

CHAPTER 1

The Kind of Person God Uses

When Jesus Christ voluntarily gave His life on the cross some 2,000 years ago, He did not die for a cause. He died for people. During His ministry on earth, He “ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach” (Mark 3:14). Just before His death on Calvary, Jesus prayed for His men (see John 17). Over 40 times in that prayer, He referred to His twelve disciples.

During His brief ministry on earth, Jesus had the world on His heart, but He saw the world through the eyes of His men. Prior to His ascension, He gave to these men what is commonly referred to as the Great Commission. As recorded in Matthew 28:19, Jesus charged them to take the Gospel throughout the world by making disciples.

Jesus had world vision. He expected His men to have world vision. Jesus expected them to see the world through the disciples that they would produce, just as He had seen the world through the twelve men He had raised up. His vision of reaching the world through the use of multiplying

disciples is not found in an obscure passage in the Bible it is a theme that pulsates from page to page.

It was obviously the thought that was on the Apostle Paul's heart as he wrote his "last will and testament" to his son in the faith, Timothy. Let's briefly analyze 2 Timothy 2:2: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

Thou indicates the importance of the individual. At Jesus' meeting with Peter, He said, according to John 1:42, "Thou art Simon . . . thou shalt be called Cephas." (You are Simon, you will become a rock.) When Jesus saw Peter, He did not see him as he was but as he would someday be. There is tremendous potential in the life of one man.

Thou . . . me indicates the importance of personal relationships, of mutual confidence and trust built up through years of laboring together. When Paul wrote from prison to the church at Philippi, he said that because he was unable to visit them, he would send Timothy, his son in the faith. In essence what he said was, "When Timothy arrives, it will be as though I myself were present."

Many years earlier Paul had seen the potential in this young man from Asia Minor and decided to invest his life in him.

Commit suggests transmitting something from one person to another. It indicates the deposit of a sacred trust. Paul is saying to Timothy, "You are my disciple. This is the relationship that exists between you and me. Now transmit this as a disciple-maker to other disciples." When we invest in the lives of other people, we transmit not only what we know but, more importantly, what we are. Each of us becomes like the people with whom we associate. I am sure that if we could meet Paul and Timothy, we would find them similar in many respects.

Later Paul wrote to him, “But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, persecutions” (2 Tim. 3:10-11). This gives a synopsis of what was committed to Timothy by Paul and what in turn was to be committed by Timothy to faithful men.

Faithful men—Discipling stands or falls with these two little words. Solomon, that wise king of ancient Israel, said, “Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?” (Prov. 20:6) Faithful men and women have always been in short supply. God still seeks them out. “For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of *them* whose heart is perfect toward him” (2 Chron. 16:9).

Teach others also—This is where the discipling process begins to pick up a head of steam. We are now in the fourth generation. We began with Paul, then Timothy, then faithful men, and finally, others also. Teaching others cannot be done solely through a classroom situation. It entails the imparting of a life—the same in-depth transmission that occurred between Paul and Timothy.

This is a multiplicative process. While the faithful men are teaching others also, Timothy is in the process of raising up more faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Implementing this vision of multiplying disciples constitutes the only way Christ’s commission can ever ultimately be fulfilled. Other ministries and approaches can augment it but never replace it.

Dawson Trotman, founder of The Navigators, used to say, “Activity is no substitute for production. Production is no substitute for reproduction.” Whatever ministry we are engaged in, it ought to be reproductive.

We have already pointed out that the key to this disciple-making ministry is faithful men and women. What are the qualifications for a faithful person? What qualities of godliness

must be characteristic of his life? Let's mentally digest a few essential traits of the person who wants to qualify as "a faithful man."

1. He has adopted as his objective in life the same objective God sets forth in the Scriptures.

Jesus said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33). Rarely did the Lord Jesus ask people to seek something, but here He suggests we seek two things which are to become the twofold objective of every believer: His kingdom and His righteousness.

Notice that Jesus does not say to seek money or a wife or a dozen other things that could easily occupy our attention. Rather, He is saying that if we seek His kingdom and His righteousness, He will assume responsibility for meeting every other need in our lives.

A friend of mine is a lawyer in a prestigious law firm. Year after year he had the highest earnings in the firm, but his colleagues would not make him a senior partner. The reason was that all these men gave their lives, their time, and their energy to the firm. But because my friend was a Christian, he did not feel that the practice of law rated that high on his priority list. He was a superb lawyer and did a good job—as the financial records indicated. But his objective was Matthew 6:33. Being a lawyer was a means to an end, not an end in itself. I believe it was because of his commitment that God entrusted him with so much success.

Whatever your vocation is, it must never be your life objective; for your vocation, no matter how noble it may be, is, in the final analysis, temporal. The Scriptures teach us that we are to give our lives to the eternal and not to the temporal. A faithful man is a man who has chosen eternal objectives for his life.

2. *He is willing to pay any price to have the will of God fulfilled in his life.*

This is a crucial issue. After instructing Timothy to commit to faithful people the things that Timothy had learned from him, Paul goes on to say, “Suffer hardship with *me*, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier” (2 Tim. 2:3-4, NASB). Having committed himself to God’s objective, the faithful man steadfastly resists becoming ensnared in the world’s glittering attractions.

Let me ask you: Is there anything between you and God? Are there any little pet sins that you have been unwilling to confess and forsake? Any areas that you have not put under His control? How about your finances? The question is not how much money you have in the bank, but rather who has the power to draw on your account? Do all of your financial assets belong to Jesus Christ? Do you know what it means to give sacrificially? And by that I mean to give what you know from a human perspective you cannot afford.

How about “things”? Do your possessions play an inordinate role in your life? Paul says, “For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is *their* belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things” (Phil. 3:18-19). The Bible says that people “who mind earthly things” are enemies of the cross of Christ.

All that you hold dear to yourself—your family, your health, your dreams, your aspirations and goals—must be held with an open hand. If you desire to fulfill God’s will for your life irrespective of the price, the sum total of all that makes up you must belong to Jesus Christ. He must be free to do with you and take from you as He pleases. You need not open your

hand to God with a sense of fear, for God loves you with a perfect love and has your best interests at heart. But having said that, the faithful person is one who is willing to pay any price to have the will of God accomplished in his life.

3. He has a love for the Word of God.

The Prophet Jeremiah said, “Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts” (Jer. 15:16). Do you have an insatiable appetite for the Word of God? Do you crave it like you crave food? Are you in submission to the authority of the Word of God? Or do you pick and choose what to believe and obey?

A carpenter whom I have known for years averages 10 hours each week in Bible study. This man has never gone to college or Bible school. He is not a learned scholar, but for him the Scriptures have a place of priority. I believe it was St. Jerome who said that the Scriptures are shallow enough for a babe to come and drink without fear of drowning and deep enough for theologians to swim in without ever touching the bottom.

One day I was in the office of a surgeon. In the course of his training, he had to master the contents of scores of books. If he were to operate on me or one of my family, I would certainly want it that way! As I thought about this, it occurred to me that, as Christ’s disciples, we really only have one Book we must master—the Bible. Yet, when I talk to people about investing five hours each week in Bible study and memorizing a couple of verses a week, they look at me as though some monstrous demand were being made on them.

What is your Scripture intake? Do you have a regular Bible reading program? Are you systematically studying the Scriptures? Is your craving for the Bible so great that it is impossible to satisfy?

4. *He has a servant heart.*

Jesus once reminded His disciples that non-Christians enjoy being served and exercising authority over others. In contrast to this He said, “But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:26-28).

The motto of the British Royal Military Academy is “Serve to Lead.” This is the same truth Jesus was seeking to communicate to His disciples when He washed their feet (see John 13). If, as their Lord, He washed their feet, they ought to be willing to do the same for others.

A person may try to recruit others to help him accomplish his vision. The disciple-maker, however, seeks to invest his life in another to help that person accomplish his own vision.

5. *He puts no confidence in the flesh.*

The Scriptures emphasize this principle often. Paul said, “But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that *we should not trust in ourselves*, but in God who raiseth the dead” (2 Cor. 1:9, italics added). Again he said, “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing” (Rom. 7:18).

Worldliness and having confidence in the flesh are very closely related, for *worldliness* can be defined as “living as though you had no need for God.” For example, to leave for work in the morning without first spending time with the Lord to me indicates having a tremendous amount of confidence in oneself. It is equivalent to saying, “I can run my life today without an absolute dependence on God.”

One of the ways of determining exactly how much confidence you have in the flesh is to take an inventory of the number of times *you* come into your own conversation. How

often do you talk about how great you are and the things you have done?

6. *He does not have an independent spirit.*

There is a great deal of talk today about “doing your own thing.” In this anti-authoritarian society in which we live, the attitude is, “Don’t let people tell you what to do.”

Accomplishing the work of God, however, is a team effort. It is done in concert with like-minded brothers and sisters in the faith. There is no room in the life of the disciple for a loner’s attitude the kind of attitude that says, “If it is not done my way, then I’m not going to do it at all.”

A young man once told me, “I will listen to what God has to say to me, but I will not learn from other people.” To have such an attitude is to live in self-deception. People are often God’s instruments to communicate to other people. God is looking for faithful people who are willing to subjugate their own ideas for the sake of the team.

7. *He has a love for people.*

The Apostle John said, “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:10). To be godly is to be God-like. To be like God is to love people, because God loves people.

I remember reading a “Peanuts” cartoon in which Charlie Brown said, “I love the world. I think the world is wonderful. It’s people I can’t stand.” Yet, people are the reason Jesus invaded human history. He came to redeem people. That is what the Gospel is all about. The disciple is one who is involved in the lives of people. The faithful person has a love for people.

8. *He does not allow himself to become trapped in bitterness.*

The writer of Hebrews warns us to be watchful “lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness spring-

ing up trouble *you*, and thereby many be defiled” (Heb. 12:15). The context of this verse is the giving and receiving of rebuke. Many a person has become bitter because someone pointed out a fault in his life. He takes the attitude, “Huh, who does he think he is! telling me about my sins? Why doesn’t he take the beam out of his own eye before he takes the little speck of sawdust out of mine?”

As a young Christian, I remember hearing someone preach on this verse, and I jotted in the margin of my Bible next to it, “Bitterness comes as a result of real or supposed ill-treatment—it doesn’t really matter which.” Somebody may really wrong you, or you may just think that somebody wronged you. In either case, if you are not careful, it can cause you to become bitter.

A wise, old saint once said, “I will never allow another person to ruin my life by making me hate him.”

The root of bitterness can come through a competitive spirit, a breakdown in communications between you and fellow Christians, or from feeling that you have gotten a raw deal. I believe more disciples become ineffective in the Christian life because of a root of bitterness than because of any other sin. Faithful Christians guard their hearts well in this critical area.

9. *He has learned to discipline his life.*

One of the most motivating passages of Scripture that I know was penned by the Apostle Paul. “Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified” (1 Cor. 9:24-27, NASB).

One day I sat down and meditated on what would be the most horrible thing that could happen to me as a Christian. The conclusion to which I came was that when I die, God would take me aside and say to me, “Henrichsen, let Me show you what your life could have been like *if only* you had done what I asked, *if only* you had been faithful to Me, *if only* you had disciplined your life and made it really count, as I wanted you to.”

Have you learned to discipline yourself? Have you learned to say no to temptation? Maybe there is a habit that you have been unable to conquer. You know that the Spirit of God would like you to get victory, but you have done nothing about it, having rationalized that, “If God wants me to give up this habit, then He will have to give me the power to do it.” Although this is true, it is avoiding the issue, because God has already given you the power. It has been made available to you through the Holy Spirit. All you need to do is appropriate it—and such appropriation requires discipline. Never blame God for your failure to do what you know is right.

It is the evening that you have set aside for Bible study, but you discover that one of your favorite programs is on television. So you rationalize by saying you will do the study some other time. Not only does the Bible study not get done, but you also stay up so late that night that you are unable to get up the next morning in time to fellowship alone with the Lord before going to work.

It is not the one or two isolated times of compromise that will make the difference. The problem is that once you make an exception, it is so easy to do it again, and again, and again. You sow a thought and reap an act. You sow an act and reap a habit. You sow a habit, and you reap an eternity.

It is evident that one does not become a “faithful person” by being a weekend Christian. The faithful person is one who has applied the Scriptures to every area of his life. The life of

discipleship is a life of discipline—the two words come from the same root. A disciple is a disciplined person. Such a life is not easy, but God never promised us it would be. That it is not easy is clearly seen by the fact that there are so few faithful people around today.

The gold medal goes to the athlete who has worked hard, who has learned how to discipline himself, who has learned to say no to the myriad distractions that cross a person's life, who has a clear-cut objective and has resolved in his soul to stay with it until he accomplishes it. This is the kind of person God uses.