

should have the effect of **transforming us** so that we become more **like Christ** in our **character** and in our **practice**. The Christian Life is a **godly life** of virtue fueled by the **Word, prayer**, and regular **fellowship**.

**2 Peter 1:5-8** - 5 Now for this very reason also, **applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence**, and in your moral excellence, knowledge; 6 and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness; 7 and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. 8 **For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.** NASB

Jesus left all Christians a *mandate* to make disciples in His **Great Commission** (Matthew 28:18-20). The visible church has been **slow** in heeding Christ's call to **nurture new believers** as they as they **grow** in grace and knowledge of God's Word. Consider that a **healthy church** should be filled with Christians who **actually** do the hard **work** of **nurturing new believers** in the faith so that they can enjoy the **maturity** of a **godly life**, and better yet, put the glory of God on display by the way that they live!

**Acts 14:21-22** - 21 And after they had preached the gospel to that city and had **made many disciples**, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, 22 **strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith**, and saying, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God." NASB

May God grant us deep desire to walk after the example Christ set for us! We have been called to high and holy privilege of making disciples! (Matthew 16:24-25)

### **Qualifications for the Disciplemaker**

Are you **spiritually mature** enough to make disciples? Does your life exemplify **effective, productive Christian living** that will instruct and encourage disciples? Does the **Holy Spirit reign** in your life over your **sinful passions** and vices? Is your love and enjoyment of God clearly

evident in the way you live? When you sin, do others see you **humbly confess and repent**? Those are good questions for any Christian as they consider their spiritual health. Clear **evidence of growing spiritual maturity is fundamental** to your **effective discipling**. Therefore as we think about our role as a discipler, helping others follow Jesus, let us briefly consider our own spiritual health, and some qualifications for being and effective discipler.

1. **Spiritual maturity** – If we are going to help others follow Jesus, then **we must** also be **following Him**. The discipler's life should be an *example* of the things being taught to the disciple. Discipling will take enough **integrity** that your life as a discipler is **genuinely** reflecting the kind of **godly life** that others can **follow**. You are in a sense saying to them, come follow me as I follow Jesus. Consider Paul's example to the Thessalonians.

**2 Thessalonians 3:7-9** - 7 For you yourselves know how **you ought to follow our example**, because **we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you**, 8 nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we kept working night and day so that we might not be a burden to any of you; 9 not because we do not have the right to this, but **in order to offer ourselves as a model for you, that you might follow our example**. NASB

Now see here the importance of our own **spiritual maturity**. If helping others follow Jesus

means teaching them to **live the Christian Life effectively** and productively, we must ask, is

our Christian Life **effective and productive**? Are we loving Christ and also our neighbor, in

the church and outside the church? Does our life reflect the **basic disciplines** feeding

ourselves daily on the Word of God? Are we communing daily with God in prayer? Do we

fellowship regularly with other godly Christians? Is all of this **transforming** our lives and making us more like Jesus? See here a healthy gauge of our own spiritual health.

2. **Commitment to Christ** – As we help others follow Jesus it is important to exemplify a life that has **Christ in first place**. This means we generally have our **life's priorities** in the **right order**. Our relationship with **God and Christ**, our **marriage and family, career, church, and relations to others** need to be handled in a way that honors God and is consistent with Jesus teaching, and **generally in that order**. If you spend too much of your time on lower life priorities so that your relationship with God and your marriage is on the rocks, it should be obvious that you're **not qualified to guide others** in healthy Christian living. Therefore it is important for the discipler to have the **commitment to Christ in the highest place**, and therefore a **properly ordered set of life priorities**.

**Ephesians 5:15-17** - 15 Therefore **be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as**

**wise, 16 making the most of your time**, because the days are evil.  
17 So then do not be

foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. NASB

3. **Separation from sin** – Disciplers who are helping others to follow Jesus must obviously be walking and living in **repentance from sin**. This is not to say we never sin, but that our life is **not dominated** by any **sin** and that when we do sin we deal with it properly in **confession and repentance**. In fact, this is one of the great lessons we must teach those we disciple, that is, confession and repentance of sin and the humility of recognizing our own sinfulness and dealing with it in a godly way (2 Cor 7:9-11). Obedience to the Word is a main qualification in disciplemaking. If you're not doing the Word, you cannot lead others to do the Word.

**James 1:21-22** - 21 Therefore putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, **in humility receive the word implanted**, which is able to save your souls. 22 But **prove yourselves doers of the word**, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. NASB

4. **Ability to independently study the Bible** – Of course one important aspect of Christian life is **growing** in the grace and **knowledge of God** through the **Word**. Our faith is didactic and we are always learning. Young Christian believers must learn how to **feed themselves** on the **Word** and grow in an understanding of Christ and His teaching. As Christ followers we must learn “**every that He commanded**” (Matt 28:20), and also to **teach others** the same. One main lesson you will be teaching those you disciple is how to both study and understand the Bible.

**Matthew 28:18-20** - 18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 "Go therefore and **make disciples** of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 **teaching them to observe all that I commanded you**; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. " NASB

5. **Ability to effectively counsel others from Scripture** – As new believers learn to **navigate** the **Christian life**, they will have all kinds of questions about how to honor God as they **relate** to the **world** and **others**. Helping others follow Jesus means that we know **how to find the wisdom of God** in life’s many and varied situations so that we can honor Him with godly choices. We may not always know the right answers and choices for life’s complex situations, but we need to know how to **guide them to find the answers** in the **Word**, and also sometimes **seek** the help and **advice of godly pastors** in the church. In fact, one lesson they must learn is to discern who godly Christian leaders are and also to submit their lives unto their leadership and guidance.

**Hebrews 13:7 - 7** **Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you**; and considering the result of their conduct, **imitate their faith**. NASB

**Hebrews 13:17 - 17** **Obey your leaders, and submit to them**; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you. NASB

6. **Ability to clearly and spontaneously articulate the Gospel** – The Christian life is never detached from the Gospel. The Person and the Work of Jesus is at the heart of everything we do. We are **always** and ever **living in relationship to Him**, and always live with our minds saturated with the wisdom, promises, and exhortations that Gospel brings. It is the food of our very lives and like a fountain of holy cleansing, it is **living water** to our souls. New believers must learn the Gospel well, not only so that they can be **assured** of their **own salvation** and what they have believed, but also so they can **teach others**. One main reason for this is **every Christian** needs to learn to **evangelize** and **make disciples** of others which cannot be done without an **ability to clearly articulate what the Gospel is**.

**Colossians 4:5-6 - 5 Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders**, making the most of the opportunity. **6 Let your speech always be with grace**, seasoned, as it were, with **salt**, so that you may **know how you should respond to each person**. NASB

To be sure, one does not have to meet every one of these qualifications without flaw to start discipling, but they are **general guidelines** to determine the **level** of our **spiritual health**. Here are a few more important probing questions to help gage your spiritual health.

- Does your **commitment to Christ** dominate your lifestyle? Are you disciplined in the ways of Jesus and is this exemplified by the **fruit of the Spirit** and through **basic Christian disciplines** such as:
  - Daily meditation on the Word
  - Daily communion with God through prayer
  - Regular Christian worship, fellowship, and service in the Church
- Are you **acutely sensitive** to the Holy Spirit's **conviction of sin**, and do you and **deal with sin** quickly through **confession, faith** and **repentance**.
- Do you know **how to study the Bible** and explain its meaning? Can you teach to others to do so? Do you study (at any level or in any way) the Bible on a regular basis?

- Can you provide **basic biblical counseling** to those seeking direction through life's difficulties? Are you equipped to teach others to live so as to glorify God?
- Can you clearly **articulate the Gospel concisely, accurately, and persuasively**? Below is an excellent example of how this can be done.

### **The Initiation of Discipling: Evangelism**

Fundamental to the **discipling process** is of course **Evangelism**. Of course if you're going to have someone to disciple, they must be willing to **embrace Christ** with **faith** and **repentance**. That is, unless you have a kind of **discipling relationship** with someone you are **evangelizing**. This is actually a very effective way to bring someone to faith in Christ. To meet regularly with them doing **"one to one"** reading through the **Bible**, and/or going over different passages of Scripture and different **biblical doctrines** to help someone come to **understand the Gospel** and thereby believe and be saved. It also helps if possible, to bring them into your life and allow them to see how you live and how the power of godliness affects your life. At some point they will need to come in repentance to Christ and embrace Him by faith alone for righteousness before God to be saved. At that point a full blown discipling relation can begin and should continue for two or more years. So it is therefore incumbent upon us to be **sharing the Gospel** with others **in our sphere of life** (family, work, neighbors, acquaintances) in order to bring them to **saving faith** and have someone to disciple. This is something the twelve did very effectively and ended up by God's grace reaching much of the Greco-Roman world of their generation. This is what Jesus taught the twelve, and then **commanded them to teach us** (Matt 28:19-21).

**Luke 24:45-49** - 45 Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, 46 and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day; 47 and **that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations**, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 "You are witnesses of these things. 49 "And behold, I am sending forth the