



GO MAKE
DISCIPLES

LIQUID DISCIPLESHIP

*Creating a Church Culture Saturated in
Relational Discipleship. By Michael Pouliot ©*



This Draft SAMPLE is for your eyes only. Please do not forward to anyone or make copies.

Sample Excerpts from Liquid Discipleship

I have been singularly focused on the study of Christian discipleship for over a decade. While searching the Scriptures, praying, reading books, going to workshops, and interviewing church leaders I have concluded that there are Ten Discipleship Principles that help churches create a culture of Liquid Discipleship. These eleven principles include the:

- 1) Purpose Principle
- 2) Intentionality Principle
- 3) Identity Principle
- 4) Nehemiah Principle
- 5) Relationship Principle
- 6) Liquid Discipleship Principle
- 7) Hebrew Principle
- 8) Disciple/Discipleship Principle
- 9) Harmony Principle
 - a. Relationship Principle (TAAAL, reconciliation)
 - b. Real Life Principle
 - c. Faith Skills Principle (RBE's, tool belt, method)
- 10) Discipleship Training Cycle Principle
- 11) Multiplication Principle

Purpose Principle

“Go and make disciples...” Jesus Christ

“Equip the saints for the works of the ministry...” The Apostle Paul

There is a purpose for Christ’s church and His people—to glorify God. Yet, there is much diversity on how individual churches go about glorifying God. In Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus gave the Great Commission to His disciples; to go into all the world and make disciples, baptize in the name of the threefold God and teach them to obey all of God’s commandments. The Great Commission literally means the Great Empowerment. Jesus empowered his disciples then and now to glorify God by making disciple makers who strive to become more like Christ. Jesus not only empowered His disciples, He spent a few years equipping them not in a vacuum of didactic information but as they did real life together.

For the church to succeed in achieving its purpose, the purpose must be clear to everyone. Like a swimming pool at the end of a waterslide—everyone knows that if they start down the slide they will eventually reach the pool. The purpose is represented by the pool which is where you end up if you start down the slide from the top. Not only does the church need to define its pool (purpose), but it needs to have a clear pathway (slide) for each person who enters the church doors to reach the “pool” and become like Christ in order to make disciple makers. It is not enough settle on becoming a disciple of Jesus for the church, one must become a disciple who is intentionally equipped to become a disciple maker.

A clear vision, mission and purpose statement that fulfills the Great Commission through the Great Commandment is necessary to streamline resources, motivate people and measure success.

So what is the purpose of the Church? To glorify God by intentionally creating an ongoing relational process that helps individuals become more and more like Christ so they can, in turn, fulfill the Great Commission through the Great Commandment in ongoing relational discipleship.

The way the church glorifies God is by making disciple makers of Jesus who make more disciple makers. It is not enough to just do half of the “work” and disciple someone in a vacuum—we must, like Christ did, disciple them to be able to disciple more people. This is done by Jesus empowering his people through the Spirit and by pastors-teachers equipping the most mature saints to minister to the next level of Christ-followers. This intentional strategy is captured in Jesus prayer in John 17 and in Paul’s writings, 2 Timothy 2:2.

Intentionality Principle

As the time drew near for him to ascend to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.

Luke 9:51

The American Heritage Dictionary defines intentionality as: “The state of having or being formed by an intention.” The antonym of intentionality is accidental.

In God’s Kingdom there are no accidents. God intentionally forms us in His own image. God intentionally sent His only Son to be crucified for mankind’s sins. Intentionality is God’s nature. The human race was not accidentally created from an amoeba or an explosion. God fearfully, wonderfully and intentionally made each of us unique. Likewise, Spirit filled Christians are purposefully chosen by God to be formed into the likeness of His Son—Jesus.

God is intentional about His purpose for all of His children. As part of God’s plan to bring us back into relationship with Himself after Adam’s sin, He sent His Son to make it so. Luke 9:51 says, Jesus was resolute or determined with intentionality to go to the cross. Jesus was also intentional to “form” or shape his disciples to be like Himself. When we are intentionally formed into being more like Christ, we glorify God. When we intentionally make disciples of Jesus who make disciples of Jesus we are extensions of Christ’s intentional plan set in motion by the Father.

In John chapter 17, Jesus states a reason for coming to Earth other than the Cross. Jesus prays to his Father and says,

“I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.” John 17:4.

Jesus glorified God in everything He did, including “the work” that was completed by Him prior to the cross. So what did Jesus mean when He stated He had completed the work His Father gave Him if He had not yet gone to the cross? What was the work other than the cross? The apostles were the work!

In the book *The Lost Art of Disciple Making*, Leroy Eims says it this way,

“When you read the prayer carefully (referring to John 17), you’ll notice that He did not mention miracles or multitudes, but 40 times He referred to the men whom God had given Him out of the world. These men were His work. His ministry touched thousands, but He trained twelve men. He gave His life on the cross for millions, but during the three and a half years of His ministry He gave His life uniquely to twelve men.”

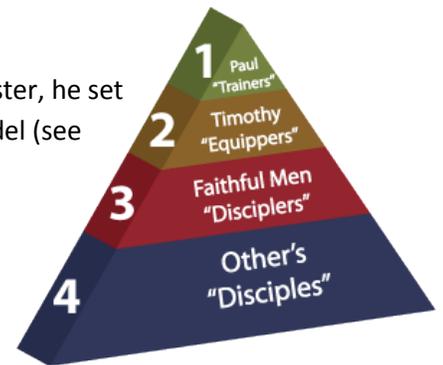
Jesus’ prayer clearly states the importance of “the work”, not only illustrates that Christ had more than one objective, but if we are to look to Christ for direction—these words give us clear intentionality for pastors and church leadership to equip the *empowered* through discipleship.

Intentionality

In Ephesians 4:11-16 Jesus gave the church evangelists and pastors-teachers so they could intentionally equip His people for building up the body to reach the World for Christ. This equipping would then unify the body and evoke the knowledge of Christ to grow up all believers to fully understand who we are in Christ. Christ modeled this intentional process in the context of relationships. He continued the relational model passed on from His Jewish heritage as the best way to grow closer to God while growing closer to one another. Jesus was intentional about His discipleship strategy and so was the Apostle Paul.

Paul not only understood the modeling for relational discipleship exemplified by his Master, he set in motion the intentionality for generational discipleship using the four generations model (see illustration).

In 2 Timothy 2:2 the Apostle Paul gave Timothy a strategy for church leaders to multiply spiritually mature leaders by having the most mature followers begin to disciple, in relationship, the next level of spiritually growing individuals, who would then disciple the next level all the way down to the spiritually infant. This, is in fact, the same multiplication effect that Jesus had in mind when He spent time in relationship with His disciples thus, completing the “work” of discipleship.



Jesus and Paul knew that in order for Christianity to grow it would not be enough if they themselves has an intimate relationship with God, but that they must be intentional about teaching others to teach others how to develop this intimate relationship. The genius of God’s plan is that we grow in our relationship with the Godhead as we grow in our relationships with others.

The Intentionality Principle is clear; God wants us to glorify Him through our intentionality. The intentionality of going and making disciples in the context of authentic relationships while teaching them to obey all of God’s commands so they can, in turn, keep Christ’s “work” and Paul’s generational plan in motion.

Identity Principle

And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.
2 Corinthians 3:18 ESV

For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

Romans 8:29 ESV

my little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you!

Galatians 4:19 ESV

In order for you to execute the Purpose Principle and the Intentionality Principle you must first embrace the Identity Principle.

When I am speaking about a believer's identity in Christ I often challenge the audience with this statement:

"If the Jesus you know is not compelling enough to follow—then your version of Jesus is not the Jesus of the Bible."

If we really knew the Jesus of Bible we could not help but want to become like Him. We glorify God by becoming disciples who make disciples of Jesus. This is not done by accident, but with intentionality. This intentionality can only be sustained if we understand correctly what Jesus meant when he commands His disciples to make more disciple makers. It is impossible to make something correctly with an incorrect view. It is however critical that we understand our identities as disciples of Jesus before we start making counterfeit disciples of our misguided understandings. Just like the word salvation is clear unto it's meaning, we must also be clear about our identity as disciples of Christ.

The truth is that every disciple of Jesus is empowered by the Holy Spirit, but unfortunately most fall short of being equipped for generational discipleship. Just because Christians are empowered does not mean we are equipped to go and make Disciples of Christ. There are lots of elements that go into making disciples but none more important than understanding the foundation for equipping others to follow Christ than ones perception of their identity as a disciple of Jesus.

Let's begin this principle with some basic logic. If I wanted to become like another person, what are some basic requirements to begin this process?

Here are my thoughts:

- I would have to know that person first hand, not just know about them from other sources alone.
- I would have to spend time with them and observe them daily as they interact and accomplish tasks.
- I would have to spend time communicating with them through open dialogue to understand meaning a motive behind their actions, values and beliefs.
- I would want to observe them in many different life situations and environments.

The above thoughts seem logical don't they? What if you were asked to become like someone but you had just bits and pieces of information on that person? What if the information was incomplete or worse, misinterpreted? What would your chances of becoming exactly like that person? Slim to none, I would say. The real tragedy is that if you did become like that person, but because you had a distorted understanding of him or her, you became someone totally different.

In other words, you missed it by a mile. The modern Christian however, has a distorted, incomplete or outright misunderstanding of who and what a disciple of Jesus is.

Take your understanding of Jesus based on the logic above. Do you know the Jesus of the Bible well enough to become like Him? If not, what would you have to do to remedy your missing relational knowledge that enables this intimacy God wants with you?

The fact of the matter is, that a correct or incorrect interpretation/perception of Jesus would manifest a perception or conclusion that shapes your relationship and identity as a disciple of Jesus. If you are to become a disciple of Jesus you must know Jesus, and know what Jesus meant by the word disciple. If your becoming someone who is based solely on your interpretation of Christ verses the Biblical Truth about Christ – you will become the wrong disciple and make counterfeit disciples as well.

Jesus understood what a disciple was because of His Hebrew upbringing, and the simple fact that He is God. The disciples also understood the process of making a disciple because they too grew up in the Jewish culture and lived with Jesus under this relational model for years to complete the “work” Jesus chose 12 men and intentionally discipled the men to become like Himself. True relational intimacy is perfected in daily living, not weekly preaching.

Jewish history records that a rabbinical student would leave his father, mother and family to go and live with the Rabbi everyday for nearly 15 years. The Talmid (Hebrew for disciple) goal was to become exactly like His Rabbi. By exactly, I mean just that—identical. The young apprentice wanted to teach like his Rabbi, walk like his Rabbi, talk like his Rabbi, fast and pray like his Rabbi, interpret the Scriptures like his Rabbi and follow the Jewish Laws just like his Rabbi. **The Talmid had to identify with his Rabbi so he could become identical to him in every way; which meant that he would carry on the Rabbi’s teachings through the discipleship process just as he was taught.**

As the Talmid were to become just like his Rabbi, we Christian’s are to become like Christ-His disciple. But in order to become more like Jesus, we must have a Biblical understanding of Christ’s identity.

If we are to glorify God by becoming more and more like Christ, a good place to start is to know what Christ is like. If we can identify the true Jesus of the Bible, we can become like Him. However, if we have an inaccurate identity of the Savior we will either be unmotivated to become like Him or become something that Hollywood or a children’s Sunday school inaccurately portrayed. If we have a distorted identity of Jesus as a 6’4” skinny white guy in a white robe with a sheep around His neck always whisking through towns kissing babies and comforting crying women—we have the incomplete Jesus. If we have an angry God version of Jesus because of our experiences with our own father figures—we have the wrong Jesus. If we see Jesus as a good idea, but have a hard time identifying with him in a way that compels us to change our life—then we have the wrong Jesus.

Jesus is the Lion and the Lamb. He is the perfect tension between tough and tender. Jesus is not a wimp, nor is He a bully. Jesus was a fully human man who was tempted by real life challenges but was able to overcome all sin by yielding to the Father’s will. In order for us to be discipled properly we must have the correct identity of Jesus.

Jesus was fully God and fully man. His interaction as a human gives us a model to follow and a goal to pursue. Because Jesus was human He had multiple characteristics, just like we do. He was compassionate, loving, bold, brave, focused, submissive, angry, sad, frustrated, concerned, scared, tempted, prayerful, effective, flexible, determined, broken

hearted, selective, direct, obedient, and joyful. I would encourage you to make a list of words that describe the Jesus you understand and compare them to the Biblical characteristics of Jesus.

This ushers in the obvious question. Is the Jesus you identified with upon your Salvation conversion more clear to you or is He falsely identified? Until you begin to understand the true identity of God's Son you will not have a chance of becoming like Him.

In order to identify with Christ we must know the true identity of Christ. Identifying with Christ beckons the responsibility for each disciple to learn and experience his very own identity as a disciple of Jesus.

How do we learn and experience the Christ of the Bible in a real undistorted way? Through a relational discipleship process that is guided by the Spirit of God. We become more and more like Jesus by knowing more and more of Jesus through prayer, Bible study and relationships.

As we know Jesus' true identity we come to know our new selves. As we identify with Christ we can embrace our new identity in Christ. By knowing Who's we are, we can know who we are—in Christ. We are disciples of Jesus who are empowered to introduce and teach others about the risen Christ and His Lion and Lamb characteristics.

In summary, to become a disciple of Jesus we must first identify with Christ as our Saviour by believing in His redemptive power to reconcile our sinfulness to the Father. After we are reconciled to God we can begin a journey as a disciple where we intentionally identify with Christ more and more as we develop our relationship with the Godhead. The more we identify with the Jesus of the Bible and experience His heart, the better we understand who we are in Christ. As we know Christ we grow in Christ. As we grow in Christ we experience Christ growing in us. As we experience Christ growing in us we can embrace our identities in Christ. As we embrace our identities in Christ we know ourselves more. As we know ourselves more we will embrace our roles as disciples of Christ. As we embrace our roles as disciples of Christ we will engage in discipleship ourselves—fulfilling the Great Commission through the Great Commandment.

Nehemiah Principle

If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do? **Palms 11:3**

Albert Einstein is credited with saying...

"If I had one hour to save the world, I'd spend 55 minutes defining the problem ..."

John Dewey said,

"A problem well stated is a problem half solved."

The latest and greatest movement in the church should be to rediscover the original plan for discipleship, not reinvent a trendy new one. Too many leaders today are looking for the secret decoder ring to grow their church, but eventually they all come to find out that you cannot franchise discipleship like Taco Bell®. The latest "pixy dust program" may give the illusion of church growth and reinvigorated leadership, but it will eventually wear off and come crashing down—just

like in Peter Pan. In order to make disciples we must build a culture of relationships that center around real life issues and emphasize equipping over educating, relationships over programs and fellowship over preaching.

Because our God is a God of order and intentionality in order to change a church culture where Liquid Discipleship flows freely we must first understand the Nehemiah Principle.

What's First the Wall or the People?

Nehemiah demonstrated godly wisdom in identifying the problems that Jerusalem faced, yet he was strategic in the order of execution. The first half of the book of Nehemiah is about rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem; where the second half is about rebuilding God's people's ability to keep the Covenant. Even though it may seem unwise to put up a wall before refocusing the people back on the Covenant, **Nehemiah demonstrated a wise strategy for rebuilding God's people by first rebuilding the wall.** By building the walls first, God's people grew as a Holy Nation and set in motion the stability needed for national repentance. The rebuilding of the wall was paramount in enabling Israel to keep their Covenant with God. The safety that the wall provided also beckoned God's people who were scattered in fear to return home as one people.

The wisdom of Nehemiah is illustrated in the reason one would plant a fruit tree. A fruit tree is planted for the fruit. By planning the fruit tree in the ground it provides the foundation and nutrients for the tree to produce more fruit. A tree cannot grow if it is not planted in the ground. God's people could not return to their Covenant way of life without the stability of the walls. Nehemiah's temptation could have been to call everyone to repentance first, yet this would have been like placing a tree on top of the ground and expecting it to produce fruit. Nehemiah did the right prep to assure that God's people could produce a strong and healthy Jewish Nation.

Likewise, doing the necessary prep work prior to planting a tree illustrates this kind of foresight. If you plant a tree in hardpan (clay-based) soil without preparing the ground around and underneath where the tree will be planted, the tree will get root-bound, which stunts its growth. Soon the tree develops "sucker branches" or weed branches that literally suck the energy from the real tree. No matter how much the tree is watered its root base will not grow because it has no way to expand.

Similarly, many churches unknowingly try to create a generational discipleship culture without preparing the soil—creating a culture of Christ centered relational intimacy based in real life. A church's attempt to rebuild the people's knowledge about discipleship via programs before a culture of real relationships undermines the relational fellowship foundational for generational discipleship.

A rancher should first build a corral before he rounds up the cattle. A fish tank should have water prior to gathering the fish. The disciples had to be trained before the Holy Spirit was unleashed at Pentecost. One thing may not directly affect another but it is necessary for the goal to be achieved. This is what I call Nehemiah's Framework Principle. In order to reach the end goal, other things have to be in place first that may or may not have anything to do with the goal itself. Who would have thought that a wall would be God's plan for bringing His people back to a state of national worship?

Applying the Nehemiah Principle would encourage churches to "build" three primary indicators for generational relational discipleship: Relationships, Faith Skills & Real Life prior to directing someone towards a spiritual growth

program. These three indicators act as the *Harmony Principle* discussed later and establish a fundamental framework so God's people can be discipled—generation upon generation.

A church that attempts to make disciples absent of these indicators is like a tree planted in hardpan. There will be little to no growth because the “soil” was not properly prepared with Relationships, Faith Skills and Real Life. Since these three indicators are absent the “suckers” or trendy programs tend to take over and suck the energy from an effective discipleship pathway. Churches that attempt to disciple using programs end up with burned out leaders and surface relationships. Like the rebuilding of the walls and gates, when real life intersects with authentic relationships and Faith Skills are being passed along—a church will experience Liquid Discipleship.

The walls and the gates had nothing to do with God's people repenting and coming back together to worship God in community—yet they had everything to do with it happening. Likewise, skills of faith shared in relationships around real life circumstances are the backbone to the Great Commission. Without them we experience an unfruitful discipleship culture that is attempting to fulfill the Great Commission using knowledge and programs alone.

In a knowledge transfer environment, where programs, preaching, Bible studies and classes are being used as the means for discipleship—there will always be a perpetual problem. Why? Because, the Framework Principle is ignored as relationships are optional, real life circumstances are hidden and only the professional Christian's need to learn skills of faith.

Nehemiah defined the problem that was going to restore God's people clearly and often. He said, “The walls have been destroyed and the gates have been burned.” This was clear and visible to everyone—young and old. If Nehemiah had focused on the core problem of God's people were to scattered, scared and secularized to worship at the temple in community—he would have failed.

To create church buy in we may not want to present the core problem in the church as being poor discipleship because it is not understood by many and is not easily visible. Instead, like Nehemiah, we should be wise and build on something that everyone can grasp which would in-turn, solve the core problem of poor generational discipleship.

Like the walls and the gates, today's church should focus on the following:

- Developing and Deepening Relationships by creating a culture of authentic relational intimacy.
- Problem Solving Life Circumstances by using real life as the curriculum.
- Teaching Christian Skills that will foster relationships and equip the saints to be wise disciples of Christ.

In summary, the Nehemiah Principle for Liquid Discipleship should start with rebuilding a culture of intimate relationships so God's people can be discipled to become more and more like Jesus. This would mean taking the steps needed to stop the culture of programs and preaching centered “discipleship”. The process of discipleship that equips disciple of Christ to know and become like Jesus relies on Bible skills of faith that are best understood during real life circumstances. It is wise for a church to forgo bringing in more programs that promise more disciples until the “walls” of relationships are securely built. It is in these relationships where real life can be shared. When real life is shared in relational intimacy that God's skills of faith can be taught generation upon generation.

Relationship Principle

“Making disciples places a priority on bringing people into relationships, not an invitation to another program, class or course.”

The Relationship Principle is the key to understanding God’s master plan. God’s very nature is relational. God is love, thus love can only be expressed or demonstrated through relationships. The Relationship Principle runs throughout the Old and New Testament. Here are some examples from the Bible:

- 1) God walked with Adam and Eve in the Garden. Walked means intimacy, communion and fellowship.
 - a. God walked with Adam and Eve because He loved them and wanted fellowship with them.
 - b. Then Eve and Adam sinned and broke the holy harmony and hid from God because they were afraid of God seeing them for who they became producing guilt and shame.
 - c. God’s love or desire for relationship compelled Him to go looking for them.
- 2) God wanted to be with His people: Exodus 25:8, "And let them construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them."
 - a. Once again God’s love compelled Him to pursue the Jewish people in the wilderness.
 - b. God needed a holy place to (be with) live amongst His people so He had them build a **tabernacle** where the yearly atonement would require the shedding of blood.
- 3) God gave Moses the Ten Commandments to help His chosen people keep their covenant relationship.
 - a. The first three commandments are about the relationship between God and man.
 - b. The fourth commandment is sandwiched in the middle requiring man to take a break from work so he can focus on relationships between himself and God and himself and others.
 - c. The last six commandments are focused on our relationships with others.
- 4) Jesus came to dwell with His people: John 1:1:14: “The Word became flesh and dwelt amongst us...”
 - a. The Greek word for dwelt is *skanae* which means to **tabernacle**.
 - b. Jesus came to be with His people. He pursued us even in our sinful state just like He did with Adam and Eve and the Jewish nation.
 - c. So Christ was crucified on a cross and shed His blood.
 - d. Jesus became the perfect sacrifice once and for all instead of annual sacrifices in the tabernacle holy of holies.
 - e. The veil was torn from the bottom up when Christ died on the cross symbolizing that believers in Christ can once again have access to God like Adam and Eve. Instead of rituals and special priest, anyone who receives the Holy Spirit can have a restored relationship with God because of Christ’s blood.
- 5) Jesus chose the apostles to be with Him so that He might send them out to preach, Mark 3:14.
- 6) In Summary: 1 Corinthians 1:9: "For God is faithful through whom you were called into Fellowship with His Son Christ Jesus."
 - a. God desires to have fellowship with you because He loves you.
 - b. Fellowship in Greek is the word *koinonia*. It means intimacy, communion, and fellowship.

- c. It is also translated into the word, "communion" when referring to the communion supper.
- d. *The communion supper is the place of intense intimacy between God and the Christian.*

The Relationship Principle stems from the character of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. The Three give witness to an intimate relationship. This is God's desire for the church family and the family in the home.

If it is God's plan for relationship then why are relationships so difficult? I am convinced that we are afraid of intimate relationships because of sin. Like Adam, we are afraid because sin makes us self-conscious of our nakedness so we hide from God and others. Fear of the naked truth about our condition still causes us to hide from God and others. When we are seen for who we really are, we blame others, "the woman you gave me," and/or lie to cover up the uncomfortable feelings that come with shame and guilt. This type of behavior, because of the "Fall" is natural and we should not be surprised when we want to hide after sinning. Adults also isolate while living in sin, either by avoiding God or by avoiding intimate relationships with God's people. This is natural to those who do not know their new found freedoms in Christ.

2 Corinthians 13:13-14: Is one of the most profound verses as it generates the incredible plan for relational intimacy with the Godhead. Where Paul stressed:

- 1) The love of God
- 2) The Grace of Jesus
- 3) The Fellowship with the Holy Spirit

This is so profound because Jesus sent the Spirit to be the ambassador for relating to Himself and the Father in heaven. We are to have fellowship with the Spirit which means that we regularly commune with the Spirit to know Christ; for when we know Christ we know the Father. We know Christ and the Father through our fellowship with the Spirit.

In summary, God's character oozes the Relationship Principle instead of the Knowledge Principle, which simply states that the more you know about God the more spiritually mature you are. Adam walked with God, yet he and Eve blew our chances of doing the same. However, God's love for us demanded His presence in the wilderness. Also the Ten Commandments stress the importance of our primary relationship with the Godhead, relational connection time during Sabbath so we can relate and love other people. But because of Christ's loving act and the torn curtain in the holy of holies, we are granted access to the Father again—through our communion with the Spirit.

Christ is the peacemaker (Eph 2:14) for all Jews and Gentiles. Unity can exist in the family, the body of Christ and with our relationship with the Godhead. We no longer have to hide and be afraid because we are "naked". The Spirit allows for honest fellowship by granting us understanding that we have a new nature—one that can walk with God daily. Christ has set us free from the shame that was once natural to our makeup. The Spirit allows us to come and drink from the river of living water as Christ's disciple so we can, in turn, lead another to the same river and show them how to quench their thirst through the satisfying love of Christ. From the second the veil was torn and we believed by faith in Christ we can come out from behind the bush and remove the covering from our nakedness because we are now once again covered by the righteousness of Christ.

The truth is that God's Word has numerous examples of the Relationship Principle because this represents God's heart and desire for His people. As we develop our relationship with the Godhead (disciple) we can help others develop their

relationship with Him (discipleship). This liquid relationship culture is key to implementing the Liquid Discipleship Principle.

Liquid Discipleship Principle

All of us as disciples of Jesus have within our hearts a “river of living water” where the Holy Spirit partners with us to fulfill the Great Commission. Jesus’ disciples were given the Spirit so they could be channels from which the love of Christ could flow through the gift of Salvation.

In John 7:37 Jesus tells us to do two things if we are thirsty:

1. Let him come to me...
2. and Drink

Jesus did not say, “Let him come to church.” Nor did He say, “Let him come to Sunday school.” He was clear by saying that we should come to Him. This may be in a church or in a relationship where someone shows you Christ and shares the Gospel. The point is that we are to “come” to Jesus.

After we come to Him we must drink. However, some people do not know how to “drink from the river of living water” and therefore must be equipped to do so. By drinking, I mean relating to Christ through Relationship Building Encounters (RBEs) through the Holy Spirit and apply them to real life today. Relationship Building Encounters include private prayer and Bible study. God gave us His Word and prayer to develop relationship with the Godhead. As we open our hearts to the Holy Spirit by engaging in the Relationship Building Encounters we are ministered to and our thirst becomes satisfied. Through the person of the Holy Spirit we are able to relate with Jesus and quench our thirsty souls. We cannot however, quench our thirsty souls by going to church, studying God’s Word, or doing any other Christian activity apart from the Holy Spirit. The Liquid Discipleship Principle demands that we develop and maintain an intimate relationship with the Spirit of God in order to know Christ and engage in discipleship.

Liquid Discipleship Flow = Jesus → Holy Spirit → You → Another

The more I go to the river of living water the more I know Jesus and develop my relationship with the Spirit. The more I know Jesus the more I know my new self and want to become like Jesus and experience the Spirit transforming me to be Christlike. The more like Christ I become the more I want to help another know Christ and become Christlike with the Spirit leading the way.

When we become Liquid Disciples ourselves we will be “rivers of living water” out of which we serve, tithe to the Lord’s work, and become the priests in our homes who equip our families to pass on the love of Christ through relationships. We become teachers who teach others to teach. We become disciples who disciple others to disciple. For by the grace of God we become the essence of Liquid Discipleship.

TAAAL Relationships

Liquid Discipleship is all about living water flowing through the Holy Spirit. The love of Christ that pours out from our living relationship with Jesus compels us to intentionally develop what I call TAAAL Relationships. TAAAL Relationships are **t**ransparent, **a**ccountable, **a**ccessible, **a**uthentic and **l**oving. With these relationships in place, we are able to pass along Faith Skills from one generation to the next. Faith Skills include the Relationship Building Encounters mentioned earlier but go beyond the skills needed to know Jesus and assist us and others in living a life pleasing to God—such as personal evangelism, relational reconciliation, confession and repentance and loving your wife like Christ loved the church, to name a few. See Additional Faith Skills Clarification Chapter on pages 32-34.

The challenge of Liquid Discipleship is that one cannot fully embrace it until one has fully experienced it. Until you taste clean water you would not be able to tell the difference from dirty water. For it is in this contrast that you develop a deep understanding and appreciation for the differences. Once you know the refreshing taste of clean water, it is hard to drink from another cup.

Dehydrated Discipleship

Dehydrated Discipleship is the attempt or illusion of discipleship without relationship and/or ignoring the hard work of dealing with real life situations. Dehydrated Discipleship occurs when we assume that discipleship comes through the delivery of information in the form of content, curriculum or sermons alone and/or sets aside dealing with real life issues for the sake of learning more Bible information. If Bible content avoids relationship it becomes dehydrated discipleship and the flow stops. If Bible teaching skips real life it also becomes dehydrated and the flow stops.

Dehydrated Discipleship is also more about orthodoxy (right thinking) than orthopraxy (right doing—or living). Dehydrated Discipleship allows for orthodoxy to fall short of orthopraxy. There should be a perfect tension between the two—as one is just as important as the other.

Some churches are doing a great job teaching God’s Word in its fullness, but have created an imbalance because the orthodoxy rarely leads to orthopraxy in real life. The most glaring gap in creating this perfect tension is helping those who know right to live right. Like the Ethiopian Eunuch said to Phillip in paraphrase, “How can I understand unless someone shows me how” (Acts 8:31).

How we live demonstrates what we believe. However, what we believe influences how we live. So again this is not an either—or; but a both/and practice. Orthodoxy sets in motion the trajectory of our orthopraxy. It is both; knowing and doing right that Jesus demonstrated and expects of His disciples.

This is where Faith Skills come in. The teaching, showing and coaching fosters relationships where Biblical principles are applied to real life. This will be discussed further in the *Discipleship Training Cycle Principle*.

In Summary, the Liquid Discipleship principle stresses the need or thirst to go to Jesus and develop an intimate relationship with him prior to helping others do so. It is through the flow of relationship where orthodoxy can

fully impact one's orthopraxy. The delivery of information without relationship leads to Dehydrated Discipleship, as well as thinking that knowledge can be learned apart from application to real life.

Hebrew Principle

Hebrew Principle (Real Life is the Curriculum)

"Teachers have not successfully taught until the student has demonstratively understood."

"Your life is the ultimate curriculum that God uses to help you mature as a disciple of Jesus."

"Your life + God's Word + God's Spirit + God's People = Life Transformation."

And the LORD directed me at that time to teach you the decrees and laws you are to follow in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess. Deuteronomy 4:14 NIV

Moses summoned all Israel and said: Hear, O Israel, the decrees and laws I declare in your hearing today. Learn them and be sure to follow them. Deuteronomy 5:1 NIV

Assemble the people—men, women and children, and the aliens living in your towns—so they can listen and learn to fear the LORD your God and follow carefully all the words of this law. Deuteronomy 31:12 NIV

Moses was chosen by God to pass along the decrees and laws to the Hebrew people so they could live upright. The Jewish people learned God's ways to obey and live life as God commanded. In today's church culture we learn to gain knowledge verses to learn in order to live godly.

Today's method of teaching disciples of Jesus is vastly different than when Jesus lived. Why, because the modern church has been greatly influenced by Greek culture and its education methodologies. Tragically, we have all but fully abandoned the Hebrew process for discipleship. **Instead we are becoming a people that are addicted to Bible knowledge instead of knowing Jesus.** The Greek influence of learning to know verses learning to do has confused the discipleship process in the body of Christ.

Coaching

I have the privilege of coaching many kids about different sports. I have learned that I have not coached well until the player understands and is able to carry out my coaching in a game—when it really counts. Sure I can tell him or her how to dribble a basketball, but until they are able to do it as I instructed them, I cannot blame them, for their abilities reflect my coaching effectiveness. To only instruct using my voice is incomplete coaching if the result is a player's inability to execute a play or skill. If I fail to coach them how to dribble while running down the court, they should not be expected to run and dribble. If I fail to coach them how to shoot free-throws, then I should not get angry when they miss a free-throw.

The ineffective coach will expect a player to perform based on their expectations verses their coaching. Likewise, a Greek mindset may teach knowledge to puff up the intellect but a Hebrew teaches only to do or affect one's behavior.

The Hebrew's were desperately dependant on God's guidance to keep them and prosper them. For they knew if they followed God's ways they would experience blessing, and if they did not they would have tribulation. Proverbs 2 gives us a process for crying out to God for knowledge and understanding that will direct our lives to live holy before God and others. When we turn to God for help with real life situations God will speak into our unique circumstances and give us revelation that directs our decisions to line up with His will.

As you read Proverbs 2:1-10, try to find the process listed below:

- Trust and belief in God's Word and commands
- Real Life Issue
- Humble dependence (on Spirit and God's Word)
- Desperation (Cry out for help)
- Intentional search
- Focused search (in God's Word)
- Revelation (from God that lines up with Scripture)

God teaches the humble

He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way. Psalm 25:9 NIV

Humility—Real Life—Spirit Led

Humility is the foundation for real life revelation. When we humble ourselves out of reverence and desperation to hear from the Spirit to help guide us in life decisions we will experience revelation from God. **Revelation is God speaking into a specific situation in our lives that cannot specifically be found in the Scriptures, although the Scriptures must coincide with all revelation.**

Bible knowledge alone can sidetrack us from God's Divine impact in our lives if we fail to bring real life circumstances into our Bible study. When real life becomes our curriculum we will be compelled to seek God's ways in His Word and receive revelation if we truly want God's ways over our own. I have known many people who have gone through the latest Bible study attempting to grow spiritually by focusing on the content instead of applying the content to their lives, only to become smarter instead of more like Christ.

A desperate desire to hear from God combined with a humble heart creates the environment where specific revelation from God breads an encounter that allows God's ways to direct your life decisions and/or solves the life problem.

In a discipleship-relationship (you and another) it is vital that both the disciple and the one discipling are seeking God's revelation humbly. Most often in today's church mentoring environment, instead of the discipler going to God, he or she gives his or her own opinion without even asking God to join in. This is personal opinion reflect more of a Greek influence, where a Hebrew mindset would desperately seek God's direction being fearful of making a decision or giving advice apart from God.

GREEK	HEBREW
Greek reflects that knowledge is King	Hebrew reflects that one studies to be like the King (holy)

Greek the goal is to regurgitate answers	Hebrews the goal is about living holy
Greek the teacher is done when they have instructed or opined	Hebrew teachers are done when the student can do it.

We see Jesus rebuke of the religious elite in the passage below for being more concerned about their head studies of Scriptures over their heart being drawn toward the one whom they are studying about.

You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to **come to me** to have life. John 5:39-40 NIV

The Spirit will teach us

But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. John 14:26 NIV

The Goal of teaching

We can admonish and teach everyman for the goal of presenting him complete in Christ.

We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. Colossians 1:28 NIV

Dialogue on the Road about Real Life Events

They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. Luke 24:14 NIV

You will know when Christ Speaks to our Real Life Problem

They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" Luke 24:32 NIV

Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. Luke 24:45 NIV

In the Hebrew culture the entire philosophy of education was for the purposes of holy living not heady knowledge. The Jewish culture emphasized the art of application for determining a successful understanding of the concept being taught. **Lamad** is the OT Hebrew word for *to teach* and *to learn*.

Lamad emphasizes the unifying understanding that one **has not taught until one has learned**, based on Hebrew cultural examples. This is a stark contrast to today's western understanding of teaching, which is more of a Greek influence than a Hebrew one.

When Real Life Collides with the Spirits Teaching

Sound doctrine

Creating a culture of holiness through relational-discipleship is preceded by sound doctrine. This is why the teaching of sound doctrine is critical for creating a culture of men who live holy lives. **A person's theology will ultimately determine their decisions.** For example, if a college student is given the opportunity to cheat on an exam, yet they chose to accept

the consequences of not studying, their theology ruled because they refused to cheat. On the other hand, if a college athlete cheats to get ahead in his sport by taking steroids, his theology was only as deep as the relationship that was established while learning about God's ways. It was in fact—skin deep.

True conviction is more than skin deep---it affects ones behavior. Convenient decisions that are rooted in self-gratification never please God. Consistent theological behavior is the evidence that the scriptural knowledge went beyond one's belief and became a conviction. This conviction is tethered in relationship, not just knowledge. When we know God intimately we will develop convictions that reflect His character. In summary, a church that reproduces godliness in the men comes from a pastor who teaches sound doctrine, as well as from the male leadership who regularly model spiritual congruency based on that sound doctrine.

The answer does not lie in an academic Scriptural intellectualism alone, but in **a relationship with God based on the correct teachings of Scripture.**

Orthodox theology alone cannot fix the discipleship problem. Orthodoxy can be correct but dead and void of the love that is vital for deep relationships with God and others.

In Revelations 2:2-4, John talks about the Church of Ephesus and praises them for their patient endurance, ability to beat those who are evil and the rejection of false apostles; but rebukes them because they had abandoned their first love—a loving relationship with Jesus.

Correct interpretation and teaching of God's Word is vital to discipleship, yet it must be superimposed by love, relationship and dependence on the Holy Spirit to please God. Jesus' rebuke of the Pharisees in John 5:39-40, demonstrated this principle.

A.W. Tozer, a minister of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, wrote,

“There is something behind the text that you've got to get through to.... Textualism is as deadly as liberalism.”ⁱ

A.W. Tozer referred to intellectual orthodoxy as "the dead letter of textualism;" even if teaching is sound and theologically correct, it can still lead to dryness without the Holy Spirit breathing life into it. Read what one blogger had to say about textualism as it refers to the intellectual church;

“For most of my childhood I attended conservative churches that had the right biblical doctrine, hymns and Gospel songs, Sunday school, and so forth but the churches we were in were not spiritually healthy. Two were actually in the process of dying. They had the *form* of godliness but the members were grossly complacent, largely prayerless and there was no power in the lives I witnessed. They were dedicated to doing things right. But there was a lukewarmness and a coldness. “Lifeless textualism” is a term used by A.W. Tozer to describe those in his denomination, who would never compromise on the infallibility of Scripture, but for whom the Scriptures never seemed to penetrate into the reality of their lives. These are people who will go to the guillotine over whether the Bible is inspired and infallible but yet the Scriptures have no place in their everyday lives other than a cursory devotional reading. Often the fruit of these churches is found behind the scenes, in fractured relationships, in deeply troubled families, in gossip and conflict. These are churches where there is often a lack of love and concern for others.”ⁱⁱ

Teach the Knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness

...and the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness (Titus 1:1 NIV)

The church is God's vehicle to pass on sound doctrine from one generation to the next. Paul is so concerned about passing on this knowledge in the correct way that he instructs both Timothy and Titus in his three letters. Paul warned them of false teaching. He encouraged them to teach these truths to faithful men (2 Timothy 1:13 & 2:2) and to teach knowledge that leads to godliness (Titus 1:1) not intellectualism. The Apostle Paul did not mean for Timothy and Titus to pass on intellectual knowledge alone, but the goal of love, faith and godliness in our personal lives. Here is the GAP in the church today. We are in fact teaching, and people are learning, but the unspoken goal is perceived to be knowledge, not godliness. This is the difference between Greek and Hebrew thought.

How We Learn by Edgar Dale

"We learn 10% of what we read 20% of what we hear 30% of what we see 50% of what we see and hear 70% of what we say or write and 90% of what we teach." ⁱⁱⁱ

Dr. William Glasser, an educational psychiatrist became famous for teaching what Mr. Dale originally founded and what God already knew. God knew that the process of relational discipleship brings true understanding of God's Word and His ways. God knew that when we actually teach something ourselves we will grasp the invisible and unspoken concepts with greater understanding.

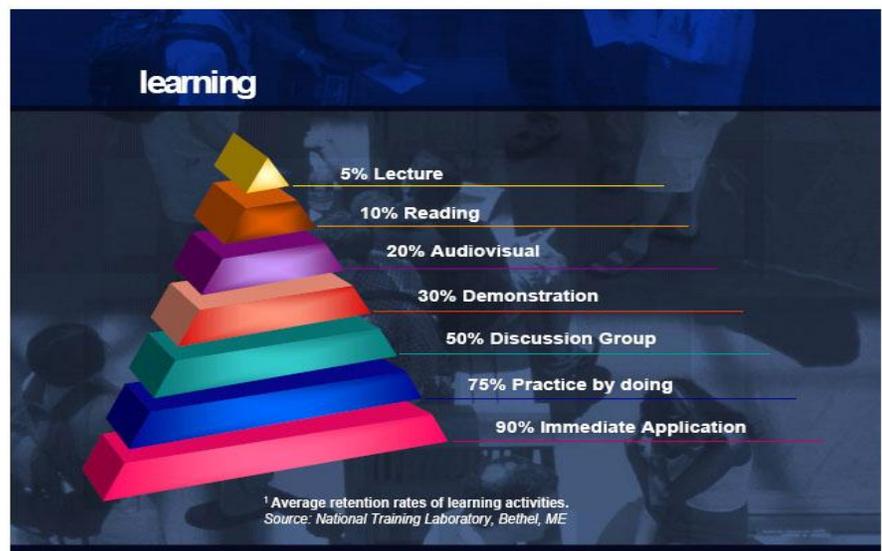
Churches today are set up to teach over 90% of its people in a passive learning environment. This type of discipleship is dehydrated and inhibits relational discipleship. Let's see what Harvard researchers said about the ineffectiveness of passive learning environments.

Harvard researchers point out in their groundbreaking book entitled, *Deep Smarts*, 2005 authors Leonard and Swap reveal the ineffectiveness of passive learning. They concluded that passive learning methods for teaching, like presentations and lectures (church pulpit preaching), are the worst forms for developing deep smarts. We also see that learning by doing and guided practicing with a coach are the best ways to learn (relational discipleship). What are we doing in the church? The church is using passive learning. We must change our methods to be more relationally active instead of the anti-relational impact from using passive sermons alone.

Retention Rates Depend on Instruction Methods.

Let's take a closer look at the effectiveness of the most common education methods. Here we see a graphic on learning retention based on teaching methodologies. We see that lecture format used in the majority of the churches throughout the World yields the worst retention rates. These retention percentages represent the results of research conducted by National Training Laboratories in Bethel, Maine.

According to the chart, **lecture**, the top of the pyramid, achieves an average **retention rate of**



5%. On the opposite end of the scale, the "teach others/immediate use" method achieves an average retention rate of 90%."

Josh McDowell says, that it is not only what we teach but how we teach it that is important.^{iv} In America, we have adopted a Hellenistic [Greek] teaching model focused on communicating information and testing whether the student can regurgitate it. In addition, Christianity is often communicated as a set of behavior rules covering one topic at a time, rather than as a deep relationship emulating the character of our heavenly Father. Bits of knowledge and rules for behavior are not a comprehensive worldview.^v

In contrast to the Hellenistic model, the Hebrew model of Deuteronomy and Proverbs uses a set of ongoing object lessons, applying the character of God to each life situation. The entire inter-generational community is modeling their faith and articulating their biblical worldview.^{vi}

Again, Jesus taught the masses, yet disciplined a few because He set in motion the skill-set of educating His disciples by engaging them in meaningful conversations about spiritual things. Unlike the relational impact that stemmed from the Socratic Method, the educational systems continue to use lecture which mostly results in unsatisfactory outcomes.

In Israel, learning did not take place in a classroom (as Greek learning and later Jewish learning did). Fathers taught their children not only by precept but mainly through life experience (Deut. 11:19 – "Teach your children when you rise up, walk by the way, etc.).

The Greek teacher and our Western educational model make the lesson material the focus and the student is expected to master it intellectually. The student is deceived into thinking that he has learned the lesson when he has only memorized facts in his head. Even getting it down into his spirit is not enough. He must make it part of his life. Only then has he "learned" it.

For this reason, interaction – even disagreement – is a vital part of the activity of learning. For this reason also, learning must not be rushed in order to get through the material in some artificial timetable, lest the life lessons are not thoroughly learned. It also means that as much or more learning (and maybe the most important lessons) take place outside of the gathering itself.

Our common way of learning has been to try to learn everything the Bible says about everything so that we are prepared for anything. This is, I think, part of the Greek system of learning. It sounds good but it seldom happens that way. Our most memorable, most valuable and best-learned lessons are learned through experiences, sometimes very painful experiences. They are both lesson and exam rolled into one. Then, what the Bible says about those things really comes alive to us because we are interacting with it out of life-experience.

In summary, Jesus was raised to learn God's ways in relationship as he lived real life. He learned through the Hebrew educational culture which was to learn to live, instead of the Greek which was to learn to know. In order to break free from a Greek dominated church culture one must set the goal to learn in relationship so one can live life pleasing to God. Scripture is most alive when it is theologically accurate and applied to one's real life. The Bible is least impactful when it is used to get smarter, isolated from life application. It is God's Spirit that allows us to understand His ways as well as apply them in our lives. This again is based on a relationship with the Spirit not knowledge of the Spirit.

Disciple/Discipleship Unity Principle

The Bible is clear that the two most important commandments are to love God fully and your neighbor as yourself. This is the foundation for the principles of disciple (love God fully) and discipleship (love our neighbor as ourselves).

Disciple = Jesus and You in Relationship

We are commanded to “go and make disciples” of Jesus alone, not any preacher, teacher, person or ministry. With this in mind, the general principle of the term disciple is *the relationship between Jesus and you*.

Therefore, the first objective as a disciple of Jesus is *to know Jesus more intimately, not gain more intellectual knowledge about Jesus or the Bible*. Simply put, “Disciple” = Jesus and You.

The second objective as a disciple of Jesus is *to live a life of practical holiness or learn to obey all that God commands*. Again, it is not enough to know Scripture, we are to apply it to our everyday lives. That means in our relationships, our habits, our thoughts, and even our desires. We are to read God’s Word to do it, not just know it. This is practical holiness.

We are empowered to do God’s Word by the grace of God through the person of the Holy Spirit. As a disciple of Jesus we engage in Bible study for the purpose to become like Jesus in character and conduct. By intentionally seeking to know Jesus and gaining understanding about whom Jesus is (identity) we know ourselves better. This empowers us to apply this knowledge in practical ways in our own lives. For when we know Jesus, we know ourselves and can better live congruently with whom we are in Christ.

Disciple Principle

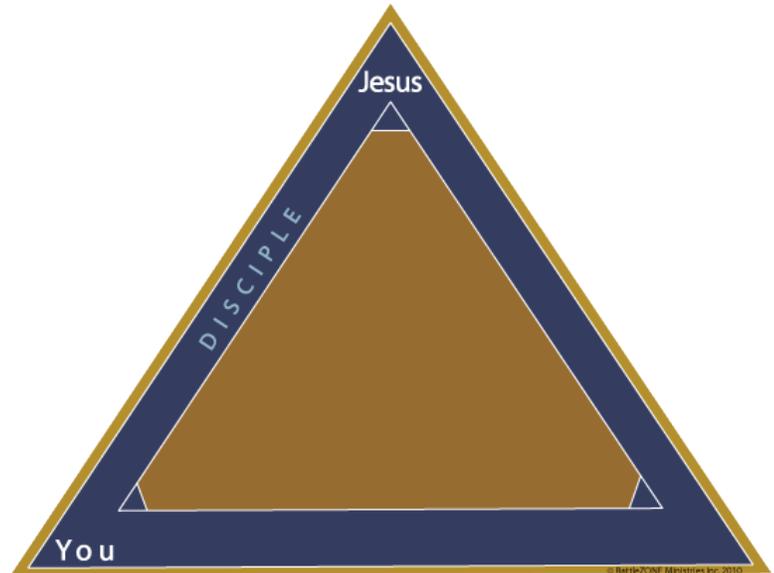
Basic Principle of Disciple = the relationship between Jesus and you.

Goal

The Goal of a Disciple of Jesus = full spiritual maturity or Christlikeness which continually solidifies your identity in-Christ. This is accomplished by encountering Jesus as a student apprentice who desires to know Jesus intimately and emulate Him spiritually.

Objectives

Objective #1 The goal of disciple: to know Jesus more intimately, not gain more knowledge about Jesus so we can be like Christ. This is spiritually and relationally, not intellectual.

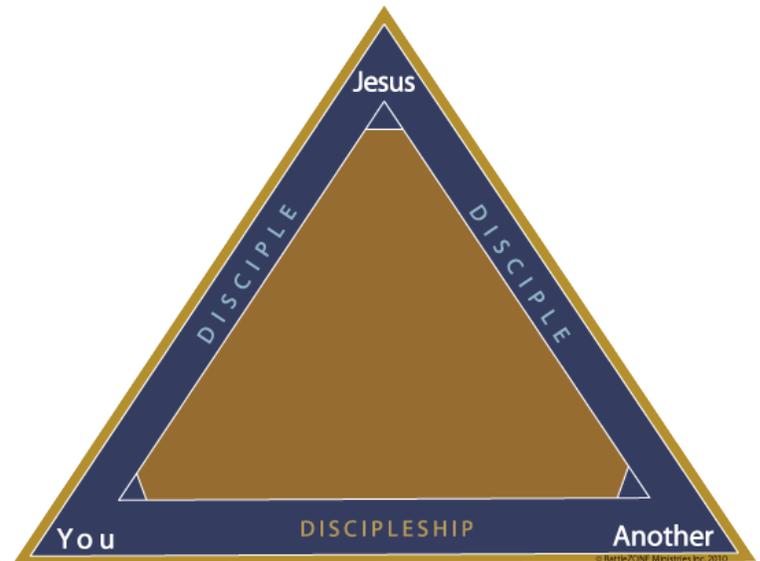


Objective #2 The goal of disciple: to live a life of practical holiness, where knowledge about Jesus moves from the head, to knowing Jesus intimately which then impacts your heart, to emulating Jesus spiritually so you can carry out His purposes in action through your hands daily.

Relationship Building Encounters, RBEs

How do you mature in your relationship with Jesus as His disciple and become more like Christ? By engaging in what I call RBEs or Relationship Building Encounters. How do you get to know Jesus more, thus knowing your new self? Through Relationship Building Encounters. These Relationship Building Encounters are activities that have been practiced by godly men and women throughout the ages, including Jesus. These activities are intentional and should be viewed through the lens of building your relationship with Jesus instead of being an intellectual discipline. Relationship Building Encounters fall under a broader category called Faith Skills. Relationship Building Encounters are to be used to help a disciple of Jesus know Jesus more intimately, and as you know Jesus you will want to live life like Jesus. Relationship Building Encounters include:

- 1) Personal Bible study
- 2) Personal prayer
- 3) Personal meditation
- 4) Scripture memorization
- 5) Inviting Jesus into an area of your day
- 6) Fasting & praying
- 7) Yielding to the Holy Spirit when tempted to sin
- 8) Solitude
- 9) Obeying God in personal daily decisions
- 10) Seeking God for answers to life problems or decisions



These Relationship Building Encounters are key Faith Skills to help you grow as a disciple of Jesus. Regular, intentional Relationship Building Encounters with Jesus will release the Holy Spirit's grace which helps you mature spiritually, thus fulfilling the goal of a disciple—full spiritual maturity or Christ-likeness.

If Relationship Building Encounters are so important in growing our relationship with Jesus as His disciple and becoming more like Christ, how do we learn these valuable skills? We learn RBEs through the discipleship relationship—You & Another.

Discipleship = You & Another

The relationship between you and another becomes the vehicle for discipleship where you engage in passing on Faith Skills to solve real-life problems. The goal of discipleship is to assist another disciple of Jesus to spiritual maturity or Christ-likeness that continually solidifies the disciples' identity in Christ. The objectives of

discipleship include developing TAAAL Relationships in which Faith Skills are passed along in Real Life circumstances.

Principle

Basic Principle of Discipleship = the relationship between You & Another.

Goal

The Goal of Discipleship = to assist another disciple of Jesus to spiritual maturity or Christlikeness which continually solidifies their identity in-Christ. This maturity is evidenced by their discipleship fruit production.

Objectives

Objective #1 The goal of discipleship: to develop *TAAAL Relationships* that assist the disciple in knowing Jesus more intimately so he or she can become more like Jesus—not gaining more knowledge about Jesus.

Objective #2 The goal of discipleship: to pass along *Faith Skills* connected to Real Life that assist the disciple to live a life of practical holiness.

The objectives are best achieved by implementing the *Harmony Principle* discussed next. Discipleship is best carried out in small groups, especially the family unit, but can also be achieved in one-on-one relationships.

Grace and Truth

In the discipleship process we are to teach Truth (God's ways) through grace (relationship). Again, it is the perfect tension between the two—not one over the other. We are to teach Christ-followers to obey all that God commanded = Truth (Great Commission); through relationship = grace (Great Commandment). Our personal relationship with Jesus (disciple) prepares our hearts for passing along Faith Skills to another (discipleship) throughout the lifecycle.

In summary, it is hard to “go and make” something you are unclear about what it is, not to mention the process of making one. That is why it is important to unify the church by simply stating the principle of a disciple and discipleship. The basic principle of what it is to be a disciple is the relationship between Jesus and you, with the goal of developing an intimate knowledge of Christ which assists you in becoming more like Christ. The basic principle for the process of discipleship is the relationship between a disciple of Jesus and another person (who may be or may become a disciple of Jesus), where the goal is for the disciple to assist the person in developing their relationship with Christ and identifying with Him so they can embrace their identity in Christ and become more like Jesus.

This triangle creates a perfect system to know and grow in Christ, because God's plan was for a disciple to become more Christ like as he or she engaged in a discipleship relationship with another person.

Harmony Principle

There are three core indicators, when present, that give profound insight into a Liquid Discipleship church, family or small group. (See circles graphic). The catalyst for these three indicators is the Holy Spirit who initiates and sustains spiritual reproduction. With guidance from the Spirit the *Harmony Principle* includes:

- 1) Relationship (TAAAL)
- 2) Faith Skill Transfer (starting with RBE's)
- 3) Real Life Focus (vs. content alone)

Transparent, Accountable, Authentic, Accessible and Loving Relationships, Faith Skills and Real Life indicate the presence of a Liquid Discipleship church, family or small group. When all three of these intersect in the presence of the Holy Spirit we experience the *Harmony Principle*.



© BattleZONE Ministries Inc. 2010

If you can visualize the three circles moving dynamically within the larger circle you should be able to imagine the relationship between all of the circles changing constantly. The dark area in the graphic illustrates where all three inner circles overlap—creating harmony. During any given discipleship encounter either one of these three indicators can be the starting point which can intentionally bring in the other two circles—creating harmony. This dynamic interaction between the three indicators sets in motion the opportunity for passing along Faith Skills, developing TAAAL Relationships and solving Real Life problems willingly yielding to the Holy Spirit. Dehydrated Discipleship will leave out; Relationships, Real Life circumstances and/or Faith Skills and are needed to solve Real Life problems.

In Luke 2:52 we read,

And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man. Jesus humanness grew in four areas:

- 1) **Wisdom**—which is not only the knowledge, but more importantly the ability to apply the intellect to life.
- 2) **Stature**—which is physical development throughout the stages of infant, toddler, child, pre-adolescent, etc...
- 3) **Favor with God**—which includes his relationship through love driven obedience resulting in spiritual maturity.
- 4) **Favor with Man**—which emphasizes his relationships with others as he shared himself and became trusted by others to share themselves. Jesus modeled emotional health in family and social settings.

There are indicators for the discipleship process throughout the human lifecycle stated in Luke 2:52 above. These indicators instill in us that there should be a balance of growth in a disciple of Jesus life instead of stressing one over another. For example, if a disciple ignores the social aspects of relationships he or she could get too focused on growing in knowledge, becoming a heady Christian. If a Christian becomes too focused on their relationship with others and disregards his or her relational obedience to the Godhead, then their identity of who Christ is becomes distorted as does their ability to disciple another.

The life of a disciple of Jesus must be fully developed with the perfect tension between grace and truth or relationships and knowledge. For it does no one any good if they are full of Biblical knowledge but do not have the wisdom to apply it to a life situation. Jesus grew in favor with others because His identity was found through the Father, not the latest

fashion, fad, material item or job title. So we see that the perfect tension for a disciple of Jesus is the tandem between relationships and knowledge of the truth applied in real life situations.

The Family is God's Design Discipleship using the Harmony Principle

The family unit best exemplifies the environment where Jesus equipped His disciples. The disciples lived together as the family does and is forced to deal with life as a unit. The best way to understand the Harmony Principle in action is within the family unit. Deuteronomy 6 and Ephesians 6 are clear about the father's role in discipling His family as life happens. The family is God's design for discipleship because it is where the Harmony Principle flourishes like a greenhouse. The right temperature, humidity and light provide the ideal environment for plants and flowers to grow.

It is vitally important to equip fathers and mothers to experience the Harmony Principle in their homes before they try to disciple others in the church setting. This is where the church comes in—to equip the fathers and mothers to do the work of the ministry in the home. The Harmony Principle is best understood when circumstances in life can trigger the “green light” for parents to teach in the moment a new Faith Skill or re-use one in a fresh situation. This is known as systematic fluidity, discussed later. Instead of having a timeline or curriculum that encourages the parent(s) to get the skills taught in an academic way, parents should be looking for life circumstances that open the door to develop deeper relationships and, in those moments, pass on Faith Skills.

Family Example #1

Let's take the example of my son who got in trouble at school showing off to other kids. I learned from the teacher that my son was jumping off of the monkey bars. To complicate the situation a parent of another child went to the teacher concerned that because her son followed my sons lead he was going to get hurt. Here is a fluid real life situation that gives me a window to deepen my relationship with three parties; my son, the teacher and the concerned parents. The core problem is my son's disregard to the rule, *no jumping from the monkey bars*. The rule is in place to protect the kids from getting hurt. I addressed it as follows:

- A) I acknowledged my sons need for adventure and danger because God made him that way (to avoid shame).
- B) I asked the teacher to explain the situation and listened without making excuses for my son's behavior.
- C) I took responsibility to address the behavior at home and discipline my son and encourage him to follow the rules.
- D) I called the concerned parents to talk to the father about the “trouble” my son has caused. By the way the parents were so angry that they denied getting the boys together and reconciling our differences.

Again, this real life situation brings up fluid opportunities to experience the Harmony Principle in action. Next are the Faith Skills and potential Faith Skills (underlined) that were used, or could have been used, during this real life situation:

- 1) Immediately when I hear of the issue I silently invite God into the situation and ask the Spirit to guide me.
- 2) I attempt to bring my child up with discipline and instruction without provoking him to resent me because of how I address his behavior. I must admit that I blow it at this stage many times because I allow my anger to take over and I sin against my son and God in my anger. I then have to backtrack and confess my sin to God and my son and seek his forgiveness for disciplining him in anger.
- 3) If a Spirit-filled spanking is needed I pray and ask God to give me wisdom and extend grace if He prompts me to. I ask my son why he is getting a spanking. Then after using a wooden spoon, swatting him on the butt once or

twice, I hug him and tell him I love him and talk softly into his ear letting him know I do not like giving him the “trouble stick.”

- 4) Looking back, I should have also prayed out loud and asked God to help my son obey the rules by searching God’s Word for passages on the influence of friends which would teach my son that his poor decisions can cause others to stumble into sin.
- 5) Seek to reconcile a damaged relationship with the parents of the child who was influenced by my son. However they did not choose to reconcile. I did what was in my power to reconcile. I will try again at a later date.

As a father, I used the Harmony Principle by first starting with the “Real Life” circle based on my son’s trouble at school. Next, I then intentionally leveraged my God given “Relationship” as his father and spoke truth into the situation. Last, I intentionally incorporated several Faith Skills by leveraging the life event. In addition to the relationship encounter with my son, I also engaged in relationship encounters with the teacher and the parents of my son’s friend.

The Harmony Principle is best understood in the family environment. Then we can move the principle into the church setting. Just plug your family into the Relationship circle and see if you are using the Harmony Principle at home.

From the circles which ones are you experiencing in your home?

- Are you developing TAAAL Relationships with your children and spouse?
- Are you dealing with Real Life situations that come up or are you avoiding them?
- Are you passing along Faith Skills when a Real Life situation comes up or do you need equipping?
- Are you submitting to and yielding to the Holy Spirit as you engage in relational discipleship or are you trying to do it in your own strength?

Since the church is so complex and the process of implementation is dynamic in a church setting—understanding the family dynamic first, may help move a person’s understanding into the larger context of the church.

Here are two examples of the Harmony Principle being used in a small group church setting.

Small Group Example #1

Let’s say that a man in your small group mentions he is having trouble in his marriage. You have been together in small group for over one year and thus you have developed a close relationship. The self-disclosure on his part can either originate from the Relationship or Real Life circle because he is sharing a Real Life problem in the context of TAAAL Relationship. A trained discipler would then be able to go to his personal Spiritual Tool Belt (discussed later) and pull out a Faith Skill that could help connect all three indicators creating discipleship harmony.

The discipler asks the sharer if he and his wife ever pray together. He answers no, not really. The discipler then pulls out a hypothetical Faith Skill he has experienced himself we’ll call “praying with your spouse.” He then proceeds to teach, show and coach the sharer on how to pray with his wife using the *Discipleship Training Cycle Principle*. Throughout this entire interaction several things are taking place that pull in the dynamics of the circles into a harmonious place:

- 1) The discipler is praying silently asking the Holy Spirit to help guide his discipleship encounter with the sharer.
- 2) The discipler is intentionally passing along a Faith Skill that was passed on to him.

- 3) The other men in the group are observing the process and experiencing the Spirit's guidance through the discipler.
- 4) The relationships between the men go deeper because of the self-disclosure.
- 5) The discipler and other men are reminded/convicted about the importance of praying with their wife's.
- 6) More real life circumstances are shared as they work through the marriage problem.
- 7) God is glorified because the men humble themselves and seek guidance from the Spirit and God's Word.

Note: the goal is for the three inner circles to be superimposed on top of one another in perfect harmony creating one dark circle inside the larger circle—Holy Spirit lead.

Small Group Example #2

Here we have a new discipleship relationship where a couple is being disciplined in the group and are not willing to share real life problems or engage in self-disclosure. In this case the discipler can be intentional about starting with the Faith Skills circle. The discipler(s) or group knows that the couple is new to the faith and assume they do not know how to handle God's Word. So very intentionally they engage the couple by asking "Is there a life decision you are facing that you would want God's help in making the decision?" This opens the door for self-disclosure which creates relationship development (TAAAL Relationships) as well as gives them an opportunity to share real life circumstances. As the couple shares, the interaction sets in motion the harmony between the three indicators as well as invites the Spirit to guide and direct them. The dynamics in this discipleship encounter include:

- 1) The discipler praying silently asking the Holy Spirit to help guide his discipleship encounter with the couple.
- 2) The discipler is intentionally passing along a Faith Skill that was passed on to him.
- 3) The other couples in the group are observing the process and experiencing the Spirit's guidance through the discipler. They are also learning and interacting as the Spirit leads as well.
- 4) The relationship between the couples goes deeper because of the self-disclosure.
- 5) The discipler and other couples are reminded /convicted about the importance of going to God's Word to find answers to life decisions.
- 6) The couple being disciplined learns about the concordance, index, cross-referencing, thumbing through the Bible and finding books-chapters and verses and experience how God wants to speak directly into their decision.
- 7) More real life circumstances are shared as they work through the decision—bringing the group closer.
- 8) God is glorified because the couples humble themselves and seek guidance from the Spirit and God's Word.

The *Harmony Principle* brings together the perfect trio for the discipleship process because it deepens relationships, sets the environment for real life issues to be team tackled and intentionally passes along Faith Skills.

This *Harmony Principle* combined with the Disciple/Discipleship Principle is summed up in the graphic above.

The Tool Belt of Faith Skills

Faith Skills are like tools in a tool belt. Every handy man knows that the right tool can make or break a project. The key for using each tool in the tool belt is knowing when and how to use it. Different construction projects require different tools. However, some tools can be used in



dramatically different ways depending on the project. For example, a hammer can be used to drive nails in 2x4's when framing a wall. The same hammer can be used to pound a beam in to place. Two projects—one tool. A drill can be used to attach drywall to the stud-framing as well as drill pilot holes for the cabinet hardware. Again, one tool—two projects.

The Christian life is full of “projects” and also requires different spiritual tools called Faith Skills to build a Christlike life. Take prayer for example. A father whose daughter is hooked on drugs can go before the Lord and intercede for her. This father faces a spiritual remodeling project that rocks the foundation of his entire family. This same father can use prayer while he seeks God's will in hiring a new employee at his business. He has interviewed ten candidates but needs the Lord to help him fill one position.

Like a tool in a tool belt, Faith Skills can be pulled out and effectively used for challenging life projects. It is not the Faith Skill in and of itself, but that the skill becomes a pathway to connect us to God in relationship. Simply put—Faith Skills build our relationship with God and others.

Some building projects are complicated and require many different tools. The same goes for life projects. They may demand several Faith Skills that connect us and another person to the Holy Spirit. The father who is in the midst of a drug addicted daughter may need to know how to use many different Faith Skills in his life remodeling project. Some Faith Skills he could use include:

- 1) Prayer (RBE)
- 2) Handling God's Word Accurately (RBE)
- 3) Confession and repentance (RBE)
- 4) Seeking direction and comfort from the passages of Scripture (RBE)
- 5) Forgiveness and Biblical reconciliation
- 6) Yielding to the Holy Spirit (RBE)
- 7) Biblically instructing his daughter without provoking her to anger
- 8) Biblical accountability with a Spirit lead trusted friend

The key for this father is that he must be competent in using these Faith Skills before he can implement them. He must know how they work before he can show someone else how to use them. Much like a carpenter who has used a hammer and saw on many of his construction projects—his experience will pay off on future projects. It's because the father has experienced prayer, fasting, confession and repentance, studying God's Word, and Biblical reconciliation for himself as a disciple of Jesus, that he will be able to competently use them with his daughter in a relational-discipleship role. The reason why the father knows how to use the Faith Skill is because someone intentionally equipped him in relational-discipleship. The key here is that the father connects with the Spirit as he helps his daughter through the implementation of the Faith Skills. Faith Skills provide a two-way street for deepening relationships. Most often a Faith Skill becomes the catalyst for sharing real life issues that help launch a more intimate relationship. On the other hand a relationship may already be intimate—thus there is foundation of trust that will give a platform for passing on the Faith Skill of private prayer. Again, we see the *Harmony Principle* here.

I can remember in my early weekend warrior do-it-yourself days when I was putting prefabricated flagstone rock around my fireplace. I used a circular saw with a diamond blade to cut the material. I knew how to use a circular saw because I worked construction in the summers when I was going to college. I cut thousands of feet of wood in those days leading

up to my fireplace project. That being said, I had never cut “stone” with a diamond blade using a handheld saw. Since I knew the basic principles of cutting, I could apply those to cutting the prefabricated rock. The foundational skill of using a saw allowed me to use it on a project that I had never encountered.

Faith Skills are similar. Most life problems are different but the Faith Skills can be applied if you have practiced them and understand the core principles. Now looking back on the fire place project with many more years of practical experience, I can see that renting a wet-saw would have been a much better way to go because the cuts would have been straighter. The truth is I did not even know there was such a thing as a wet-saw, much less how to use one.

As life happens before us we too can expand our Spiritual Tool Belt of Faith Skills. As we encounter Jesus through the Spirit of God, he can expand our understanding and abilities to live life dependant and attached to Him. Faith Skills assist in this relational connection.

Why are Faith Skills so valuable to the discipleship process?

First, Faith Skills can only be pulled from the Spiritual Tool Belt when we have been shown how to use them through relational-discipleship. If the tool is not in the belt then it is not an option to use on a project. Recently I was faced with yet another home project that required specific tools and know-how. My wife got a gas stove which required me to learn how to use my tools in new ways. If I had not had the new project, I wouldn't have learned how to install a shutoff valve on a gas line. I wouldn't have known to shorten the extension pipe and use a 90° adapter so the stove could set flush against the wall if my neighbor would not have instructed me how. He knew more than me through his experiences and then passed his experiential knowledge to me. This is trade discipleship, where someone shows another how to a skill needed in a trade. Because of my neighbors know how, today I have a new skill in my tool belt because life gave me a gas stove. Each time we have a life challenge we too can find a new use for our Faith Skills or learn a new Faith Skill all together.

Second, Faith Skills can be pulled from the Tool Belt when we need them. Life drives our need for the Faith Skills much like the home project will determine what tools we use. For example, a newly born-again friend is struggling in his marriage. We have been meeting once a week to allow God to speak into this life problem. To help him with this life project I first pulled from my Spiritual Tool Belt the Faith Skill of prayer. I proceeded to use the *Method* and teach, show, coach then released him to reproduce this Faith Skill in another (the *Method* is discussed next). This is discipleship in action, where a TAAAL Relationship is being developed and Faith Skills are being passed on determined by life. Next, I showed him how to seek God's will and direction using the Bible using the following five steps:

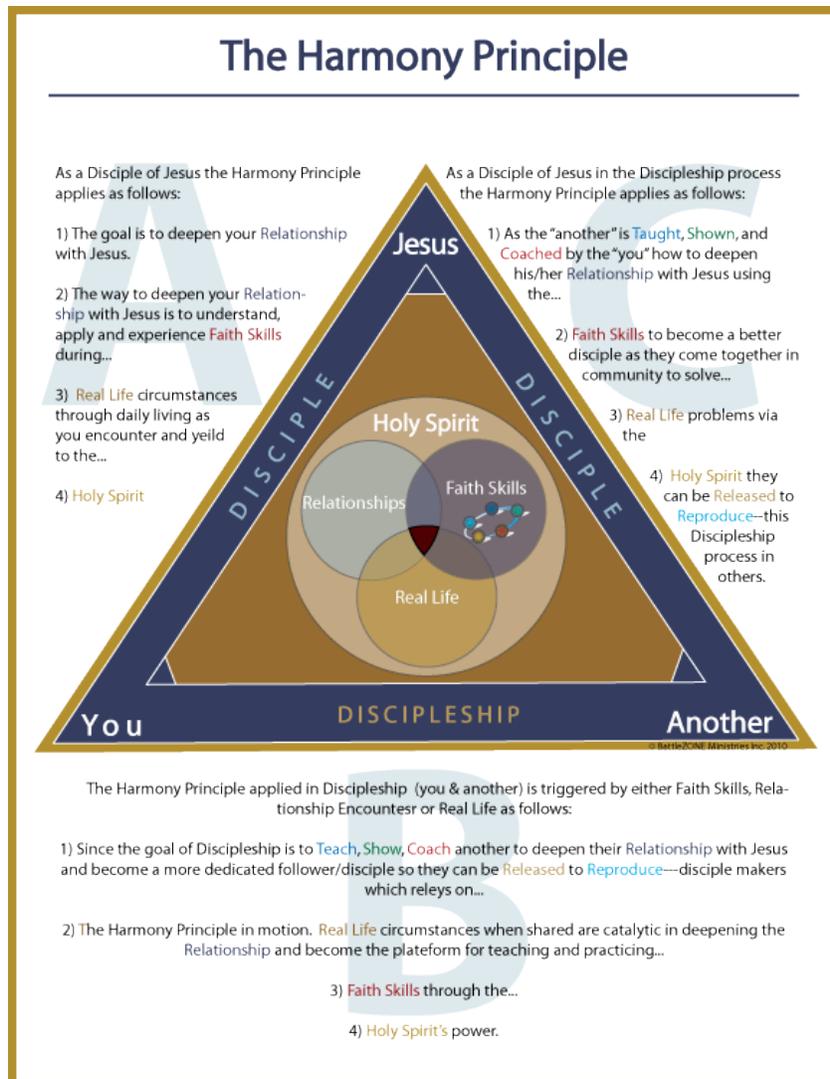
Steps for Faith Skill—How to Solve Real Life Problems using God's Word:

- 1) Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to guide your journey.
- 2) Define the main life problem in writing:

- 3) Seek the concordance for key words that allow the Spirit to guide the process.
- 4) As God reveals the solution and/or changes your heart—do as He says.
- 5) Repeat as needed in relational-discipleship.

We walked through the above steps and he learned about praying and asking the Holy Spirit to guide and illuminate the Scriptures. He found out there was a concordance in the back of the Bible and how to use it. He practiced finding Scripture verses by book, chapter and verse. Last, he learned, for the first time about cross-referencing. We will meet again in a week and he enthusiastically agreed to use this new Faith Skill and seek out God's will using His Holy Word.

This highlights the discipleship process in motion. **My friend received His new Spiritual Tool Belt when he accepted Jesus as his Lord and Savior. Now, I get the privilege to help him add in one by one the Faith Skill tools until his belt is equipped to take on any life project—and eventually help others with their projects.**



In summary, the Harmony Principle is triggered in a Relationship where a Real Life event beckons the application of a Faith Skill. This is discipleship on the go. Life happens fast and we should be prepared with the Spiritual Tool Belt that carries the proper tools combined with knowhow to repair or remodel any life project. The key to all relational discipleship is the ability to desperately depend on the Spirit's guidance in all life moments. For discipleship without the Spirit is futile activity.

Discipleship Training Cycle Principle

Faith Skills are best taught using a method called the Discipleship Training Cycle.

By observing the way Jesus and Paul went about making disciples of Jesus we see a *Method* emerge. This *Method* was more than just merely passing on Biblical Truth; it was intentional with the goal of assisting another disciple to become spiritually mature and reproduce. Jesus and Paul used relationships that were Transparent, Accountable, Authentic, Accessible and Loving to set the table for generational discipleship. These TAAAL relationships form the foundation for real life discipleship because trust allows both parties to walk in the light, to bring forth sensitive real life problems and to work them out using God's Word and Spirit. I call this Real-Life Relational Discipleship, the *Method*.

The importance of community in making disciples of Jesus cannot be overemphasized. Can one be disciplined apart from the presence of another person, depending solely on the Holy Spirit? Technically, perhaps, but no New Testament disciple became fully mature in this way. God's model is clear; one grows in their faith through trusted community relationships. Look at Paul's missionary journeys. He was never alone and was always discipling someone. Jesus was also intentional about staying personally connected to His disciples so they could learn from Him by:

- Teaching them about himself and God;
- Showing them His ministry in action;
- Coaching and correcting them before they went out and when they returned;
- Releasing them two by two to reach others for Christ; and by
- Reproducing these trained disciples who then went and made more disciples.

The BattleZONE Discipleship Training Cycle

The *Method* is where the actual process of generational discipleship takes place between two or more individuals in relational-discipleship. This discipleship model parallels Jesus' method to fulfill the Great Commission. The Discipleship *Method* (teach, show, coach, release and reproduce) facilitates the process for Christ-centered, self-disclosing, deep relational-discipleship where Faith Skills can be passed along in Real Life situations.

Let's take a look at each one of these steps:

- **Teach Me**—To transfer accurate and applicable Bible knowledge to another person through sharing personal experiences about the life topic or life problem through two way dialogue.
- **Show Me**—To demonstrate the applied knowledge in a visual way, such as seeking God's Word or to



demonstrate a Faith Skill, such as praying.

- **Coach Me**—To assist the disciple within a safe setting in applying the knowledge and or skill correctly and to fill in the knowledge gaps from what was taught and what was actually understood. Coaching is an ongoing relationship in which the disciple returns again and again to ask questions about Biblical truth and to gain further clarification about their personal application in real life of the Faith Skill.
- **Release Me**—To allow the disciple to try Biblical application on real life problems - away from the coach - and report back the results. Note: more teaching, coaching and showing often occurs here.
- **Reproduce Me**—The expectation that the disciple will pass on Faith Skills to another generation through relational-discipleship using the *Harmony Principle*.

Discipleship Teaching Pathways

There are three primary pathways where God’s Word is used for discipleship.

- 1) Scripture Driven (didactic)—where the Bible content drives the learning.
- 2) Scripture to Life—where a Bible passage, story or topic acts as the catalyst address real life subjects.
- 3) Life to Scripture—where a real life circumstance is the catalyst to direct people into the Bible to find answers and direction.

I believe that the majority of churches use the scripture driven method which is a dehydrated form of discipleship. Some churches intentionally use the scripture to life method—which can lead to Liquid Discipleship. A small majority use Life to Scripture—which is crucial for the *Harmony Principle*.

Systematic Fluidity

Liquid Discipleship embodies systematic fluidity, which is a process that Jesus and Paul modeled for generational discipleship. Jesus first called a few (not the entire Jewish nation) to follow Him, then Jesus told them to “go and make disciples”—who then make more disciple makers. Pastors cannot create a Liquid Discipleship church by attempting to disciple the entire congregation from the pulpit. Likewise, one cannot give away something that they do not themselves possess. Therefore, we must first learn how to follow Jesus ourselves before we can go and make Christ follower’s through relational discipleship. Programs, classes and workshops may do some good but they are incomplete for successful generational discipleship. Jesus did not use programs, classes or workshops to equip His disciples. Curriculums by their very nature end and create a congregation mentality to move onto the next new book regardless of the person’s ability to implement the suggested content into their real life. On the other hand, life happens daily and transcends the one-n-done dehydrated discipleship culture. **The only curriculum Jesus used was Real Life.**

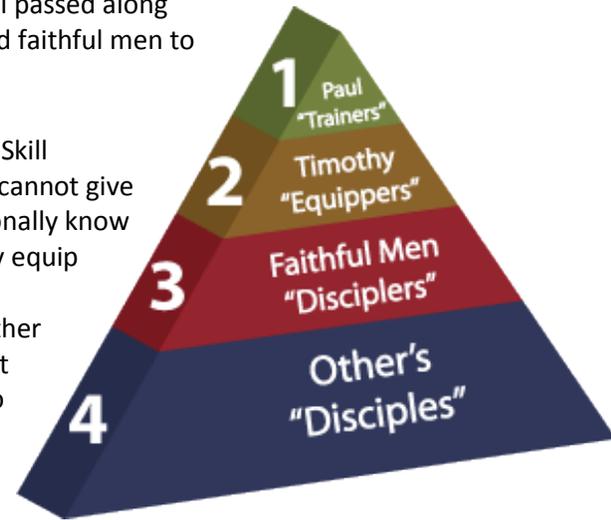
Real life issues came up daily within the intimate group of disciples and Jesus leveraged systematic fluidity to pass along Faith Skills according to the life circumstance. Life is fluid, yet we must systematically know and follow Jesus as a disciple (you and Jesus) before we can help another know and follow Jesus (discipleship). Thus by using the Discipleship Training Cycle which creates a system that intersects with real life which is fluid we get systematic fluidity.

In summary, in order to effectively and efficiently equip disciples to understand and apply Faith Skills during Real Life situations the Discipleship Training Cycle Method becomes an important visual aid and process. This Method also facilitates the development of TAAAL Relationships as you pass along the Faith Skills.

Multiplication Principle

The Multiplication Principle is a strategy based on 2 Timothy 2:2 where Paul passed along Scriptural Truth and Faith Skills to Timothy who then prayerfully handpicked faithful men to pass them on to others in TAAAL Relationship.

As discussed in the Spiritual Tool Belt section, the discipler's personal Faith Skill competencies limit his ability to pass on Biblical Truth and Faith Skills. You cannot give away what you do not possess. For example, if the discipler does not personally know how to share the Gospel through personal evangelism he cannot effectively equip another person to share the Good News. If the discipler is competent at evangelism then he can pass on the Faith Skill of sharing the Gospel to another person. If a discipler has made a practice of—and is able to find the context and meaning of a passage of Scripture, he is in a good position to be able to pass this Faith Skill on to another. If he does not know how to determine the context and meaning of a passage, it would be impossible for Him to show someone else how to do so.



Paul's multiplication strategy was grounded in relationships, life, willingness and competence.

Paul's replication strategy is dependent upon the depth of the relationships between the disciples involved. If a TAAAL Relationship is not reached as the goal of the relationship, chances are the effectiveness of the Faith Skills will be surface and intellectual at best, resulting in Dehydrated Discipleship. This strategy depicted in 2 Timothy 2:2 also shows the importance of prayerfully selecting and discipling more mature disciples who are capable and willing to learn the essential Faith Skills. Not everyone is willing to enter into a discipleship relationship, so readiness of the disciple must be evaluated before you engage in the discipleship process. This does not mean however, that you cannot begin the process of developing a TAAAL Relationship with them in hopes of one day being able to intentionally disciple him further.

Every discipler has a limit, and that limit is time. Investing in others who are not willing to become leaders is not a good reflection of the *Strategy*. What if Paul invested in the fourth level or the "others" instead of Timothy and Silas who were capable and willing to make disciples of Jesus. I believe that Paul would have experienced addition instead of multiplication. Again, Paul's multiplication strategy represented in 2 Timothy 2:2, is the most effective and efficient way for pastor's and leaders to make maturing disciple who are making maturing disciples of Jesus.

Levels of maturity and/or Skill-Ability/Competency give both a pathway and a model for generational discipleship. What if Paul told Timothy to skip the faithful men (2's) and go straight to the others (4's)? Would there have been as much spiritual reproduction? I think not. If Timothy did not know how to teach the Bible then how could he pass on this Faith Skill to another? He could not. The "others" or 4's represents those in the church that are Faith Skill-less and/or less mature, therefore they may not be able to equip others because they are still struggling in their flesh. 1 John also talks about the levels of maturity in terms of being a little child, young man and finally a father. It is clear that the little children are tossed about, while the young men are still learning the foundational Scriptures and still allow Satan to influence their lives. It is also clear that the fathers know God intimately and have overcome the whiles of the Devil.

This Liquid Discipleship strategy is a key for generational discipleship because it is based on maturity and multiplication instead of popularity and addition. In this strategy it is impossible for the one who is being disciplined to fake their

spiritual maturity because the TAAAL Relationship that was developed prevents a double life. This one-to-many relationship strategy has the potential of impacting more people in the church in a shorter period of time. This strategy also instills the notion of starting from the most mature/committed so they can begin a discipleship relationship with someone who does not have the Faith Skills they possess.

One important note to clarify the discipleship process is that the “another” does not have to be saved to begin the relational discipleship process. Discipleship can start with anyone who is willing to learn about Jesus, even if they do not have the Spirit residing inside of them.

It is also important to note that the best environment for Liquid Discipleship to occur is small groups especially within the family.

Liquid Discipleship MIRG’s God’s people:

Liquid Discipleship can merge the generations through fulfilling the Great Commission via the Great Commandment. This MIRG is best accomplished in the church if the discipleship process is:

- **M**easurable
- **I**ntentional
- **R**elational
- **G**enerational

The discipleship process should be measurable in several areas:

- Intentional relationship depth or intimacy (TAAAL Relationship).
- Intentional Faith Skills applied to Real Life passed along by disciplers.
- Intentional Faith Skills applied to Real Life mastered by disciple.
- Faith Skills reproduced by fourth generation in TAAAL Relationships.

Like Nehemiah chose to start rebuilding the walls because the progression of the walls would be visible—Faith Skills are also a visible way to measure discipleship progress in a church, family or small group. Most churches do not disciple because discipleship is hard to measure. By using MIRG, a leadership team can see how God is making disciples who make disciples.

In closing, I have interviewed over 50 pastors and asked them, “What are the top two essential Christian skills needed in order to grow one’s relationship with Jesus and become an effective disciple?” They overwhelmingly said:

- 1) how to have an effective **private prayer** time and
- 2) how to handle **God’s Word**.

I then asked them who showed them how to do these two Faith Skills—only 5% could name a person. I then asked those 5% who have they passed these two Faith Skills to? Again only 5% of the 5% could name someone—which is less than 1% overall who both have been equipped and then intentionally equips others in the two RBE’s.

Here is the core issue. Regardless of your denomination—if **less than 1% of the top two Faith Skills needed to know Jesus more intimately are being intentionally passed on to the next generation by pastors—we have a spiritual**

reproduction problem. This would be like school teachers allowing thousands of children to come to school but never teaching them how to read and write. It does not make sense. I'm convinced that the evil one is responsible for this blindness and now that it is in the light we must fight to develop Christlike maturity generation upon generation. Discipleship must flow like a river from one person's relationship with Christ to another. It must be like a tree planted by a river whose leaves never wither and whose roots grow deep.

We are called to disciple people to disciple people. Liquid Discipleship starts with relationship and ends in deepening one's relationship with Jesus who then helps another know Jesus more intimately—as the goal. This is by God's design and we cannot deny its importance or its effectiveness. Again, discipleship is Relationship experienced through Real Life circumstances where Faith Skills are shared.

Additional Faith Skills Clarification

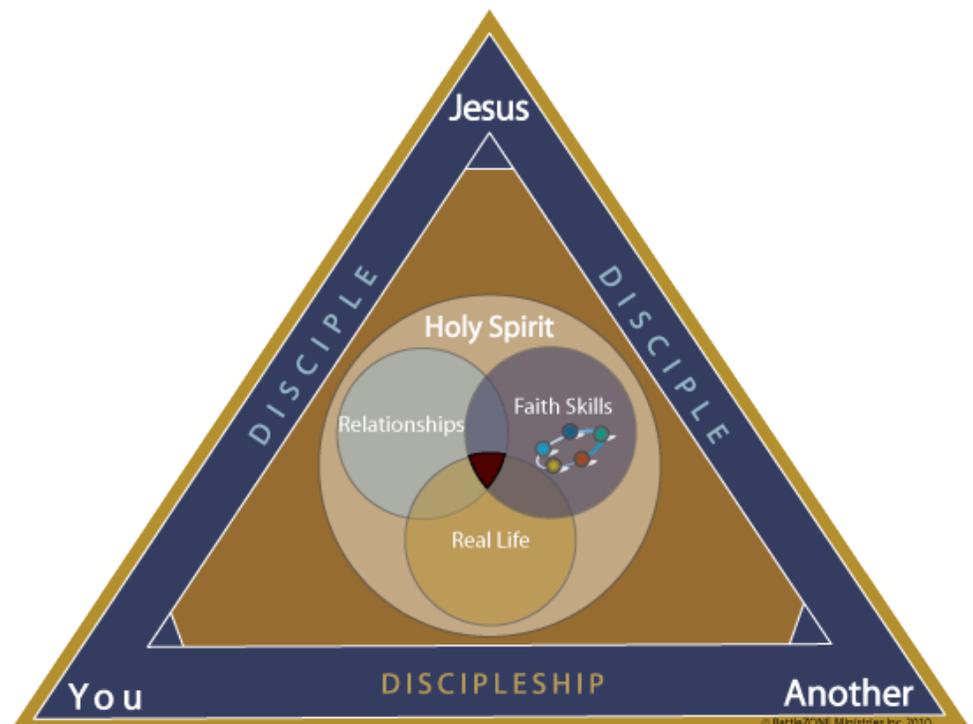
Faith Skills including Relationship

Building Encounter's

Faith Skills are the specific applications of spiritual activities that make the "invisible" spiritual truths visible, practical and real for deepening our relationship with Christ and others, as well as living holy in any life circumstance (practical holiness). Faith Skills bridge the gap between intellectual understanding of God's ways and the application of His Truths for practical holiness.

All RBE's are Faith skills but not all Faith Skills are RBE's. The difference is that RBE's like prayer and personal Bible time build your relationship with Jesus as His disciple (Jesus & You), but a Discipleship Faith Skill like praying over your children or sharing the Gospel emphasize the discipleship relationship (You & Another). To be clear, RBE's are essential activities that you engage in as a **disciple** to deepen your relationship with Jesus, which in turn grows you spiritually and solidifies your relationship with Jesus thus your identity in-Christ.

The discipleship relationship should focus on teaching a disciple of Jesus how to become competent in the Faith Skills first, starting with the RBE's. The discipler should first equip the disciple in RBE's before they move onto teaching them how to be competent in Discipleship Faith Skills (sharing the gospel, teaching God's Word, praying over the sick, disciplining your children, etc..) This stresses the priority of helping another know Christ more intimately out of which will flow a love for God and others setting the stage for passing on all Faith Skills. Focusing on RBE's in the beginning help us know Christ and then teaching the secondary Faith skills help us spread Christ or be Christlike to others.



Faith Skills are a larger umbrella encompassing intentional competencies needed to know Jesus more intimately as His disciple and for discipleship. It is important to note that since there are dozens of Faith Skills we should start learning/teaching the one's that assist us in developing a more intimate relationship with the Godhead—again these are known as RBEs or Relationship Building Encounters. For example, each time I spend time in private prayer, I am having a relationship building encounter with Jesus.

Below are the breakdowns of the Faith Skills in their groupings; disciple (You & Jesus) and discipleship (You & Another).

Disciple Faith Skills—Relationship Building Encounters, RBEs are a sub-category of Faith Skills that help you develop your relationship with the Godhead-emphasizing your ability to follow Christ and relate with the Holy Spirit. These include:

Prayer	Handling God's Word	Confession/Repentance
Worship	Meditating on God's Word	Sermon Encounters
Putting on the Whole Armor of God	Holy Communion	Yielding to the Holy Spirit
Fasting	Hiding God's Word in Heart	Inviting God into my Day
Seeking God's Word for Life Problems/Decisions		Apologetics

These RBE's are key Faith Skills to help you grow as a disciple of Jesus. Regular, intentional Relationship Building Encounters with Jesus will release the Holy Spirit's grace which helps you mature spiritually, thus fulfilling the goal of a disciple—full spiritual maturity or Christlikeness. If RBE's are so important to growing our relationship with Jesus as His disciple, how do we learn these valuable skills? We learn how to master RBE's through the discipleship relationship—You & Another.

Discipleship Faith Skills—are the broader category of Faith Skills that assist you in developing, enhancing and/or repairing your relationships with another person in your journey to know and share Christ. These include:

Sharing the Gospel	Reconciling a Damaged Relationship	Disciplining Child Biblically
Loving Wife as Christ Loved His Church	Handling God's Money Biblically	Dealing with Temptation/Sin
Walking in the Light	Transparent Relationships (James 5:16)	Speaking the Truth in Love
Praying with your Spouse	Praying over your Children	Praying over the Sick
Story Telling	Teaching God's Word	Christlike Hospitality

Measurements: Relational depth in a small group should be measured with a pre and post survey. Faith Skills should also be measured at three levels:

- 1) Faith Skills taught by the leaders using the *Discipleship Training Cycle*.
- 2) Faith Skills demonstrated successfully by the small group members.

- 3) Faith Skills passed along successfully to the small group members third generation using the *Discipleship Training Cycle*. This is a night where the small group members bring in the person they are in a discipleship relationship with and have them demonstrate the Faith Skill that they learned from their discipler.

FAITH SKILL Example: “Solving real life problems using God’s word.”

Steps to execute this Faith Skill –

1. **Define the problem or life decision.** Example: “My marriage is unhealthy and I am having trouble loving my wife as Christ loves the church.”
2. **Pray** – the Holy Spirit has to be invited into every situation. This sets in motion humility and dependence on the Spirits leading and God’s will.
3. **Search God’s Word.** Simply, start with the concordance and look up words that pertain to your circumstance. This will take you into God’s word with some focus and give the Spirit a chance to lead you. Because scripture interprets scripture, continue to dig in God’s Word for verses related to those you find in the concordance and pay attention to the context of each verse you read – noting what is said before and after the verses you find. Keep reading, searching, and praying and allow the Holy Spirit to lead you to the truth you desire. You may not find peace or resolution for you problem in minutes, hours, days, or months....every situation will be different.
4. **Obey.** Do what God reveals. Share God’s answer or directions with someone else for accountability.

Remember that this is not as much about the “steps” as it is about the “process” that facilitates your relationship with Jesus as His disciple. Get to know Jesus, He is desperate to help.

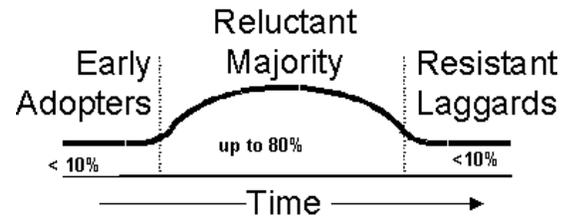
This Faith Skill is simple but it is not easy. It is not the knowing but experiencing God as he guides us through our question to Him. Sometimes it is not about the answer but how God changes our heart in our search for help.

A win – is defined not only as your ability to practice and master this Faith Skill in method and experience...but to be able to pass it along in TAAAL Relationship to another (TAAAL = Transparent, Authentic, Accountable, Accessible, Loving)— thus engaging in discipleship (you & another) who can also pass it along. This is G4 (Passing it on through 4 Generations) in action.

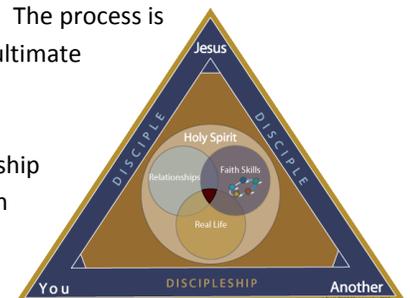
In summary, the RBE’s are Faith Skills we intentionally engage in to know Jesus more intimately and thus, solidify our identity in-Christ as we become more spiritually mature. Discipleship Faith Skills are practical Biblical tools that emphasize ministry outreach instead of personal time with Jesus.

Implementation Guidelines for Liquid Discipleship

- 1) Dialogue, Dialogue, Dialogue with Senior Pastor and influential leaders/pastors.
 - a. Create multiple face to face discussions that focus on Liquid Discipleship (LD) principles and philosophies.
- 2) Dialogue, Dialogue, Dialogue with leadership. (After pastor embraces vision himself and owns it fully). Unity through clarification.
 - a. Have pastor set up multiple face to face discussions with leadership to discuss Liquid Discipleship principles and philosophies.
- 3) Be willing and ready to deal with internal conflict.
 - a. Conflict will come because church will have to change to be a LD church.
- 4) Pull everything off the table and start from scratch. Keeping the focus on the "pool" and the "slide".
 - a. Since the current church allocates around 80% of its resources for Sunday's there must be a willingness to reshape the way church is done so a LD culture can flourish.

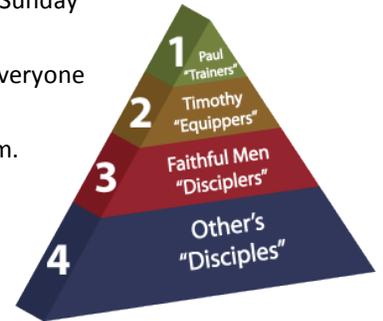


- 5) Begin to create unified alignment using a Rubric.
 - a. Philosophy of ministry (like Jesus did it)
 - b. Theology (non-negotiable's and negotiable's)
 - c. Organizational structure for church governance
 - d. Leadership principles and protocols
- 6) Start a parallel track (with the 2's small group training) to educate larger numbers of interested people as a class or "Discipleship Institute."
 - a. This class will lay an underlying current for the culture change at the church
 - b. This class will prime the next set of disciples or 3's to want to go into the community group from the 2's training.
 - c. This class would provide valuable feedback for bringing the rest of the congregation along from the pulpit and the next classes.
- 7) Refuse to follow another churches plan (or church franchise) but allow the Spirit to guide you step by step.
 - a. A cookie cutter approach to implementation and execution will hinder the Spirits leading. Encourage the entire leadership team to lean the principles and philosophies of LD but ask God how to implement them in their own church. All church communities are different and must be uniquely developed.
- 8) Determine your current way of attracting people to your events (Sunday services is an event), and what your ultimate purpose is for each individual who comes to an event. This illustration is best understood using a water slide at a water park.
 - a. Go to the Water Park (surrounding church community); climb the ladder (get person to church event), stand on the platform (person is now at a connection point or position to go down the "slide" into the "pool"), define the pool's purpose (what does the church want each person to become after they enter the slide from the platform?) and build process or steps with each the loopy-loop until the slide reaches the pool. The process is the indicated journey that each person encounters as they move towards their ultimate purpose (to become Christlike).
- 9) Create unity for Disciple and Discipleship with leadership and the entire church.
 - a. A disciple is the relationship between you and Jesus. Discipleship is the relationship between you and another where you develop a TAAAL Relationships and pass on Faith Skills in Real Life.
 - b. These FOUR Relational Discipleship Culture are:
 - i. Relationship
 - ii. Faith Skills



- iii. Real Life
- iv. Spirit Directed

- 10) Put names to “strategy triangle” and then create “2’s” development map and integrate it into Sunday services, classes, home groups, etc.
- a. 1’s are to invest in 2’s and then 2’s are to pour themselves into the 3’s and 4’s. Not everyone can become a two, but every four must become at least a three.
 - b. The culture where the 2’s are equipped should simulate a community not a class room. These couples are to do life together and in the process be intentionally disciplined through Faith Skills.
 - c. Schedule weekly time and place where 1’s equip the 2’s and 3’s who will pass along in various church activities.
- 11) Begin intentional leadership training
- a. Develop Triad-Training (one leader, one co-leader and one observer)
- 12) Identify the FOUR MIRG (Measurable, Intentional, Relational & Generational) indicators in all areas of ministry (Faith Skills, TAAAL Relationships--Real Life, Holy Spirit Directed).
- a. In each ministry area there are three indicators that will determine if the church is a LD church. These areas must be intentionally sought out and measured on a regular basis.
- 13) A MIRG- Team/person identified.
- a. Someone who is gifted at constant follow-up and data collection. They determine the master plan flow and measure results of the LD church.
- 14) Create Faith Skills Rubric starting with children’s ministry.
- a. Kindergarten through 12th grade all need to learn certain Faith Skills/RBE’s. The life circumstance will determine the complexity of applying the Faith Skills.
 - b. Spiritual Tool Belt (for life projects—either your own or to be used to help a neighbor).
- 15) Start with two Faith Skills (How to search God’s Word to solve Real Life Problems and PRAYERS).
- a. Use the core RBE’s to launch first year of LD in a church.
- 16) Plug into over-lapping master plan that reaches into every area of ministry for launch (tying into Sunday sermons and home groups). Overlap is approximately 3 to 6 weeks from entire church launch to equip 2’s.
- a. Master schedule will allow for overlap of the equipping of the 2’s so when the new Faith Skill is launched in the entire church the 3’s & 4’s will have trained disciplers.
- 17) Generational Tracking Chart for Faith Skills and Relationships.
- a. Create some kind of visible master flow chart that shows the discipleship impact from generation to generation.



Liquid Discipleship brings people into relationships not programs (with God’s people and the Holy Spirit).

Each person who is invited into the relational-discipleship culture will be equipped primarily on how to develop their relationship with the Godhead—which will result in a deeper relationship with others. Let Christ’s love compel us!

This is a new section I am working on –thus it is in draft format.

The Distorted Disciple/Discipleship Principle

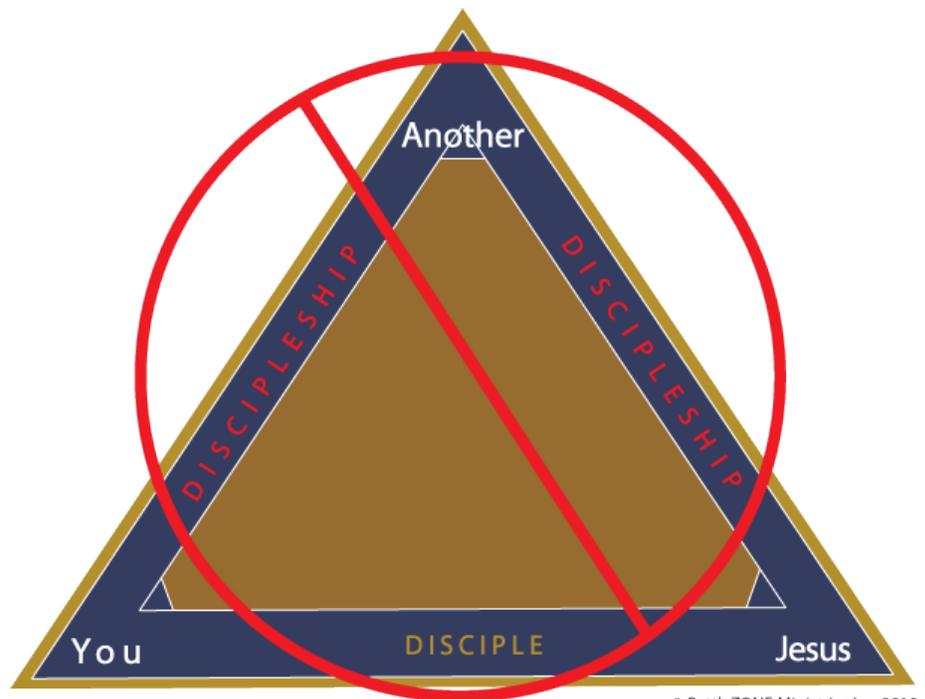
As we have learned the principle of being a disciple of Jesus is the relationship between you and Jesus. We know that in order to build our relationship with Jesus we need to acquire Faith Skills that help us master Relationship Building Encounters, like private prayer and Bible study. I have also discussed that we are to be disciples of Jesus alone, not another pastor or teacher. This means we are not to hold anyone else above Jesus as father, teacher, pastor or Rabbi—according to Christ’s instruction to His disciples. For Jesus is the only one we are to strive to know as our ultimate example so we can be more like Him. Unfortunately we see another trend in some Christian circles that tries to skip the Disciple Principle (you and Jesus) and go straight for a distorted version of the Discipleship Principle of you and another. Paul addresses a similar problem in his first letter to the Corinthians.

For when one says, “I follow Paul,” and another, “I follow Apollos,” are you not being merely human?

1 Corinthians 3:4 ESV

As a lead up to what Paul states above he tells the Corinthians that because they are still fighting and full of jealousy they will remain on spiritual milk because this type of behavior stems from the sinful flesh. This implies that until they stop living in the flesh, there is no way that they will be able to receive solid spiritual food—so they will stay spiritual infants. Since Paul is their spiritual father (1 Corinthians 4:15-16) they must stop propping up their “countless guides in Christ,” who are the multitude of spiritual leaders, and put their relationship with Jesus first as His disciple (you and Jesus), and “be imitators of how Paul follows Christ. Not to be confused with being imitators of Paul as an individual but to imitate him in the way he follows Christ (humble, submissive, aggressive and not shrinking from the Truth).

Where some Christians are breaking down in the discipleship process is that they skip the Disciple Principle (which builds their relationship with Jesus as His disciple) and go straight to “eating” spiritual food from the Discipleship Principle (you and another). In this case they are utilizing a distorted Discipleship Principle. First, they are to grow in Christ as a disciple before they enter into a discipleship relationship with another— so they can equip them to be a more mature disciple of Jesus—just as they have experiences and in the constant process of doing. Instead they become the “you” that goes to the “another”—or “countless guides in Christ” to be fed. This bypasses the Disciple Principle and distorts the Discipleship Principle because those who are



© BattleZONE Ministries Inc. 2010

functioning in the flesh by “following Paul or Apollos” instead of Christ, will never be off of spiritual milk. Thus, they will have to be addressed as infants until they experience the true Father by engaging in skills of faith that draw us closer to Christ as His disciple.

This entire debacle can be illustrated in the graphic. Notice that the Disciple Principle is non-excitant and a there is a distorted Discipleship Principle. Jesus used to be at the top of the pyramid but now the “Another” becomes the one at the top to emulate. The “another’s” are what Paul may be refereeing to as “countless guides”. This distorted behavior is exactly what Paul was addressing in 1 Corinthians 3. Therefore, when “You” follow “Another” and wish to be like them instead of Christ it is evidence that they remain in their flesh and they can only tolerate spiritual milk for babies.

Isn't this exactly what is happening in the majority of our churches today? People are jumping from one pastor teacher to the next because they have “countless guides in Christ” and never understanding how to develop their intimate relationship with Jesus as His disciple. Sadly, because of this trend most of us do not have a spiritual father as Paul describes.

The graphic illustrates that the moment we dethrone Christ as whom we follow, we immediately distort the discipleship process—which leads to spiritual immaturity and generational reproduction in the flesh. Remember the goal of the Disciple & Discipleship Principles is the same—to know Christ more intimately so we can follow Him more fervently.

I myself have fallen into this distorted discipleship pathway and would read, listen and watch many different pastors (guides) whom I wanted to be like. Even though this is subtle, I believe that because I was being a disciple of another guide—I remained an infant until I realized that I was to pursue a disciple relationship with Christ alone. It has become evident that as I know Jesus through my disciple relationship with Him, He gracefully allows me to hear and understand solid spiritual food and not just baby milk.

Self-Disclosure Principle

⁵This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. ⁶If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; ⁷**but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another**, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. ⁸If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us. Bold emphasis mine.

1 John 1:5-10 NASB

When a group of people gather in someone's home for the purpose of relational discipleship for the first time the group dynamic as a whole is very surface. Relational equity has not been established therefore to move forward in relational discipleship an intentional strategy must move the entire group into deeper relationship. To create a visual understanding of this I will illustrate the relational depth needed to form intimate relationships using the Self-disclosure Continuum. But first let's discuss the importance of self-disclosure in the discipleship process.

Self-Concealment vs. Self-Disclosure

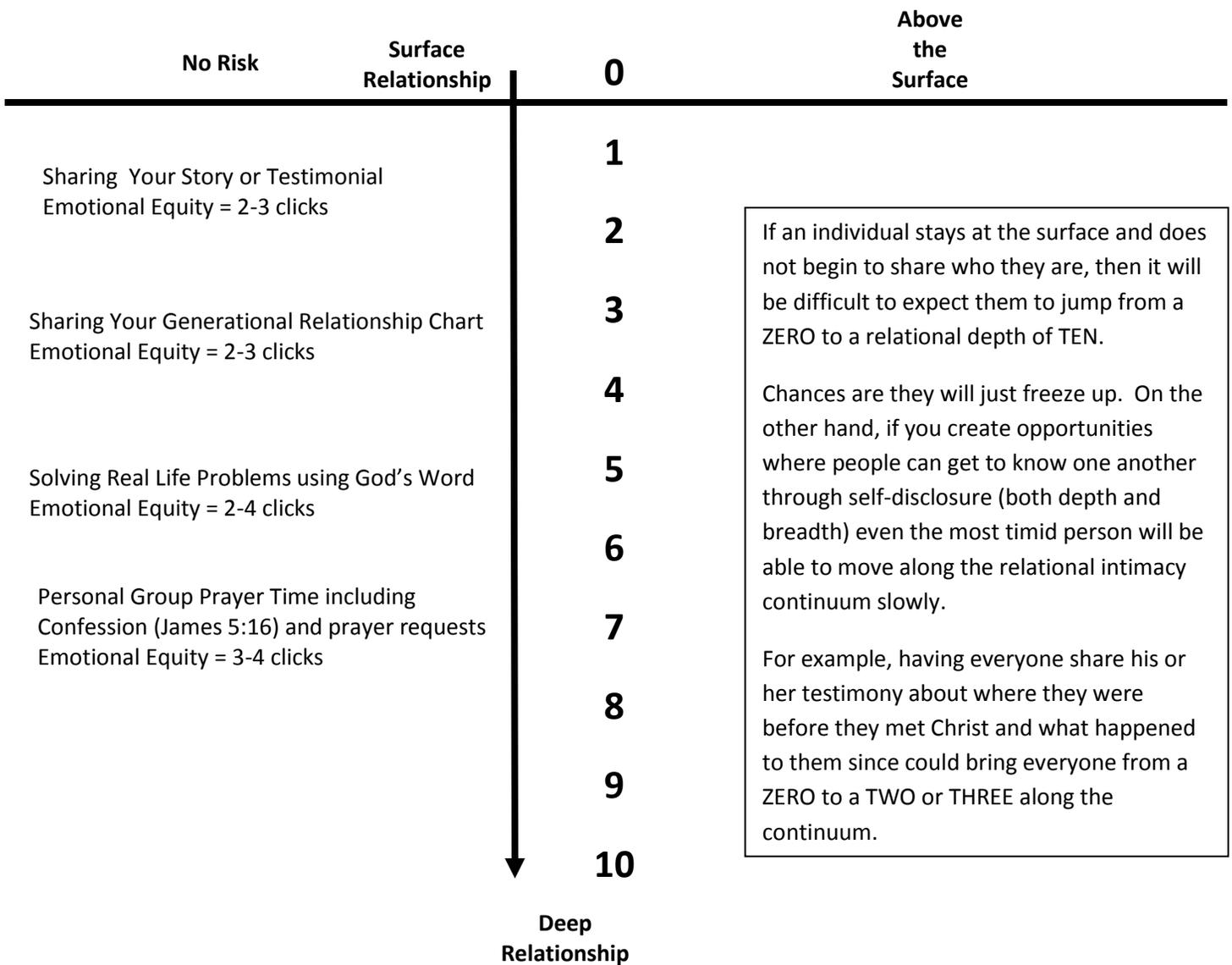
People only know what we let them see. Men are masters at developing surface relationships because they only let you see what they want you to know. Self-disclosure plays an important role in friendship closeness. It was hypothesized that individuals who self-disclosed in-depth about difficult topics to a close friend would rate those friendships as closer. To the degree that we let people see us, to the same degree, we develop deep relationships or surface acquaintances. Just like we reap what we sow in our spiritual lives, we reap what disclose in our relationships. Research indicates that individuals who self-disclose in-depth about difficult topics to friends experience those friendships as closer as long as the friend also discloses. On the other hand if the relationship is built on self-concealment or not sharing personal information about yourself, then the relationship will be superficial at best.

With that said, this is why in a Relational Discipleship Life Group it is imperative for the facilitator to be intentional about increasing the relational equity of the entire group with a couple of self-disclosure tools.

- 1) The Story (or Testimony)
- 2) The Generational Relational Chart
- 3) Using God's Word to Solve Real Life Problems
- 4) Group prayer (gender specific as needed)

From ZERO to -10

Relational Discipleship is more about developing relationships through the process of learning about God's Word than it is about learning Scripture. The goal of the facilitator is to move each person from their relational readiness of zero trust to the TAAAL Relationship of -10. This relational equity is crucial to the process of developing the culture needed for real life discipleship. So how does a facilitator move each person from zero to a depth of 10? By simply intentionally setting up the group sessions where each person can share about themselves, their past and real life challenges.



To Lego or Not to Lego

I just returned from a ministry summit where Larry Osborn, author of *Sticky Church* and *Sticky Teams* was our keynote speaker. Larry used the illustration of Lego's as a way to describe how people in the church can only have so many meaningful relationships before they begin to be friendly instead of being connected or a true friend. In other words a person who is capable of connecting with lots of people will eventually reach a place where they cannot connect (or be a friend) in a meaningful way with one more person so they default to being friendly but never connecting as a friend.



Mr. Osborn example of Lego's really helped me to understand for the first time, why I cannot put any more people on my Lego board because all of my connecting capacity is used up...so I default to being friendly instead of a friend. If you recall, Lego's are building blocks that connect together to build anything from a skyscraper to a Star wars fighter ship.

The old fashion rectangle shaped Lego's kits usually has a green base plate to connect your blocks to. This Base plate or building pad can only fit so many blocks until the base is completely full. Since this base plate has a limited amount of cubic inches to connect other blocks to the builder must be strategic in which blocks are given the privilege of hooking up with the foundation. Once the base plate or foundation connecting points are filled up, no more blocks can join the base group.

Keeping with this Lego base plate concept, people in the church have different sizes of base plates that limit their ability to connect intimately with other people. Maybe one person's base max is 5 relationships, while another may be 25. Upon each person's ability to connect people to their relationship base plate, they are limited only after their plate is full. When one's relationship plate is full, the ability for a new relationship to connect to your base plate is impossible unless you remove a relationship to make room. But who do you remove and will this cause hurt feelings in the body?

Are you Friendly or a Friend?

We see this relationship dilemma happen often in church leadership who want to relate to new people but are unable to do so because of plate fullness. Instead of helping new people get connected in an authentic relationship they are forced to become friendly instead of a friend. Friends are the ones who were able to fit on the base plate and who have chosen to maintain the connection through regular sharing of one another's connections or life's. That being said not only is one's cubic area for connecting limited, so is their ability to connect one-on-one from one block to another as they relate to others. Picture if you will, having two rectangle blocks with four pairs of connectors rising up from each block (see illustration). If you want to connect one block to another you have to snap the first row giving you a weak connection, or the first two rows will give you a better connection, or three rows yielding a good connection but if you connect all four rows you have maximum connection. Full overlap and bound together in the optimal way.

Connecting blocks can be compared to relationships. Each block has a certain number of connectors that increase the bond with the level of connectivity. For example, if the block has four rows of connectors then the amount of the connectors united will determine the strength of the bond. Full overlap is where all four rows are connected giving us

the strongest bond. If only two rows are connected then we have a half strength bond. Finally, if only one row is connected we have a connection, but it is a very weak bond.

Self-disclosure yields maximum connectivity

Church relationships are like this too. People have the ability to connect fully with other people (through self-disclosure which creates a relational bond) and can fully connect if both persons join all of their connectors together. The thing is that it also takes both block connectors to lock in to form a bond. If one block does not lock with the other block then there is not a connection. This is why reciprocating self-disclosure is important to making a church full of friends instead of people being friendly.

The deeper the connection the more self-disclosure resulting in being a friend. The more surface the connection the less self-disclosure resulting in being friendly. Based on the relational depth continuum mentioned earlier, we see that a surface level or ZERO is being friendly. We also see that in order to connect at a deeper and level one needs to self-disclose. This willful self-disclosure when reciprocated builds a level of full connection and trust that results in being a friend instead of being friendly—having a Transparent, Authentic, Available, Accountable and Loving Relationship instead of being churchy.

To drive this concept home, reflect back on the best relationships you have in your church experience. What size foundational base plate did you have at the time? How many connectors did you allow to connect with the other persons connectors? Was it 100% coverage, 50% or 25% - minimal connection? How are you currently at developing deep 100% connecting relationships in your church today? Why is this? Do you see your base plate as being full? Do you intentionally see old relationships suffering because you unintentionally had to remove them in order to add new Lego's or relationship blocks to your relationship plate? What is your maximum number of relationships does your base plate allow? Why? Why would it be beneficial to allow for new people in the church to connect with new people in the church verses try to unsuccessfully add them to your already full relationship plate. Have you wondered why you are more standoffish and are friendlier than a friend to new church members? How can you change this dilemma personally? How can you change this as a church body? What specific strategy will change this "full-plate" crisis?

Implementation of Liquid Discipleship Church-wide Planning Tool

See attached Planning Guide to connect the pulpit to the ministries in the church to the home groups.

1) Jesus Christ

- a. The Centrality of Christ is ALWAYS the focus. To create a culture of relational-discipleship the focus and purpose must be on knowing Christ more intimately and becoming Christlike.
- b. All planning for the church-wide Faith Skill should always be on the centrality of Jesus Christ. It is easy to get to focused on learning Scriptures, of expositing the Bible that Jesus can subtly get derailed. Even focusing too much on discipleship without Christ at the center can be a misguided journey.

2) Faith Skill

- a. Through prayer and the impressions from the pastor(s) a select Faith Skill becomes the catalyst to help the entire congregation to know Christ more intimately and help others do the same.
- b. The Faith Skill also becomes the church wide vehicle to connect people in relationships and teach them how to know Christ more intimately and become Christlike.
- c. The Faith Skill becomes the tool to help everyone who participates to learn how to either know Christ more intimately or how to share Christ. This discipleship process gives those who know how the

opportunity to show another how to effectively use the Faith Skill. As we engage in relational encounters to help others learn the Faith Skill, the understanding of the Faith Skill becomes more ingrained in you, thus making you a better practitioner and educator.

3) Pulpit

- a. The pulpit is the single most influential platform that can reach the maximum amount of people.
- b. The pulpit can be effectively used to connect all of the pieces that make up the church. These moving parts include; the staff, volunteers, ministry leaders, small group leaders and the general congregation. If you think about it the pulpit is able to communicate the same message in the same way to the largest audience.
- c. The pulpit casts vision for the importance of the Faith Skill and the vision of generational discipleship. The vision focuses on experiencing the Faith Skill personally and then pass it on to another person in the context of relationship vs. a classroom.
- d. The pulpit can stress the importance of getting connected into a Life Group if you are not yet connected. New Life Groups can begin to gather at the start of a new Faith Skill launch.
- e. The pulpit can also connect the entire church through Life Groups where the sermon becomes a way to dive deeper into the Sunday sermon.
- f. From the pulpit there is a series of TEACHings that go into God's Word and then make the Scriptures practical through the Faith Skill with an emphasis on SHOWing the congregation from the stage what it looks like to implement the Faith Skill.
- g. The pulpit also casts the vision to the entire congregation the importance of experiencing the Faith Skill personally and then their obligation to PASS it along to another—thus discipleship.
- h. The pulpit is to create the series of teachings that emphasize the TEACH—but are systematically taking the entire church through the TEACH, SHOW, COACH, RELEASE—REPRODUCE Discipleship Training Cycle Model. The SHOW can be include a drama or have the pastor set up the stage like his prayer closet to demonstrate how he does personal private prayer.
- i. This series is listed by date on the planning wheel along with the Scripture verses to be covered on those dates.
- j. The pulpit can also have small group questions based on the sermon to facilitate deeper understanding of Biblical truths shared and help people share more of their lives in community.
- k. Expectations should be repeated and clear for each Faith Skill. For example, the expectation to implement the Faith Skill in the week ahead and report back to the pastor how they encountered God in a new and fresh way. The expectation to pass along the Faith Skill should also be communicated and measured.
- l. Testimonials from the congregation and or Life Group leaders will help the pastor connect the Faith Skill application to a real person or family in a real life situation. This is vitally important because personal testimonies continue to set the culture of how God's people who use Faith Skills experience God's help.

4) Ministries

- a. Each church ministry officially operating in the church can be another vehicle for passing on the Faith Skill. These ministries include: Children's, youth, men's, women's, worship, prayer, hospitality, seniors, etc.
- b. Each ministry leader should be listed by name on the planning wheel and held accountable for getting equipped to pass along the Faith Skill and measure the impact in their area of influence. For example, the children's ministry leaders should adjust the private prayer Faith Skill to be age appropriate as well as measure the number of kids who were taught, shown and then coached. As well as those who were able to pass it along to another person as they were released to reproduce the Faith Skill in another.
- c. Here the class or ministry becomes a hands-on practice session to implement and learn the Faith Skill. Here those who lead the ministry will be equipped by the LEADERSHIP (G2's) to effectively pass along the Faith Skill.

- d. Perhaps the worship ministry meets 30 minutes early to go over the Faith Skill and practice it in there already gathered small group.

5) Life Groups (small groups)

- a. Life Groups will be primary goal of this planning tool—in order to connect as many people in the congregation in small groups for relational-discipleship. Life Groups are the best way for relational-discipleship thus creating a pulpit to home effect that gives every person involved in the Life Group the opportunity to learn in a safe environment a new Faith Skill which can then be passed along to others.
- b. Each week the pulpit will provide a couple of discussion questions that help facilitate intentional relational self-disclosure amongst the groups. They are to answer the questions first, then dive in to the Faith Skill where more TEACHING—SHOWING & COACHING can occur. This process instills peer accountability and the positive pressure to pass along the Faith Skill themselves.
- c. The meetings should use the Faith Skill to solve a Real Life challenge instead of using it as an academic exercise that is taught but never implemented—or worse—never passed on.

In the 'soft launch' at Oakhills the congregation will be encouraged to gather (organically) and go over the PRAYERS card together in each others homes...but simultaneously the G2's will hand pick their G3's from the congregation to meet with for a couple of weeks to pass along the PRAYERS card and develop new relationships.

Freedom vs. Constraint

One might be thinking that this planning tool constrains the pastor from preaching freely. However, it brings just the opposite. There is greater freedom to preach using the planning wheel because your sermons (TEACH ME) not only allow for Spirit lead instruction—they help build a stronger understanding because of the Faith Skill focus which breeds practical application. When good Biblical teaching collides with practical application you get Spirit lead life change.

LIFE GROUPS
 Leader(s)
 People
 Time
 Place
 Measurements

MINISTRIES
 Leader(s)
 Age Appropriate FS
 Measurement

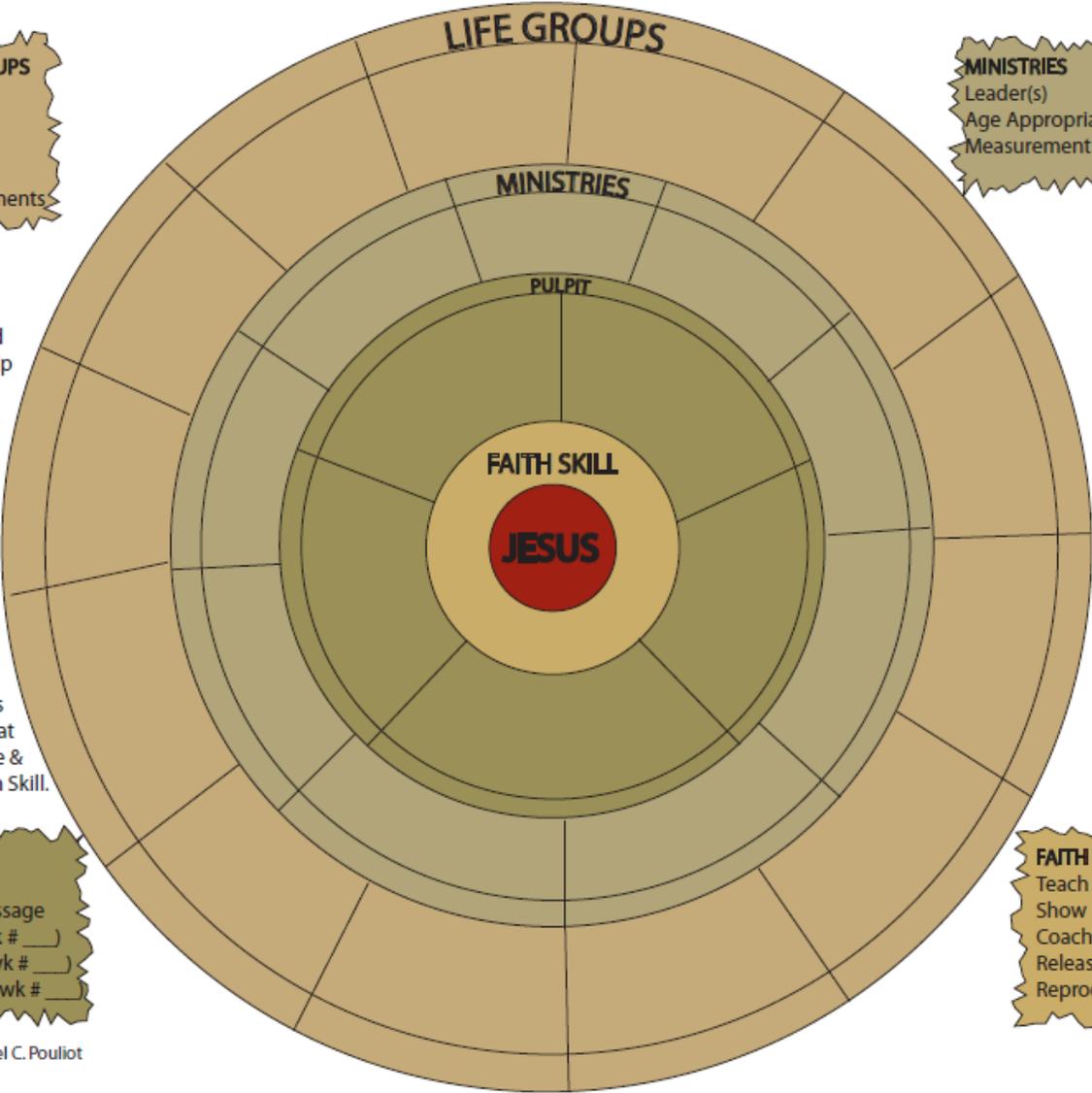
Liquid Discipleship Planning Tool

The goal is to create a church wide united relational-discipleship movement that connects the pulpit to ministries and Life Groups—with purpose to pass along a Faith Skill in ministry areas & Life Groups.

Each message from the pulpit will have questions that help deepen relationships in the Life Groups that lead into the practice & coaching of the Faith Skill.

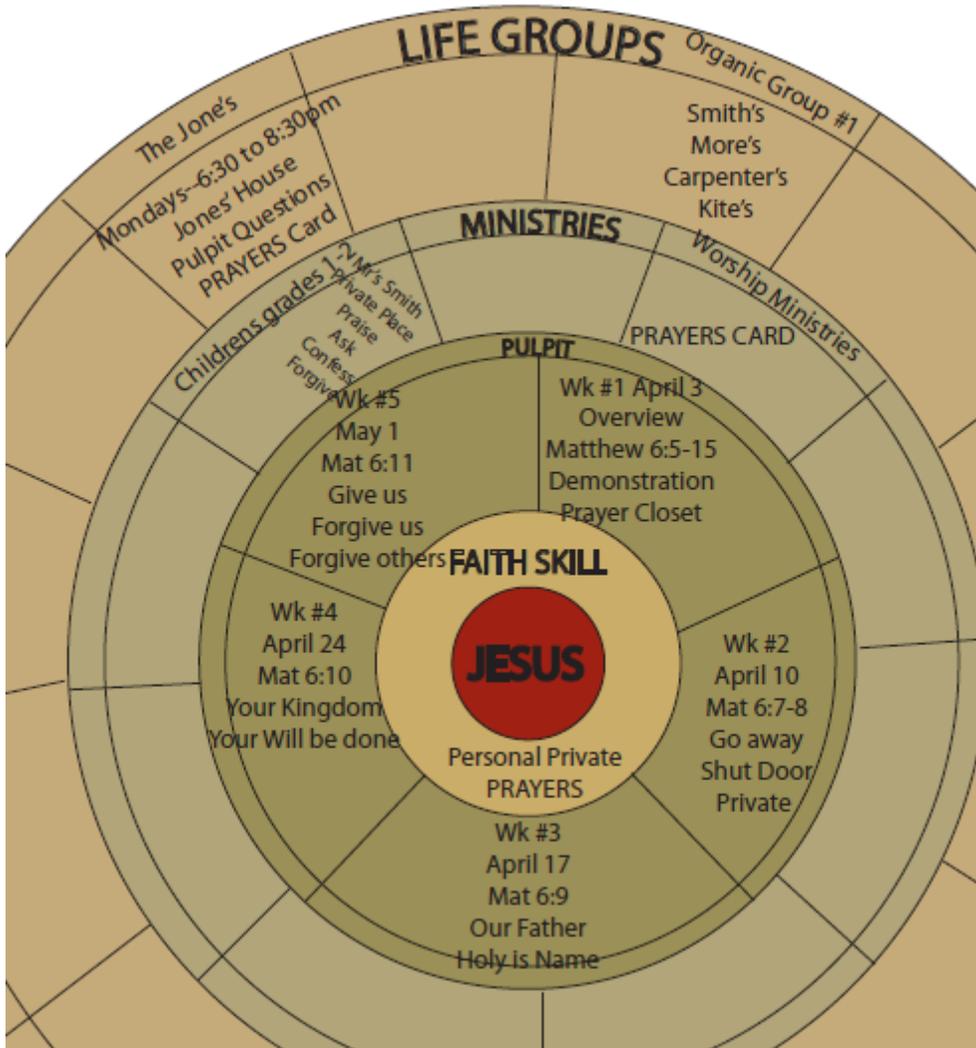
PULPIT
 Vision
 Teach Passage
 Show (wk # ___)
 Coach (wk # ___)
 Release (wk # ___)

FAITH SKILL
 Teach
 Show
 Coach
 Release
 Reproduce



© 2011 Michael C. Pouliot

Sample



Man camp handouts to discuss.

ⁱ A. W. Tozer, *The Presbyterian Journal*, February 11, 1970.

ⁱⁱ <http://ingridschlueter.wordpress.com/2007/10/16/what-is-dead-textualism/>

ⁱⁱⁱ Edgar Dale's "Cone of Experience" can be found in *Education Media* by Wiman and Mierhenry, Charles Merrill Publishers, 1969

^{iv} Josh McDowell & David Bellis, *The Last Christian Generation* (Holiday, Fla.: Green Key Books, 2006).

^v <http://www.probe.org/site/c.fdKEIMNsEoG/b.4226769/k.A211/Is This the Last Christian Generation.htm>

^{vi} <http://www.probe.org/site/c.fdKEIMNsEoG/b.4226769/k.A211/Is This the Last Christian Generation.htm>