

Disciple Making: It's not a Course, it's a Relationship Life in Tandem

The Way to Joy is a tool that can help facilitate a deeper relationship between you and the person you are discipling. Because TWYJ necessitates spending substantial time together spread out over 10 weeks, including praying, talking and learning together, it ensures continuity in the relationship. It provides a framework for intentional discussion of serious Biblical truths and their personal application to life which adds depth to the relationship. It also allows the opportunity to share personal stories regarding the character of God and His promises as well as our times of personal failure and growth. TWTJ alone is not enough to build a "life in tandem" relationship. There must also be relaxed and informal times together, as well as times to serve others, to worship God in an assembly, and to extend the circle of believing friendships with other believers. Using TWTJ with a new disciple brings into the relationship an additional, more intentional and formal learning opportunity, including scripture memory, Bible reading, prayer and study. A healthy "life-in-tandem" disciple making relationship will include these elements as well.

Three Roles of a Disciplemaker

Teacher, Father, Coach

Teacher

Disciples are learners, and therefore disciplemakers are, among other things, teachers. Using TWTJ, in addition to the 130 page leader's guide available at www.goodsoil.com, can advance your skills as a teacher of God's Word. TWTJ is designed to get the disciple into the Word of God, both in the lesson, the Bible reading guide starting in lesson 4, and the verse memory cards. Your part will be to guide the discussion with your disciple, provide answers to their endless questions, and to lead them back into the scriptures to make discoveries on their own.

Father

Disciples, by our definition, are young in the faith. They need a role model of faithfulness, integrity and spiritual maturity. They need wise counsel for the myriad of choices they now want to make in line with God's will. They also need to be gently but consistently corrected when their attitudes or beliefs are contrary to God's truth. Lesson 3 on Assurance, 6 on The Holy Spirit, 7 on Purity, and 9 on Baptism and Church Membership will often require more time to cover as your disciple will likely have no background or false teaching in their background that will need to be corrected. Along with the informal times with your disciple, this intentional time in the Word will allow you to share verbally and clearly your own love for God and passion for His glory and truth. These "fatherly" times bear great potential for good in the life of your disciple.

Coach

You have been emphasizing all along the importance of "giving out", not just "taking in". If you have been faithfully praying for unbelieving friends and relatives together with your disciple, the time may soon come when your disciple and you may be able to co-teach TWTJ to others. When your disciple begins to take the first steps towards discipling others, encourage and support him. Take him along with you as you work with others. One of the primary goals of taking your disciple through TWTJ is to give him a tool and methodology that he can then repeat with others. As you get to know your disciple, those special areas of spiritual giftedness will begin to surface. Whether they possess gifts of service, compassion, leadership or teaching, they need to be coached and assisted in using these gifts now. This does not mean you turn them loose unassisted, but you coach them along the process of developing their gifts as they serve with you. The old formula is still a good one...

"You watch while I teach, then we discuss it.

We teach together, then we discuss it.

I watch while you teach, then we discuss it."

Four Illustrations, Four Occupations

Investor, Soldier, Athlete, Farmer

Investor

It will become evident by the last lesson of TWTJ, whether your disciple is serious about following Christ and committed to faithfully obeying God's Word. This not only provides a foundation for your disciple's future growth,

but it also tells you whether or not they are a good investment of your time. This is one of the most difficult realities to face in discipling: “You can’t disciple everyone. They must be willing and committed.” Your time is limited, therefore you want to spend it with those who are serious about acting on the truth they are hearing.

Soldier

The 10 weeks of time TWTJ takes to complete will usually provide opportunities to observe how your disciple handles temptation. Lesson 6 on the Holy Spirit and lesson 7 on Purity will provide additional material to explore hardships and suffering in the life of a disciple. Life is a battleground, not a playground. The seriousness of suffering is an unpopular but essential one for all of us to face.

Athlete

Discipline and diligence are foundational for growth in an area of life. We live in a lazy, self-indulgent age. TWTJ lessons 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, and 10 focus on the disciplines of the Word, prayer, purity, witnessing, local church identification, and the great commission. Bringing the whole life under the whole Lordship of Christ in obedience to the whole Word is the goal of discipleship. TWTJ will give you opportunities to initiate these ideas over the weeks together. They are only a beginning, but they are a strong beginning.

Farmer

Hard work is essential for a good harvest. The initial 10-week commitment to TWTJ will be an easy commitment to some and an overwhelming commitment to others. Some people are more disciplined by nature, while others will resist such “assignments”. Using TWTJ will allow you to challenge your disciple to evaluate and realign their present use of time. Scripture memory, Bible reading, and lesson preparation will take time... more and more as the weeks go by. Your personal example as a discipler will be key here. As you memorize all the verses, read all the chapters and come really well prepared, they will see the importance of preparation. If you approach it casually and unprepared, then you will communicate a casual approach to the Christian life. Remember, you are not just teaching a student, you are modeling a lifestyle. 2 Tim 3:10

Three Principles of Form and Function

Repeatable, Thorough, Continual

Repeatable

TWTJ is simple. It is not overly long. It is not overly deep. It is designed to help your disciple learn the basics for beginning to follow Jesus. But it is also designed to allow them to quickly turn around and lead someone else through what they themselves have just learned. The simple subject matter, careful wording, multi-ethnic pictures, and open-ended questions are all designed to help a learner quickly become a teacher. So, as a discipler, keep in mind as you use TWTJ, to not get sidetracked. Stay on the subject at hand and cover it thoroughly in such a way that your disciple will be able to share it with someone else ASAP.

Thorough

Discipleship is not just learning Biblical information, it is also experiencing life transformation. Therefore, TWTJ covers such things as personal holiness, sharing your faith story, being baptized, joining a local church, and making other disciples. Over your time together, listen for such things as personal conflicts, sinful reactions, relationships with family, neighbors and at work. Your disciple needs to grow in every area of life. Memorizing scripture is good. Applying it to life is even better!

Continual

TWTJ does not place a lot of requirements on the new disciple. But those things it does require are those things we should all be practicing as long as we are followers of Jesus: reading the Word, memorizing the Word, studying the Word, praying, witnessing, seeking the lost, making disciples. It is important, as you move through TWTJ, to emphasize your own personal practices in these disciplines. If they see the continual practice of the disciplines in your life, they will more likely see the value of continuing them in their own life.

Four Areas for Growth - #1 Doctrine Doctrine

Granted, TWTJ is not a theological tome! But, it does provide an introduction to some basic doctrines of scripture. Bibliology: lesson 1 and 4 Theology Proper: the character of our faithful, holy, gracious God – lessons 1 and 2
Christology: lessons 1,2,7 Pneumatology: lesson 6 Anthropology: lessons 1,2,3,6 Soteriology: lessons 1,2,3,6
Ecclesiology: lessons 1,2,9,10 Eschatology: lessons 1,10

Working completely through TWTJ will give the new believer at least an introduction to all the foundational doctrines of scripture.

Four Areas for Growth - #2 Disciplines Disciplines

Of the eight spiritual disciplines found in the sermon on the mount (Word, prayer, fasting, solitude, giving, serving, evangelism and discipling) TWTJ introduces the practice of five disciplines: the Word (reading, studying and memorizing), prayer, serving, evangelism and discipling. TWTJ will allow you to practice some of these disciplines with your disciple for several weeks. You may want to include suggestions for you and your disciple to practice fasting for a day during lesson 5, three hours of solitude and meditation for during lesson 4, or initiate a discussion of financial stewardship in lesson 9 or 10. Sharing how you personally practice the disciplines will challenge your disciple to take steps to begin practicing them as well. You may also want to add the reading of Matthew chapters 5-7 during lesson 5, as much instruction is given by Jesus on prayer in the sermon on the mount.

Four Areas for Growth - #3 Character Character

TWTJ lesson 7 highlights the importance of personal purity and growth in holiness. While lesson 7 focuses on the wonderful truth of continual cleansing, this lesson naturally lends itself to discussing those areas of failure in our lives that need *more* than forgiveness; they need transformation. Character traits such as personal humility, integrity, self control, generosity, mercy, and honesty are essential components of effective disciples. Such passages as Romans 12:1-2 and the remainder of the chapter highlight key commands for growth in Christ-like character. We must include personal application of the glorious truths we are learning through TWTJ, or we run the danger of producing disciples who “know” more than they “live”.

Four Areas for Growth - #4 Skills Ministry Skills

TWTJ lessons 8, 9 and 10 are focused on challenging the disciple to become engaged in serving Christ. Learning to share one’s faith story, standing for Christ in baptism and church membership, and serving Christ in the local church and the local community are included. As we already mentioned, partnering with your disciple in team teaching TWTJ to others should be a mutual goal from the outset. As the spiritual gifts and natural talents of your disciple are discovered, seek to quickly facilitate the use of these gifts in the local church. The pattern of come-sit-listen-leave church attendance must be done away with. A good way to overcome inertia is to begin mutual ministry with your disciple from the beginning of their walk with Christ. Initiation into the body of Christ by baptism, identification with the body of Christ by membership, and involvement to the body of Christ through service should not be widely separated. You will need to involve other mentors in their lives to help develop their ministry skills. Along with your time in TWTJ, your attendance at church services and fellowship functions will allow you to introduce and connect your disciple with other believers with mutual interests and gifts. Keep this in mind and work diligently during these 10 weeks in TWTJ to do your best to integrate your disciple into the life of the local church fellowship.

Crucial Choices, Limited Time *Who is more important than How*

As you come to the end of TWTJ, it will become clear if your disciple is ready to move ahead with more intensive discipling efforts, or if they need a few months to adjust to this new life and the new relationships they are developing. If they are eager and ready to move ahead, then you will want to work with them to develop a spiritual growth plan for the next stage of their journey with Christ. Consider the Navigators 2:7 Growing Deeper series or

books such as Disciplines of a Godly Man, Measure of a Man, Choose the Life, and How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth. More suggested resources and advice are available from Ron Berrus at www.ronberrus.abwe.org. There are many tools available for continued growth in knowledge of the scriptures. But it will be even more important to encourage your disciple to stay in the Word for themselves and to be diligent and faithful in serving Christ at home and in the church, as well as in the workplace and the neighborhood. The on-going "life-in-tandem" relationship you have with this disciple will mature and develop over the years, if God allows. Your disciple will have ups and downs along the way. Your stable example based on God's word and enabled by the power of the Spirit will be used of God as a powerful influence. Never stop praying for them. Your labors will be rewarded, eventually. "The hard working farmer must be the first one to taste the crops!"