

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 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. Here, we see that Saul showed a learner’s attitude by 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 under-shepherd for Christ. Christ did not invite the disciples to sign up for His leadership course. Instead, He invited them to follow Him. In 1 Corinthians 11:1, Paul said, “Imitate me, just as I also *imitate*

Christ.” The only reason Paul gave people for following and imitating 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 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. ...⁶Now 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
- * Has 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.