

## A Crash Course in Evangelism

# 11

## Making Disciples

In this lesson, we will examine what happens *after* you lead someone to Christ. In fact, as we will discover, what we do *after* a person accepts Christ is just as important, if not more so, than what we do before that decision is made.

### Read Matthew 28:19-20

Most people have a distorted view of evangelism because they have a distorted view of the commission Christ gave the Church. On the basis of their style of evangelism, one might think that their version of the Great Commission goes something like this:

“Go into all the world and convince people to make a ‘decision’ for me.”

This decision-focused evangelism produces just that – people who have decided to give Christ a try. But notice that the word “decision” is noticeably absent from the Great Commission. We are not to go and make *deciders*; we are to go and make *disciples*.

**Matthew 28:19-20** is the starting point for all evangelism, for it delineates the commission that has been given to the Church. In fact, the work of evangelism cannot be said to be complete until the objectives of these two verses are achieved. So let’s take a quick look at exactly what Jesus commissioned us to do.

“Therefore go and *make disciples* of all nations, *baptizing them* in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and *teaching them* to obey everything I have commanded you...”

Gary Kuhn makes an interesting observation:

“An examination of this passage in more depth will uncover an unusual fact. Nowhere is the command directly given to evangelize.”<sup>1</sup>

Seeing the Harvest

Making the Messenger

Clarifying the Message

Honing the Method I

Honing the Method II

Honing the Method III

Witnessing in Power

Engaging the Enemy I

Engaging the Enemy II

Engaging the Enemy III

▶ **Making Disciples** ◀

Reaching Your Community

This is very important for us to understand. Christ's commission is not actually to go and evangelize. It is to go and make disciples. Every other action in the Church is subservient to that one command. We evangelize not just to "get people saved." We evangelize in order that we may make disciples!

This places evangelism in a whole new perspective. In reality, you are not called to "evangelize" but rather to "make disciples." Everything in church life is a means toward that one end.

## **After the Birth**

So often in evangelism, our whole focus is on one thing and one thing alone – to win a person to Christ. But think of it this way. A pregnant woman may long for the day when her baby is born, but what mother, having given birth to her child, would say: "OK, that's my job done. I'm ready for the next one!" No, the job of mothering has only just begun! In fact, there are many more years of parenting ahead than the nine months she carried the child within her.

It is the same with spiritual birth. Jesus likened entry into the kingdom of God as being "born again" (**John 3:6**). Likewise Paul, in **Titus 3:5**, declared that God "saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit." Peter also developed on the theme of spiritual birth when he proclaimed that God has "given us new birth into a living hope" (**1 Peter 1:3**) and that we have "been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable" (**1:23**). But he carried this a stage further when he wrote in **2:1**:

"Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation..."

What baby would be left to fend for himself? How long would he last without someone to feed him, protect him and care for him? Well, this is exactly what it is like when someone commits his life to Christ. Post-natal care is not just a luxury; it's a necessity.

This spiritual post-natal care is expressed in two vital ways:

### ***Mothering***

#### **Read 1 Thessalonians 2:8**

There is a mothering aspect to nurturing a new believer. In this passage, Paul writes of his tender care toward the young Thessalonian believers:

"...but we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children. We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us."

This mothering dimension to the discipling process is expressed not just in the sharing of the Gospel, but of your very life with the new believer. The mothering aspect involves:

- Nurturing
- Feeding
- Sharing

## ***Fathering***

### **Read 1 Thessalonians 2:10-11**

Not only is there a mothering aspect to the discipling process; there is also a fathering aspect. Paul described this second dimension with these words:

“You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.”

Whereas the mothering aspect of discipling emphasizes the sharing of your life with a new believer, the fathering aspect emphasizes the setting of an example to the new believer. This dimension of discipling also involves:

- Encouraging
- Comforting
- Urging

As you can see, the mothering aspect is mainly focused on growth, whereas the fathering aspect is focused on purpose. It is these two things – growth and purpose – that are the aims of the discipling process.

- **Growth in Christ** – being conformed to the *life* of Christ. This is the focus of the *mothering* dimension of the discipling process.
- **Purpose with Christ** – becoming actively involved in the *work* of Christ. This is the focus of the *fathering* dimension of the discipling process.

Both these aspects – growth and purpose – are necessary components in the discipling process. If one of them is lacking, disciples will not be made.

## **The Importance of Follow Up**

The first step in the making of a disciple is what we generally call “follow up.” Follow up is the first few appointments you make with a new believer in order to establish him in his new faith in Christ.

There are two important reasons to follow up a new believer:

### ***Because a new believer is vulnerable***

Just like a new-born baby, a new believer is particularly vulnerable in the first few months of his spiritual life. This is the time when the enemy will attack and seek to convince him that it was all just an “emotional decision.” By following up a new believer after his initial decision to follow Christ, you shore up his new-found faith and establish the principles upon which his new life in Christ will operate.

- The new believer's **vulnerability** is the focus of the *mothering* dimension of discipling – *growth in Christ*.

### ***Because a new believer is valuable***

Every single person has immense value, not only to the *family* of God as an individual, but also the *purpose* of God as an integral part of God's redemptive work in the world. Contained within each new believer is untold tens, hundreds or even thousands of other potential believers.

- The new believer's **value** is the focus of the *fathering* dimension of discipling – *purpose with Christ*.

Can you see how integrated these fathering and mothering aspects are? As we study the discipling process, we will see them emerge over and over again, like two sides to a single coin. Mothering and fathering. Growth and purpose. Rest and activity. Relationship and ministry. Fellowship and evangelism.

## **Three Stages of Growth**

### **Read 1 John 2:12-14**

John addresses the Church in terms of three spiritual age groups – children, young men, and fathers. These three stages of growth correspond to three steps in the discipling process:

- **Grounding** – the childhood stage (“children”)
- **Training** – the adolescent stage (“young men”)
- **Partnering** – the adult stage (“fathers”)

Let's take a look at each of these stages in turn.

### ***Grounding***

This is the first stage of discipling. After a person commits his life to Christ, he needs to be grounded in a clear understanding of the Gospel.



The grounding phase of discipling is strongly mother-like in its style. The focus is on early growth with an emphasis on fellowship in two areas:

- Fellowship with the Lord
- Fellowship with other Christians

When a baby is born, a bonding takes place between mother and child. In exactly the same way, discipling is about bonding – a bonding between you and the disciple, but just as importantly also between the disciple and the Lord and between the disciple and your church.

What should you be teaching the new disciple during the grounding phase? The answer is: *Everything that is necessary to see the new disciple grounded in the Gospel*. This is reflected in **Matthew 28:19**:

“Therefore go and make disciples...teaching them to obey *everything* I have commanded you...”

How long does this grounding phase take? The answer is: *As long as necessary*. Every new convert is different. But the grounding phase is complete when the following three passages are a living reality in the new disciple’s life:

- **John 15:1-8**
- **Ephesians 4:17-24**
- **Galatians 5:16-25**

At the end of the grounding phase, a new disciple is able to live the Christian life dependent upon God, not upon you. Thus the end of the grounding stage is defined by its goal – a God-sufficient, God-focused Christian life.

- The goal of the grounding stage – **God-dependence**.

## ***Training***

The training stage is not a distinct phase, independent of the grounding stage. You don’t graduate from one to the other. In fact, as soon as a new believer starts to experience revelation in God’s Word, that revelation must find expression outwardly. Grounding *includes* training.



For this reason, the training stage overlaps early into the grounding stage. As early as possible, the new believer should be exercising his spiritual muscles through sharing the revelation he has received with others.

Gary Kuhne defines discipling as the ministry of “developing spiritual maturity and spiritual reproductiveness in the life of a Christian.”<sup>2</sup> Spiritual maturity cannot be separated from spiritual reproductiveness. This is the goal of the discipling process. As Jesus stated it in **John 15:8**:

“This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.”

This fruit-bearing quality of the discipleship process is the focus of the training phase and has a strong fathering emphasis. How is a new disciple to bear fruit? It involves sharing with others the revelation he himself is receiving. He can do this in two important ways:

- Sharing his faith with believers
- Sharing his faith with unbelievers

When is the training phase complete? Like the grounding phase, its end is defined by its goal – to see the disciple fully equipped to be a worker with Christ in his purpose upon the earth. When this happens, the disciple should be able to witness, teach and disciple others without reliance upon yourself.

- The goal of the training stage – **Independence**.

## **Partnering**

The final stage of the discipling process is partnering. The aim of partnering is to multiply the disciple's fruitfulness in the lives of others. In fact, the discipling process itself is multiplied so that those the disciple leads to Christ will be also disciplined, and those that those disciples lead to Christ will in turn be disciplined, and so on.



When is the partnering phase complete? As you can see from the diagram, the answer is: *Never*. It is completely opened-end, because its goal is open-ended.

- The goal of the partnering stage – **Inter-dependence**.

The discipling process itself is completed once the training phase ends. At that point, the disciple has become “one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth” (**2 Timothy 2:15**).

The partnering phase, however, continues indefinitely, but now your disciple has become a co-laborer in the discipling mission. He is no longer your disciple but your partner in the work of God.

Let's now look at the entire discipling process – grounding, training and partnering – as a whole.

Paul's final goal in the discipling process of the Gospel was clear. In **Romans 16:25-26**, he declared:

“Now to him who is able to *establish* you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ...by the command of the eternal God, *so that all nations might believe and obey him...*”

The goal of the discipling process has two elements:

- **The Internal Goal** – To establish the new disciple in the Gospel. This is the focus of the grounding stage of discipling.
- **The External Goal** – To train the new disciple and partner with him to enable not only the spread of the Gospel to others, but also the discipling of others in that Gospel. This is the focus of the training and partnering stages of discipling.

You will notice that the discipling process is not introverted. Rather than being inward looking, it constantly looks outward. Its ultimate goal is nothing less than “that *all nations* might believe and obey [Christ]!” This is reflected in the very commission we received from Christ in **Matthew 28:19**:

“Therefore go and make disciples of *all nations*...”

## **Discipling in the Gospel**

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One thing must be clearly understood. You are not making disciples to yourself. You are making disciples to Christ. Your goal is to wean your disciple from dependence upon you to a genuine and active dependence upon Christ. As with all things, purpose shapes the method. Let’s spell this out clearly.

- **Purpose of discipling** – To produce disciples of Christ
- **Method of discipling** – By establishing disciples in the Gospel of Christ

How do you disciple a new believer? You disciple them in the Gospel! By grounding a disciple in the Gospel and by training him to communicate that Gospel to others, you are setting in motion a multiplication of the Gospel. This is why **Acts 12:24** (KJV) records:

“But the word of God grew and multiplied.”

How did the word of God grow and multiply? It multiplied in the lives of the disciples. Everywhere they went they both lived and proclaimed the Gospel. The discipling process of **Matthew 28:19-20** was in full momentum.

Do you want to see this kind of momentum build in your own community? Welcome to the discipling process!

## **The Ongoing Discovery**

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In **ES111-06**, we described the “path of discovery” that a person makes as they discover Christ for themselves. But this path of discovery doesn’t suddenly come to a dead end at the point of commitment to Christ. In fact, it is just beginning.

As you disciple a new believer, you are encouraging him in the same process of personal discovery that brought him to the point of commitment to Christ. But now the discovery path leads the believer deeping in a revelation of Christ and of the Gospel. The art of discipling is to guide the new believer into his own personal discovery of the timeless truths of God’s Word. In fact, Paul’s own path of discovery, described in **Philippians 3:10**, is now each believer’s path of discovery:

“I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings...”

Do you remember the three styles of communication we taught in **ES111-05**? These are also important types of communication in the discipling process:

## **Monologue**

The new disciple will get his fair share of monologue in the course of his Christian life, mainly through church meetings and bible studies. This is not to belittle monologue. It plays a valuable role in grounding the disciple in the essential truths of the Gospel.

Places where monologue occur:

- In congregational meetings
- In small group bible study
- In one-on-one bible study
- Through tapes and videos
- In the reading of books and bible studies

## **Dialogue**

This is the communication style that addresses the unique concerns and needs of the disciple. A disciple needs to be able to ask questions, for you will remember from your previous lessons that the asking of questions is the doorway to discovery in Christ.

Places where dialogue occur:

- In small group discussions
- In one-on-one discussions
- In telephone/videoconferencing discussions
- In online chatrooms

## **Paralogue**

This is the real art of disciple-making. It is the “alongside” nature of paralogue that helps ground the new believer, since he sees you as a Christian in real life situations. In Gary Kuhn’s words, “personal follow-up is more the communication of a life than it is the communication of information.”<sup>3</sup>

Jesus used monologue and dialogue when communicating with his disciples, but paralogue is the style of communication Jesus used most with his closest disciples. As John expressed with amazement in **1 John 1:1**:

“That which...we have *heard*, which we have *seen* with our eyes, which we have *looked at* and our hands have *touched* – this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.”

Places where paralogue occur:

- In your home
- In your disciple’s home
- In recreational activities
- In church activities

All three styles of communication are important in the discipling process. While monologue and dialogue play an important role in the *grounding* process, paralogue



is most effective in the training process. But paralogue is also the most costly in terms of time.

Timewise, monologue and dialogue are relatively uncostly. A regular appointment of half-an-hour can set up enough monologue and dialogue communication to help ground a new believer in the truth of the Gospel. But paralogue is much more than that. It is a sharing of your life with the new believer.

But how is that possible in today's modern lifestyle? Our schedules are packed with work responsibilities, family responsibilities and, as Christians, church responsibilities. We often have to guard our personal time carefully, or we don't get time "just for me." How does a discipling schedule fit into all of this?

## Making a Start

A discipling schedule is possible, but only if you do the following:

### ***Set priorities***

It all comes down, first and foremost, to priorities. If you consider something an absolute priority, you will be able to find room for it in your schedule no matter how busy you may be. So the question is not so much how busy you are. The question is: How high a priority do you consider discipling a new believer to be?

If you count discipling to be a high priority, you can take a look at your schedule to see if you can weed out any activity that is of a lower priority. As an example, if you are discipling a new believer and you are already heavily committed to church responsibilities, you could speak with your church leadership and ask for "time out" to disciple the new believer.

In a similar way, you may want to speak with your family, explain the importance of discipling the new believer, and come to an agreement that over, say, a six week period, you will be focusing on this discipling process.\* If you do enter into such a family contract, it is important to make up for lost time at the end of the agreed period.†

### ***Be selective***

You need to look carefully at your limits and not overstretch your capabilities. Even Jesus could not disciple everyone. The Gospel accounts record the following groupings of disciples:

- **The seventy-two‡ disciples** – these were the outer circle of disciples, mostly unnamed, except for Matthias, who later become one of the twelve, replacing Judas (**Acts 1:15-26**).

\* It's impossible to disciple someone in six weeks. You can, however, ground a new believer in the faith during this time, then approach the rest of the discipling process in a less time-intensive manner.

† Better still, include your family, if you can, in the discipling process. If your family are believers themselves, then seek to impart the vision of discipling to them also. Rather than have them give up the time spent with you, why not include the family in the discipling process *with* you.

‡ Some early manuscripts give the number as 72, while others record the number as 70.

- **The twelve disciples** – these were the main circle of disciples, and the ones named in the Gospel accounts. They were designated “apostles” by Christ (**Mark 3:14**).
- **The three disciples** – these were the inner circle of disciples – Peter, James and John.

Although Jesus taught the multitudes and trained the seventy two, his main focus in the discipling process was upon the twelve. But there were also times when he narrowed the focus even further, spending special time with the three. In the same way, you need to determine how to focus your time in the discipling process. If you have full-time work or home duties, you may only have the ability to disciple one person at a time. If you are fully supported by the church in ministry, you may be able to focus on three or more disciples at a time.

Who should you disciple? There is no better person for you to disciple than the one you lead to the Lord yourself. If you don't yet have someone to disciple, go out and win one to Christ! The going precedes the discipling (**Matthew 28:19**).

### ***Piggy-back your activities***

Once you have reordered your priorities and selected who you will disciple, you can multiply the effectiveness of your time by *piggy-backing* your activities. In other words, rather than seeing your schedule as something isolated from your disciple, seek to include him, where possible, in some of your daily activities. As Gary Kuhn suggests:

“...look for something that *you are already doing* to which you could invite the new Christian. This is the key to finding time to do effective personal follow-up. By doing two things at once, you squeeze forty-eight hours into twenty-four.”<sup>4</sup>

Here are some examples of piggy-backing:

- If you walk or jog in the morning, see if your disciple would like to join you.
- Take the new disciple to church with you. This is not just to get him to go to church, but also to piggy-back the time to reinforce your relationship and to discuss aspects of the Christian life. On the way back home, you can discuss what he learned from God's Word.
- If you are going to visit someone in the church, take the new disciple with you. This allows the disciple to see you in action, and also provides time for dialogue in the Gospel.

What about shopping? Going to a football game? Going on a picnic? Mowing the lawn or gardening? These and many other everyday activities can be an opportunity to spend time with your disciple. This, after all, is the nature of paralogue. It is all about real life.

**Read Luke 6:40**

## Multiplying Yourself

We started off this module with a principle:

**Evangelistic Principle #1** – “The first priority in evangelism is *perspective* – seeing the harvest as God sees it.”

This principle could easily be extended to discipling: “The first priority in discipling is *perspective* – seeing the disciple as God sees him.” When God looks at a new believer, he sees not only the value of that one individual life; he also sees the many tens, hundreds or even thousands of lives that will eventually be won to Christ because of that one life.

The spread of the Gospel works on the principle of multiplication. Every time you disciple a new believer, you are participating in this multiplication. Let’s see how it works.

### Read 2 Timothy 2:1

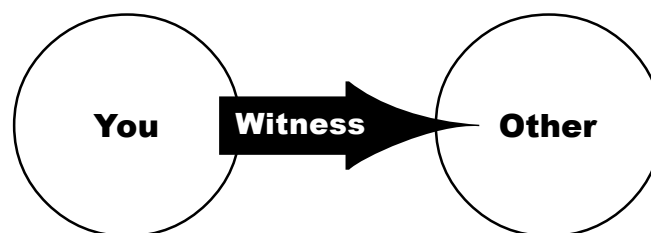
In this injunction to his disciple, Paul expresses the basic principle of multiplying the Gospel message. He writes:

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

Paul speaks of four generations of disciples in this one verse:

- **1st generation** – Paul
- **2nd generation** – Timothy
- **3rd generation** – Reliable men
- **4th generation** – Others

In the same way, you need to see the discipling process in terms of generations. You are the first generation, and you start things off by being a witness for Christ. This is starting point for the discipling process. There are no shortcuts. We are to “go and make disciples” (**Matthew 28:19**) and this means that first we must be “witnesses” for Christ (**Acts 1:8**).

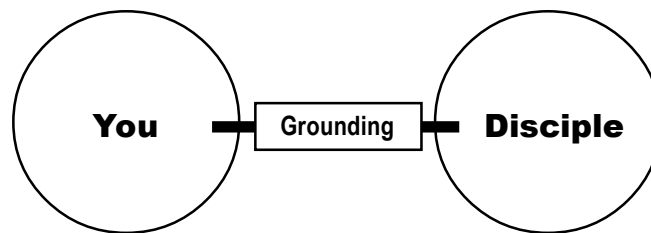


Your ongoing witness is important, for the following reasons:

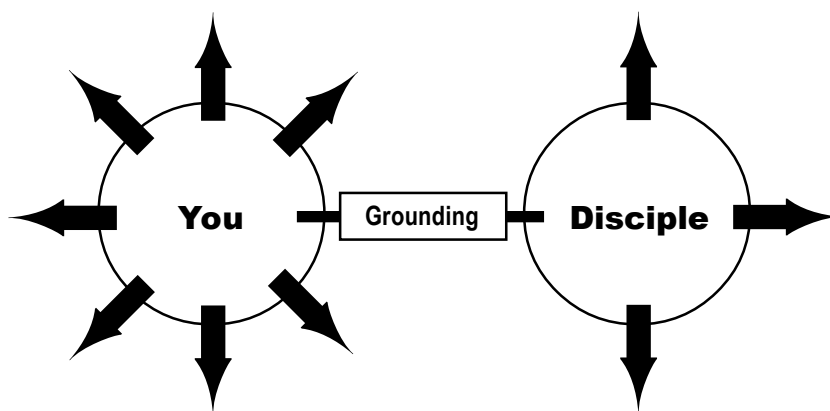
- **For yourself** – Through witness, you participate in the mission of Christ and grow even closer to him. You also discover the unique joy that comes with obedience in evangelism.

- **For the unbeliever** – Your witness is an opportunity for the unbeliever to respond to the challenge of the Gospel. The message you bring may be enough to gain the commitment of that person to the cause of Christ.
- **For your future disciples** – Being a witness is inseparable from being a disciple. If you are to disciple a new believer, you can only impart what you have yourself. If you are a witness, your disciple will also be a witness. This means that a lifestyle of evangelism is vital to the ongoing multiplication of the Gospel.

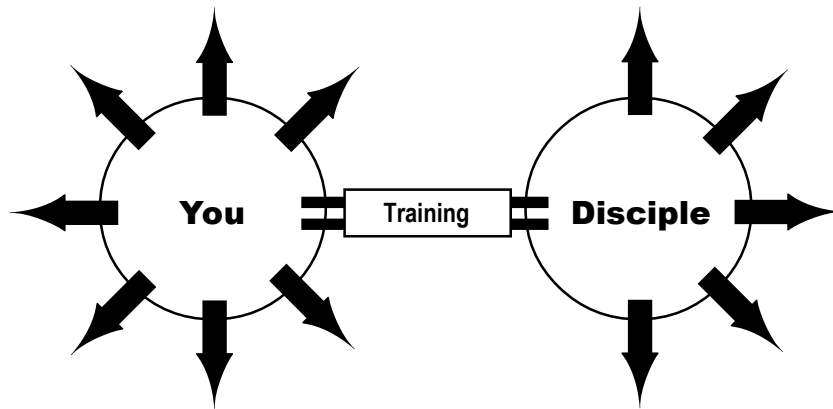
Once you have lead someone to the Lord, the first 24-48 hours is the most critical. It is important to organize to meet up with the new believer at the earliest possible time to reinforce the commitment he has made. It is at this point that the true discipling process commences. Stage one – grounding – has begun.



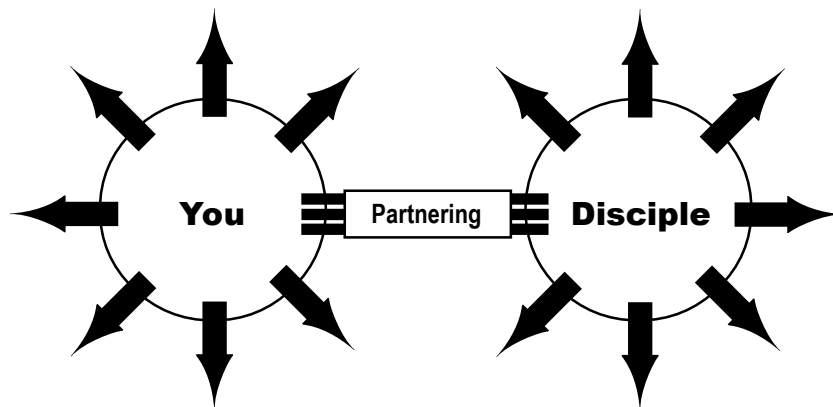
The first four to six weeks are mainly focused on grounding the new disciple. But even during this time, it is vital to be encouraging the disciple to begin sharing his faith with others around him, even as you continue sharing your faith with those around you. It looks something like this:



Can you see that the moment a new disciple begins reaching out evangelistically himself, there is the sudden need of training? Thus it is the disciple’s witness that kicks off the second stage of disciple – training. Grounding continues for as long as is necessary, but training now begins to take priority in the discipling process.



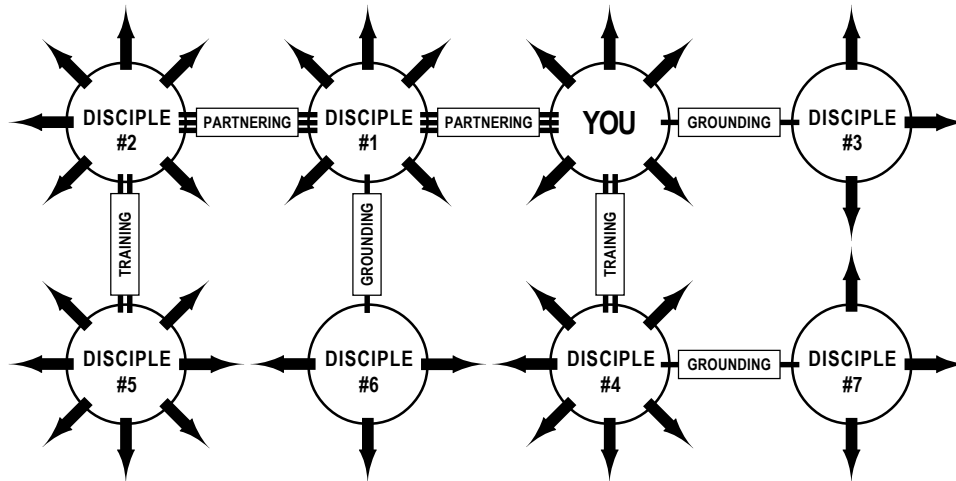
Like the grounding phase, the training phase will vary from disciple to disciple. But there comes a time when your relationship with your disciple has shifted from being a mentor to being a partner. This is the formal end of the discipling process, but not the end of your relationship with your disciple. You are now partners in the Gospel and co-workers in the discipling of others.



At this point, you have reproduced your experience of the Gospel in the life of another. But that's not where the story ends. Assuming that each year all you do is just disciple one other person, and train your disciple to do the same, you would find the following take place over a ten year period.

- ☞ **Year 1** – 2 disciples\*
- ☞ **Year 2** – 4 disciples
- ☞ **Year 3** – 8 disciples
- ☞ **Year 4** – 16 disciples
- ☞ **Year 5** – 32 disciples
- ☞ **Year 6** – 64 disciples
- ☞ **Year 7** – 128 disciples
- ☞ **Year 8** – 256 disciples
- ☞ **Year 9** – 512 disciples
- ☞ **Year 10** – 1024 disciples

Here is what the picture might look like at the end of just three years.



When Jesus commissioned us with the words, “Go and make disciples of all nations,” this is what he had in mind – one person discipling another person to disciple another person to disciple another person. And this is the marvellous mission to which you have been called. If you abide in the vine, then his promise in **John 15:8** is also yours:

“This is to my Father’s glory, that *you* bear much fruit, showing [yourself] to be my [disciple].”

Let’s now sum this lesson up in the next important principle of evangelism:

**Evangelistic Principle #27** – When you lead a person to Christ, you need to disciple him in the Gospel, training him to disciple others.

### Exercise #11

- **Pray** – Ask the Lord to help you lead someone to Christ.
- **See** – When you lead someone to Christ, seek to see him through the eyes of the Lord. Realize that he is valuable, both for himself and for those who will come to know Christ through his witness.
- **Act** – Begin to disciple the new believer, taking him through the grounding stage, then the training stage and then the partnering stage. Go forth and multiply!

- <sup>1</sup> Gary Kuhne, *The Dynamics of Personal Follow-up: The Art of Making Disciples* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), p.21.
- <sup>2</sup> Gary Kuhne, *The Dynamics of Personal Follow-up: The Art of Making Disciples* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), p.22.
- <sup>3</sup> Gary Kuhne, *The Dynamics of Personal Follow-up: The Art of Making Disciples* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), p.51.
- <sup>4</sup> Gary Kuhne, *The Dynamics of Personal Follow-up: The Art of Making Disciples* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), p.62.

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