



INSTRUCTIONS IN RIGHTEOUSNESS

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Entry 8 - 6

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Mentoring Disciples

Abraham, Moses and Elijah had disciples. After they departed, the process of mentoring did not fade; discipling became even more prevalent under the New Covenant. The New Testament is a treasure-trove of information on discipleship. Peter, Paul and Jesus give us specific instructions on the subject. After Jesus rose and ascended on high, He did two things; He filled the universe with Himself and gave gifts unto men. He gave apostles, pastors, prophets, teachers and evangelists. Each one was commissioned to raise up disciples. They were to prepare God's people for works of service (Eph. 4:7-13). It is not just leaders, however, who were commissioned to disciple others. Everyone is called to help another on their journey. Older men and women are to teach the younger brothers and sisters. Everyone should encourage, love, care for, bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ. Everyone should be discipling someone. Everyone is called to care.

Some churches refrain from personal discipleship and give all their attention to organizing congregational meetings. Others, over-disciple to the point of control, displacing the work of the Holy Spirit in a disciple's life. There is, however, a place of personal discipleship without the control and it is desperately needed in the church. Discipleship should not be a program, organized by spiritual bureaucratic leaders. That always results in someone, who is not qualified, discipling someone and making a mess. The joining of lives for the purpose of mentoring must be God-initiated, but teaching about it is the responsibility of church leaders. Without the organic development of mentoring, a church will never become a real and functional family.

Church leaders should teach biblical guidelines for mentoring to better equip disciples for service. These guidelines should emphasize the role and heart of the disciple, but more so, the gentle care and humility of the overseer. For our purposes in today's teaching, we will give the same instruction to all; guidelines for

mentoring a disciple should be the same for spiritual seniors as it is for pastors and church staff.

We start with the words of Peter.

***"To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder ... Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers - not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lord-ing it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. ... Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.'**" 1Pe. 5:1-5*

The first point that stands out, is God's personal possession of His people. Those under our care do not belong to us, they are God's flock. Disciples are only on loan, and that for a short time. They do not

belong to us, so one day, they will be gone. As stewards, we care for another man's property. Disciples will be promoted, so they will not be our disciples forever.

There are 6 things that Peter teaches that we must become or do. Feed, care for, oversee, serve, lead by example, and be humble.

There are 2 other details, that tell us what we must not do. We must not be greedy for money or lord it over those under our care.

1. Feed

We feed with God's word and God's word comes in 2 applications. The written word (logos) and the specific word (Ramah). We must resist being overly directive when giving a specific word. A disciple must receive a word from the Holy Spirit. Your job is to feed, but not to force-feed or even spoon-feed. The disciple must seek the Lord for personal direction.

2. Care For

To care for another, means to look out for one's wellbeing. It involves gentle warnings, advice, prayer, comfort, encouragement, and giving natural help such as financial aid, health suggestions, along with practical tips and counsel. This care should be always positive but not intrusive.

3. Be an Overseer

An overseer takes an interest in the

destiny of another. They look for the spiritual advancement of their disciple. They help discern the grace and gifting of their friend and encourage them forward. They open doors of opportunity, if they are able. They also help to guard them against the snares and deceptions of the enemy. For both initiatives, only gentle advice should be given with no heavy-handed control or manipulation.

4. Be a Servant

Peter's instruction emphasizes that the overseer should be the servant rather than the disciple. Being a servant is the best example a leader can give. Peter says we must be eager to serve. Like a mother who delights to serve her children, so a leader serves their disciple. It is a privilege. Of course, a disciple will serve their mentor, but a mentor serving a disciple, is absolutely Christ-like.

5. Lead by Example

People learn what they see more than what they are told. A rough, legalistic leader will produce even rougher under-shepherds. There is too much ivory-tower leadership and heavy-handed management in the church. Multitudes leave the church disillusioned due to a lack of Christ-like love and gentleness among her leaders. There is no excuse for people to leave God or His church. Still, all who lead should give no ammunition to the devil who wants to weave a web of disenchantment against Christ's church.

6. Be Humble

Those who have authority should be humble. At first, it seems like a

contradiction of terms; how can one be authoritative and humble at the same time? The key is to get your authority from God and not from your title, position or age. If you have to be rough or use a stick to wield authority, it is the wrong kind of authority that you are wielding. The wisdom from above is gentle and the person who has godly authority will find that others follow because they are inspired by God to do so. If you lack authority, humble yourself, become the lowest servant and serve, serve, serve. In time, God will promote you and give you authority. Those who serve will rule. After receiving God's authority, you must still walk in humility.

Peter told us 2 things that we must not do. We must not be greedy for money, and we must not lord it over people who are under our care.

These are Peter's words, but in the scriptures we find that Paul and Jesus taught the same message. Peter was a first-generation disciple of Christ; what he taught, he received directly from Jesus.

Paul speaks of being a wise master builder (1Cor. 3). He is not talking of building physical buildings or even organizations. Buildings and organizations are necessary, but Paul speaks about building people. He says we can build with gold and silver or wood, hay and stubble. Be a wise builder, build with gold and mentor God's people with grace. **AΩ**



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