

## **The Key to Our Church's Future 2 Timothy**

### **Part 2 – “Discipleship: Becoming Fully Mature in Christ”**

#### **Introduction:**

1. What is the best way to teach a young player how to play the game of baseball? Is it to have a soccer expert come in and try to teach him? How about a football player? Is it to sit him in a classroom with 30 other players to listen to lectures?
2. We know the answer, don't we? It is rather obvious. The best way is to have another, experienced, successful baseball player take that young player out to the field and teach that young man the ins and outs of baseball.
3. What is the best way to teach a young Christian how to live the Christian life and how to grow and mature in the faith? Is it to sit him in a church with 500 other people to listen to lectures about the Christian life?
4. We know the answer, don't we? Find a Christian who is seasoned – that has been saved for awhile, who has learned what it takes to grow in the faith – to take that new convert under his wings and teach him!
5. This is the key to our church's future, and we call it discipleship. Why is it the key to our church's future? Last week we learned that discipleship is God's way of passing our faith along. But let's look at a second reason.

#### **Second, because discipleship is God's way of growing new Christians**

1. When a person gets saved and trusts Christ as Savior, he begins living spiritually.
  - Before salvation, the Bible declares us dead in trespasses and sins. Ephesians 2:1
  - But when we trust Christ, the Spirit of Christ comes to live within us, and we are quickened (made alive). Ephesians 2:5
2. Just like you have a physical birthday, you should have a spiritual birthday when Christ saved you, and His Spirit came to live within you.
3. Once you receive spiritual life, you don't begin your Christian life fully mature, but rather as a babe in Christ. 1 Corinthians 3:1
  - They were saved. They were in Christ. But they were babes in Christ.
  - Every Christian's spiritual journey begins this way. The Bible uses this analogy for good reason.
  - Every one of us started our physical lives as little babies that spit all over ourselves, got food all over our faces, and pottied our pants. The same is true in our spiritual life.
4. Let's look at some characteristics of physical babies, and let's see if they apply to new Christians.
  - They can't take care of themselves. They can't feed themselves. They can't protect themselves. They need a lot of care and attention. They are very vulnerable. They can be deceived easily. All of this is true of baby Christians.

5. This is why Paul said in Ephesians 4:14-15, *“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men...”*
6. It is absolutely crucial that new Christians begin growing after they are saved. How does a new Christian grow? 1 Peter 2:2
  - They must learn and assimilate and digest God’s Word. It is spiritual food.
  - This is where discipleship comes in. Remember, a baby can’t feed himself. So mature Christians take baby Christians and disciple them. That is, they teach them the basic foundational principles of God’s Word so they can begin growing.
7. Look at 2 Timothy 3:15-16. What do we learn from this passage? The Scriptures:
  - Are able to make a person wise.
  - Are able to spiritually mature a young Christian.
  - Are able to equip a new Christian to serve God.
8. But think about this – the Scriptures can’t help you if you don’t know them. You’ve heard the expression, “What you don’t know can’t hurt you.” In the Christian life, what you don’t know **can** hurt you. God’s Word is our defense.
  - This is also true in the spiritual realm. When a person first gets saved, he needs someone to begin coaching him, discipling him.
9. What is the goal of discipleship? The new believer becomes a fully mature Christian who has learned to depend on Christ in every area of life.
  - Sometimes an unhealthy dependency can develop between disciplers and the disciples. They begin leaning on and depending on their discipler too much. They try to mimic the person mentoring them.
  - That is not the goal. The goal is to get them to see their sufficiency in Christ. You want them to see that, if they will abide in Christ, He will work and live through them in every situation. Philippians 4:13, Galatians 2:20
  - Let’s look at Colossians 2:19. Many Christians have never learned to hold the Head (Jesus). This means to trust in Him, and Him alone. The result is that they do not increase and grow as this verse talks about.
  - Many Christians have simply learned how to mimic other believers: learn the lingo, learn how to look, act, and outwardly conform. This is not discipleship.
  - Discipleship is when growth occurs as a result of a person being truly connected in a life-giving relationship with Jesus Christ.
  - Jesus is overflowing in every area of their lives. They are no longer basing their decisions on, “What would the pastor think?” But rather, they ask, “What would Jesus think?”
10. You have heard me say before that spiritual maturity has nothing to do with what position you hold in the church, how spiritually you talk, how big your class is, or how much money you give. The issue is the fullness of Christ. Is Jesus overflowing in every area of your life? Have you learned to depend on Him in everything?

**In Conclusion:**

1. The apostle Paul had discipled Timothy. He left him at Ephesus to pastor that local church. But look what he reminds him in 2 Timothy 1:13.
  - The Bible teaches we should be growing in our faith and growing in our love, but they are found in Christ Jesus.
2. As the discipleship process takes place, we keep emphasizing to those young believers that everything they need is found in Christ. We are complete in Him. He is our sufficiency in all things.
3. Once the new convert understands this, true growth and change begins to happen. This is another reason why discipleship is the key to our church's future.