

Developing Reproducing Christians

**Growing Christian Leaders Series
Manual 3**

by

Duane L. Anderson

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Growing Christian Leaders Series

This series of manuals is the result of a series of weekly e-mail topics that have been prepared and e-mailed over a period of years. They originally started out as a one page topic that gradually grew to the point where most topics are about three pages in length.

This series is especially designed for those who are already Christian leaders to give them Biblical principles for the development of additional godly spiritual leaders. Because they give Biblical principles for growth in spiritual leadership, they are also helpful for Christians that want to grow and become godly spiritual leaders.

Mark 10:43-45 says, "Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." In these verses Christ taught that godly spiritual leaders do not have the attitudes of leaders in the world. Worldly leadership is based on power and authority and is designed to benefit the leader and place him above others. In contrast, godly spiritual leadership is designed to help every Christian reach their full potential in Christ. The following three statements give a summary of three styles of leadership.

If we drive people, we will drive them until they can get out of our way.

If we lead people, we will be able to lead them as far as we have gone ourselves.

If we serve people, we will help each person develop their full God given potential and equip each person for the ministry that Christ has prepared for every Christian.

In the world people often measure success by the amount of things that they accumulate in this world before they die. However, they are unable to take any of those things with them when they die. Mark 8:36-37 says, "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" Success produces rewards until we die but it produces nothing for eternity.

In contrast, God measures effectiveness by our faithfulness and obedience. Matthew 6:19-21 says, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Effectiveness produces eternal rewards. Mark 10:29-30 says, "So Jesus answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time--houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions--and in the age to come, eternal life." I Corinthians 10:31 says, "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." The Growing Christian Leaders Series is designed to make your life count for eternity by bringing glory to God.

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1.

Helping Spiritual Children Continue Proper Development

In the last fourteen topics we have been talking about how to help a new Christian or a spiritual toddler grow and become a spiritual child. Today we will be starting a group of topics on helping spiritual children continue their spiritual development. We have mentioned that Christ gave Four Calls and a Commission to His disciples. They were:

- ◆ Come and See - John 1:39-46, Matthew 9:9-10, Mark 1:30-33
- ◆ Come and Grow - Mark 1:16-20
- ◆ Come and Serve - Mark 3:13-15
- ◆ Come and Shepherd - John 21:15-17
- ◆ As you are going, Make Disciples - Matthew 28:19-20

All of the last fourteen topics deal with the first call - Come and See. That period for Christ and the disciples lasted for about a year. During that period they came to Christ and began to grow in their spiritual lives as they observed Christ and began to imitate Him. Beginning with the second call, Come and Grow, the disciples were growing and beginning to participate with Christ in ministry. Healthy development in the life of a new Christian will bring them to a point where they are ready to function at a more mature level of development where they begin to participate in ministry. The development of the spiritual child to a spiritual young man or woman is what we will be covering in our next series of topics.

Just like a physical child wants to grow physically, the spiritual child wants to grow in his spiritual life. A person who has become a spiritual child has already learned many lessons about building his relationship with God, his relationship with other Christians and his relationship with those who are not yet Christians. However, for proper growth to continue, he still needs spiritual parents. In addition, he also needs spiritual brothers and sisters who now become more important in his development and he becomes more important in their development.

During this stage of a person's spiritual development, he needs to become strong in spirit. Luke 1:80 describes the development of John the Baptist by saying, "So the child grew and became strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his manifestation to Israel." A person becomes strong in spirit as he learns to submit the control of his human spirit to the Holy Spirit so that the power of the Holy Spirit flows through his life.

Just like the spiritual new born and toddler, the spiritual child continues to need encouragement and an example to follow. Paul told the Christians in I Thessalonians 2:10-12, "You *are* witnesses, and God *also*, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father *does* his own children, that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory."

A key part of the development of a spiritual child is the development of healthy relationships with a growing number of other Christians. John 13:34-35 says, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." In order to develop healthy

relationships with a growing number of other Christians, the spiritual child needs to be in at least one small group to develop a healthy relationship with the others in that group. The early church focused on getting Christians into groups where they could grow together both in their relationship with God and their relationship with each other. Acts 2:42 says, "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers." The early Christians spent time together studying the Word of God, having fellowship together having communion together and praying together.

There are at least three things that spiritual children need in order to continue their growth and become spiritual young men or young women:

- They need to become strong in spirit - Luke 1:80
- They need to have encouragement and an example to follow - I Thess. 2:10-12
- They need to build healthy relationships with other Christians - Acts 2:42

Just like the spiritual new born and the spiritual toddler, the spiritual child also has certain characteristics. A spiritual child is one who is growing in the same way that Christ grew as a child. Luke 2:40-52 give us some of the characteristics that were present in Christ when he was twelve years old and describe characteristics of spiritual children.

"And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him. His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast. When they had finished the days, as they returned, the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem. And Joseph and His mother did not know *it*; but supposing Him to have been in the company, they went a day's journey, and sought Him among *their* relatives and acquaintances. So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him. Now so it was *that* after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously." And He said to them, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them. Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men."

In these verses we see the following characteristics of a spiritual child:

1. He is becoming strong in spirit - Luke 2:40
(development of godly attitudes and character) - Gal. 5:16, 22-23
2. He is increasing in godly wisdom - Luke 2:40, James 3:17
3. He is growing in grace - Luke 2:40, II Peter 3:18
this is the reproduction by the indwelling Holy Spirit of the graciousness of God in the life and service of the believer (Christian growth)
4. He has the attitude of a learner - Luke 2:46
5. He is growing in ministry - Luke 2:47
6. He is growing in his relationship with the Father - Luke 2:49
7. He is growing in his application of submission - Luke 2:51

8. He is developing a proper family relationship - Luke 2:51
9. He knows that his sins are forgiven because of Christ - I John 2:12
10. He is growing in His knowledge of the Father - I John 2:13

I John 2:12-14 gives us a summary of the characteristics of a spiritual child, a spiritual young man and a spiritual father, "I write to you, little children, Because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake. I write to you, fathers, Because you have known Him *who is* from the beginning. I write to you, young men, Because you have overcome the wicked one. I write to you, little children, Because you have known the Father. I have written to you, fathers, Because you have known Him *who is* from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, Because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, And you have overcome the wicked one."

In these verses we see that spiritual children have the following characteristics:

- They know that their sins are forgiven.
- They have known the Father (not just known about the Father).

In these verse we see that spiritual young men have the following characteristics:

- * They are strong.
- * They have the Word of God abiding in them.
- * They have overcome the wicked one.

Our goal in the next series of topics is to focus on how we help the spiritual child grow and become a spiritual young man. Only as Christians mature and become spiritual young men and spiritual parents do churches develop and become healthy reproducing churches. May the Lord richly bless you as you help younger Christians in their spiritual growth.

2.

Developing Spiritual Children into Spiritual Young Men

As we think about how we help spiritual children grow and become spiritual young men, we want them to continue to grow in the same ways that they grew to become a spiritual child. We saw in the previous topics that Jethro taught Moses to help people grow in three ways in Exodus 18:20:

- Growth in character and attitude.
- Growth in knowledge.
- Growth in ministry.

First, as we think about growth in character and attitude, our goal is to help each Christian continue to grow in the development of godly character and attitude. In order for this to happen, we need to know what will help them continue to develop and we need to show them how these things develop in their lives. This means that spending time with a spiritual parent is equally important or even more important at this stage of development so that growing Christians can be shown how to grow in godly character and attitude. To become strong in spirit, a growing Christian needs to be shown how to:

- Live in the Spirit - Galatians 5:25
- Walk in the Spirit - Galatians 5:16-18
- Be led by the Spirit - Romans 8:12-14
- Be filled with the Spirit - Ephesians 5:18

In addition to becoming strong in spirit by learning to submit to the Holy Spirit, there are some other key areas where we want to help a spiritual child in his development as he grows so that he will develop and become a spiritual young man. Again the growing Christian needs to be taught these things by example as he observes the life of one or more spiritual parents. A spiritual child that is growing:

- Is developing a good reputation - Acts 16:1-2
- Is becoming an example to others - I Timothy 4:12
- Is becoming a person of godly wisdom - James 1:5, James 3:13-18
- Is developing the attitude of a servant - Mark 10:42-45

I am sure that all of us would agree that we want to see these things happen in the lives of growing Christians. However, knowing these things does not mean that they automatically happen. In fact many of these things are not true of people who have been Christians for many years. These things did not happen automatically with the disciples of Christ either. Christ had a plan of action to help the disciples in their development. Christ gave an open invitation to all to get to know Him and follow Him. Some responded (John 1:35-46) and some did not (Luke 9:56-62, Mark 10:17-22).

About a year after that first invitation in John 1:35-46 we see that Christ gives some of those same men a second invitation. In Mark 1:16-20 Christ said to those same men, "And as He walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." They immediately left their nets and followed Him. When He had gone a little farther from there, He saw James the *son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also *were* in the boat mending their

nets. And immediately He called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after Him.”

In these verses we see that in addition to inviting the disciples to follow Him, Christ also told the disciples what He was going to help them become. There are certain characteristics that we find of the disciples Christ invited to follow Him in the book of Mark:

- ◆ They were responders
- ◆ They were all called while working
- ◆ They were willing to commit themselves to spending more time with Christ

In these verses we also see certain things that Christ did:

- He went to them where they worked
- He gave them a personal invitation to spend more time with Him
- He committed Himself to spend more time with them
- He promised to help them become fishers of men

The disciples did not know it but as they committed themselves to spend more time with Christ, some radical changes were going to happen in their lives. Similar radical changes will happen in the lives of those who begin to spend more time with us. The disciples:

- * Saw Christ teach - Mark 1:21
- * Heard Christ teach with authority - Mark 1:22
- * Saw the power of Christ over demons - Mark 1:23-26
- * Began to discuss this power and authority among themselves - Mark 1:27-28
- * Saw Christ minister to their family - Mark 1:29-31
- * Saw Christ minister to the entire town - Mark 1:32-34
- * Saw Christ's passion for fellowship with the Father - Mark 1:35
- * Saw Christ's concern for the next towns - Mark 1:36-38
- * Saw Christ's concern for the entire region - Mark 1:39
- * Saw Christ touch the untouchable leper - Mark 1:40-42
- * Saw Christ's concern for a testimony to the priests - Mark 1:43-44
- * Saw Christ minister to the multitudes - Mark 1:45

While the disciples watched these things happen, certain things were happening in their lives. They were:

- ⇒ Learning what to teach
- ⇒ Learning how to teach
- ⇒ Learning how to minister to others (family, neighbors)
- ⇒ Learning the importance of fellowship with the Father
- ⇒ Learning to develop a larger vision for an entire region
- ⇒ Learning to be concerned for all segments of society (the untouchables to the priests)
- ⇒ Learning to serve the multitudes and not just themselves

As you will notice, most of these things can only be learned by example and cannot be taught in a classroom or from a sermon. However, something even greater was happening. The disciples were being exposed to Christ as they traveled with Him to the various towns of Galilee. They were seeing the character of Christ which gave them a model for their own lives. They saw the attitudes

and the concerns of Christ as they went with Him. These are things that will never be learned in a classroom or from sermons. The same thing is true for people today. People will not learn how to develop godly character from books or lectures. These things are only learned from example. That is why we will be most effective if we spend time with people and have them with us in a wide variety of situations. Character and attitude are learned from example. They are primarily caught not taught.

Second, as we think about growth in knowledge, our goal is to help each Christian continue to grow both in his or her knowledge of the Word of God and also the application of that Word to their daily living. Many Christians grow in knowledge but they do not know how to put into practice what they are learning. That is why we also want to help Christians learn to put into practice what they are learning. During this period of development in the life of the growing Christian, we want to help them focus on at least three things. A spiritual child that is growing:

- Is becoming familiar with the entire Word of God - II Timothy 3:14-17
- Is having effective meditation become a basic part of life - Joshua 1:8, Psalm 1:1-3
- Is developing a clear commitment to the doctrines of the Word of God - I Timothy 4:16

Third, as we think about growth in ministry, our goal is to help each Christian grow and develop an effective and balanced ministry. Effective ministry is based on healthy relationships with others. A spiritual child that is growing:

- Is developing an effective ministry of submission to spiritual leaders - Titus 2:4-8, I Peter 5:5-6
- Is developing an effective ministry in the home - Colossians 3:17-21
- Is developing an effective ministry of service to the body - Acts 16:1-2
- Is developing an effective ministry of evangelism to the lost - Acts 8:4, Acts 11:19-21

We will look at the topic of growth in ministry in more detail in our next two topics as we see how spiritual growth should affect our relationships both in our physical family and also in our spiritual family. As you help growing Christians develop their ministry, the physical and spiritual families become key areas for growth and development during this period of spiritual life. May the Lord richly bless you as you help growing Christians continue to grow in godly character and attitude, Biblical knowledge and ministry.

3.

Helping Spiritual Children Develop Family Relationships

One of the key areas of development of those who have grown in their spiritual lives to the point of being spiritual children is the development of godly relationships with their families. Because of the sin of Adam, before a person becomes a Christian, the relationships that he or she has with family members have been based on fear, guilt and shame.

The New Testament gives us 43 different relationships that talk about our relationship and ministry to one another. Thirty one of these are positive and twelve are negative. These are best developed within the family with those members of the family that are Christians. Many times when we reach people for Christ, part of their family are not Christians. In that case we need to help the new Christians learn to develop these relationships within a spiritual family so that they will be shown by example how to develop a godly relationship with family members whether those family members are Christians or not. This is very important if we are going to reach their family and their extended family for Christ.

First, we want to focus on how we help growing Christians develop their relationship with their parents. The Bible gives us certain principles for children, teenagers and young adults who are still living in the home. Ephesians 5:21 and 6:1-3 tell us, "Submitting to one another in the fear of God...Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth." In these verses we see three principles for children who are still living with their parents:

- Children are to be taught to submit to their parents.
- Children are to be taught to obey their parents.
- Children are to be taught to honor their parents.

Among families who are not yet Christians, many children have never been taught these things. In such cases they will need to be shown how to submit, honor and obey.

Some different principles come into effect when a child gets married. In Genesis 2:24 and Ephesians 6:2-3 we see the following principles for married children, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh..." "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth." In these verses we see that:

- Married children are to be taught how to leave their parents. (This includes such things as learning how to make their decisions with their partner instead of their parents.)
- Married children are to be taught to still honor their parents.

Second, we want to focus on how we help growing Christians develop their relationship with their extended family. In addition to parents, the extended family will include brothers and sisters, grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins and other members of their extended family. We also want to help spiritual children learn to practice the one anothers of Scripture in relation to their extended family. If part of the members of the extended family are Christians, developing the one another

relationships commanded by Scripture are often most easily developed in that part of the extended family first. If part of the extended family are not Christians, practicing the one another in our relationships with those family members will often give us opportunities to share the gospel with them and lead them to Christ. In the extended family, Titus 2:1-5 tells us how we are to minister to those who are younger than we are, “But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience; the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things— that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.” In these verses we see that:

- We are to teach the older male relatives to learn to lead by their example and by their teaching.
- We are to teach the older female relatives to learn to lead by their example and by their teaching.

Then I Timothy 4:12 and I Timothy 5:4 tell us how we are to minister to those who are older than we are, “Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity...But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God.” In these verses we see that if we are a younger relative we are to minister to older relatives by example and by our actions to minister to their needs.

In these verses we see that we serve our extended families by:

- Being an example of godly living.
- Teaching what we have learned.
- Serving them in their spiritual development.

Third, we want to focus on how help growing Christians learn to build their relationship with their partner. Ever since Adam and Eve sinned, there has been a great deal of conflict between husbands and wives. Husbands and wives often do not have any idea how to move from the conflict that was present before they became Christians to the point where they have a godly marriage. Before Adam and Eve sinned, God gave them three principles for building a godly marriage. Once they sinned, God chose the areas where couples have the greatest trouble to focus on to develop a godly relationship. In Genesis 2:24 we see that God gave Adam and Eve the following three principles before they sinned, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” In this verse we see that a newly married couple or a couple who are new Christians are to:

- leave - move decision making from the old family to the new family
- cleave (be joined) - become joined together in their decision making
- become one - learn to think “us and our” instead of “me and my”

Then Colossians 3:16-19 tell us some of the areas where couples need the most help in developing a godly relationship, “ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And *whatever* you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.” In these verses we see

that:

- ◆ 1. Couples need help in learning to apply the Word in their relationships.
- ◆ 2. Couples need help in learning to live with grace in their hearts.
- ◆ 3. Couples need help in learning to develop a thankful attitude.
- ◆ 4. Wives need help in learning to submit to their husbands. (Eve made her decision without talking to Adam.)
- ◆ 5. Husbands need help in learning to love their wives. (Adam placed blame on Eve - the first step to bitterness.)

Fourth, we want to help growing Christians focus on building their relationship with their children. When parents did not have godly Christian parents as they were growing up, they have no idea how to function as godly parents themselves. Instead they will tend to parent their own children the same way that their parents raised them. As a result, they need help in learning how to be godly parents to their children. Scripture points out that there are certain areas where most parents need help because of wrong examples they experienced as they were growing.

Two verses that show areas where parents most often need help are Colossians 3:21 and Ephesians 6:4, “Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged...And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.”

In these verses we see that:

- Parents often have problems provoking their children.
- Parents often have problems discouraging their children.
- Parents need help learning to train their children.
- Parents need help learning to admonish their children.

In I Thessalonians 2:7-12 Paul gives us a model of things that parents need to learn, “ But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing *mother* cherishes her own children. So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us. For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God. You *are* witnesses, and God *also*, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father *does* his own children, that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.”

In these verses we see that:

- ◆ Parents need to be taught how to be gentle with their children.
- ◆ Parents need to learn how to share their lives with their children.
- ◆ Parents need to learn how to sacrifice for their children.
- ◆ Parents need to learn to be an example to their children.
- ◆ Parents need to learn how to encourage their children.
- ◆ Parents need to learn how to help their children develop a worthy walk.

As you can see, there are many things that we want to do to help growing Christians develop godly relationships with their families. Some of these things are things we are still working on in our own lives. The best way we teach these things is by example as we invite growing Christians to spend

time with us so they can see us as we put these things into practice in our relationships. May the Lord richly bless you as you help growing Christians learn to develop godly relationships.

4.

Helping Spiritual Children Develop Within Spiritual Families

In our last topic we focused on how we help growing Christians build godly relationships within their families. Today we will focus on how we help growing Christians build godly relationships with a spiritual family. Scripture gives us some key teachings on how to develop spiritual parent - spiritual child relationships. It also gives us similar teaching on how to develop spiritual family (small group) relationships.

One of the key reasons why so many Christians remain as spiritual toddlers for many years is due to the fact that they never become part of a spiritual family. The most important relationship in a physical child's development is their relationship with their parents. The same is true for a spiritual child. A person who becomes a Christian as an adult has never seen a Christian family modeled. Unfortunately, even many who have grown up in Christian homes have not been given good models as their examples. That is why it is very important for every new Christian to have spiritual parents (In some cases these will also be their physical parents.).

I Corinthians 4:14-17 and I Corinthians 11:1 give us some very important keys to help spiritual parents develop healthy relationships with spiritual children, "I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn *you*. For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *you do not have* many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Therefore I urge you, imitate me. 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...Imitate me, just as I also *imitate* Christ." In these verses we see that:

- ◆ Spiritual parents do not shame spiritual children.
- ◆ Spiritual parents treat spiritual children as beloved children.
- ◆ Spiritual parents warn spiritual children.
- ◆ Spiritual parents provide an example to imitate.
- ◆ Spiritual parents remind spiritual children of their ways.
- ◆ Spiritual parents are consistent wherever they are.
- ◆ Spiritual parents urge spiritual children to follow them as they follow Christ.

As you think back to when you were a fairly new Christian, you might ask yourself, "Who were my spiritual parents and what did I learn from them by the example that they provided for me during those early years of my spiritual development?" For some of you it may be hard to ever remember one or more Christians who spent time with you to help you develop in your spiritual life. If that were the case, it was probably several years before you really started to grow in your spiritual life. You can remember some of the struggles that you went through during those years where you wondered whether it really made any difference to be a Christian. A few of you may still be experiencing a life of struggle because you have never had a spiritual parent. If so, may I encourage you to find a godly Christian couple and ask that couple if you can just spend time with them to observe and learn how they walk as godly Christians.

In addition to having spiritual parents, we also need to develop a spiritual family (small group) relationship with a group of other Christians. Just as new Christians need spiritual parents, growing

Christians need a spiritual family to help them in their development. Christ formed a spiritual family when He chose the twelve to be with Him. They had to learn to relate to one another and learn to accept one another because Christ chose some very diverse disciples - a tax collector and a Zealot (the tax collectors worked for the Romans and the Zealots were trying to overthrow the Romans). In the early church we see that Christians met in small groups so that they could share their lives.

In Acts 2:42, 45-47 we see some of the things that happened in small groups in the early church, “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers...And sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” In these verses we see that the early Christians gathered together in small groups for:

1. Bible study
2. Fellowship
3. Breaking of Bread
4. Prayer
5. Meeting needs
6. Sharing meals
7. Praising God

As groups of Christians meet together, there are several keys to help these small groups develop healthy relationships which should be characteristics of healthy spiritual families:

- ◆ Focus on glorifying God - I Corinthians 10:31
- ◆ Focus on accepting one another - Romans 14:1-3
- ◆ Focus on strengthening the weak - Romans 15:1-2
- ◆ Focus on restoring and bearing burdens - Galatians 6:1-2
- ◆ Focus on encouraging one another - Hebrews 10:24-25
- ◆ Focus on praying for one another - James 5:16-20

Because of sin, Adam and Eve felt separated from God and from one another. The result of their sin is that the world still continues to experience that separation. However, once we come to Christ, God wants us to begin to experience healthy relationships with one another again. That is why it is important for every Christian to become a part of a spiritual family (small group) where he or she can share their life with other Christians who care. A statement that was often made about the early church was, “See how they love one another.” That statement should be true today also but it will only be true as Christians gather together in small groups where they can really care for one another. May the Lord richly bless you as you help growing Christians become part of a spiritual family who really loves and cares.

5.

Helping Spiritual Young Men Develop an Effective Ministry

Just as a physical young man enjoys learning how to help others, the spiritual young man or woman wants to learn how to serve the Lord and serve others. A spiritual young man or woman is one who has already learned how to develop a healthy relationship with God, with his or her family and with a spiritual family. Now they want to learn how to serve God, serve their physical family, serve their spiritual family and learn how to reach others for Christ and help them grow.

This is actually a very exciting time to work with growing Christians because they are looking for opportunities to serve and their greatest need is guidance in how to develop an effective ministry of service to God and to others. Like a car that is already moving at the speed limit, they just need some guidance as to where to go and what to do.

We have some Biblical examples of young men who grew quickly and became spiritual young men who wanted to serve the Lord. In fact we can learn some key lessons from two of these young men. The first is Saul who demonstrated two key characteristics of a person who wanted to grow right from the very moment he first met Christ. Acts 9:4-6 tells us, "Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It *is* hard for you to kick against the goads." So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" Then the Lord *said* to him, "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." In these verses we see that Saul demonstrated two key attitudes by the questions that he asked:

- ◆ A learner's attitude - Who are You, Lord?
- ◆ A servant's heart - Lord, what do You want me to do?

A learner's attitude is one of the key factors to look for in developing Christians. In particular we see here a learner's attitude shown of wanting to get to know Christ better. That was an attitude that was present in the life of Saul (Paul) for the rest of his life. We see that attitude demonstrated so well toward the end of his life when he said in Philippians 3:10, "That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death." In this verse we see four ways that Paul demonstrated a learner's attitude of wanting to get to know Christ better:

- Paul wanted to know Christ (much better than he already did).
- Paul wanted to know the power of Christ's resurrection.
- Paul wanted to know the fellowship of Christ's sufferings.
- Paul wanted to know how to see his life become conformed to the death of Christ.

A servant's heart is the second key factor that we want to look for in developing Christians. Before a person can effectively lead the Lord's sheep, that person has to learn to follow the shepherd. Today the world is focused on the great shortage of leadership. The church has followed the world by writing many books on leadership. However, most of these books forget one important thing. People must learn to follow and obey Christ before they can be an effective undershepherd for Christ. Christ did not invite the disciples to sign up for His leadership course. Instead He invited them to follow Him. In I Corinthians 11:1 Paul said, "Imitate me, just as I also *imitate* Christ."

The only reason Paul gave for people to follow him and imitate him was because he had chosen to follow Christ and imitate Christ. Christ also said to the disciples in John 14:15, “If you love Me, keep My commandments.” A servant’s heart requires obedience to Christ which is based on love for Christ. As a growing Christian demonstrates a desire to know and love Christ and a desire to follow and obey Christ, that person will begin to make a growing impact for Christ.

A second Biblical example of a young man who grew quickly and became a spiritual young man who wanted to serve Christ is Timothy. Timothy was one of the FAT people. FAT stands for one who is:

Faithful
Available
Teachable

In Acts 16:1-3 and 16:6-10 we see these characteristics demonstrated in Timothy, “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. He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium. 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...Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia. After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them. So passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them.” In these verses we see that Timothy was:

- Faithful - well reported of - Acts 16:2
- Available - willing to go with Paul - Acts 16:3
- Teachable - learning to be led by the Holy Spirit - Acts 16:6-10

One of the things that you will see when you find a growing Christian who has:

- * A learner’s attitude
- * A servant’s heart
- * Is faithful
- * Is available
- * Is teachable

is that person will always have a desire to learn how to serve the Lord more effectively. Then it becomes a case of showing that person how to develop an effective ministry that is based on Biblical principles. As we work with new Christians and help them grow in their relationship with Christ, the day will come when their lives will demonstrate these five characteristics. Christians who have these five characteristics in their lives will be looking for opportunities to serve Christ. May the Lord richly bless you as you help growing Christians develop these five characteristics in their lives.

6.

Helping Spiritual Young Men and Young Women Grow and Become Spiritual Parents

In our last topic we talked about how we help spiritual young men and young women develop an effective ministry. Today we will begin talking about how we help them continue to grow and become spiritual parents. We will begin by looking at the profile of a spiritual young man. Just like the other levels of spiritual maturity, the spiritual young man also has certain characteristics. The following characteristics are developing in a spiritual young man (or woman):

1. He is strong in spirit - I John 2:13-14, Ephesians 3:16-19

In I John 2:13-14 we see why a spiritual young man has become strong, “I write to you, fathers, Because you have known Him *who is* from the beginning. I write to you, young men, Because you have overcome the wicked one. I write to you, little children, Because you have known the Father. I have written to you, fathers, Because you have known Him *who is* from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, Because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, And you have overcome the wicked one.”

Then in Ephesians 3:16-19 Paul gives us an example of how to pray for others so that they will continue to grow in spiritual health, “That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the width and length and depth and height— to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” We are to pray for others that:

- they would be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man
- Christ would dwell in their hearts through faith
- they would be rooted and grounded in love
- they would know the love of Christ which passes knowledge
- they would be filled with all the fullness of God

This might be a good time to ask yourself, Who are the growing Christians that I am praying for each day for the Lord to help them in their spiritual growth and character development? If we are praying for the spiritual development of a person and not just their physical needs, we will see the Lord open up many opportunities for us to help them in their spiritual development.

2. He has the Word of God abiding in him - I John 2:14 (see above)

- this includes knowledge of the whole Word of God - Acts 20:20, 27
“How I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house...For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.”
- this includes effective meditation - Joshua 1:8, Psalm 1:1-3

3. He has overcome the wicked one - I John 2:13-14 (above)

- he practices separation from sin - I John 2:15-17
- he practices separation from false teaching - I John 2:18-24

4. He is continuing to experience balanced growth and development - Luke 2:52

“And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.”

Christ gives us the example because He continued to experience:

- growth in wisdom
- growth in spiritual as well as physical stature
- growth in favor with God
- growth in favor with man

5. He is an example to other Christians - I Timothy 4:12

“Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.” In this verse we see that Timothy was to be an example to other believers:

- in word - II Timothy 3:14-17
- in conduct - I Timothy 3:7
- in love - I Timothy 1:5
- in spirit - II Timothy 1:7
- in faith - II Timothy 1:3-5
- in purity - II Timothy 2:19-22

6. He has an effective ministry - Acts 16:1-2

The priorities of a spiritual young man (or woman)

- Growth will happen best as he continues to:
 - 1). talk to God daily throughout the day - I Thessalonians 5:17
 - 2). let God talk to him each day through:
 - a). Bible study - II Timothy 2:15
 - b). memorization - Psalm 119:11
 - c). meditation - Joshua 1:8, Psalm 1:1-3
- b. Growth will happen best as he is learning to: I Timothy 4:11-16
 - 1). be an example
 - 2). teach the Word of God
 - 3). exercise his spiritual gift (s)
 - 4). demonstrate a wholehearted commitment to personal growth
 - 5). always be faithful to the Word of God

As we can see from the six characteristics mentioned in the spiritual profile of a spiritual young man, this is a Christian who is really growing and making real progress in his spiritual life. This growth and progress is helping spiritual young men and women to look for opportunities to serve the Lord. What a great privilege we have to be able to help spiritual young men and young women continue to grow and mature in Christ. May the Lord richly bless you as you help spiritual young men and women move toward spiritual reproduction.

7.

Helping Spiritual Young Men and Young Women Grow in Character and Attitude

In our last topic we gave a spiritual profile of a spiritual young man. Today we are going to talk about how we help spiritual young men and young women grow in godly character and develop Christlike attitudes. This becomes increasingly important as Christians grow and mature because their lives are beginning to exercise a greater influence on others as they serve Christ. Since we lead others most effectively by what we are rather than what we do, character and attitude are critical issues at all times but especially as a person begins to influence others.

Our goal is to develop the attitude that Christ showed in Philippians 2:5-8, “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of death*, even the death of the cross.” This attitude must be continuing to develop in our own lives if we want to help others because they will become what we are whether that is good or bad. As growing Christians have this attitude developing in their lives:

1. This attitude produces a desire to become a spiritual parent

Paul had this attitude and it also became the attitude of Silas and Timothy as they traveled with Paul. As they wrote to the new Christians in Thessalonica, they wrote in I Thessalonians 2:7-12, “But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing *mother* cherishes her own children. So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us. For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God. You *are* witnesses, and God *also*, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father *does* his own children, that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.” In these verses we see that Paul, Silas and Timothy provided:

- the tender care of a nursing mother
- a strong love which caused them to share their lives
- an availability both day and night
- an example to follow
- the encouragement of a father
- an example of a worthy walk

Paul told the Corinthians that they were lacking in spiritual parents. In I Corinthians 4:15-17 Paul said that he and Timothy did have the attitude of spiritual parents for them, “For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *you do not have* many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Therefore I urge you, imitate me. 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.” Paul said:

- he had begotten them through the gospel

- he urged them to imitate him
- he had sent Timothy to remind them of his ways (actions) in Christ

2. This attitude produces a concern to develop one or more spiritual Timothy's - II Timothy 2:1-2
 "You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. ² 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." In these verses we see that a concern to develop one or more Timothy's is what produces godly reproducing Christians:

- * Paul
- * Timothy
- * faithful men
- * others also

Who is your Timothy or Timothy's?

3. This attitude produces a proper attitude toward becoming a spiritual leader

a. an attitude of sacrifice to reach others for Christ - I Corinthians 9:19-27

In verse 19 we see that Paul made himself a servant to all - "For though I am free from all *men*, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more;"

In verse 22 we see that Paul became all things to reach others - "I have become all things to all *men*, that I might by all means save some."

In verse 24 Paul encouraged the Corinthians to follow his example - "Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain *it*."

b. an attitude which develops a seriousness of purpose in life - Titus 2:6-8

"Likewise exhort the young men to be sober-minded, in all things showing yourself *to be* a pattern of good works; in doctrine *showing* integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you."

In these verses we see that Paul was encouraging Titus to carry out his purpose in life by helping others to grow and mature.

We see the characteristics of a spiritual young man who is growing in godly character and attitude. These include:

- learning to become a servant to others
- developing a concern to develop spiritual children
- beginning to develop one or more Timothy's
- developing a proper attitude toward becoming a spiritual leader
- a concern to reach others for Christ
- developing a purpose in life

As you can see spiritual young men are going to have an impact on others as others observe their attitude and character. May the Lord richly bless you as you help Christians mature and become reproductive Christians.

8.

Helping Spiritual Young Men and Young Women Grow in Knowledge and Ministry

In our last topic we gave an introduction to how we help spiritual young men and women grow in godly character and attitude. Today we will be focusing on how we help them grow in knowledge and ministry. As we help a spiritual young man grow in knowledge, there are at least four key areas where we want to see growth and development.

1. We want to help him become advanced in his knowledge of God - I John 2:13-14

“I write to you, fathers, Because you have known Him *who is* from the beginning. I write to you, young men, Because you have overcome the wicked one. I write to you, little children, Because you have known the Father. I have written to you, fathers, Because you have known Him *who is* from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, Because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, And you have overcome the wicked one.” In the phrase that describes spiritual fathers in both verses, John said he wrote to the fathers, “Because they had known Him who is from the beginning.”

As a person grows and becomes a spiritual young man, that growth happens because he gets to know the Word of God. Here we see that to become a spiritual parent, a person needs to get to know the God of the Word. Many people have gotten to know all about God by Bible study but they have never gotten to know God by communion with Him through prayer and meditation. We can know all about a historical figure like George Washington from reading books about him but that does not mean that we know him. The only way we really get to know a person is by spending time with him. We want to help spiritual young men learn to really know God by learning to share every area of their lives with Him as they commune with Him.

2. We want to help him learn how to be ready at all times to share his faith - I Peter 3:15

“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always *be* ready to *give* a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.” The only way anyone will be ready at all times to give a defense to everyone who asks him with a proper attitude is if that person is learning to walk in the Spirit as a pattern of life. We will teach others how to walk in the Spirit by our own example. Galatians 5 gives us four key principles for being ready at all times:

- Walk in the Spirit - verses 16, 25
- Be led by the Spirit - verse 18
- Bear the fruit of the Spirit - verses 22-23
- Live in the Spirit - verse 25

3. We want to help him learn to be an example to others - I Timothy 4:12

“Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.” We want to help spiritual young men grow in their understanding of the importance of their example as they minister to others. We do that both by providing an example by our own lives and by teaching them how to be an example to others.

4. We want to help him learn how to answer false teachers - Titus 1:9

“Holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both

to exhort and convict those who contradict.” Since an elder is to be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and convict those who contradict, we need to begin preparing spiritual young men for this ministry as it will be a part of their future ministry as they continue to develop. The best way to help them learn to answer those who reject sound doctrine is to take them with us as we reach out so they can see by our example how to answer false teachers from the Word of God as well as encourage those who believe from the Word of God.

In addition, there are also some basic areas of ministry in which we want to help spiritual young men as they grow in their ministry. These things must be shown by example in order to help the spiritual young men develop these as a part of their life and ministry. In these areas we will be most effective if we work as a team of spiritual leaders so that the spiritual young men can observe others as well as observing us. Three key areas where we want to help young men grow in ministry are:

1. We want to show him how to share the Gospel with others:

In Mark 1:16-17 we see that Christ made it an important part of his ministry to show people by his own example how to share the Gospel, “ And as He walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then Jesus said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.”

In Acts 11:12 we see that Peter made it an important part of his ministry to show people by his own example how to share the Gospel, “Then the Spirit told me to go with them, doubting nothing. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered the man’s house.”

2. We want to show him how to minister to other Christians - Acts 20:2-4

“Now when he had gone over that region and encouraged them with many words, he came to Greece and stayed three months. And when the Jews plotted against him as he was about to sail to Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia. And Sopater of Berea accompanied him to Asia— also Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia.” As we can see, whenever Paul traveled he took other Christians with him so that they could learn how to minister by observing him.

3. We want to show him how to teach the Word of God - Acts 20:20

“And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shown you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house.” Paul made it a point to take future leaders with him so that he could show them how to teach the Word of God both in public places and also in the homes of people.

As we look at these various areas where we want to equip spiritual young men, we see why a spiritual leadership team in a church can be very valuable for spiritual young men to equip them. Ephesians 4:11-13 says, “And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” The apostles gave us eyewitness testimony of the resurrection of Christ (Acts 1:21-22) and the prophets gave us the written Word of God (II Peter 1:19-21). Ephesians 2:19-22 tell us that these gifts provide our foundation with Jesus Christ being the chief cornerstone.

The other three gifts are also given for the purpose of equipping the saints for the work of the ministry. That is why a team of spiritual leaders can be most helpful in preparing spiritual young men for spiritual ministry.

Evangelists will be most effective at showing young men how to and equipping them to:
Share the Gospel with others.

Pastors will be most effective at showing young men how to and equipping them to:
Minister to other Christians

Teachers will be most effective at showing young men how to and equipping them to:
Teach the Word of God

The Lord will greatly use you as you help spiritual young men and young women grow in godly character and attitude and grow in knowledge and ministry. May the Lord richly bless you as you equip others to serve Him.

9.

Help Spiritual Young Men and Young Women Build Their Ministry to the Body

In our last topic we talked about how we help spiritual young men and young women grow in knowledge and ministry. Today we will be focusing on how to help them build their relationship with the body. We want to help growing Christians learn to build spiritual extended family relationships.

In some of our earlier topics we shared ideas on how to help spiritual babes and toddlers learn to build relationships with spiritual parents. Then we talked about helping the spiritual child learn to build relationships with a spiritual family (the small group). Today we will be focusing on how to help the spiritual young man or young woman learn to build relationships with the entire body (the church). This is of key importance because the desire of the spiritual young man or young woman is to serve others. In order to be able to effectively serve others, the spiritual young woman or young man needs to know how to build healthy relationships with all Christians.

The Lord wanted to make certain that we learn how to build healthy relationships. As a result, the New Testament contains 43 one anothers. Twelve are things that we are told to avoid because they will destroy relationships rather than build them. If we depend on our own strength, we will act out of fear and will do the things that destroy relationships. We will list these twelve first in order to show what Christians often do when they depend on their own strength to live the Christian life. The twelve things which Christ commands us to avoid are:

1. Let us not judge one another any more - Romans 14:13
2. Do not go to law against one another - I Corinthians 6:7
3. Stop depriving one another (in marriage) - I Corinthians 7:5
4. Do not bite one another (to wound the soul) - Galatians 5:15
5. Do not devour one another (to make it a habit of wounding the soul) - Galatians 5:15
6. Do not consume one another (the last act of swallowing) - Galatians 5:15
“bite-devour-consume” speaks of the process which destroys a relationship because we wound one another with words
7. Do not challenge one another (to call forth as a contest - Why do you always ...? etc.) - Galatians 5:26
8. Do not envy one another - Galatians 5:26
9. Do not lie to one another - Colossians 3:9
10. See that no one repays another with evil for evil - I Thessalonians 5:15
11. Do not speak against one another (to slander) - James 4:11
12. Do not complain against one another - James 5:9

Many Christians have never learned to yield to the Lord moment by moment and the result is seen by the fact that they do the things which destroy relationships without even realizing that they are doing them. That is why it is so important to help new Christians and growing Christians learn to ask the Lord to act in His strength rather than their own in their relationships with others. In fact many Christians nearly always act out of fear because they have never learned that yielding to the Lord is a moment by moment process. That is why Paul said in II Corinthians 12:9-10, “And he

said unto me, My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me...For when I am weak, than am I strong.”

In contrast, each time that we yield to the Holy Spirit and depend on His power, the love of Christ will flow through us and we will build healthy relationships with other Christians. The New Testament tells us thirty-one things to do in our relationships with one another in order to build healthy relationships;

1. Accept one another - Romans 15:7
2. Admonish one another - Romans 15:14, Colossians 3:16
3. Bear one another's burdens - Galatians 6:2
4. Bear with one another - Ephesians 4:2, Colossians 3:13
5. Build up one another - Romans 14:19, I Thessalonians 5:11
6. Care for one another - I Corinthians 12:25
7. Comfort one another - I Thessalonians 4:18, 5:11, Hebrews 3:13, 10:25
8. Be comforted together through faith in one another - Romans 1:12
9. Have compassion one of another - I Peter. 3:8
10. Confess your sins to one another - James 5:16
11. Be devoted to one another - Romans 12:10
12. Fellowship with one another - I John 1:7
13. Forgive one another - Ephesians 4:32, Colossians 3:13
14. Seek what is good for one another and for all - I Thessalonians 5:15
15. Greet one another - Romans 16:16, I Corinthians 16:20, II Corinthians 13:12, I Peter 5:14
16. Be hospitable to one another - I Peter 4:9
17. Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another - I Peter 5:5
18. Be kind to one another - Ephesians 4:32
19. Be members one of another - Romans 12:5, Ephesians 4:25
20. Be of the same mind one to another - Romans 12:16, Romans 15:5
21. Be at peace with one another - Mark 9:50, I Thessalonians 5:13
22. Pray for one another - James 5:16
23. Regard one another as more important than self - Philippians 2:3
24. Serve one another as a slave - Galatians 5:13
25. Employ your gift in serving one another - I Peter 4:10
26. Stimulate one another to love and good deeds - Hebrews 10:24-25
27. Submit to one another - Ephesians 5:21
28. Teach one another - Colossians 3:16
29. Wait for one another - I Corinthians 11:33
30. Wash one another's feet - John 13:14
31. Love one another - John 13:34-35, John 15:12, John 15:17, Romans 13:8, I Thessalonians 1:3, I Thessalonians 4:9-10, II Thessalonians 1:3, I Peter 1:22, I Peter 4:8, I John 3:11, I John 3:23, I John 4:7, I John 4:11-12, II John 5

A very practical way I have found to help Christians begin to put these into practice is to have them place this list next to their calendar and then focus each day on doing the one that fits the day of the month. That way over a period of a year a person has focused on practicing each of the one

another's twelve times. In order to practice these things on a daily basis, a person has to be in contact with at least one other Christian each day. Hebrews 10:24-25 says we stimulate one another to love and good works by getting together and encouraging one another. As Christians we are a body and a body functions best when it is in regular contact with the other parts of the body.

In addition to practicing the one another's on a daily basis, one other very important responsibility of a spiritual young man or young woman is to become an example to others. This means that a spiritual young person is learning to show by his life that Christ is the one that changes and transforms a life. Because a spiritual young man or woman is becoming a leader to others, people are beginning to watch their example very closely. This is very important because many things in the Christian life are caught rather than taught. People must be shown by the example of others how to grow in the Christian life.

In I Timothy 4:12 Paul shared with Timothy six ways that he should be an example to other Christians, "Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Spiritual young men and women are able to become an example for others to follow because they are learning to follow Christ by being an example in:

- ◆ word - what they say
- ◆ conduct - what they do
- ◆ love - how they love
- ◆ spirit - by yielding to the Holy Spirit
- ◆ faith - what they believe
- ◆ purity - moral character

As growing Christians learn to become an example in these six areas, they will help younger Christians in their spiritual growth because they are providing an example to follow. Christ and Paul both taught others by taking them with them so they could provide an example and show others how to become an example. As we take younger Christians with us, we will be showing them by our example and training them to be an example. May the Lord richly bless you as you help growing Christians become more like Christ because of the example you are providing for them.

10.

Helping Spiritual Young Men and Young Women Build Their Ministry

In our last topic we talked about how we help spiritual young men and young women build their ministry to the body. Today we are going to focus on some key areas to help growing Christians develop their ministry. One of the key characteristics of spiritual young men and young women is that they are looking for opportunities to serve the Lord. Spiritual young men and women are ready and eager to serve the Lord if they are given opportunities and shown how to serve. In order to help them learn to serve the Lord most effectively, we need to help them discover their SHAPE.

- S - spiritual gifts - Romans 12:3-8, I Corinthians 4:12-31, I Peter 4:7-11
- H - heart (passion in life) - the example of Paul - Romans 15:15-20
- A - abilities - I Peter 4:11
- P - personality - Peter liked to work with crowds - Acts 2:14-41, Andrew like to work with individuals - John 1:40-41, John 6:8, John 12:20-22
- E - experiences in life - II Corinthians 11:21-33

When Barnabas and Paul were sent out by God from the church at Antioch, they took John Mark with them so that he could learn to minister by assisting them as they traveled. That is a key way that we help spiritual young men in their spiritual development and prepare them to become healthy reproducing Christians. Acts 13:5 says, “And when they arrived in Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. They also had John as their assistant.” Many years later Paul wrote in II Timothy 4:11, “Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry.”

Paul shows us that taking spiritual young men and women with us as we minister is a very effective way to help growing Christians become reproducing Christians. In Acts 16:1-3a we read, “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. He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium. Paul wanted him to go with him.” Paul had noticed several things about Timothy:

- Timothy was already a disciple.
- Timothy had a mother who was a believer.
- Timothy had a father who was not a believer.
- Timothy had a background of two cultures.
- Timothy had a good report from other Christians.

As Timothy traveled with Paul, Timothy was being shown how to serve the Lord in new ways as he had the opportunity to share the Gospel in many different cultures. Through that process, Paul was able to help Timothy develop his SHAPE.

- ◆ Paul helped Timothy to recognize his spiritual gift - I Timothy 4:14
- ◆ Paul helped Timothy develop his passion for ministry - I Corinthians 4:17
- ◆ Paul helped Timothy to use his abilities in serving the Lord - I Timothy 1:3

- ◆ Paul understood Timothy's personality and encouraged him - II Timothy 1:5-7
- ◆ Paul used Timothy's experiences in life to help him multiply his ministry - II Timothy 2:2

Timothy was not the only growing Christian Paul took with him to help him develop and mature. Paul usually had a team of several growing Christians with him. In Acts 20:4 we read, "And Sopater of Berea accompanied him to Asia - also Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia." Paul realized that growing Christians mature best by spending time with godly spiritual leaders as they minister together.

As we can see from this verse Paul had learned the tremendous importance of taking younger Christians with him to show them how to minister. As you can see, these men were from several different cultures so they were also learning how to minister to a variety of different cultures. Paul knew that the men would be equipped to carry on the ministry when he came to the end of his life because he had shown them how to minister through on-the-job training rather than just telling them what to do. That same principle will help us to develop reproducing Christians and multiply our ministry.

Today many growing Christians never have the opportunity to learn by observing more mature Christians in their ministry because many spiritual leaders have not realized the importance of taking others along with them as they minister. Paul told Timothy that he would multiply his ministry in the same way that Paul had earlier multiplied his ministry. In II Timothy 2:2 we read, "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." Here we see four spiritual generations - Paul, Timothy, faithful men, others. Here we see some key principles for helping spiritual young men develop their ministry:

- Take growing Christians (Timothys) with you.
- Share with your Timothys in many different situations (among many witnesses).
- Show your Timothys how to select faithful men.
- Show your Timothys how to pass sound teaching on to these faithful men.
- Show your Timothys how to help those faithful men develop a vision for others.
- Show your Timothys how to help those faithful men learn how to teach others by example as well as word.
- Show your Timothys how to commission those faithful men to teach others following the same process.

Today most Christians try to tell others how to serve the Lord (sermons, seminars, classes, etc.) instead of showing them how to serve the Lord. As a result, many Christians have a lot of knowledge but they do not know how to pass that knowledge on to others. Spiritual young men and young women will learn best how to serve the Lord if we take them with us and show them how to serve the Lord instead of just telling them how to serve. Whether it was Christ or Paul, we see that both of them realized the importance of taking people along with them and showing them how to minister in order to equip those people to carry on that ministry.

In Mark 3:13-14 we read, "And He went up on the mountain and called to Him those He Himself

wanted. And they came to Him. Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him, and that He might send them out to preach.” In these verses we see that Christ:

- ⇒ Chose the men that He was going to train.
- ⇒ Chose those men to be with Him.
- ⇒ Chose to send them out to preach.

When we are choosing those that we will spend time with Christ gives us certain principles:

- ◆ Christ chose these men after spending much time in prayer - Luke 6:12-13
- ◆ Christ chose men who were FAT men (Faithful, Available, Teachable).
- ◆ Christ chose them to be with Him (the value of learning through example)
- ◆ Christ chose to send them out to preach (the value of having them minister and then come back and report what had happened - Mark 6:30)

When you come to the end of your ministry, you will see a ministry that will do one of two things:

- If you have chosen faithful men and taken them with you, you will see your ministry multiply.
- If you have tried to do all the ministry yourself, you will see your ministry start to die.

May the Lord richly bless you as you take spiritual young men and young women with you so that the Lord is able to use your life to multiply His work.

11.

Helping Spiritual Parents Develop an Effective Ministry

In our last few topics we have been talking about spiritual young men and young women. Today we will begin to look at what the Bible teaches about spiritual parents. Just as a physical parent enjoys learning how to become a more effective parent, a spiritual parent has an even greater desire to learn how to become an effective spiritual parent. In the previous topics we have discussed how growing Christians build their relationships with Christ, with their family, with a spiritual family and with an extended spiritual family.

Today we want to discuss how to become effective spiritual parents who are able to show others how to experience healthy growth and development in their spiritual lives. The Bible gives us some excellent examples of people who became spiritual parents to help others in their spiritual growth. Paul, Silas and Timothy provide some of the best examples of spiritual parents other than Christ.

Two key passages which talk about the spiritual parenting ministry of these men are I Thessalonians 2:7-12 and I Corinthians 4:15-17. In I Thessalonians 2:7-12 we see how Paul, Silas and Timothy helped the Christians in the city of Thessalonica grow. In verses 7 through 9 we see that they provided the tender care of a nursing mother. In these verses we see that they:

- Cherished these new Christians like a nursing mother cares for her own children.
- Had a great longing for the development of these new Christians.
- Shared their own lives with these new Christians.
- Were available to help these new Christians night and day.
- Made sure that they were not a burden to these new Christians.

In I Thessalonians 2:10-12 we see that these three men provided the godly example of a godly father. In these verses we see that they:

- * Provided an example of a holy life.
- * Provided an example of a just and righteous life.
- * Provided an example of a blameless life.
- * Provided encouragement and comfort.
- * Provided encouragement to live a godly life.
- * Provided encouragement to a worthy walk.

In I Corinthians 4:15-17 Paul encouraged the Christians because he:

- Had begotten them through the Gospel.
- Give them an example to imitate.
- Sent Timothy to encourage them
- Said Timothy would remind them of Paul's conduct in Christ.
- Said Timothy would remind them of Paul's teachings.

Just like the other levels of spiritual maturity, Scripture gives us a profile of a spiritual parent. By the very definition of the word parent, it means there must be one or more spiritual children. A spiritual parent is one who has taken the personal responsibility to help one or more spiritual

children in their total spiritual development not just in their growth in knowledge. The following characteristics will be seen in a spiritual parent:

- * a spiritual parent is advanced in his knowledge of God - I John 2:13-14
- * a spiritual parent demonstrates true care for spiritual children - I Thessalonians 2:7-12
- * a spiritual parent has one or a few Timothy's that he is bringing to spiritual maturity - II Timothy 2:1-2
- * a spiritual parent has become a mature disciple - Matthew 13:52

Since the word disciple is used by many people who have little or no understanding of what the word really means, we will look for a moment at the characteristics of a Christian parent defined for us in Matthew 13:52, "Then He said to them, Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old." From this verse we see that a mature disciple has the following characteristics:

- ◆ He is instructed concerning the kingdom of God
- ◆ He is the head of a spiritual household - one or more spiritual children
- ◆ He has a treasure (the Word of God)
- ◆ He shares from his treasure things that are new (he is continuing to study the Word and grow)
- ◆ He shares from his treasure things that are old (he is able to share basic teachings from the Word of God)

As a Christian grows and matures one of the things that he begins to do is develop priorities for his own personal growth and development. The priorities of a mature spiritual parent will be:

- To know Christ - Philippians 3:10
- To be motivated by the love of Christ - II Corinthians 5:14
- To serve Christ as a bondservant - II Timothy 2:24-25
- To finish the race well by keeping the faith - II Timothy 4:7-8

If we are helping others become spiritual parents, there are certain things that we want to do to help them to grow in character and attitude. Of course these things must be a part of our own lives because we can only lead others as far as we have gone ourselves. A spiritual parent wants to:

- ⇒ be an example to follow - I Corinthians 4:14-17, I Corinthians 11:1, I Thessalonians 1:6
- ⇒ provide love - I Thessalonians 2:7-9
- ⇒ provide encouragement - I Thessalonians 2:10-12
- ⇒ provide instruction from the Word of God - Acts 20:20

There are also certain areas of knowledge that are important for us to share with those who are becoming spiritual parents. Spiritual parents need to:

- learn what to teach those who are younger - Titus 2:4-8
- learn when to teach those who are younger - I Thessalonians 2:9, Acts 19:9
- learn how to teach those who are younger - Acts 20:27

Most teaching by physical parents is not done in a classroom. The same should be true for spiritual parents. Most teaching happens because the spiritual parent and spiritual child are spending time together. As a result, the model for teaching spiritual children is the same as the model for teaching physical children. That model is given for us in Deuteronomy 6:6-9 where we read, "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your

children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” In these verses we see that both physical parents and spiritual parents:

- ◆ must have the Word of God in their hearts.
- ◆ need to help people become sharp in the Word.
- ◆ need to share the Word in informal situations.
- ◆ need to model the Word by their actions.
- ◆ need to have the Word of God in their thoughts.
- ◆ need to share the Word of God in their homes.

Those who are becoming spiritual parents also need continued encouragement in their growth in ministry. They are now taking the responsibility to help other Christians grow. They will only help others grow as they continue to grow themselves. We need to help Christians that are becoming spiritual parents realize that:

- ministry grows as we spend time with spiritual children - John 1:39, Mark 1:16-20
- ministry grows as we help spiritual children develop priorities - Mark 1:38-39
- ministry grows as we show spiritual children how to minister - Mark 3:13-15
- ministry grows as we help spiritual children learn to minister - Mark 6:7, Mark 6:30-31

Christ wants each of us to learn to multiply our ministry. We multiply our ministry as we help others come to Christ, grow and become spiritually mature and then become spiritual parents to others. Each spiritual parent that the Lord enables us to develop results in a multiplication of our own ministry. May the Lord richly bless you as you help Christians mature and become reproductive spiritual parents.

12.

Helping Spiritual Parents Develop their Ministry with Spiritual Children

In our last topic we focused on how to help spiritual parents develop an effective ministry. Our topic today will build on that topic as we see how to help spiritual parents build their relationship with spiritual children and then begin to develop a ministry with those spiritual children. As Christians grow and mature, they want to begin to serve the Lord. However, at first they do not know how to minister. As a result, the most effective way for spiritual parents to develop the ministry of spiritual children is to begin taking those younger Christians with them as they minister.

This does two things. First, the growing Christians can learn from the example of godly Christians how to develop godly character because it is continually being modeled for them. In Luke 9:51-56 Christ was traveling through Samaria with his disciples. The Samaritans in one village did not allow them to stay in their village for the night. We see the reaction of James and John in Luke 9:54 as they said, “Lord do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?” This sounds like two very angry disciples. Jesus rebuked them in verses 55 and 56, “You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives but to save them. And they went to another village.” Christ could not have helped them to develop godly attitudes toward the Samaritans unless he was with them when this event happened.

Second, the growing Christians can learn from the example of godly Christians how to minister to others because they have seen many examples of ministry as they have gone along. Younger Christians see how we depend on the Holy Spirit to open a door for the Gospel as they go with us and see how the Holy Spirit opens the door for us. Younger Christians learn how to explain the Gospel as they hear us explain the Gospel to others. They learn how to encourage struggling Christians as they see us encourage others. Ministry is primarily caught not taught.

There are several kinds of examples that we provide for younger Christians as we take them with us in all kinds of situations. In order to help new spiritual parents realize the importance of taking newer Christians along with them as they minister, we want them to understand that they will do at least the following things for growing Christians as they take those growing Christians with them:

- ◆ they provide an example for the spiritual child to imitate - I Corinthians 4:15-17 (notice how Timothy had learned from the example of Paul)
- ◆ they provide an example for the spiritual child of how to glorify God - I Corinthians 10:31-11:1
- ◆ they provide an example for the spiritual child of how to walk - Philippians 3:17
- ◆ they provide an example for the spiritual child of how to become an example to others - I Thessalonians 1:6-7 (we see in these verses that people learn to follow the Lord by following the Lord’s people)

As we help people become spiritual parents, we also want to help them learn how to encourage their spiritual children. In order to be able to encourage their spiritual children, the new spiritual parent needs to understand some of the areas of encouragement that younger Christians need to help them in their growth. We want to help spiritual parents learn to do the following to encourage

their spiritual children:

1. encourage their spiritual children who are fainthearted - I Thessalonians 5:14
2. encourage their spiritual children to love and good works - Hebrews 10:24-25
 - a. spiritual parents stir up love and good works by getting together with their spiritual children
 - b. spiritual parents stir up love and good works by encouraging their spiritual children when they are together
3. encourage their spiritual children when they are troubled and fearful - John 14:27
4. encourage their spiritual children by taking risks - Acts 9:26-27 (the example of Barnabas)
5. encourage their spiritual children by helping them develop their ministry - Acts 11:25-26 (Barnabas saw an opportunity to help Saul develop his ministry)

As you can see, Barnabas gives us a great example of how to be an effective spiritual parent to a new Christian. Barnabas had a tremendous impact on the life of Paul. Some of the things he did for Paul during the early spiritual life of Saul (Paul):

- introduced Paul to the other Christian leaders when they were afraid of him - Acts 9:26-27
- went looking for Paul to help Paul expand his ministry - Acts 11:22-25
- worked with Paul as a team in the church at Antioch - Acts 11:26, 13:1
- went with Paul as a church planting team - Acts 13:2-3
- encouraged Paul to take the leadership of the team as they traveled - Acts 13:9
- encouraged Paul to become the main speaker - Acts 13:14-16 , Acts 14:12
- worked with Paul in developing and recognizing leaders in the churches - Acts 14:21-23

It was the on-the-job training with a more mature Christian leader that Paul needed to develop his ministry. By comparing the times mentioned in Galatians 2 and Acts 11, we see that Paul had been a Christian for 13 years before Barnabas brought him to Antioch to share in the teaching of the new Christians there. Barnabas had not forgotten Paul even though it had been ten years since he had introduced him to the leaders in Jerusalem. Barnabas recognized that Paul needed someone to come along side Paul and help him develop his ministry. This helps us to understand why he had his name changed to Barnabas which means the Son of Encouragement. - Acts 4:36

We also want to help spiritual parents learn to be become role models to their spiritual children. As Christ called and chose His disciples we see that Christ had a plan and a purpose. He wanted to help the disciples learn how to do certain things. These are some of the same things that we want to do with our spiritual children. Following the example of Christ, we need to:

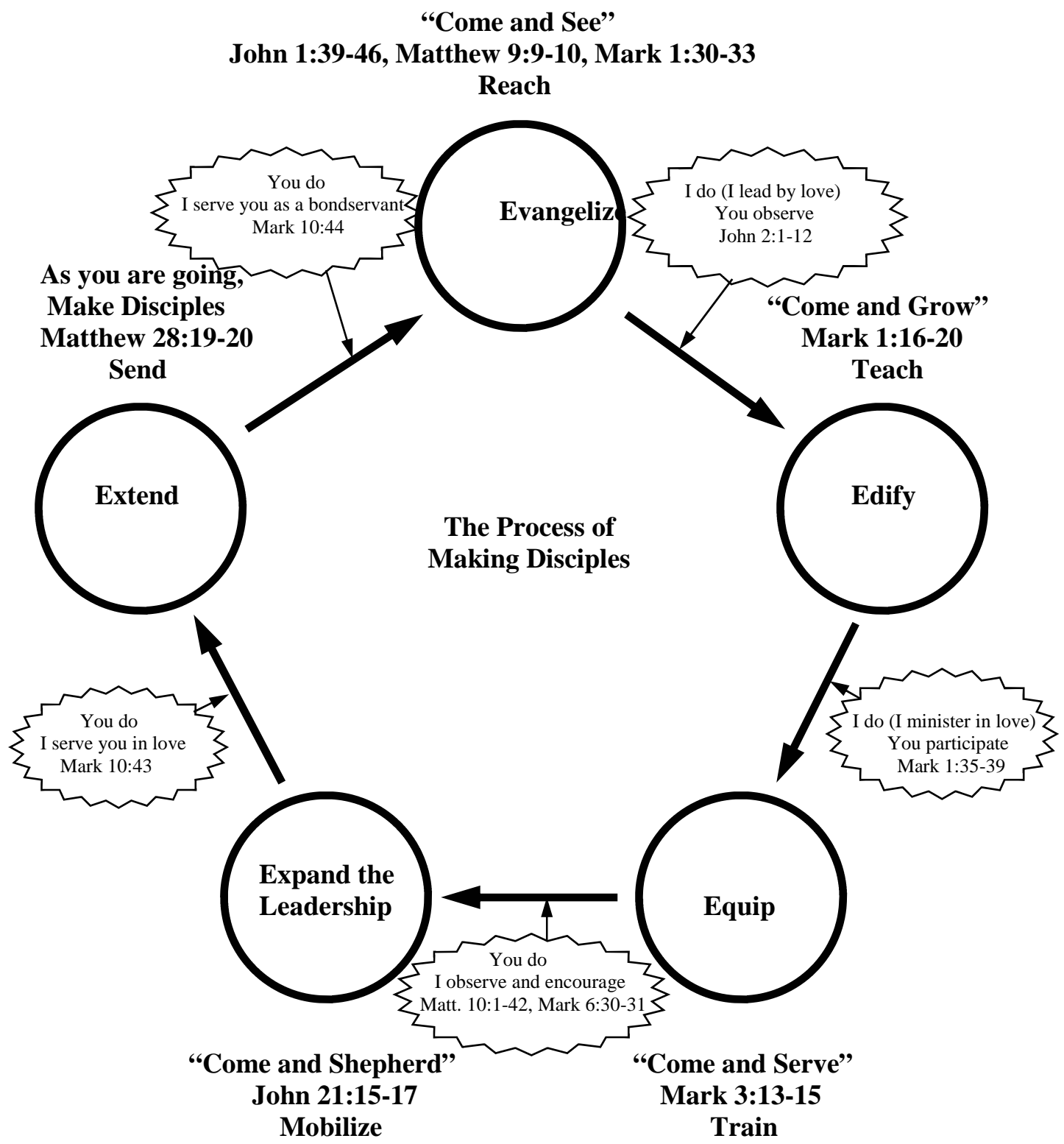
1. show spiritual children how to share the Gospel with their:
 - a. family - John 1:40-42
 - b. friends - John 1:43-46
 - c. co-workers - Matt. 9:9-10
 - d. neighbors and other acquaintances - Mark 1:29-33
2. show spiritual children how to develop their dependence on God - John 6:5-6
3. show spiritual children how they can serve and minister - John 6:11
4. show spiritual children how they can minister to the grieving - John 11:16, 34-36
5. show spiritual children how to become partners in ministry - John 15:15-17

As we help spiritual parents learn to develop an effective ministry with spiritual children, we are in the process of helping them learn how to reproduce and multiply themselves as they learn to help

others mature and develop a ministry. We are helping them learn to become obedient to the Great Commission of Christ to “Make Disciples” among all nations. All Christians are commanded to make disciples. Make the Lord richly bless you as you help others become healthy reproducing Christians who are able to join you in making disciples.

We will be obedient Christians as we follow a Biblical process of Making Disciples

Four Calls and a Commission



World Model (Greek Model) - Develop by Telling
Biblical Model (Hebrew Model) - Develop by Showing