

# Discipleship: It's a Process - Not a Program

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**Discipleship** is a great word. It looks good on a church bulletin right above the words: Bible Study Service. It appears pleasant and inviting on the cover of numerous curriculum choices. Its mere mention on a resume can change a hard-core evangelist into a well-rounded, balanced ministry professional. The fact is - discipleship is a great word. It is, however, a difficult task.

Paul spoke of his commitment to discipling believers in this way: **it's labor!**

**Colossians 1:28-29 (NIV)**

<sup>28</sup> *We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.*

<sup>29</sup> *To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.*

Christ has called us to disciple believers. Paul saw the value in Christ's command and was willing to labor until the task was complete. This goal of spiritual maturity was his desire for every believer. If we truly want to accomplish the task of discipleship with every student God gives us, we must consider the following:

## **We must commit to the task.**

Discipleship is not a program; it is a process. It's not a sleek, red sports car that burns rubber and gets you and one suitcase there in a hurry, but rather, it is a locomotive that slowly leaves the station, containing the strength to transport an unfathomable amount of cargo. Being committed to the task means that we cannot become impatient and bail when things aren't moving at the pace we desire. **Time is required to present each of your students as "mature in Christ."**

## **We must exercise personal spiritual disciplines.**

**How can we possibly pass on what we do not possess?** In order to pass on a deep love for Christ and the tools for building a relationship with Him, we must first possess them ourselves.

## **We must have a plan based on relationship.**

**Every student requires individual care and development.** Just because a group of kids completes a Bible study does not mean that they have been disciplined that semester. Day-to-day, life-on-life experience and instruction helps transform Bible study into life skills.

## **We must not waver.**

There are dozens of reasons to seek another method of growing students, methods that are more pleasing to parents and more appealing to students. Jesus must have thought the same things as many turned and walked away from His call to radical discipleship. **If a student will test your love for them, they will also test your commitment to the task.** When they see your love and understand your resolve, they are more likely to join the journey to spiritual maturity.