

Cultivating Leaders: A Case Study in Disciplemaking with Timothy_Disciplemaking Principles

Toby DeHay

Cultivating Leaders / Discipleship; Mentor; Leadership; Apprentice; Timothy; Principles / Acts 16:1-5

As Paul meets Timothy and proceeds to bring him along on his second missionary journey (Acts 15:36-18:22). Timothy's character and desire to follow the Lord provides us with some disciplemaking principles we can follow.

[Acts 16:1-5](#) (NKJV)

¹ Then he came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, *the* son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father *was* Greek. ² He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium. ³ Paul wanted to have him go on with him. And he took *him* and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in that region, for they all knew that his father was Greek. ⁴ And as they went through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. ⁵ So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily.

Discipleship Memory Verse

[2 Timothy 2:2](#)

2 Timothy 2:2 NKJV

And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

Searching for a certain type of believer.

1. Faithful
2. Available

3. Teachable
4. Reproducible

Faithful Discipleship Principles

Disciples are Hungry for God's Word (v1)

[Acts 16:1](#) (NKJV)

¹ Then he came to Derbe and Lystra. **And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy**, *the son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father was Greek.*

Before we move on, I'd like to take a minute to define our terms and to the special relationship we have in Christ as a *disciple* of His.

1. **The term *disciple* here means “a follower of Jesus.”** At this point Timothy was not on mission with Paul, but was still a Christ-follower.
2. **This term *disciple* assumes reproduction.** Timothy was a third-generation Christian. [2 Tim 1:5](#) “when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also.”

How do we know Timothy was Hungry for God's Word?

- Several scholars believe Paul had previously known Timothy as a convert of his on his first missionary journey.

[Acts 14:20–21](#) (NKJV)

²⁰ However, when the disciples gathered around him, he rose up and went into the city. And the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

²¹ And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch,

[1 Corinthians 4:17](#) (NKJV)

¹⁷ For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.

[2 Timothy 3:15](#) (NKJV)

¹⁵ and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Believer...

- Do you have a genuine hunger for God's Word?
- Are you reading it daily with expectations that we will encounter the Lord?
- Would our friends, family, coworkers, and neighbors know us as a disciple or Christ-follower?

One who is a disciple, is hungry for God's Word.

Disciples are Hungry for God's Word

Disciples have godly Character (v2)

[Acts 16:2](#) (NKJV)

² He was **well spoken of by the brethren** who were at Lystra and Iconium.

It seems as if it shouldn't have to be said, but sadly it does: godly character is important.

Let's take a minute to look at the atmosphere in which Timothy's godly character was produced in [Acts 14](#).

[Acts 14:4-7](#) (NKJV) Paul fled to Lystra and Derbe to escape persecution.

⁴ But the multitude of the city was divided: part sided with the Jews, and part with the apostles. ⁵ And when a violent attempt was made by both the Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to abuse and stone them, ⁶ they became aware of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding region.

⁷ And they were preaching the gospel there.

[Acts 14:8-10](#) (NKJV) Timothy no doubt heard about Lord's power.

⁸ And in Lystra a certain man without strength in his feet was sitting, a cripple from his mother's womb, who had never walked. ⁹ This man heard Paul speaking. Paul, observing him intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed, ¹⁰ said with a loud voice, "Stand up straight on your feet!" And he leaped and walked.

[Acts 14:11](#) (NKJV) He would have understood the difference between true and false worship.

¹¹ Now when the people saw what Paul had done, they raised their voices, saying in the Lycaonian *language*, "The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!"

[Acts 14:14-15](#) (NKJV) Timothy witnessed or heard about Paul and Barnabas' character, attesting to Christ rather than themselves.

¹⁴ But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard this, they tore their clothes and ran in among the multitude, crying out ¹⁵ and saying, "Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men with the same nature as you, and preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them,

[Acts 14:19-20](#) (NKJV) Timothy would have seen or heard about Paul being stoned, supposedly to death, and those disciples who ministered to him.

¹⁹ Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there; and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul *and* dragged *him* out of the city, supposing him to be dead. ²⁰ However, when the disciples gathered around him, he rose up and went into the city. And the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

[Acts 14:21-23](#) (NKJV) Timothy may have been one of those directly impacted by Paul's evangelism, been encouraged, and saw him appoint elders and begin the First Church at Lystra/Derbe.

²¹ And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, ²² strengthening the

souls of the disciples, exhorting *them* to continue in the faith, and *saying*, “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.”²³ So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

Friends, Timothy had plenty of opportunity to see what godly character looked like and to compare what he knew about the Lord to what he saw in one who was preaching Him.

- Do our actions as a Christian exemplify our Lord?
- When people hear our name, do they think “godly character,” or might they be thinking what Jesus said in [Matt 23:25](#)?

Matthew 23:25 NKJV

²⁵ “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence.

- When we think about being a disciple or making some, we can’t skip godly character.
- Pastor Tim Parsons was pastor of Centerpoint Church of Lexington. He passed away a few years ago of COVID, but was known for spending all day every Thursday at Panera Bread discipling one person after another.

Tim wrote his own discipleship material that is amazing! He said:

There are three basic requirements for someone who is ready to begin making other disciples:

1. Must be a Christian
2. **Must live a clean, committed life**
3. Must have a concern for lost people

Friends, what do you and I need to change in order that we can claim we have godly lives?

Disciples are Hungry for God's Word

Disciples have godly Character

Disciples are on Mission (v3)

[Acts 16:3](#) (NKJV)

³ **Paul wanted to have him go on with him.** And he took *him* and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in that region, for they all knew that his father was Greek.

I notice a few principles about being on mission in verse 3.

1. Notice how the other principles have led to this. (Hungry for God and godly character)
2. Timothy did something he didn't need to do.
 - a. Internationals living here.
 - b. Helping my neighbor care for their property.
 - c. Forgoing our own traditions and preferences in church for the sake of our lost neighbors.

Remember, the council that was held in Jerusalem in [Acts 15:28](#) lets the Gentiles know they do not need to hold to the law as some Jewish believers had been saying.

Acts 15:28 NKJV

²⁸ For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things:

Yet, Timothy receives circumcision.

Friends, are we willing to let go of our preferences for the cause of the gospel?

Are you and I on mission as a disciple of His?

Are we going in Oak Grove, Pembroke, Kentucky, the US, and the world?

Disciples are Hungry for God's Word

Disciples have godly Character

Disciples are on Mission

Disciples are Faithful and Steadfast (v4)

[Acts 16:4](#) (NKJV)

⁴ And **as they went** through the cities, **they delivered to them the decrees to keep**, which were determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem.

How do we know they were faithful and steadfast?

They went to the cities and delivered the decrees from [Acts 15](#).

Not only did they go and deliver a message, they saw the churches strengthened and increase in number.

How is it possible that simply due to a message being delivered, the churches were strengthened and increased in number?

- The people were encouraged. Can you imagine the burden they must have felt? Maybe guilt, confusion, or inferiority?
- No doubt Paul and Timothy evangelized while they were there and the people were encouraged to do the same.

Friends, a disciple is one who is faithful and steadfast.

They are faithful to God, His Word, and do what it and the Holy Spirit tells them to do.

Disciples are Hungry for God's Word

Disciples have godly Character

Disciples are on Mission

Disciples are Faithful and Steadfast

Disciples Bless Their Local Church (v5)

[Acts 16:5](#) (NKJV)

⁵ So **the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily.**

Let me lay out some examples from the past 12 months and you give me an answer....all the same answer. :)

- A month or two ago I asked a man if he had a church family and he said, “I don’t believe in organized religion.” Would he be considered to be a faithful disciple?
- I talk to the wait staff at restaurants and ask them about their relationship with the Lord and His church. I hear this often: “I’m a Christian, but I don’t go to church.” Faithful disciple?
- Local church member has a second or third tier theological disagreement with their pastor (not salvation related, but theological none the less), proceeds to bad-mouth him to anyone who will listen, and then abruptly leaves the church. Faithful disciple?
- What about this one? A Christian comes to church regularly, yet never shares the gospel with others, isn’t reading the Bible or praying regularly, and doesn’t contribute to the needs of the church. Faithful disciple?

Friends, faithful disciples bless their church.

They may be the one’s who are bringing good news such as the decree from [Acts 15](#), or a rebuke such as the first letter to the Corinthians.

Faithful disciples want to see their local congregation strengthened not torn down by unbiblical character.

Faithful disciples want to see the kingdom grow through evangelism and multiplication.

Faithful disciples love their fellow believers and try to minister to one another through the use of their gifts.

Faithful disciples love their pastors, support their ministry, and care for their family.

Faithful disciples are ones of whom others say, “they love their church very well!”

Disciples are Hungry for God’s Word

Disciples have godly Character

Disciples are on Mission

Disciples are Faithful and Steadfast

Disciples Bless Their Local Church

Further Resources for Teaching/After Sermon:

Principles to Begin Multiplying Oneself

1. Start by praying daily to be a [2 Tim 2:2](#) disciplemaking believer.

2. Set up structures for a future disciplemaking ministry NOW.

a. Read biblical accounts and learn about your biblical responsibility.

b. Read a few discipleship/making books.

c. Interview a few pastors or believers who are currently active in this ministry.

d. Study a few disciplemaking methods and get prepared to give one a try.

e. Brainstorm your own “Leadership Lab,” “Pipeline,” or “Internship.”

i. Bivo/Covo pastors and other small church staff/leadership can do this!

3. Look for FATR 2-2-2 believers within your church.

a. Faithful, Available, Teachable, Reproducible

Action Steps

- What are you doing to identify any Faithful, Available, Teachable, and Reproducible believers in your church?
- What steps do you need to take to make time to begin discipling another believer?
- Friend, have you been born again? Have you repented of your sin and placed your faith and trust in Christ alone for your salvation

Connect!

www.tobydehay.com/disciplemaking