

## 11. Discipling Spiritual Leaders (1Q 2014—Discipleship)

**Biblical material:** Luke 6:12–16, John 16:7–14, Luke 6:20–49, Jer. 50:31, Isa. 57:15, Acts 1.

### Quotes

- In every historical period, the religious groups that grow most rapidly are those that set believers at odds with the surrounding culture. *Nancy Pearcey*
- Many pastors have been reduced to secular “mentors” and “coaches” in exchange for authentic disciplers of men. *John Paul Warren*
- “Jesus did not command us to “develop” leaders. He commanded us to make “disciples”. The world “develops” leaders, the Church “disciples” them. The two are not the same. *John Paul Warren*
- If we are to go forward, we must go back and rediscover those precious values - that all reality hinges on moral foundations and that all reality has spiritual control. *Martin Luther King, Jr.*
- Great men are they who see that spiritual is stronger than any material force - that thoughts rule the world. *Ralph Waldo Emerson*
- Effective leadership is not about making speeches or being liked; leadership is defined by results not attributes. *Peter Drucker*

### Questions

What was the primary reason Jesus chose disciples? What would you say were the chief qualities Jesus looked for in his disciples? How did he prepare them for future leadership? What was the most important perspective Jesus shared with his disciples before he left them? How does this fit in with the Great Controversy?

### Bible summary

The calling (and names) of the disciples is recorded in Luke 6:12–16. Jesus tells his disciples, “I’m telling you the truth: it’s better for you that I go away, for if I don’t the Comforter won’t come to you. If I go away, I will send him to you.” John 16:7 FBV. Jesus spends time talking to his disciples in Luke 6:20–49 explaining what will be their experience. The arrogant will experience judgment (Jer. 50:31), while the Lord will be with those of a lowly and contrite spirit (Isa. 57:15). “This same Jesus” will return the angels tell the disciples as they watch Jesus ascend into heaven (see Acts 1).

### Comment

Jesus recognized the vital importance of sharing his earthly time here with others who could continue to tell the good news of God once he was no longer present. That is why he was so focused on ensuring that his disciples gained the best picture of God, and spent much time in demonstration and explanation with them. While some of this was information he also knew that experience is the best teacher. This is why Jesus involved his disciples in all aspects of his ministry. He showed them the truth of God incarnate, which included such experiences as the Transfiguration, the miracles of healing and feeding, walking on the water, the treatment of people (Samaritan woman, woman taken

in adultery, Nicodemus, Zacchaeus, the rich young ruler etc. etc.), and ultimately the cross and resurrection.

Likewise we need to recapture that vision of God, and seek for experiences that lead us closer to him. Here Scripture is so important, especially the gospels, for they reveal God in sharpest focus. As his disciples our job is to tell others the truth about our loving Lord in contrast to the Devil's lies.

After the death of Jesus his disciples were hiding behind locked doors, fearing what would happen to them. But after the resurrection and Jesus' appearances to them, they were empowered by the Spirit to go out and be God's witnesses. This dramatic transformation shows what can happen when God intervenes in our lives and gives us confidence in the presence and hope for the future. What made the difference? Confidence in the God they now knew, trust in his promises, and the assurance of his presence with him, forever and ever. It would be foolish to stake your life on some worthless idea—which is why the story that the disciples stole Jesus' body makes no sense as an explanation for Christian faith in the resurrection. It is because the disciples knew Jesus, and recognized their resurrected Lord, and saw in him a God who was totally loving and trustworthy. That experience transformed their world!

Jesus knew it would be a traumatic experience for his disciples to witness his death, and then his departure. This is why he spent much time preparing them for this, and pointing to the future when everything would be resolved, promising "I will come again." It is the central promise that continues to give us as his disciples hope as we continue on his work here, looking forward to the Day of Reunion.

### **Ellen White Comments**

But a faithful performance of duty goes hand in hand with a right estimate of the character of God. There is earnest work to do for the Master. Christ came to preach the gospel to the poor, and He sent His disciples forth to do the same work He came to do. So He sends forth His workers today. Sheaves are to be gathered for Him from the highways and hedges. {HP 131}

The Son of God declared in positive terms that the world was destitute of the knowledge of God; but this knowledge was of the highest value, and it was His own peculiar gift, the inestimable treasure which He brought into the world. In the exercise of His sovereign prerogative He imparted to His disciples the knowledge of the character of God, in order that they might communicate it to the world. . . . Everyone who believes the message of God should lift up Jesus, point men to Christ, and say, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." . . . {LHU 36}

To know God is the most wonderful knowledge that men can have. There is much wisdom with worldly men, but with all their wisdom they behold not the beauty and majesty, the justice and wisdom, the goodness and holiness, of the Creator of all worlds. The Lord walks among men by His providences, but His stately steppings are not heard, His presence is not discerned, His hand is not recognized. The work of Christ's disciples is to shine as lights, making manifest to the world the character of God. They are to catch the increasing rays of light from the Word of God and reflect them to men enshrouded in the darkness of misapprehension of God. The servants of Christ must rightly represent the character of God and Christ to men. {TMK 98}