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***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-CPS Grid in the *Exhibits* section of this Manual.

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