

1. The Process of Developing Ministry Skills

Christ gave us the greatest example of how to develop ministry skills as He developed the ministry skills of the twelve. That process is seen in the “Four Calls and a Commission” (a diagram by this name is on our web site) that Christ gave His disciples. That process of making disciples is summarized as follows:

- ♦ “Come and See” (evangelize) – John 1:39-46; Matthew 9:9-10; Mark 1:30-33
- ♦ “Come and Grow” (edify) – Mark 1:16-20
- ♦ “Come and Serve” (equip) – Mark 3:13-15
- ♦ “Come and Shepherd” (expand the Leadership) – John 21:15-17
- ♦ “As you are going, Make Disciples” (extend) – Matthew 28:19-20

To understand how Christ developed the ministry skills of the twelve during each of these stages, we will give a summary in this topic and then expand that summary in future topics. One thing that is important, here, is to notice the length of time each of these stages lasted:

- “Come and See” – about twelve months
- “Come and Grow” – an additional nine months (total twenty-one months)
- “Come and Serve” - an additional twenty-one months (total about forty-two months)
- “Come and Shepherd” – spoken after the resurrection
- “As you are going, Make Disciples” – spoken after the resurrection

First, Christ just invited the disciples to come and spend time with him. During this time, they traveled with Him to a wedding in Cana (John 2:1-12), to the Passover in Jerusalem (John 2:13-3:21), to Judea (John 3:22-4:3), through Samaria (John 4:4-42) and ministered in the synagogues throughout Galilee (Luke 4:14-44). Throughout the entire first year, a group of disciples were traveling with Christ at various times. This included a larger group than the twelve, but various members of the twelve were often a part of this group.

During this entire first year, Christ was doing the ministry, while the disciples just observed. We will look at some of the things they observed in our next topic. For the most part, Christ did not expect them to do anything except observe. He did allow them to baptize (John 4:2) and He did send them into the city of Sychar to buy food (John 4:8, 27). Other than that, they were primarily observers of the ministry of Christ.

Second, after about a year, Christ began inviting the disciples to follow Him, so He could show them how to become fishers of men (Mark 1:14-20; Luke 5:1-13). During this time, they spent time visiting the towns of Galilee. Since there were two hundred and three towns and villages throughout Galilee that had a synagogue, this allowed the disciples to observe what Christ was teaching, and also, begin participating.

In Mark 1:29-33, we see that ministry to the multitudes shifted from the synagogue to the house of Peter and Andrew on that particular day. This meant that the disciples were beginning to participate in the ministry, because it was happening in their own homes, where they would be the hosts. Mark 1:35-39 shows that the people were beginning to ask questions of the disciples. Then, in Mark 2:14-17, we see that ministry was happening in the home of Matthew, so he was

participating as the host as Jesus met his co-workers and friends. Here, we see that Christ was developing the ministry skill of hospitality during this time.

Third, after a total of about twenty-one months from the time Christ first started getting acquainted with the disciples, we see that Christ chose the twelve. Luke 6:12-13 says that Christ did this after spending an entire night in prayer. Mark and Luke both point out that the twelve were chosen from a larger group of disciples. Mark 3:13-15 tells us what the twelve were chosen:

- ⇒ to be with Him
- ⇒ that He might send them out to preach
- ⇒ to have power to heal sicknesses
- ⇒ to have power to cast out demons

During this second half of Christ's ministry, the disciples were going to start doing part of the ministry, while Christ observed and encouraged them. When Christ sent the twelve out on their own the first time, He gave them very specific instructions. Matthew 10:5-11 gives us those instructions, "These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: 'Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, preach, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give. Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts, nor bag for *your* journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor staffs; for a worker is worthy of his food. Now whatever city or town you enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and stay there till you go out.'"

We see that Christ knew they were not yet ready to learn certain ministry skills, so, He told them to avoid certain things. He also wanted to teach them to depend on Him to supply what they needed. Notice the following thing Christ focused on:

- they were not to go to the Gentiles – the twelve were not yet ready to learn to cross the barrier of language
- they were not to go to the Samaritans – the twelve were not yet ready to learn to cross the barrier of another culture, religion or ethnic group
- they were given a specific message to preach – the kingdom of heaven is at hand
- they were given a specific ministry of healing – the sick, the lepers and the dead
- they were given a specific ministry of dealing with demons – they were to cast out demons
- they were to give freely
- they were to learn that the Lord would supply what they needed
- they were to stay with someone who was respected by the other people in each city that they visited
- Mark 6:7 also tells us that He send them out in teams of two

Then, Mark 6:30-31 tells us a key thing that Christ did after He sent the disciples out for a time of ministry. Those verses say, "Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. And He said to them, 'Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.' For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat." Here, we see that Christ did three things with the disciples:

- He listened to what they had done

- He listened to what they had taught
- He emphasized the importance of rest after a busy time of ministry

Later, Christ also sent out thirty-five teams of two in Luke 10. Before Christ sent them out, He also gave them specific instructions. We see the report of the seventy in Luke 10:17-20. There we read, “Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, ‘Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.’ And He said to them, ‘I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.’” In these verses, we see that Christ did two things:

- He shared the joy of the seventy
- He explained the source of real joy

We see that Christ used the following process to develop ministry skills in the twelve.

- ◆ He took them along and gave them the opportunity to observe what He did
- ◆ He took them along and gave them the opportunity to participate in what He did
- ◆ He had them minister while He observed
- ◆ He had them report so they could begin to realize priorities
- ◆ He then spent nearly two more years in joint ministry
- ◆ He then commissioned them to go out and reproduce themselves in the lives of others

However, before Christ sent them out to reproduce themselves in the lives of others, He gave them the two keys necessary to be effective in ministry when He was no longer physically walking with them. Those same two keys are absolutely necessary for every developing spiritual leader to learn if he or she is going to be effective in ministry:

- ◆ The developing leader must learn to depend on the Holy Spirit for the wisdom to know what to say – John 14:25-26 “‘These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.’” Jesus opened the understanding of the apostles in Luke 24:45-48, but they still needed the Holy Spirit to guide them in what to say.
- ◆ The developing leader must learn to depend on the power of the Holy Spirit to be able to minister with boldness – Luke 24:49 “‘Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.’” Acts 4:29-31, as well as many other passages, tells us that the believers were able to speak the Word of God with boldness as they depended on the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Lord gives each Christian gifts and abilities to minister effectively. However, He gives us the great privilege of showing them how to develop those gifts and abilities. The Lord also gives us the opportunity to show developing leaders to depend on the Holy Spirit, for both wisdom and boldness to share the Word of God, by our example of dependence. May the Lord richly bless you as you serve developing spiritual leaders by showing them how to minister by your example.