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- ◆ *Disciple Building: A Practical Strategy*
- ◆ *Disciple Building: Mentoring for Progressive Growth*
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Disciple Building: A Biblical Framework

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- We Need a New Perspective Regarding Discipleship
- People Need to Grow

Five Foundational Assumptions of Biblical Disciple Building

- **Foundational Assumption #1**
"Because God made man in His own image, He desires that all humanity reflect Him and bring glory to His name. "
- **Foundational Assumption #2**
"Helping believers grow to maturity should be a top priority for the church."
- **Foundational Assumption #3**
"There is a process, revealed in Scripture, that produces maturity."
- **Foundational Assumption #4**
"Christ had a pattern/process for building disciples that can serve as the basis for contemporary disciple building."
- **Foundational Assumption #5**
"The R-CAPS framework is an intentional approach for achieving the goals of maturity and serves as a guideline for a disciple building curriculum."

Balance is Required

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- Balancing World Evangelization and Disciple Building
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- Balancing Leadership Development and Emotional Healing

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Excerpt from *Disciple Building: A Biblical Framework*

People Need and Want to Grow

God wants His people to progress to maturity and believers want to grow up. Becoming a Christian is only the beginning of the process. What is most needed is a better understanding and application of the growth process. The church today needs to find a more effective way to develop mature lay leadership that is able to work alongside the vocational church staff to equip others in the congregation. Paul refers to this process in his ministry and instruction to Timothy.

“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 (II Timothy 2:2).”

Paul had been discipling Timothy, and now he wanted Timothy to have a similar ministry with “reliable” men who would be able to disciple others. It was Paul’s clear goal to multiply himself and his ministry through Timothy. Moreover, Paul instructs the churches to have this same kind of ministry in the church as a whole.

“It was he (Jesus) who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:11-13).”

Paul’s message is clear: the leaders Jesus provides have the responsibility to disciple people in the congregation so that they too can minister to others according to their gifts. Then as this 'every member' ministry of the congregation develops, the whole church becomes involved in building itself up. This fuller ministry is necessary for the whole church to reach unity and maturity.

The plan is not complicated, but there is an important unanswered question. What is the pattern or process by which the church leadership is to train and instruct the congregation? Paul refers to a "pattern of sound teaching" in his instructions to Timothy. (II Tim 1.) Where can we find this pattern that enables church leaders to transfer character and maturity? Must the modern Church use 'trial and error' to figure it out? Will the Spirit of God lead us? Are we to simply teach all the Bible and trust that character will develop? God will certainly use many means to equip us, but what if there is a more strategic method? As we will see, Jesus Himself provided such a disciple building approach.

Disciple Building: A Practical Strategy

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- Mark's Case Study
- Pages from Mark's Equipping CGC
- Pages from Mark's Restorative CGC
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- Sample NGP #2
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- Sample NGP #4
- Blank NGP Worksheet
- *Christian Growth Inventory (CGC)*

Excerpt from *Disciple Building: A Practical Strategy*

II. **NGP Approach** (How to Discern Needs, Set Goals and Write Projects for a Disciple)

Introduction

Now that many of the foundational philosophical roots have been discussed, the R-CAPS Grid explained and the restorative elements of disciple building presented, it is time to put these theoretical concepts into practical, disciple building situations.

As we grow and help disciples grow, it is important to recognize our dependence on God for wisdom and guidance. Although we have a responsibility to be faithful, diligent and loving, it is the Holy Spirit who enables and causes us to grow. (I Corinthians 3:10-11)

But as the Lord of our sanctification, He has given us the privilege of cooperating with Him in effecting growth. To accomplish this He has provided practical approaches and strategies to use in carrying out our responsibilities. Just as we need a strategy for living (with goals, priorities, etc.) we need a strategy for building disciples. Understanding what people need, having clear goals that assist them, and prayerfully designing growth projects are essential ingredients in disciple building.

At WDA we integrate these three concepts into a tool called an “NGP” (an acronym for Needs-Goals-Projects/Plans). This tool is useful in training leaders to pray through, think through, write and implement a personalized disciple building strategy. Having a strategy in building disciples will help prevent aimlessness and “communication overload.” Paul’s admonition in Ephesians 5:15-16 sums up this approach: “Live life...with a due sense of responsibility, not as men who do not know the meaning and purpose of life, but as those who do. Make the best use of your time, despite all the difficulties of these days”. (Phillips)

Step 1: Discover the Needs of a Disciple

The well-known psychologist, A. H. Maslow suggested that there is a hierarchy of human needs. We need to be fed and clothed, we need to feel secure, we need companionship and love, we need to understand our purpose and the meaning of life, and we need to feel that we are a significant part of the world.

Disciple Building: Mentoring for Progressive Growth

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Excerpt from *Disciple Building: Mentoring for Progressive Growth*

Understanding the Five Initiatives of a Disciple Building Mentor

I have a friend who, knowing my penchant for systematics and theology, keeps me honest by always asking the practical questions. It's not that he's opposed to biblical theories and ministry approaches, he simply wants to know: "Does it WORK in real life?" Let's face it, if mentoring doesn't work in the fast-paced world where most of us reside, it is of little use. But Jesus made it work in His world, and without all the "bells and whistles" of modern technology to assist Him. This begs the question: "What did our Lord actually DO to disciple the Twelve?" In other words, if Jesus had a palm-planner, what mentor activities or initiatives would He have scheduled?

A careful study of Scripture gives us clues into how biblical mentors facilitated the process of helping others grow. In effect, they engaged in five activities that constitute the initiatives of a disciple builder. [1] They built ***relationships***, [2] they taught ***content***, [3] they provided ***accountability*** to help people put the truth they had been taught into practice, [4] they ***prayed***, and [5] they constructed ***situations*** where that truth could be applied. These five initiatives form an acrostic: R-CAPS. When combined with the Five Phases we discussed in the last section, these five initiatives form a disciple building training/growth grid¹. The R-CAPS approach has been helpful to many as a guide for assisting mentors in the growth process². R-CAPS is not a curriculum or a program but a framework for understanding what disciple builders can do to help others grow. Let's take a closer look at each of these five initiatives.

Build Relationships

Paul said to the Thessalonian church that he and the other members of his team were like fathers and mothers, caring, nurturing and teaching the believers. (I Thessalonians 2: 7-12) The relationships that they established provided the foundation for everything else that God was doing. The impact someone has upon us is in direct proportion to the relationship we have with that person. Casual associates may irritate us with their comments or actions, but not to the same degree as remarks made by those we live with or work closely with.

¹ See R-CAPS Grid in the *Exhibits* section of this Manual.

² See *Disciple Building: A Practical Strategy*, WDA

A Small Groups Manual

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 - Why Have Small Groups?
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Role of Leadership in Progressive Disciple Building Groups

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- Informal Leadership
- The Importance of Partnerships
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 - What We Teach
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Addendum

- Small Groups and Sunday School
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- Mutual Agreements and Covenants
- The Benefits of a Well-Designed Guided Curriculum

Excerpt from *A Small Groups Manual*

- Progressive Disciple Building Groups

The second kind of intentional small group is similar to what Jesus used to train His disciples. These groups are called Progressive Disciple Building Groups. Though containing many of the characteristics of other kinds of small groups, these groups are unique because they are formed around the specific maturity level of the group members. Actually there are five different types of progressive disciple building small groups corresponding to five different phases of Christian growth to maturity. (See *Disciple Building: A Biblical Framework*, a revision of *A Model for Strategic Disciple Building*, WDA) Maturity does not mean that someone has arrived at spiritual perfection or been completely formed as a believer. It means that a disciple has been trained how to put into practice all the truths Christ commanded. We cannot honestly say that we are fulfilling our Lord's Great Commission unless we have a plan to train disciples to progressively put His truth into practice. The Progressive Disciple Building Group is central to that goal.

Putting truth into practice involves more than merely imparting information to someone. Helping a disciple obey God's Word in order to transform his character is a complex process similar to raising children. A good parent understands that children must grow over time through a process that involves modelling, discipline, nurture, and other important elements. In a similar way, disciple building must be grounded in genuine relationships between less mature and more mature believers. In addition, prayer, teaching, and appropriate accountability challenges that include real life experiences of ministering to others are integral to the process. We refer to this comprehensive method of disciple building as The R-CAPS approach. It is described in more detail in *Disciple Building: A Biblical Framework*, WDA (a revision of *A Model for Strategic Disciple Building*).

Progressive disciple building small groups are an integral part of this systematic discipleship approach. These groups aim at helping believers assimilate and apply the truths appropriate for their particular level of maturity. Each group functions best when it is integrated with a mentor program, a guided approach toward developing spiritual disciplines, and a systematic, tiered program for teaching "everything whatsoever Christ commanded".

***Helping a disciple
obey God's Word
in order to
transform his
character is a
complex process.***

Excerpt from *Christian Growth Checklist* :

Instructions: Read over the items in each Phase and mark the items that are true of you. Continue marking items in each Phase until you come to a Phase in which you mark fewer than one-half of the items. This indicates that you need training and growth at this phase, and possibly, at the previous phase.

Remember, try to be consistent and honest in your appraisal of yourself. Celebrate what God has done in your life and eagerly anticipate what He will do!!

Phase I-B: Follow Up

1. I understand that God loves me.
2. I have admitted that I have a problem with sin and need a savior.
3. I know that my sin caused a separation between God and me before I became a Christian.
4. I know that my good deeds are not the basis of my salvation.
5. I know that if unbelievers continue to reject Christ they will experience separation from God and eternal damnation.
6. I know that I am forgiven because Christ died on the cross to pay the penalty for my sin.
7. I know that Jesus Christ is the only way that people can be brought into a relationship with God.
8. I know that the Bible is the Word of God.
9. I know that I have eternal life.
10. I have acknowledged my faith in Jesus Christ through baptism.
11. I have placed my faith in Christ alone for salvation.
12. I realize that the Christian life is journey that will last a lifetime.
13. I have a desire to follow Christ.
14. I find myself trusting Christ in new ways.
15. My care and concern for others has increased.

Phase II: Laying Foundations

16. I know that I am a new person now that I have trusted Jesus Christ.
17. I know that the Holy Spirit lives in me and will empower me to live the Christian life.
18. I know how to be filled with the Spirit.
19. I know that Jesus Christ is coming again.
20. I have seen God answer specific prayers related to my everyday needs.
21. I have experienced God's guidance and direction about a particular matter.
22. I regularly attend a local church.
23. I am learning to understand and apply the Bible to my daily life.
24. I am establishing a personal devotional time in my daily routine.
25. Since becoming a Christian, I have sinned and have experienced both the discipline and forgiveness of God.
26. I am in a small group that meets regularly for Bible study and encouragement.
27. I know that God is a just, benevolent, all-powerful Father.
28. I know that God has a three-in-one nature: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

How Emotional Problems Develop

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Created in God's Image

- The Source of Our Struggles
- Correcting an Imbalance

How Problems Begin

Sources of Pain for Children

- The Results of Unresolved Pain

Typical Adult Problems that Result from Unresolved Pain

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- The Order of the Recovery Process

Four Development Tasks

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Addendum A: Development of Emotionally-Based Problems

Addendum B: The Recovery Process

Addendum C: A Biblical View of Recovery: Isaiah 61:1-4

Excerpt from *How Emotional Problems Develop*:

Typical Adult Problems that Result from Unresolved Pain

The child takes all these unhealthy ways of living into his adult life with him: the wrong and ineffective behaviors, the buried emotions, the false beliefs and the distorted self-image. This causes even more pain. If these issues continue to go unaddressed, the problems will get worse.

Interestingly, these very problems often show the person his need for Christ. Coming to know Christ usually brings many positive changes into the person's life, but the types of problems mentioned here tend to lurk in the background and usually do not get resolved until they are addressed directly. This is why new Christians often seem better immediately after conversion, but problems surface (or may return) as time goes on. It is not that Christ does not make a difference: He does. And ultimately, He is the answer. However, we must apply the Biblical principles to these emotional issues in order to resolve problems.

The second column of *Addendum A* ("Development of Emotionally-Based Problems") lists some of the typical problems an adult will face when the emotional issues of the past go unaddressed. This list applies to Christians as well as to unbelievers. The problems listed in the middle column are really symptoms of the underlying issues which are described in the first column. These issues (Column Two) are what bring people into counseling and into recovery groups. They need help to understand the root problems (Column 1) and to learn the skills necessary to overcome these problems. They also need support from others through the process.

The following is a short description of each problem listed in Column Two of *Addendum A*. This is not a complete list of problems that might occur. People may experience one of the symptoms, several of them or all nine.

- 1. Relational Problems** - A person's survival mechanisms, addictions, compulsions, and emotional immaturity will interfere with relationships. As a result of unresolved problems, a person may not have the relational skills to interact with others in a healthy way.
- 2. Poor Decisions** - Because the person does not think correctly about himself, his emotions, his needs or life issues, he will often make poor decisions that add even more pain to his life. For example, it is not unusual for this person to be out-of-control financially. In spite of being intelligent, he seems to lack the ability to think wisely about finances.