

Closing Challenge

Gary DeLashmut

If 77% of believers want to be discipled and Barna is right that only 3% are being, why are so few Christian workers involved in a disciple-making ministry?

Bottom line: Because it hasn't been a ministry priority!

I'm sure that Satan knows the importance of discipleship more than we do.
I'm sure he respects the power of discipling more than we do.

He wants to prevent us from selling out and making the commitment that if we don't do anything else in life we are going to become competent in discipling ministry.

Church structures are often a hindrance to a discipling ministry...

People often ask, "How do we go from a non-home group based ministry to a home group based ministry.?" We don't really know because we haven't done it. There is a church in Ireland right now that is trying to do so. We'll see how this works.

A disciple-making ministry is the most flexible of all ministries.
God has designed the most important things are the easiest to do structurally.

At Xenos we are trying to create structures to facilitate discipleship effectively.
...but the main obstacles are usually in our personal lives.

I. Obstacles...

1. Hobbyism and entertainmentism

We can't pull ourselves away from the TV or the golf game or the joystick, or, or.
It is a preeminent value in our culture. The inability to concentrate.
The neglect of the most important relationships. It is culturally allowed and approved.
We will never find a way to disciple that is not time intensive.

The good disciplers are not cutting strokes off their golf game.
We have to be willing to pry ourselves away from these hindrances.
We also need to challenge our people to do so.

2. The tyranny of the urgent

This is a victimizing way to say this. We are not victims. We chose how we spend our time. Covey's quadrants:

Urgent: not important

Urgent: Important

Not urgent: Not important – but highly stimulating.

Not urgent: Important – this will go a long way to write the legacy of our lives.

God always gives us time to accomplish His will every day.

The good is often the enemy of the best. You can spend you day every day doing what is urgent and never get around to discipleship.

When we come before the bema seat we will experience the book ends of (grace)...(grace) All our tears will be wiped away. But we never got around to it because there were so many other things to do.

But that is what He has given us to do.

We have to get to this business of making disciples.

If we believe this then we will have to say “no” to other things.

3. Insistence on quick and easy results

This is the quick and easy culture. There is a hastiness to our culture.

The End of Patience

Think about this. What would it be like to actually have to dial a rotary phone.

We are so used to it that it would be psychologically painful to have to dial a phone.

You can't do discipleship quickly.!

Dennis McCallum has a saying “You need to get that relaxed!” Settle in for the long ride! It is going to be a long ride.

We are all working with goofed up people like ourselves.

Working for years two steps forward, one step back.

Have you gotten overwhelmed yet at the difficulty of the task?

Are we really willing to get that relaxed feeling to settle in for the long ride?

4. Preference for high-recognition ministry

We lust for high recognition ministry.

Francis Schaefer's message “No little people” really goes at this point.

We lust and will gravitate toward ministry that we can do that gets noticed.

Discipleship is not this way!

Very few people know or care about the fact that you got up at 4:30 am to meet with someone. They don't know and they don't care! And that is good for our soul.

Discipleship ministry is much like farming. We just want to go to the store and buy food.

But farmers work hard before, during and after the crop that has to be done.

It is work that is done almost always behind the scenes.

Disciple-making is one of those ministries that is done in secret.

5. Ironically, we can be derailed from a discipling ministry by our own spiritual gifts.

I find teaching easier than other ministries. God gives us the desire and aptitude to do it well. And again, precisely because the area of our giftedness is easier to do we may

neglect the areas of crucial importance like making disciples. I know that I've been guilty of this. We need to not neglect the areas of our giftedness. But we need to be aware that there is still the issue of "making disciples"

6. Perfectionism

I won't do this until I figure out how to do it well. Or until I find someone who is such a surefire person that I am likely to succeed. This attitude is about being under law and not grace. We have all kinds of ways to rationalize this. A lot of us are perfectionists.

This is just really my own flesh finding a way to preserve itself. That's why the grace of God is there. It gives us the freedom to fail in ministry or we won't get better at anything that is important.

Jim Leffel quoted – 1 Cor 15:19 last night. Aren't you glad Paul just can't stay on the subject! "I'm not worthy to be an apostle"

We need to get down to the grace of God and get our egos bruised.

We are not saved by grace, we minister under grace.

We all bugger things up.

"Well Lord, here's is another imperfect sacrifice." But God says, in Romans 12:1-2 these sacrifices are "well pleasing to God" When you really goof things up we need to get to the place where we let rest imperfect sacrifices or we won't be able to advance in ministry. **God is big enough to overcome all of these obstacles – are you willing to cooperate with him?**

II. The main and most powerful way God motivates us is positive. There are rich rewards.

Yes the flesh has to die. Yes disciple-making is confusing and difficult.

But there are rich rewards.

This is always the way it is with the will of God. God's will is the only thing in the universe that is always glorifying to Him and helpful to me and to others.

This is the only ultimate win, win, win in the world – his will.

1. Regular spiritual nutrition

1 Timothy 4:6 – at the very least getting together with someone else who wants to study the scripture together it is nourishing.

Don't we usually walk away built up?

I can't tell you how many times I've dragged myself out to go meet with someone.

But we are built up because we got into God together.

2. Sweet camaraderie

~ 2 Tim 1:4 There is the **incredibly sweet camaraderie** between those who are fellow soldiers. There is a kind of closeness, of real enjoyment in that fellowship that can't be matched anywhere else.

“If you want to be zealous you have to hang around others who are zealous.”

3. Deliverance from the “mother bird” syndrome

Doing productive work.

There is a good tired.

4. A discipling ministry provides a cushion during other ministry difficulties and setbacks.

There is no way to avoid this. Some of our cherished dreams will go south.

Frankly, I always want to be discipling more than one person. Some will fall by the wayside. Even Jesus lost one. The point is that I can bare a lot of agony when “but we are making progress over here” In the long run we are going to win!

5. Unsurpassed joy in this life

3 John 1:4 I have no greater joy than to see my children walking in the truth.

We have to take this by faith some time.

In this life the greatest joy in the work of God is to see that these people that I poured my life into are walking in the truth.

6. Not to mention eternal reward

In our temporally motivated world this was the motivate of Paul.

Over and over again, Paul talks about this.

1 Thessalonians 2:19 “For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming?”

We can't go the long haul unless we get some deep convictions about this ministry of making disciples. I know for sure that He is going to reward us for discipling others. What do you want your life to count for? We will be overwhelmed that we are actually there in heaven. Let's review what you've done. I'm not going to shoot you but let's take a walk before I reward you.

The Lord will reward us according to what we've done with what God gave us.

30 years ago Dr. Howard Hendricks leaned over and asked a teenage boy named Dennis, “If I came back in a couple of years, would you have another ‘Dennis’ with you?” And that boy named Dennis went out during the next year and found me. I would not be here today. He saved my life. Is that worth it? I think so.