

Heart-Level Discipleship; How To

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Perspective

- *The purpose of our lives is to glorify God. Making disciples is our primary work (entire N.T.).*
- *We are at war (Eph. 6:10-18). Expect making disciples to be difficult.*
- *Have a clear picture of what successful discipleship looks like (e.g. 1 Thess. 1:2-10). If you don't have a clear vision of the target, you're not likely to hit it. (1 Thess. 1)*
- *Start in your own home. If you are not discipling your family well, you're not likely to disciple others well (1 Tim. 3:5). Discipleship requires life-on-life and the home is the ideal setting. Discipleship is more like parenting than any other relationship (1 Thess. 2:7-12). Discipleship is central to parenting and either qualifies or disqualifies you from ministry.*
- *Effective discipleship requires: engaging the heart and cultivating wholehearted love for God (Luke 6:43-45). Behaviour modification and obligatory religion are barren and short sighted. Missing the heart is missing the mission. Below are a few essential elements that foster heart-level discipleship.*

1. Gospel Foundation

Our salvation, sanctification, glorification, freedom, hope, identity and joy are all rooted in the **gospel** of Jesus Christ. The gospel must be lived daily, modeled by the discipler, and increasingly grasped by the disciple (Rom. 8).

2. Prayer

Set regular times to pray intentionally into each of your disciple's lives and **specific** situations. Ask God for wisdom, discernment, patience and sacrificial love for them. Listen for His response in your heart and in scripture. Hearts will not be transformed without God's intervention (1 Thess. 1:2, 3:10). A discipler is not the Holy Spirit.

3. Authenticity: Disciple from a pure heart

A discipler must be an active disciple of Jesus, otherwise they cannot make true disciples. Our motive in making disciples must **increasingly** be for the Glorify God. Impure motives are readily detected by disciple. Be appropriately transparent. If you have something to hide, they will hide their secrets (1 Thess. 2:3-6,10).

4. Commitment & Time

Discipleship requires a high level of commitment by the discipler and an increasing commitment by the disciple. Discipleship typically requires a substantial amount of time that we currently don't have. Therefore, we must **re-prioritize** our lives.

5. Inspire Heart Level Vision

The discipler must help the disciple grasp a biblical vision for their life that resonates deep in their **heart** otherwise motivation will wane. God's vision for our lives is far greater than anything we could come up with (Eph. 3:20). Start where they are at, then build biblically from there. Contrast worldly (counterfeit) success vs. godly (real) success. Help them see clearly the effects of their choices. (Ex. partier vs. fellowship with God (Rom. 8:15-16); gaming adventure vs. Jesus adventure (Heb. 11); material riches vs. eternal treasure (Matt. 6:19-21).

6. Speak From the heart

Be open, honest, and appropriately transparent about your relationship with God, hopes, struggles etc.

"...turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers..." - Malachi 4:6

7. Questions & Actively Listen

Learn to ask wise, motive revealing, open ended questions. Repeat responses back in order to confirm accurate understanding. Ask clarifying sub-questions like, *What do you mean by _____?* or *How did you come to that conclusion?* Don't **assume**. Look for the deeper motives by asking "why?" Following are a few sample questions:

1. What did you like most/least about your day/week/month/year. Why?
2. How would you define a "Christian?" What do you mean by
3. How would you describe your relationship with God?
4. In the past week/month/year, what got you most excited? What got you most upset or angry?
5. What do you most hope for? What do you fear?
6. What sins do you struggle with?
7. Are you living the life God has for you to the fullest? Why or why not?

Make sure your disciple never thinks you are interrogating them or looking for some incriminating confession. Rather, they should feel like you legitimately want to get to know who they are and how you can help them toward life to the full. A wise question should lead to subsequent questions and good **content**.

Apply no pressure. Opening up requires volition. Tread carefully on the sacred ground of their hearts. Work towards speaking freely about motives, fears, doubts, hopes etc. Encourage your disciple to ask you questions. No question should be taboo or unwelcome. My first question is usually, "Is there anything on your heart that you want to talk about?" If appropriate, we go with that, if I think there is something more pressing, then we defer it.

8. Discern

As you listen, ask God to show you how to encourage the good and address the bad. Listen for age-appropriate depth. For example, if a 12 year old says they fear "rejection;" it's likely from the heart. If a 16 year old says, "spiders" you've got further to go to get to the heart. Much of discipleship is **uprooting** the lies/sin/hinderances and replacing them with truth/faith/freedom. Learn to discern; words taken at face value can be misleading. Actions and attitudes that betray inconsistencies with their belief are like warning lights on the dashboard. When they appear, take a thorough look under the hood of the heart. At every opportunity, use the **Bible** to affirm godly motives and refute deceptions. *Ex. A disciple tells you he is anxious about his performance. First, affirm his transparency! Then discern the deeper cause and bring the Bible to bear on the root issue. (Ex. Laziness needs discipline (Prov. 12:24 or Col. 3:23-24) But if it is fear of man, then he'll need help embracing truths such as Prov. 29:25 or Rom. 8:15.)*

Again, don't assume. Administering correction for laziness when fear is the issue will be exasperating.

9. Test & Debrief

Daily life is full of tests that reveal our underlying attitudes and **beliefs**. Watch carefully, observe, discern and reveal using wise questions. Look and listen for both good and bad attitudes which betray their beliefs. (Ex. How come you haven't prioritized reading the Bible this week? How do you expect to have a relationship with God while ignoring Him?) Also, get accustomed to debriefing significant aspects of their day/week.

10. Affirm & Direct

Be liberal with encouragement and celebrate victories and growth toward Christlikeness. Remember, it's not perfection but **direction**. Be wise and sensitive with correction, but don't avoid confrontation. Gently and patiently help your disciple to discover hidden lies or sinful motivations in their hearts (sometimes you'll need to point them out directly) and help replace them with the truth of God's Word. Urge them to **repent** of any sin and pursue righteousness. Let the Bible be your guide and authority that both the discipler and disciple joyfully submit to. Enjoy the journey! It won't be easy, but it will make an eternal difference.

Take Action

We've just scratched the surface of these topics. Study the Bible on each topic; there is no substitute. God specifically gave men the primary responsibility of discipling in the home and in the church (Gen. 18:19, Eph. 6:4, Matt. 10:2-4, 1 Tim.2). However, most Christian men have not been disciplined well themselves, and don't know how to get started. Malachi Man is specifically designed to help any man take his next steps with a fun, short, video series that is engaging and practical for discipleship inside the home and out. Thank you for investing in discipleship and the Kingdom of God!

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