assignment to share about myself for five minutes. As I prepared that first speech, I knew the Lord wanted me to share what had just happened to me. I was scared.

I was the youngest in a class mostly comprised of upperclassmen. On my first day in class, the guy next to me shared he was 25 years old. To this eighteen-year-old freshman, that seemed ancient! But the Lord kept tugging at my heart, affirming this was something He wanted me to do. Imagine my relief when I went to church that first Sunday and sitting in the row, right in front of me was my Public Speaking teacher! You better believe that helped fortify my heart.

So I did it. And I must say it was probably the worst testimony ever. I bumbled and stumbled. I wasn't all that certain about what happened to me, so I'm sure whatever I shared was fuzzy. But God poured on the grace. A number of those twenty-somethings came up after class, cheering me on and affirming me for sharing so openly about something "so personal."

I left that class thinking, *That wasn't really all that bad.*

Processing With Jesus



"But set Christ apart as Lord in your hearts and always be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks about the hope you possess." 1 Peter 3:15 (NET)

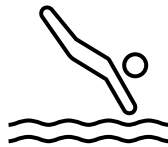
What thoughts come to mind as you read this verse?

Have you ever struggled to share the story of how you came to know Jesus? What happened?

What thoughts come to mind as you consider Jesus chooses the weak and is so able to work through us even as we bumble and stumble?

NOTE: The contents in Collection One focus on helping women grow in sharing Jesus with those who don't know him.

3



Passing Treasure On

I was so excited about what I was learning as I read the Bible. It felt like I was reading with new eyes! I wanted to share the awesome stuff I was finding. But most people around me were older, at least by a year or two. When you are the new girl in town, fresh out of high school, that's intimidating.

But I soon met a twelve-year-old girl at church who was deaf, and we hit it off. She had a lot of questions and was eager to spend time together. I had no idea what I was doing, but I found as I shared what was impacting me from the Word and spent time loving her, praying for her, and having fun with her, God was at work using that.

There were difficult things she struggled with. I felt honored when she opened up and shared. As we spent time together, it was beautiful to see her blossom before my eyes.

There were two key things I learned from this:

1. When you take time to share the treasures that bless you, you get blessed even more! My young friend wasn't the only one growing.
2. Secondly, you don't have to know much to have an impact on someone else's life.

Processing With Jesus

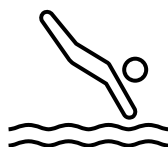


"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching." Hebrews 10:24-25

Have you ever met with someone to share the treasure Jesus is giving you? What was that like?

What thoughts come to mind when you read, "you don't have to know much to have an impact on someone else's life?"

4



The Challenge

During my first year as a Christian, I devoured the Bible daily and was active at my church. I helped lead a service for the handicapped on Sunday afternoons. I eagerly read Christian books and even joined a discipleship group where we memorized scripture and started learning about different spiritual disciplines. But I noticed there was a big difference between what was happening in me and in how my friends who were being met with one-on-one were growing.

I was eager to grow and invested a ton of energy into this. But I was all over the place.

When I first asked Barb Choat, an older woman on Navigator staff, if she'd disciple me, her response was, "If you can go for a month without saying yes to anything, then I will." What a wise woman! You can't imagine how hard that was for me, especially when my church called to ask if I'd design a mission program for kids.

I love kids! And I'm passionate about missions! And I love designing programs! But, crying out to God for strength, I said, "No." And kept saying "No" that whole month. I'm so thankful I did.

I needed to slow down and focus. Slow and steady wins the race when you're talking about laying a solid foundation for a lifetime of following Jesus. But I needed outside help to do this. A dear friend once shared, "If the enemy can't get you to stop, he'll get you so busy you don't do anything well." Was he ever having a heyday with me!

Barb's challenge also made me count the cost. How much did I truly want to be discipled? And what was I willing to give up to gain this? Every time I said "no" that month, I was saying yes to

being disciplined. Instead of being another activity on an already packed list, discipleship became a priority I made time for. So when we finally started meeting, I was ready and available.

What a difference this made in my life!

Beware of letting discipleship be something people try to cram into an overpacked life – even if they ask for it! Discipleship requires time and energy. Where will that come from? What are they (and you) willing to give up to make this happen?

One of the key goals of discipleship is helping people focus on Jesus so they can learn from Him and follow Him. My first step towards this was initiated by the woman who disciplined me before we met for the first time!

Processing With Jesus



Read 1 Corinthians 9:25-27 and underline (or record in a journal) anything that stands out to you.

Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore, I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

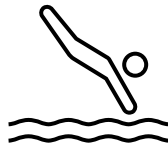
What caught your attention as you read? Why? Discuss this with Jesus.

Have you ever trained for a competition? What or who helped you do that? What was that like?

How does this relate to discipleship?

Is there anything you sense the Lord inviting you to give up so you can go deeper with him and help others do so too?

5



Diving Into Discipleship

Barb Choat helped lay a solid foundation for me continuing to persevere and grow in my walk with God. Not only did she help me understand the gospel (and what just happened to me!), but she also started me in basic spiritual disciplines that have nourished and fortified my soul for the past forty years. Most importantly, she faithfully met with me and loved the socks off me, even though I was wild and untamed!

From the start, she encouraged me to pass on what I was learning to other women.

After our time together, I headed to a nutrition class. A girl sat in the front row a couple of seats away from me. When class started, I saw her shove something that looked like a Bible under her seat. I thought that was interesting but felt a bit shy to ask about it.

That evening, one of my roommates brought that girl over for dinner! Turns out she'd just become a Christian. But my roommate was involved with a ministry that focused on sharing Jesus with people, not discipling them, so I asked Sandy if she'd like to start meeting so I could share with her what I was learning about how to grow as a Christian. Was I ever floored when she said yes!

I went back to Barb and told her, "You can't miss a week. If you do, I won't know what to do with Sandy!"

That began an adventure in co-laboring with Jesus that has continued for forty-one years. My life has been relationally enriched, and my walk with God has been spurred on through doing this. Discipleship has become an integral part of my life. I love to see others discover the joy of doing this.

To give you a picture of how passionate I am about discipleship, I once saw a Billy Graham film where hundreds of people were walking forward to receive Christ, and I started crying. “Who is going to help love and care for all those babies?!”

I believe with all my heart that the Lord is sovereign, resourceful, and able to meet those needs in other ways, but repeatedly, I have seen a difference in the lives of people who are met with one-on-one versus those who seek to grow in groups or on their own.

I keep running into people who have never been discipled but who deeply desire to learn how to make that investment in others. If I could, I'd meet with every one of them, for the best way to learn how to disciple is to be discipled yourself.

But if you were never discipled one-on-one by someone or wish you could be but don't know anyone around you who can do this, but still desire to bless someone else in this way, get ready for a special joy. According to Matthew 18:20, whenever two gather in Jesus' name, the Great Discipler is always present.

As you seek to share your journey with another woman, He will be present to disciple both of you.

Processing With Jesus



Come, follow me, Jesus said, and I will make you fishers of men.

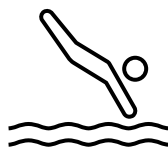
Matthew 4:19

According to Jesus as recorded in Matthew 4:19, whose responsibility is it to make you a fisher of people? Why do you think it's important to remember this?

What is your role? What does that look like?

The word "come" is a word of invitation. What do you sense the Lord inviting you to?

6



The Great Discipler

Ever wonder how someone who has only been a Christian a few months can start discipling another woman? It's because she isn't the primary discipler. God is! And that's true for someone who has been a Christian for over forty years, too!

The Greek word for discipling someone is μαθητεω (mathēteuō). It means to instruct with the purpose of making a disciple, "to become attached to one's teacher and to become his follower in doctrine and conduct of life." (Spiros Zodhiates, p. 936, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary*).

Do you want someone to become attached to you? To follow your doctrine and conduct in life? Or would you rather have them follow Jesus, become His disciple, and learn to respond to Him as their discipler? As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 11:1 "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ!"

And check out what Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 3:4-9, "For when one says, 'I follow Paul,' and another, 'I follow Apollos,' are you not being merely human? What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything but only God who gives the growth."

I love how Paul emphasizes in 1 Corinthians 3: 6 and 7 that growth comes from God! And in Ephesians 2:10 he states that we are God's workmanship! God is the one at work here. He doesn't need us to accomplish His purposes, but He chooses to involve us so we can experience Him as we join in with what He's doing. Does that ever take the pressure off.

I don't know what another person needs. Let alone where God is at work at any given moment. However, it does require a unique approach once you truly get this.

One of my all-time favorite verses for disciplining (and parenting!) is found in Isaiah 40:11, where it states, "He gently leads those who have young." I have found this to be so true.

But note that God "gently" leads.

In college, I took a course called "Exceptional People," where we learned about people who are handicapped (little did I realize then how pertinent this class would be). When we studied blindness, we learned when you want to guide a blind person; you don't grab them by the arm and yank them around. Instead, you "gently" place your hand on the inside of their elbow and apply a little pressure to indicate whether they need to go to the right or left.

I have found that to be such an accurate picture of the way the Lord usually leads. He doesn't yank us where we need to go. Rather, in a gentle way, He is right there guiding us, but we need to be focused; we need to seek to be sensitive to Him guiding us, or we can easily miss out... and so can those we're meeting with.

Especially as His ways aren't our ways (check out Isaiah 55:8&9). We can't automatically know the way He's going to lead us, let alone the way He wants to lead us as we lead someone else!!!

This is one of the key problems with discipleship programs! It's so easy to rely on the program or the plan and not on the Lord.

But when you do seek to be sensitive to the Lord's leading, hold onto your head! It will be an adventure for both of you like you've never before experienced! Because as you spend time together one on one, the Great Discipler is at work discipling both of you!

Processing With Jesus



Read Isaiah 40:11 and underline or highlight what stands out to you.

He tends his flock like a shepherd:

He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart;

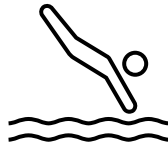
he gently leads those that have young.

What thoughts come to mind as you ponder this?

How does this relate to discipleship?

How does this relate to your life?

7



Get Real

Life is hard.

Being a Christian doesn't change that. Sometimes, it even makes it harder.

Sometimes, to follow Jesus, you have to move to another state and leave family behind, who you really miss. Sometimes you have to sell a home and take a \$100,000 loss. Sometimes the cartilage in your knees gets torn and you struggle to walk up stairs. And then, from out of the blue, your back starts hurting again. Not just a dull ache but an intense stop-life-as-you-know-it pain. And that's nothing compared to the relational pain that blindsides when our sin clashes with others or when we're the victim of their sin.

One of the best gifts I can give someone is to let them see how I struggle with the brokenness in my life and continue to persevere in following Jesus. To help them realize life isn't a sprint but a marathon, and you will hit the wall... multiple times; That everyone is broken and life is hard, but what a difference the presence of Jesus makes! That even in the midst of life's darkest hours, He is there to cry with you, carry you, help you press on, and even bring good out of the worst things imaginable.

But they'll never see that if I come across as always having it together. In fact, one of the worst things I can do is make people think following Jesus is like a cake mix – “Get the right ingredients, and it turns out great every time!” (and yes, I was told that when I was a young Christian!).

I've seen so many people fall into this trap. Pretending everything is "fine" and they waltz through life with a smile plastered on. That is not reality! We don't do anyone any favors if we perpetuate that lie.

Remember, a disciple is a learner. Learners are people who not only want to learn, they need to learn, they need to grow, they realize they are in process until the day they die! Let those you meet with see you in process and share the journey as you struggle to follow Jesus.

Now, I'm not saying to make your one-on-ones gripe sessions or all about you. Ephesians 4:29 is key to remember. We are instructed to speak, "only what is helpful for building others up, according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen." But I think it's vital to note one of the key ways we help build up those we are meeting with is to be open and vulnerable as the Lord directs. They, too, are facing hard times, or soon will. They need to see what it looks like to walk with Jesus through the hard seasons in life.

Be willing to be real. That is a thousand times more impactful than a smile-plastered-on-Bible-answer-woman any day!

Processing With Jesus



Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. Ephesians 4:29

How might sharing your life authentically be helpful for building others up?

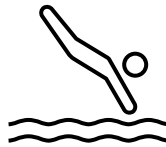
What could this look like in discipleship?

How can you tell what you should (or shouldn't) share?

Some people struggle to share vulnerably, others with sharing too much. Where are you on this continuum? Why?

What could this look like for you to keep growing in this?

8



Getting Started

I've never been a big fan of fill-in-the-blank Bible studies. I'd much rather dive directly into the Word and experience the joy of first-hand discovery!

But there was one fill-in-the-blank Bible study that was absolutely life-changing: Henry Blackaby's Bible study entitled Experiencing God. A major shift in my thinking occurred while doing this study. I went from a "do whatever your hand finds to do for the Lord is surely with you" mentality to asking, "Where are you at work, Lord? And how do you want me to join in?"

My life and ministry haven't been the same since!

God is always at work. The problem is unless we're intentionally looking (and asking!), we can miss seeing this. For just as His thoughts aren't our thoughts, so His ways aren't our ways! (Isaiah 55:8-9)

I used to read Luke 2:10, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, to send out laborers into His field," and think that field must be somewhere else. I didn't see much going on around me. But when I started asking the Lord that first question, "Where are you at work, Lord?" I was blown away at how He opened my eyes!

When I started asking the second question, it was amazing how many opportunities to join Him in His work came my way!

I recently met a woman who has been a believer for years. As we shared about our lives and I shared about the very special women I meet with, she exclaimed, “Where are you meeting these women?!” And I responded, “They’re just around me!”

You see, one of my all-time favorite promises is found in James 1:5, where we’re told, “If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask of God who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.” God is a generous giver! He loves to reveal things to us ~ but we need to ask.

In your desire to start discipling women, let me encourage you, take God up on His offer by asking Him daily where He’s at work and how He wants you to join in.

Nearly every time I meet a new woman, I ask those two questions. Sometimes, the Lord may lay it on my heart to share a verse or pray with her, and that’s all. Other times, I may sense Him leading me to ask her over for tea, to listen more. And sometimes He guides me to women He wants me to invest in long term.

I don’t always know how He’ll direct at the beginning. It’s more like a dance with Him leading than an assignment I run with. But it’s always, ALWAYS far, far better than anything I could come up with on my own!

And truly, the best part of discipling women is how we get to experience God as we do this!

Processing With Jesus



Ready to get started?

1. *Begin with prayer asking the Lord to show you where He is at work and how He wants you to join in.*
2. *Read Acts 17:26-27 "He determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us." Consider, who has the Lord placed around you?*
3. *Read Philippians 1:7 "It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart." Who is on your heart?*
4. *Make a list of potential people and begin praying for them. (You can find a bookmark *Praying For Women Who Share the Journey with Me* in the Tools section of the Heart of Discipling Women Library)*
5. *Prayerfully consider how you might initiate with these women.*
6. *Follow Jesus' lead in doing so.*
7. *Never commit to meeting weekly with a woman until you first determine if she wants to grow. Instead, I like to share a quiet time together (instructions in the Tool section of Collection One), then give her a copy of the Special Treasures bookmark. Then, I leave the ball in her court to let me know when she'd like to connect again. For some women, one and done is enough; others are hungry for more. You want to be prayerfully looking for the latter. We all have limits on our capacity. Jesus disciplined twelve. I have a high capacity and I usually disciple four women. It's vital to be selective. You cannot make anyone grow! Only Jesus can. But he's a gentleman and doesn't force himself on anyone. They have to want to grow. So that's a key thing I'm looking for.*

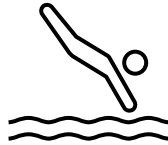
It's worth waiting for a person hungry to grow! Sometimes the Lord will bring someone right away – like how He brought my friend Sandy into my life right after Barb challenged me to pass on what she was sharing with me. Other times, it takes longer. Joyce Sackett prayed for a year before the Lord brought Jean Fleming into her life.

Remember, being a disciple is all about following Jesus so it's vital you follow Him regarding who and when you disciple.

May the Lord make His grace abound to you so in all things, at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work He has for you to do.

2 Corinthians 9:8

9



The Work of the Ministry

When discipling women, prayer is not just a nice way to end your time. With all my heart I believe one of the most important things I ever do for those I meet with is pray for them. As my friend Debbie Friley says, "Prayer is the work of the ministry."

1 John 5:4 states, "This is the confidence we have in approaching God, 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 whatever we ask of Him."

Is that not wonderful?! But how can I know if what I'm asking for is truly according to God's will for those I'm discipling?

Thankfully, the Lord has not left us hanging but, in His Word, He has given us specific examples to pray that are clearly His will. Consider the following, inserting the name(s) of women the Lord has brought into your life.

Lord, thank you for _____ would you please give her the Spirit of wisdom and revelation so she can know you better! *Ephesians 1:17*

Lord, would you please enlighten the eyes of _____'s heart in order that she might know the hope to which you have called her! *Ephesians 1:18*

Lord, would you please enlighten the eyes of _____'s heart so she can understand the riches of the glorious inheritance you have for her! *Ephesians 1:18*

Lord, would you please enlighten the eyes of _____'s heart so she can know Your incomparably great power for her as she believes! *Ephesians 1:19*

Lord, would you please enable _____ to be rooted and established in love! *Ephesians 3:15*

Lord, would you give _____ power to grasp how long and wide and high and deep your love is, so she might know this love that surpasses knowledge that she may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of You! *Ephesians 3:16-19*

Lord, would you please enable _____'s love to abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight so that she may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through you, Jesus, to the glory and praise of God! *Philippians 1:9-11*

Lord, would you please work in _____'s life so she may be filled with a knowledge of Your will, with all spiritual insight and understanding, so she may walk in a manner worthy of you Lord, fully pleasing to You, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in her knowledge of You! *Colossians 1:9-10*

Lord, may _____ be strengthened with all power according to Your glorious might so she can endure and live her life with patience and joy, having a thankful heart no matter what comes her way realizing You have already given her what matters most as You have qualified her to share in the inheritance of the saints in light!*Colossians 1:11-12*

Can you imagine the difference it could make in someone's life if you regularly asked the Lord to do this for her?

I have found it so helpful to print out the prayers of the Bible on cardstock (and note – there are many, many more prayers than I've listed here!!!) and start taking them with me when I walk and pray. Or you can write them on index cards bound with a ring and flip through them while praying. I find this really helps me stay focused while lifting someone up before the Father's throne.

But for praying on the spot with people I've found it most helpful to have these prayers memorized! Ever since I started memorizing the prayers of the Bible it's amazing how much more I am praying God's Word!

In James 5:16 Scripture says, "The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective." Want to have a powerful and effective impact on someone's life that will bless them for all eternity?

Don't just meet with them, Pray for them!

Processing With Jesus



As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD

by failing to pray for you.

And I will teach you the way that is good and right.

1 Samuel 12:23

How did Samuel view prayer? Why do you think he felt this way?

What do you think is the connection between prayer and teaching?

What do you sense the Lord wants this to look like in your life?

What is He inviting you to do?

10



It's War!

One of the most important questions you can ever ask when starting to meet with someone is, “What’s your story?”

And make sure she knows you don’t want the reader’s condensed version. You want as many facts as she is comfortable sharing.

What has brought pain into her life? Where has she struggled? How has the Lord been at work bringing her into a relationship with Him? And since? Has she ever dabbled in the occult? Or been sexually involved with someone?

Good questions can reveal key things helpful to know at the onset. But be sure to ask gently and respectfully, and make it clear it’s ok for her to only share what she is comfortable telling and to pass on any questions she'd rather not answer.

If she has experienced severe wounding or abuse, if she’s had any prior experience with the occult, it can really help to know this not only so you can help her move forward, but so you can help prepare her for ways the enemy might try to intervene and interfere in your relationship.

Remember discipleship is about spurring people on to grow! The enemy does not want this! And it seems the greater his hold on someone formerly, the more desperate he will be to thwart your attempts.

I once met with a woman who had supported herself working as stripper and who had been deeply wounded relationally as well as sexually assaulted. The story of how the Lord reached out

to her in love, drawing her to Himself, was absolutely amazing! When I met her, she was so eager to grow!

Yet about a month after we started meeting, when she heard a mutual friend share how she'd just learned the Bible says sex before marriage is wrong, she became upset. This was the only type of love she'd ever known, and as a brand new believer, she was not ready to give this up. Right away, she withdrew from fellowship and became unavailable for us to meet. It broke my heart. I wish I'd thought to give her a heads-up regarding enemy attacks in advance.

While the enemy can't keep someone from entering into a relationship with Jesus, he is so cunning in his subterfuge and efforts to undermine and interfere in any way he can with her growth – which includes efforts to destroy her relationship with whoever is seeking to disciple her.

It is vital you be ready for this and, if possible, beat him at his game by forewarning the woman of ways he may try to attack.

When someone has traumatic or occultic experiences, many times strongholds remain that need to be addressed. This is why it's vital you ask a person to share about her past with you, so you can attempt to prepare her for the battle that's sure to erupt.

Too many times, people read, “forgetting what lies behind and pressing on towards what lies ahead...” as if there's no need to address past wounding and strongholds. But remember, verses need to be read in context! And in this context, Paul is talking about his past achievements, not wounding!

People may not be willing to be open about this until they know you better – that may be one of the ways the enemy has already been at work encouraging them to build walls around their heart. But it sure can help if you ask ~ and if you're willing to share about painful things you've been through, too!

This is why when I begin meeting with someone, I will often tell her my story first, sharing deeply about my past. This sets the stage for her to realize here's someone willing to be real, willing to be honest with me. Someone who cares enough to reveal even the pain she's been through. And I do this after praying, asking the Lord to guide my sharing and help me speak only what's helpful for building her up as she listens.

Then I ask her to share her story in depth. This can launch your time in a powerfully bonding way, even if there aren't deep issues.

But if there are, be sure to encourage her. God is a God of hope. Nothing is too difficult for Him. He is able to take the ugliest scars and bring beauty out of them, but there really is a battle going on, and the enemy is going to do whatever he can to get her feelings hurt and try to get her to pull away from you.

If you can point this out from the getgo and encourage her, “If I do anything or say anything that hurts you, please come to me and let’s talk because I don’t want the enemy messing with us,” and warn her to be on the lookout for ways he might try to isolate her from other believers too, can that ever help you beat the enemy at his game and thwart his purposes to destroy your relationship!

Processing With Jesus



Read Ephesians 6:10-20 and highlight anything that stands out to you:

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

How does this relate to discipleship?

What do you sense the Lord inviting you to in response to this?



Discipleship in 15 Minutes

If you were invited to share the key things you've learned about discipleship in fifteen minutes, what would you share?

I was asked to do this at the Smoky Mountain Summer Training Program. When I asked the Lord what He wanted me to share, He laid on my heart three key things:

Listen!

Listening plays a key role whenever I am discipling someone.

First, I always seek to **listen to the Lord** regarding who He wants me discipling and how He wants me joining in with what He's doing.

This listening begins even before I meet with someone. Jesus is the great discipler. He knows them better than I ever will. And knows exactly where He's at work in their lives and what they truly need. This is why I find it so vital to lift them up before His throne of grace and ask Him to give insight into how He'd like me to join in with what He's doing. It is amazing the ideas He gives.

I also pray at the the beginning of our time, taking God up on his offer in James 1:5 "If any of you lacks wisdom he should ask of God who gives generously to all without finding fault and it will be given to him." When I began praying this at the start of meeting with women, it took my one-on-ones to a new depth. As it says in Proverbs 25:11, "A word aptly spoken is like apples of

gold in settings of silver.” I find asking the Lord for wisdom makes me much more likely to share treasure than if I’m speaking off the top of my head, no matter how much experience I have.

Secondly, I find it’s so important to really **listen to what she is sharing**. The longer I disciple women, the more convinced I am the most important part of our time, after what the Lord says, isn’t what I say, but what she will say. It’s much more effective to scratch where someone is itching (metaphorically speaking!).

Don’t only listen until you hear something you have a tool for. Has she shared what’s truly on her heart? Often the Lord will guide our time through the things the person I’m meeting with is sharing. I’ve seen people treat a discipleship appointment as an information dump. Don’t do that. One of the most powerful components of a one-on-one is the relationship. And one of the best ways to keep cultivating this is to listen.

Third, **teach her to listen to the Lord**. I don’t want her to rely on listening to me. This is a key reason why I always take us to the Scriptures and give time for the women I meet with to interact with the Lord directly during our time. Even if I’ve taught her a new tool, I want her to hear what the Lord wants to say to her about it.

Learn!

Share your journey with her. Remember **a disciple is a learner** as well as a follower of Jesus. It’s not a designation but a direction. If you stop learning, it doesn’t matter how long you’ve been discipling women, or even if you’re on Navigator staff, you are no longer a disciple of Jesus. You’ve got to be one to make one. The best thing I bring to our times together isn’t sharing wisdom from someone who’s arrived. But to let her see how I continue to grow. And fail. And to humbly ask her to pray for me, too.

A good friend once shared, “Don’t read your Bible like this…” His Bible was open in front of him, and his hand was pushing outward towards others (meaning for the benefit of others or to find stuff you can share with others!). ” Instead read your Bible like this…” with his hand coming up from the Scriptures towards his own heart and then going up and out to others, out of the overflow. I’ve shared quiet times with friends in Genesis 1 and Psalm 1 more times than I could ever count, but every single time I do, I’m listening to hear first and foremost, what the Lord wants to say to me. And this is true when I’m preparing for Bible studies I lead, too! I always seek to do the study first for me, even if I’ve done it numerous times! It’s the Living Word of God. The Author is right there with you. He never runs out of treasure to reveal. (And things always taste better when they are served fresh from the oven!)

Seek to **learn how she learns**. People learn in very different ways. Some learn best by reading, others by hands-on doing. What works best for her? My husband and I met when we were both involved with The Navigators in college, an academic environment. Seven years later, we moved to a city that was mostly blue-collar, and he started meeting with a new believer who said

he really wanted to grow. But each week, Jim would give him an assignment to read something in the Bible, and week after week, the guy would show up not having done it. Jim questioned how interested this guy was in growing... until he learned he had dyslexia and struggled to read! I can't stress how key it is to put effort into learning what works best for those you are meeting with.

Keep growing in learning new ways to learn. Ten years ago, I learned about art journaling. This has added an incredible dimension to how I learn from God... and to how I disciple, especially after I learned how key this is in helping to process things at a heart level! No, it's not the best thing for everyone, but has it ever added some great new tools into my discipleship tool chest! When I was trained as a CliftonStrengths coach, this added whole new dimensions to my one-on-ones.

You don't need a lot of tools to disciple. With Jesus giving you wisdom and your Bible and remembering what's helped you, you are good to go. But the more ways of learning you add in response to Jesus' lead, this can add whole new dimensions to what you're doing as well as opportunities to experience Him at work.

Love!

But if I have thousands of follow-up plans that are amazing, a pantry full of great resources to offer, years of experience discipling , and can quote the whole Bible, but don't have love... Get the idea here? Without love, nothing you do is of any value according to 1 Corinthians 13:1-3.

Once, when Jerry Bridges was speaking, he had us draw a bunch of zeros across a page and then asked how much they were worth. It didn't matter if we had one or a hundred zeros, they were all worth nothing. Then he told us to put a one to the left of the zeros and shared that "one" represents love. It gives value to everything else we do! One zero with a number "one" in front of it has greater value than a zillion zeros without it.

But please know love doesn't mean you sit around and hug the person you're discipling the whole time. Love expresses itself in many different ways, from praying for her to coming prepared with something specific to pass on. This is huge! While it is so important to listen, I can't begin to tell you how many people I know who tried meeting with someone one-on-one, but all the discipler did was meet with them to chat and they said, "After a while, well, it didn't feel like we were doing much." It speaks volumes of love when you come prepared with treasure to pass on.

I liken this to when someone has taken time to prepare a delicious meal or treat when they have you over for tea. That can mean the world and speak volumes about how much you care that you took the time to prepare to bless them! And yes, there are times I toss out what I prepared – if someone's mom was just diagnosed with cancer or her boyfriend just broke up with her, it may not be the best time to talk about evangelism. But even then, I will ask the Lord to bring a pertinent passage of Scripture to mind we can briefly dive into.

As the Lord says in Isaiah 55:2b, “Listen, listen to me and eat what is good and your soul will delight in the richest of fare...”

You see, I consider myself a spiritual chef. Do I want to serve junk food when the Lord has blessed me with the best money can buy? God’s Word vs. my word? It’s like the difference between serving steak or tossing someone potato chips. I can’t stress how vital it is to serve God’s Word every time you meet with someone. This is a huge act of love.

And yes, sometimes we need to get them to eat their spinach. Or foods they may not prefer. Being willing to speak only what’s helpful for building someone up (Ephesians 4:29) may mean confronting them when the Lord leads you to. But that’s love, too! Love always follows Jesus’ lead.

And you know how it says in 1 John 3:18, “Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with action and in truth.” and in John 14:21, “Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me...” It’s so important we help them learn to love God by not just hearing His Word but by doing it.

Application doesn’t come naturally. It has to be taught. And when we teach people how to apply God’s Word, to be responders to it and to Him, that is key to loving them well as we are helping them not be deceived (James 1:23) and to lay a solid foundation for their lives (Matthew 7:24-27).

One final benefit of love in discipleship – it covers a multitude of sins. (1 Peter 4:8) Seek to love well for loving as Jesus leads you, can make up for all sorts of stumbling. And as a discipler still very much in process, stumbling happens too!

I’ll leave it to your imagination whether I actually managed to deliver this in fifteen minutes. I forgot to look at my watch...

Processing With Jesus



Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 and highlight whatever stands out to you:

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.

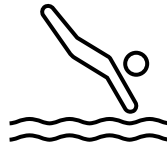
How does this passage relate to discipleship?

Why do you think love is so important?

Which aspects of love come more naturally to you? Where do you find yourself struggling?

How do you sense Jesus is inviting you to respond to what He's highlighted for you?

12



Get Ready For Grandkids!

I became a grandma at the age of twenty-three!

It happened when one of the girls I'd been discipling shared with a neighbor about Jesus. After this neighbor came to know Him, my friend began passing on to her what we'd been doing. When I went to visit, it was such a treat to meet my first grandbaby. Imagine my surprise when I learned she was almost double my age. You've got to love the miracle of spiritual reproduction!

Paul writes to Timothy, "And the things you've heard me say in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to reliable men who will also be able to teach others." 2 Timothy 2:2

There are four generations represented in that verse... can you spot them?

There are all sorts of organizations devoted to discipleship, and this can take many shapes and forms, but I've found most of them focus on getting one generation established. If you want to see spiritual "generations" take place, there needs to be intentionality and certain things taken into consideration. It needs to be something on your heart. And clear in what you're aiming towards. It must influence what you do.

I once knew a woman who many considered an amazing discipler. She would show up for her one-on-ones with elaborate Bible studies and handouts. When she met with women, they did go deep into the scriptures, and the content was extensive and intense. The problem was those she met with never thought they could disciple because they couldn't do what she did.

When you are discipling with the desire to see spiritual generations take place, there is much value in adhering to the old acronym K.I.S.S. (Keep It Simple Sweetie!)

The more organized something is, the more pass-on-able it is.

This is one reason why I love to use the Look -Listen- Live it Out format for sharing a quiet time with someone. It's not only been life-changing for me, but it's also simple, easy to remember, and very easy to do with someone else.

From the beginning of meeting with someone, I seek to mention their future "children" often (e.g., "When you have a shared quiet time with someone, you will want to..."). I want them to catch a vision for this, to understand this isn't something an elect few do, but something the Lord has called all believers to do. (Matthew 28:19)

I want them to experience the joy John writes about in 3 John 1:4, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth." (and note in the context, John isn't writing about his physical children, but those whom he has invested in spiritually).

There is a special joy that comes when you intentionally join in with what the Lord is doing in the life of another believer. That joy is magnified when they turn around and, walking in the truth, start investing in others.

This isn't only for the good of the next generation. There is nothing that's kept me pressing on after Jesus, like having younger believers whom I'm investing in. When I'm helping them learn how to feast on the Word, does it ever spur me on to continue to do so myself. My best seasons of faithfully memorizing and reviewing scripture occur when I'm helping someone else with this. If I want those I'm discipling to finish strong, persevering as Jesus' disciple throughout their entire life, one of the best things I can do is prepare them to disciple others.

And can you imagine the delight that will await in heaven when we get to meet all those generations who have followed?

Don't set your sights too low. Don't disciple to only help one person in one generation get on their feet. Pray for and plan for those grandbabies, and great-grandbabies, and great-great-grandbabies... for spiritual generations who will continue to follow Jesus as His disciples and help others do so too, until the day He returns!

Processing with Jesus



*Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, my God,
till I declare your power to the next generation,
your mighty acts to all who are to come. Psalm 71:8*

How can you declare God's power to all who are to come?

How does discipling with a generational mindset connect with this?

What could you do so your discipling is more likely to have generational impact?

13



Initiating

So what do you do if no one is clamoring at your door for you to disciple them?

There is a need for this everywhere. But someone needs to start the ball rolling. Someone needs to initiate. More often than not, that begins with the ball in our court.

I'll be the first to admit, it can be scary initiating with people. You never know if they're going to be open to doing something with you or if they are going to look at you like you're crazy.

Especially if they aren't in an environment where people around them, people they know, are being disciplined. The very idea may seem foreign – or never even enter their heads, especially if they are the same age as you or older!

Here are a few things I've found helpful when initiating:

1. Keep it lowkey

I love to start by inviting someone over for tea (or to go for coffee or frozen yogurt) and ask to hear her story. As she shares, I'm listening to hear evidence of where the Lord is at work in her life and how He might want me to join in and asking Him for wisdom to know how to do this. God is amazingly creative!

Don't start with seeking a commitment; start with a relationship.

2. Ask her to have a shared quiet time with you (*see the Tools section in Collection One for more information on this!*).

Whether you end up getting together again or not, passing on this one treasure can be life-changing. And can it ever help you go deeper in your friendship.

But I will say this – it’s still like taking a jump into an ice cold pool to initiate this. She could say no. She could think I’m strange. She may misunderstand. There is a risk whenever you initiate. But if you sense the Lord leading you to – and when I say that, in all honesty it’s not like I see a neon sign saying, “Thus saith the Lord: Take the plunge!” I often don’t know for sure whether I should or not – but if I even think the Lord might want me to, I take a deep breath, pray for courage, and dive in.

3. Don’t take it personally if someone doesn’t want to do this ~ or doesn’t want to do it with you!

Ephesians 2:10 states, “We are God’s workmanship created in Christ Jesus to do good works which God has prepared in advance for us to do that we might walk in them.” This definitely includes discipleship!!! Isn’t it wild to think the Lord has prepared in advance people for you to invest in? It’s not – just go find someone. But again, follow Him.

Sometimes, He may lead by revealing to you directly who He wants you to invest in. Sometimes, the Lord may lead through her response. Be gracious and thankful if someone says no. Would you really want to do something the Lord doesn’t want you to do?

4. Don’t expect initiating to be easy

One day, I was on campus – and you have to know I have a severe hearing loss, so initiating with new people is really scary for me as I never know whether I’ll be able to understand or not or “hear wrong” and say the wrong thing in response... So I was crying out to the Lord, “I am so tired of always being the one to initiate.” And I sensed the Lord respond, “You’re getting a taste of how I feel. No one seeks me on their own. I am always having to initiate.” (Romans 3:11; 5:8)

Is this ever an opportunity to identify with Jesus and better understand what it cost Him to do what He did.

5. Remember, you don’t have to call it discipleship for discipleship to be occurring.

In truth, outside of a formal setting, it can seem weird to push to define a relationship like this. Be content to do Hebrews 10:24, “Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.” It’s always fun on down the road to see the lights come on when someone realizes, “Hey! This is what you’ve been doing with me!” That doesn’t always happen. Be okay with that, knowing God sees, and that’s what matters.

6. Discipleship is about influence and influence isn’t a given, but a gift.

Trust me, it’s not like you attain a certain place where people run to be disciplined by you. There really is a huge element of the Lord at work in this. Even after thirty years of discipling women and with serving in a formal discipling ministry, I’ve been amazed at how the Lord at times

intervenes to close doors when I fully intended to start meeting with someone, and how He's redirected me when He's wanted me meeting with someone I never planned on.

There are seasons in our lives. Sometimes the Lord leads us into quieter seasons where He says, "This is just for you. Take a break from passing things on. Treasure and ponder what I'm giving you in your heart."

Sometimes I initiate, and there's no interest or, worse, a negative response. And yes, it's a battle when that happens to not feel rejected. But a dear friend recently shared with me maturity is being God-focused and other-focused, not self-focused. When I wallow in feeling rejected or let fear keep me from following Jesus in initiating, I'm focusing on me, as if it's all about me.

But when I do initiate, even though it's risky, trust me, it's because I'm focusing on God and desire His best for the other person – even if that's not going to be me.

7. The more you initiate, the easier it becomes.

The hardest time to dive into a cold pool is the first time. The more you do it, the more it becomes a part of your life. It does get easier (never easy – but easier!)

Love risks. Love initiates. This is exactly what Jesus did with us. If we truly want to become more like Him, initiating is a key part of that.

Processing With Jesus



Read Matthew 9:36-38 and highlight whatever stands out to you:

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." Matthew 9:36-38

What do you learn about Jesus from this verse?

What else do you learn about Jesus from this verse?

Who around you looks like a sheep without a Shepherd?

According to Jesus what is the solution for this problem?

How do you sense the Lord inviting you to respond to what you've read in His Word?

What specifically could it look like for you to do this?

May the Lord make His grace abound to you so in all things, at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work He has for you to do.

2 Corinthians 9:8

14



About the Author

Deb Entsminger is passionate about creatively helping women come to know Jesus, get rooted and grounded in a relationship with Him and learn how to help others do the same. She's been discipling women for forty-one years and serves on staff with The Navigators as the Collegiate Initiatives Director.

Living in Bradenton, Florida, with her husband, Jim, you can often find her singing as she memorizes verses while kayaking in the Braden River, thinkcling (that's a combo of cycling while thinking to brainstorm new ideas!) or elliptigoing from bench to bench enjoying extended time with Jesus. She is deaf but five years ago the Lord did a miracle through cochlear implants and enabled her to hear again! What a mighty God we serve!