

2023 Art of Leadership; Speakers Notes

Stage 1 - Babes

Dawn Meyers

THE "CHILDHOOD" PHASE OF THE BELIEVER

Intro:

Biblical discipleship as a practice and model in the life of the Church is largely absent today. However, the Word of God reveals this model of growth for Christ's body - and - with the Holy Spirit's counsel and empowering to obey, we can learn to walk as followers becoming like Christ and helping others to do the same.

Ephesians 4:1, 11-16

... I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received... It was He who gave [...] to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Proverbs 22:6

Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.

WHEN DOES DISCIPLESHIP BEGIN AND END?

It begins before a person is born again and should never end.

Matthew 28:19-20

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

Acts 2:42-47

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles.... Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

WHO'S THE DADDY?

True believers must accept Jesus as both Savior AND Lord.

Water baptism and inviting the Holy Spirit into the infant Christian's life should follow soon after this initial step.

Ephesians 4:22-24

You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitudes of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

John 14:16-17

I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, the Spirit of truth, [...] You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. "I will not leave you as orphans..."

Ephesians 5:18

And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit...

2 Corinthians 1:22

And it is God [...] who has also put his seal (of ownership) on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

WHERE AND HOW DOES DISCIPLESHIP HAPPEN?

Jesus demonstrates the "Come, follow me" model

Matthew 4:19

Jesus called out to them, "Come be my disciples, and I will show you how to fish for people!"

Deuteronomy 11:19

You shall teach them to your children, talking of them when you are sitting in your house, and when you are walking by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

Discipleship also happens within a Father to Son - like relationship.

1 Corinthians 4:15-16

For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. I urge you, then, be imitators of me.

WHAT DO WE TEACH THE NEW DISCIPLE?

- Foundational Concepts
- Daily Disciplines
- Sanctification
- Precepts: the Do's and Don'ts
- Cultivate the Fruit of the Spirit: Developing a Christ - like character
- Christian Service

WHY DO WE NURTURE YOUNG BELIEVERS IN THIS FIRST PHASE OF DISCIPLESHIP?

To mature the new christian in the foundations of his faith and to prepare him for the next phase in discipleship.

CONCLUSION

As we all mature in Christ, we must endeavor to retain our "first love" or be admonished by the Lord Jesus Himself.

Matthew 19:14

Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 18:2-6

And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

"Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.

Revelation 2:2-5

"I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false. I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary. But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first.

Every living thing grows: trees grow, bugs grow, and animals grow. Christians are to be no exception. Just as a normal human being passes through several stages of physical and mental maturation, so too will a normal Christian pass through similar stages as they develop and mature in Christ.

11 ATTRIBUTES OF ADOLESCENT STAGE CHRISTIANS

The following verses give us several characteristics we can expect to find in a little child. Notice the term "little child" or "children" is used in each verse. Let us use these verses to judge ourselves.

- **My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, . . . 20for I stand in doubt of you (*I am perplexed by you*). Galatians 4:19, 20b**

The Galatian Church had lost their identity in Christ and had returned to Jewish laws and customs. Paul had to pray for them to regain their Christian lifestyle, witness, and foundation. From these verses we see:

1. Little children are easily influenced by whomever they are around.
2. Little children lose their true identity very easily.
3. Little children do things that make mature Christians shake their head. "What are they thinking?"

- **That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; Ephesians 4:14**

Paul listed the famous "Fivefold Ministry Offices" prior to this verse. He states that the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers are given to perfect and mature the saints. Without the influence and ministry of the fivefold ministers in a believer's life, it will be impossible for a Christian to ever fully mature. This verse gives us several more behavioral traits of childish Christians.

4. Little children are tossed to and fro. The enemy easily ransacks them because they have yet to fully develop a deep foundation of faith.
5. Little children chase winds of doctrine and cannot discern truth from perversion because they lack strong doctrine. Doctrine is defined as a system of teaching you live your life by. Little children easily leave their foundation for new and shiny things, not right things, newer things.
6. Little children are easily carried away by deceivers and their cunning craftiness.

- **When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought (*reasoned*) as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.**

1 Corinthians 13:11

The Bible clearly teaches us we must grow up. Grownups have one manner about them while little children have another manner about them. This verse lists three areas that will distinguish a child from an adult.

7. Speech: Little children speak in a different manner from mature Christians. Mature saints confess the Word. They have clean speech free from vulgarities and dirty jesting. Little children whine, complain, and hurt their lives with their mouths. Sometimes you must wash a little child's mouth out with fullers' soap (**Malachi 3:2**).

8. Understanding: Little children lack the spiritual understanding of a mature Christian. Little children see a rebuke as mean. They see tithing as a burden. They are still carnally minded in many areas. They have not yet learned to discern things spiritually.
9. Reasoning: Little children are immature in their reasoning. The thought process of a spiritual child lacks wisdom, truth, stability, and consistency.

To mature in Christ you must put away these three things: childish speech, childish understanding, and childish reasoning. Until you do so you will not advance much in Jesus.

• **Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men. 1 Corinthians 14:20**

This verse only reiterates the previous point: children understand things differently. The level and complexity at which they understand things is fine and acceptable so long as they are in a child development stage. However, if a 40-year-old man still requires a puppet show to learn, something's very wrong. The Hebrew believers were rebuked for not being mature enough to learn about Melchisedec (**Hebrews 5:10-11**). We are commanded to grow up in our understanding.

• **My little children . . . 20For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. 1 John 3:18a, 20**

We saw in the previous lesson that babes in Christ really struggle with condemnation. Even into the little child stage, the believer is still dealing with this issue. This lets us know that one of the signs of deep maturity as a believer is the ability to overcome condemnation while embracing and obeying conviction.

10. Little children still deal with a condemning heart. A little child's heart is still learning to believe that they are forgiven.

Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen. 1 John 5:21

This is the last verse of 1 John. It beautifully sums up what makes a child a child: immature and misplaced affections. Little children love one thing today and something else tomorrow. They love Jesus while at church and they love the world while they are in it. A little child must learn to be faithful to Jesus all the time, in every place, and in every scenario. Idolatry is spiritual adultery.

11. Little children struggle with idolatry. They love things they shouldn't. They chase things they shouldn't. And they have yet to learn the gravity of a life committed to Jesus Christ.

12 THINGS LITTLE CHILDREN FORGET

Even in the natural, little children are very forgetful and must be reminded of many things. This is because they have not practiced them enough to make them a part of their lives. Mom and Dad must constantly remind them, and remind them, and even pick up the pieces behind them. Christians also go through this stage in their spiritual development.

According to 1 John, there are many things a little child must be reminded of:

• **My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:
1 John 2:1**

1. Remember to not sin. Little children are often tempted by the cookie jar.

2. Remember Jesus is our advocate (defense lawyer). Little children have yet to fully grasp the truths of having an advocate pleading their case.

• **I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. 1 John 2:12**

3. Remember your sins are forgiven. Little children are good at magnifying the wrong they have done over the sacrifice that Jesus made.

• **Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. 1 John 2:18**

4. Remember it is the last time. Little children forget the time we live in. 5. Remember there are antichrists. Little children are bad to trust everyone.

• **And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.**

1 John 2:28

6. Remember to abide in Him. Little children have short attention spans and so sometimes depart from Jesus to chase something new.

• **Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. 1 John 3:7**

7. Remember, people want to deceive you and talk you into sinning. Little children must be encouraged to keep doing righteousness.

• **My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. 19And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure (to induce one to believe by using words) our hearts before him.**

1 John 3:18-19

8. Remember that love is an action, not a word. Little children must continue to be taught how to properly love.

9. Remember to speak to your heart when it wants to doubt. Little children have a heart that fails relatively easily.

• **Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. 1 John 4:4**

10. Remember you are of God, not the world. Little children forget whose they are.

11. Remember you have overcome the world and its evil spirits. Little children don't realize the authority they walk in and forget that they are an overcomer.

12. Remember the Greater One lives in you. Little children don't fully understand the God who lives on the inside of them.

The only "little child" characteristic the New Testament allows us to maintain is childlike malice. The Greek word here for malice means *ill-will, wickedness, or evil*. **Howbeit in malice be ye children (1 Corinthians 14:20)**. Children are innocent and nearly devoid of ill-will and maliciousness. We must be like that!

Don't stay a child any longer than necessary!! Amen!!

Stage 3 - Adults

Jerry Milhorn

Growth, it's what every living thing is supposed to do. That's the way God has created it to be. For the born-again child of God, it is the same. We are expected to grow in our spiritual lives. The writer of Hebrews expresses this thought to his readers in chapter 5:12-14:

For though by this time, you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.

But solid food belongs to those who are off full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Over my 40 plus years in ministry I have found that the focus on discipleship has been placed on two things. The first is evangelism and the second Bible study. Don't get me wrong, both of these are important for the life of the church. But I believe where we fall short is in our efforts to make disciples we miss the mark of making disciplers. How then do we help new believers in the growth process? How do we help them from being babes in Christ to becoming full-fledged adults and mentors/ disciplers?

That is what this Art of Leadership conference is all about. The breakout sessions involve the stages of Christian growth as we progress from babes in Christ to Mentors.

The parent stage (father/mother) is what session we are in this morning. Sadly, it is a stage that many Christians do not reach. It's sad because the older we get we sometimes feel that our contributions are not needed any longer, especially in the ever-changing younger culture we live in.

I'm not being prejudiced here but I do believe that in this mentoring stage that men should mentor men and women should mentor women. I don't care what the woke culture thinks.

The Bible speaks about fathers and mothers. There is a tremendous need today in our churches for spiritual fathers and mothers. Here are some traits that a spiritual parent must have:

1. They themselves must mature disciples of Christ and constantly growing in their own personal relationship with Him.
2. They need to be able to discern where those they are seeking to mentor are in their spiritual walk and are willing to get involved to help them grow and develop in their walk with Christ.
3. They must be willing to invest their own lives in the lives of those they are mentoring. Helping those they are mentoring to eventually become mentors.
4. They are God-dependent and others-centered.
5. They encourage others and lead by example.

2 Timothy 2:2; Pass on what you have heard from me... to reliable leaders who are competent to teach others. (Message)

WOW! That's a lot of requirements! I believe it's another reason that there are few who have been following the biblically calling of being mentors. It takes personal growth and it takes commitment. Many churches have done a great job of evangelizing and bring in new believers; now how do you mentor someone into a devoted follower of Christ?

First of all, let me address the aspect of commitment.

1. It takes commitment because it's really hard.

- a. It's not for the faint of heart
 - b. Times of joy
 - c. Times of heartache and frustration
 - d. People's lives can be messy
2. It takes commitment because it can take a long time.
- a. It can try our patience.
 - b. We want immediate results.
 - c. There's a lot the Holy Spirit needs to cultivate and refine.
 - d. We did not get this messed up overnight.
3. It takes commitment because it requires a relationship.
- a. Jesus is our example and we are not meant to do it alone.
 - b. Iron sharpens iron.
 - c. To help someone to be like Christ is to be part of his or her life. (Good and bad)
 - d. There's no finish line. It's not finished until we see Jesus face to face.
 - e. It causes growth both for the one being mentored and the mentor.

While the task of mentoring is a daunting task, the outcome of making a disciple who will in turn make another disciple is absolutely worth it. In Matthew 28:19-20; Jesus doesn't give us a choice. He left us a job to do.

Stage 4 - Grandparents

Bishop Larry Herrera

Matthew 28:19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Grandparenting:

Definition: 1. the father of one's father or mother, a fore father, the founder or originator of a family, species, the first of one's or its kind, or the one being longest in existence, a familiar term of address for an old man.

- **Discipleship** never ends - Discipleship is perpetual (continuing, enduring forever). Meaning, it cannot be reduced to a yearly class. Remember, this is the Great Commission. Nursery, toddlers, adolescents, youth, young adults, adults and the elderly need to be discipled. Thus, making disciples, perpetuating His command.
- **Grandparents** - Being a grandparent is a privilege many have not been able to experience and may never experience. How many here know the joy of being a grandparent?
 - Quote: "Just when you think you couldn't love anything more than your kids... Then come Grandkids."

Proverbs 13:22a A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children,

What are some privileges of being a grandparent?

What kind of inheritance can we or do we leave?

1. Inheritance - (portion, birthright, heritage)

In a spiritual sense, what are we leaving behind?

- a. Portion - Paul said to the Philippians, and Timothy "I have been poured out."
- b. Birthright - anyone that has accepted the Lord as their Savior now has a birthright to anything and everything the Lord has to offer. We cannot deny anyone of this birthright!
- c. Heritage - something handed down from the past as tradition.
- d. Everything Jesus said and did to and for the disciples was, Portion, Birthright and Heritage.

2. Experience

Grandparents have already experienced what future generations will go through. We have a better understanding of this scripture

Deuteronomy 6:20 "When your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What is the meaning of the testimonies, the statutes, and the judgments which the LORD our God has commanded you?'

(You can say)

He brought me thru, He took me over, He was there, He healed my body, He lifted the curse, He broke the chains, etc.. **Open discussion – how and when?**

Quote: "The best way to avoid new errors is to love old truths"

3. Wisdom

The well is deep. We have many grandparents with deep wells of wisdom ready to pass on to up and coming generations. **What wisdom would you impart today?**

I believe one of the best ways to utilize our elderly (grandparents) is to allow them to give their

testimony and impart wisdom for the younger generation.

Deuteronomy 6:6-9

"And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

4. Forerunners

Jeremiah 6:16a Thus says the LORD: "Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; then you will find rest for your souls.

It seems to me that, there are many who are of the opinion that they have some new revelation and path to walk on.

Elias Gonzales funeral - "it is obvious that the church needs new young blood, but don't forget those who cleared the path making ministry possible." These men and women forged ahead with a kingdom mindset, and they have the scars to prove it. That are hoping and praying it doesn't end with them.

5. Patience

As discipling grandparents we have the opportunity to display patience. I watched as my dad would deal with people over the years and how he dealt with their situations, questions and shortfalls with great patience. After all patience is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Galatians 5:22 (longsuffering) – accommodating, patient.

6. Prayer

Who is following you? Our duty is to pray for them.

Jesus Prays for His Disciples

John 17:6-19 "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. 7 Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. 8 For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me. 9 "I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. 10 And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. 11 Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are. 12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. 13 But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. 14 I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 15 I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 17 Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. 18 As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. 19 And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.

7. Constructive criticism

This world is full of negativity our job is to build each other up (**grandpa Lucero and Richard**).

Ask yourself, "have I been constructive or destructive in my criticism?"

DESTRUCTIVE:

Psalms 52:2, 4 & 64:3 Your tongue devises destruction, like a sharp razor, working deceitfully. 4 You love all devouring words, you deceitful tongue. 3 Who sharpen their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows—bitter words,

CONSTRUCTIVE:

*Proverbs 10:20a, 21a, 31a, 32a & 12:18b The tongue of the righteous is choice silver; 21a The lips of the righteous feed many, 31a The mouth of the righteous brings forth **wisdom**, 32a The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable. 18b But the tongue of the wise promotes **health**.*

8. Encouragement

As grandparents in the ministry we are looking from the sidelines cheering these disciple on. I go to my grandsons meets and remember the days of my athleticism and the longing to compete. But it's his time and now I get to cheerfully encouraging him to finish his race.

Conclusion:

Discipleship at its core, is a transfer of faith, wisdom and knowledge to others, infecting them with the blessed virus of vision and passion. Forming disciples inoculated with Kingdom passion that consumes them.