

# Seven Essentials of Discipleship Content

Deliberate discipleship has a goal: the maturity of the believer to the glory of Christ (Col 1:28-28). Regarding the selection material to study with one's disciple, there is flexibility in terms of what curriculum may be chosen as long what is selected is Biblical and orthodox. The "X-factor" in discipleship is the requirement of *life on life* 'soul care' in which the disciple learns by instruction and example to obey what Christ has commanded. The list of seven essentials below is meant to be one among many possible suggestions for curriculum content:

**1.) Discipleship in the gospel.** By this we mean the full-orbed gospel message which Paul designates, "the word of His grace" (Acts 20:32). It is common for this phase of discipleship to take a year and one half before the disciple has learned to consistently live a 'cross-centered life' founded upon Christ and His grace (Gal 2:20). This track establishes the relationship between justification and sanctification.

**2.) Bible study method.** Hands on hermeneutics (Bible interpretation) will involve the mentor showing the disciple how he arrives at the meaning of the text. Gaining capacity in the steps of interpretation is essential in order for the disciple to learn to feed himself from the Word. Also, as the disciple learns 'inductive Bible study method' he will gain the ability to prepare his own lesson plans/sermons. With this track comes also the basics in Scripture meditation.

**3.) Biblical worldview studies.** The advantages of reading a book on biblical worldview are: 1) We learn to see the big picture (God's 'master plan'). In our age of fragmented knowledge, the unity of all things under the lordship of Christ is essential in order to have a unified Christian experience. 2) Biblical worldview gives us categories of thought by which to apply discernment to all areas of our culture.

**4.) The spiritual disciplines.** Within a discipleship relationship it is advantageous for the mentor to regularly explain to his disciple his own patterns of *prayer, Scripture meditation, confession of sin, communion, evangelism, fellowship, worship, and Scripture study*. The disciple will benefit from learning why these spiritual disciplines are inseparable from spiritual growth, and why they are essential in caring for one's relationship with God.

**5.) Survey of Bible doctrine.** A concise book of doctrine (doctrinal survey) is valuable in fleshing out one's biblical literacy. This includes systematic theology (along with O.T. and N.T. survey). Together with his disciple, the mentor studies the great doctrines of the faith so that the use of, and ethical ramifications of each truth are unfolded (practical theology).

**6.) Pastoral ministry.** In this discipleship track the disciples are given experience in joining the mentor when he counsels and engages in personal ministry. Some of the situations will include: evangelism, visitation of sick and shut-ins, ministry to the homeless, prison ministry. Also the disciple may accompany the mentor when he counsels others in some of the following areas: financial debt, backsliding, pornography addiction, sexual immorality, insubordination, laziness, etc.

**7.) Exposing the disciple to ministry opportunities.** The faithful mentor actively seeks a variety of occasions for the disciple to exercise his gift. Discipleship is incomplete without an effort to unleash one's disciple to ministry. It is common for disciples to limit their own ministry potential by thinking solely in the following terms: traditional ministries, full-time vocational ministry, and areas of service solely within the church (ushering, etc.). The

mentor can help his disciple in this area by giving him opportunities to minister in a variety of situations: *campus clubs, jail ministry, evangelism, convalescent ministries, discipling new believers, and foreign missions, etc.*

Disciples who have grown to the point of discipling others are always deepening their grasp of Scripture truth. The above *Seven Essentials* are foundational. The mentor working with more mature disciples will want to go beyond these essentials. Additional areas of focus include: *apologetics, biblical languages, historical theology, biblical counseling, church history, homiletics, etc.*