


Effective Discipleship

Find helpful discipleship tips.

-  **Practice spiritual disciplines.** Read the Bible daily, confess and repent of your sins and pray for the lost. Your relationship with Christ is a priority and the key to effectively discipling others.
 - **Remain conservative in your ethics.** Remember that pride can be dangerous. Pride may imply that you are judging others falsely, and is said to be the mother of all sins, because pride resides in each one of us.
 - **Lead by example.** “Do as I say, not as I do” is not an effective way to disciple someone. Make sure your life is worthy of emulating.
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Why You Should Count Your Blessings Backward

“If God is blessing me, He sure has a funny way of showing it!” quipped a lady next to me at church. “I know the feeling,” I thought. “But then, what do you expect? His ways, after all are not our ways.”

I learned the hard way that God doesn't always orchestrate circumstances to suit us. But at a particularly low point in my life, He gave me a key to rising above those circumstances, no matter how devastating.

At the time, I was eking out an existence as a

telemarketer. I had barely enough to eat and didn't have the money to pay the rent or the bills. I was single and alone in the big city, and I looked it, sitting around in my nubby-pink bathrobe with rollers in my hair crying out to God, "Are you there?"

What happened in the next few seconds jolted me! God did not answer, "Yes, my child, what is it?" But he did answer. All around me—and in me—I heard a resonating voice that said: COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS—BACKWARD!

Say what? It's hard enough to count your blessings in the middle of a pity party, but to count them backward? What was that?

In the next moment I found myself recalling a blessing that had happened the previous year. I had been hired to be a part of a film team that was going to England. The assignment had come about from a seemingly "chance" encounter with a former neighbor at the grocery store. She mentioned that she and her husband were hiring a production crew to go to England and asked me if I would consider joining their team.

"This is an answer to prayer!" I had replied enthusiastically. Often I had told God how much I would like to go to England, and finally He was fulfilling my desire!

Odd—if it hadn't been for the noisy apartment that had "driven" me to move to the apartment where I met this couple, I might not have experienced the trip to England!

As I thought about this, I realized what God wanted me to understand: that he had been at work all along, setting up circumstances to bring His will to pass in my life. Recalling previous blessings and answered prayers reminded me of this truth. It is what David meant by

“encouraging himself in the Lord.”

Tracing our blessings backward shows us the “pattern” of God’s involvement in our lives. It allows us to see that the very obstacles we face today could be the things that set us up for His blessings tomorrow.

So if a prayer of yours hadn’t been answered yet, hold on! The answer could very well be in progress in ways you’d least suspect.

God, being supernatural, is also wise: He often uses our natural settings and the people in them to move us along the path He has chosen for us. The path may be winding and steep, but it’s never a path of defeat—only victory.

It took Ruth’s moving to a new land with Naomi to “bring” Boaz into her life. It took a lost donkey to “cause” Saul to be sent forth, which led to an encounter with the prophet Samuel, who anointed him king.

Today’s blessings are the result of the Father’s masterful orchestration of people and events. So if you are in difficult circumstances, take heart. The answers you are believing for tomorrow are actively at work in God’s hand today!

Turn On the Light

This Month’s Bible Study | *Read John 8:31-47*

Why we don’t need to hide in the dark from our mistakes

A little boy was playing in his father's garage one sunny afternoon. It was a place of treasures and wonders for the youngster, who loved the tools, the workbench and watching his father work. He knew he wasn't supposed to play in the garage unless his father was there too, but his dad wouldn't be home for hours, and he wasn't going to hurt anything anyway.

His father's latest project was a wooden model of a sailing ship. Dozens of small parts and hours of labor had gone into it so far. It was going to be a beautiful ship.

As the boy explored the wondrous world, something on the shelf over the workbench caught his eye. He had to know what it was. He climbed onto the bench and stretched to reach the item. Holding on to the shelf to steady himself, he suddenly felt it give way. Everything on it crashed onto the yet-to-be-completed model, smashing many of its delicate parts.

The boy jumped down, horrified at what he had done and thinking how mad his father was going to be. He decided the best thing to do was to cover the ship with a piece of canvas and push it to the back of the workbench. Maybe his dad wouldn't notice—or maybe he'd forget about the project.

The boy ran into the house, worried about being found out. His mom offered him an afternoon snack of milk and cookies, but he couldn't think about anything else except what would happen if he were discovered.

John 8:31-47 gives the answer to the boy's problem. Verse 31 tells us what to do when faced with our wrongdoing. Jesus said, "The truth will set you free." The passage goes on to say, "Jesus replied, 'I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin.'"

It is our human nature to try to hide in darkness, to think that if we cover up our sins no one will know. But God always knows our deeds and our hearts. By hiding our sins, we actually make ourselves slaves to them.

God tells us in 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, [God] is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (NIV).

If the boy had just called his father and confessed his disobedience he wouldn't have spent the entire afternoon worried about the consequences. There probably were consequences—there are in real life as well—but they are never as bad as we imagine they'll be.

A note about this passage in the *Fire Bible: Global Study Edition* says: "Yet there is only one truth that will set people free from sin, destruction and Satan's power. That truth is Jesus Himself."

What are you hiding? What is inhibiting you and holding you back from real freedom? Are you a slave to things in your life that you wish you were free from?

Then the answer is clear: Confess your sins to the Father, let the light of Jesus' redemptive work on the cross shine on your life, and let Him wash away the guilt. Let the peace of the Holy Spirit come and comfort you. Know true freedom from the bondage of slavery!

Feedback November 2010

HE'S ONE SPIRITED PROFESSOR

Thank you for highlighting the contribution of Gordon

Fee (September) to those who seriously desire to love God with their minds as well as their hearts. I have found his writings to be very helpful in understanding God's Word. How sad that he is rejected by the evangelical community because he speaks in tongues and by the charismatic-Pentecostal community because he uses his brain.

*Jay Satterwhite,
Tucson, Ariz.*

MAN WITH A MISSION

The terrific article about my friend Loren Cunningham could only have been better with more emphasis on the role of his amazing wife, Darlene, in the mission ("Man [and 2.5 Million Youth] With a Mission" by Julian Lukins, September). Darlene is the co-founder of the mission, and it would not be at all what it is today without her! For years Darlene has run the leadership training for YWAM's leaders internationally and has been key in the identification and documentation of YWAM's values and principles so they can be implemented in the 1,000-plus bases around the world. I'm sure your readers would be very blessed by an article about Darlene. I heartily recommend one!

*Jane L. Crane
Rancho Santa Fe, Calif.*

BY FAITH ALONE?

If Gordon Fee is the first Pentecostal Bible scholar, I pray he is the last. He seems to delight in disproving most everything that Pentecostals and evangelicals believe. He is so caught up in Greek syntaxes,

conjugations and textual criticism that he seems to have forgotten that Christianity only requires faith. By my simple faith, God has saved me, healed me, prospered me and supplied all of my need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

O.D. Rackley,
via e-mail

HOMELESS IS WHERE THE HEART IS

In the story about Brian Seeley's decision to live among the homeless in Florida (Inspire, September), he says: "My heart is that if we could all become more personal in our approach to one another, and specifically the homeless ... I think that's part of what being a Christian is—breaking those barriers." I love his approach. I believe this is what Jesus would do and wants to do through us. After more than 60 years in ministry my heart resonates with Brian's. May the church respond in like manner.

Mel Grams,
via e-mail

ETERNAL QUESTIONS

In response to Fred Bristow's letter in the September issue, I could not disagree more! His rationale is absurd and judgmental. Self-murder (suicide) is not the unforgivable sin. Many factors contribute—clinical depression and drug interactions to name a few. A Christian who commits suicide does not go to hell—this is in direct conflict with the law of grace and is unscriptural. Suicide is certainly not the final denial

of saving grace. Such thinking is harmful and completely untrue.

*Denise Mikkelsen,
Naperville, Ill.*

MISSING A MAJOR POINT

The theme for the August issue, "Why You Need the Holy Spirit," covered well the classical charismatic position on the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which overwhelmingly focuses upon manifestations such as tongues, healing, miracles, prophecy and so on—and I greatly concur with them all. Unfortunately, the lead articles entirely overlooked the great truth of the purpose of the Holy Spirit baptism, as laid out in Acts 1:8: "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." This glaring omission has kept the charismatic-Pentecostal movement way behind the front lines of reaching the flood tide of unreached people populating our towns and cities today.

*Scott Hinkle,
Red Bank, N.J.*

MILESTONES OR GRAVE MARKERS?

I have been receiving *Charisma* for a number of years and thoroughly enjoy the accounts of the outpouring of God's Spirit around the world. In the 35th anniversary issue I did not like part of the article "Milestones in the Charismatic Movement" (August). Many beautiful reports are pointed out. However, along with these were also

reports of Spirit-filled ministers falling into sin. Brothers and sisters, these are not milestones in the charismatic movement. These are instead grave markers we need to be ashamed of. We need to be calling on God to lead us in a balanced path of holiness and power.

*Ronald Hooper,
Fort Qu' Appelle, Saskatchewan*

REVISITING TONGUES

In the August article "Evidence of the Gift," Bill Hamon states, "The main reason most Christians do not receive the gift of tongues is their pastors have not taught them that it's God's will for them to have it." A proper exegesis of 1 Corinthians 12:1-31 reveals that everyone will not receive the same gifts and manifestations of the Spirit. There are several reasons many Christians do not speak in tongues. The greatest reason is that God doesn't need them to speak in tongues to bring glory to His name. It is this kind of misinformed article that causes many to shun the charismatic doctrines.

*B.L. James,
via e-mail*

FREED FROM HOMOSEXUALITY

To my brother who responded to the article "Help! I Think I'm Possessed!" (July), you defended homosexuality as a victim, according to Hosea 4:12. Yes, a person is a victim of sin. You also stressed that your homosexuality was "God-given." That is a lie from Satan. You are just going through the process of being made whole. Brother, sin—not just homosexuality, but all sin—separates us

from God. I was a victim of the gay life for 15 years; however, the Lord delivered me in 1986. It was a long process, but I am free today. Because of God's love for me, He was merciful and full of grace. That is love! Don't give up. Endure to the end.

*Harold Simms Jr.,
Tacoma, Wash.*

Practically Political

✘ *Can Christians save the mess that is today's American political scene? Better yet, should we? Charisma asked two pastors to offer their unique viewpoints on the role politics plays in believers' lives.*

The Church as a Prophetic Voice

by Harry R. Jackson Jr.

I am often asked why I spend so much time engaging in the moral battles of our day. My critics see my work outside the pulpit as crass political pandering or fleshly power grabs.

They often are joined by a host of folks in our culture who want to renounce the religious right. These peace-loving believers have not been able to identify with angry, self-appointed spokespersons who have historically dominated the media.

Despite the excesses of some of our forerunners, the

church dare not withdraw in monklike fashion from the public square.

Charisma Online November 2010

Debt-Free for the Holidays

The average American spends almost \$700 during the holiday season—most of that on credit. This year, refuse to be average. Discover how God helped financial adviser Amie Streater dig her way out of \$100,000 of credit-card debt, and join her in living debt-free. Learn more at [.](#)

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Live Chat With Mike Bickle

Are you desperate for a more intimate prayer life? Do you want to know how to hear God's voice more? Then join prayer leader Mike Bickle for a conference call on Nov. 16 at 9 p.m. (EST) to ask questions and listen to an in-depth discussion on prayer and worship. Register and submit your questions for the chat at .


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How to Handle Jealousy

 Removing jealousy from our own lives is hard enough. It's even more complicated when we encounter jealousy from others. How should we handle another's jealousy? What is the proper response? Again, Jesus is our perfect example: We should overlook it.

Jesus did not say to those who were jealous of Him, "The trouble with you is that you're jealous." That would never do.

The Impersonators

☒ Several years ago a couple I had not met before came to our Lake Mary office. The gentleman and his wife were old friends of several people in our company and had stopped by for a quick visit and to update the staff on what they are currently doing for a living.

They traveled with two very well dressed young men, who stood near them in the background and maintained full attention. Except for their youth these men looked very much like the Secret Service men who guard the president of the United States.

Making Real Men Outdoors

☒ *Remember, fear is a controllable emotion.* That's the last thing Ted Thompson, co-founder of Real Men Outdoors mentoring camps, says to a group of boys before sending them into a dense forest with only the moon's light providing visibility for the next few hours. No, this isn't punishment for the teens; it's one of the many character-building situations they'll face as part of the Orlando, Fla.-based ministry's program to instill godly values in developing young men.

Run by an all-volunteer staff, Real Men Outdoors is a organization that uses the "wilderness experience" to teach fundamental qualities such as responsibility and accountability, which Thompson believes are missing in many of today's youth. Citing results from a census poll

taken a few years ago, Thompson says he and his co-founder Lawrence Williams were dismayed to find that 40 percent of all young men under the age of 19 in America live in homes without responsible men present.

Get Ready to Grow in Faith

This month's bible study | *Titus 2:11-14*

God's grace gives us the power to change

Imagine the very best gift you've ever received. Maybe it was a special present for a birthday or a totally unexpected gift received just because the giver wanted you to have it. God's grace is like that—a precious gift that is totally undeserved.

The *Fire Bible: Global Study Edition* note about Titus 2:11-14 says this: "Verses 11-14 describe the character and purpose of God's saving grace (i.e. the unearned and undeserved favor, love, help and spiritual enablement) and the effect it should have on believers."

It is through God's grace that we recognize and realize God's gift of salvation and love. He opens our eyes and softens our hearts. Verse 11 says it is the grace of God that brings salvation to all men.