

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 - 1 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 - 1 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 - 1 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

Growing Christian Leaders Series – Developing Reproducing Christians 12. “Helping Spiritual Parents Develop Their Relationship with Spiritual Children”
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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 - 1 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) include:

- introducing Paul to the other Christian leaders when they were afraid of him - Acts 9:26-27
- looking for Paul to help Paul expand his ministry - Acts 11:22-25
- working with Paul as a team in the church at Antioch - Acts 11:26, 13:1
- going with Paul as a church planting team - Acts 13:2-3
- encouraging Paul to take the leadership of the team as they traveled - Acts 13:9
- encouraging Paul to become the main speaker - Acts 13:14-16, 14:12
- working 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 thirteen 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 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

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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. May the Lord richly bless you as you help others become healthy reproducing Christians who are able to join you in making disciples.