

week 10 — minister: helping young adults help others

Not long ago, Jim Putman was talking with a man from another church who made it clear that he viewed the church he attended as “his church.” This man had been there long before the current minister, and he felt that his tenure entitled him to critique everything. “This rock-and-roll singing in service has to stop,” he said. His list went on and on: kids wearing hats inside, people smelling like cigarette smoke, not being able to know everyone’s name. Everything on the list seemed rooted in this man’s desire for personal comfort. He made no mention of his concern for others and had no report about how he was serving in the church. Though he had been a church member for years, this man was still a spiritual child. He had never grown spiritually, and ministry to others was a foreign concept.

day 1: MAKING THE TRANSITION

Growth from spiritual childhood to spiritual young adulthood happens in the context of ministry. It is a transformational process that comes from connecting to God’s greater purpose. God challenges and convicts disciples to realize that the game is much bigger than their personal comfort and preferences. It is not all about them. He shows them they are to change from being self-focused to genuinely caring about the needs of others.

1. Circle the following words that you think are synonyms for the term *ministry* as it is used in the New Testament:

Service	Assistance	Department
Avoid	Helping	Aid

The words that are not synonyms for ministry are *department* and *avoid*. Ministry can help hearts change and move a disciple from spiritual childhood to the young adult stage. As intentional leaders model service/ministry, God prompts the disciple to start looking beyond his or her own needs. However, disciples must be willing to move beyond their own comfort to value the needs of the hurting world around them.

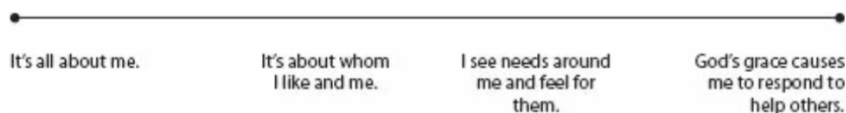
Becoming God-and-Others-Focused

2. Following are a list of phrases from believers who are spiritual children (self-focused) and those who are spiritual young adults (others-focused). Place a “C” by the spiritual child statements and a “YA” next to spiritual young adult statements.

- ____ 1. I love my small group because they take care of me.
- ____ 2. My church meets my needs, and that makes me happy.
- ____ 3. I am excited to see these two new couples in our group.
- ____ 4. I never want my small group to change because new people make me nervous.
- ____ 5. I noticed that my friend has not been in church. I need to call her and make sure she is okay.
- ____ 6. There is a need in the youth ministry. Is God telling me I need to help?

So how did you do? Statements 1, 2, and 4 should be marked C. The rest should have a YA beside them.

3. Read Matthew 16:24-25 and mark an “X” on the line to indicate where you are today on the denying-self scale.



A true disciple learns to deny self and rely on God. Christians who are immature in the faith (spiritual children or infants) may be involved in ministry, but their hearts are not God-centered or others-focused. Unfortunately, people sometimes do ministry for selfish reasons.

Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it." (Matthew 16:24-25)

4. Read Matthew 20:25-28. When Jesus said, "Not so with you," what was He emphasizing?

Jesus meant that service is the mark of a disciple. There was no Plan B.

Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave — just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

(Matthew 20:25-28)

5. Write in your own words God's Plan A for a disciple to achieve greatness.

6. Why do you think there was no Plan B?

Jesus embodied God's Plan A of servanthood, and we are to follow His example. Service is not an option. It is God's heart and Jesus' example.

7. Check three behaviors you could model to help a disciple understand a servant's heart.

- ☐ Giving credit to God for good things
- ☐ Taking the credit for success
- ☐ Being in charge
- ☐ Loving the difficult person
- ☐ Helping others joyfully
- ☐ Avoiding difficult people

The correct answers should be obvious: giving credit to God, loving difficult people, and helping others.

How can you tell when those you are discipling are having a heart change? Like Jesus, you intentionally listen to their words and observe their actions. Look for the shift that God brings about as they show genuine concern for the needs of others and become less focused on their own comfort, preferences, and recognition. When this happens, you know they are ready to move into the ministry phase.

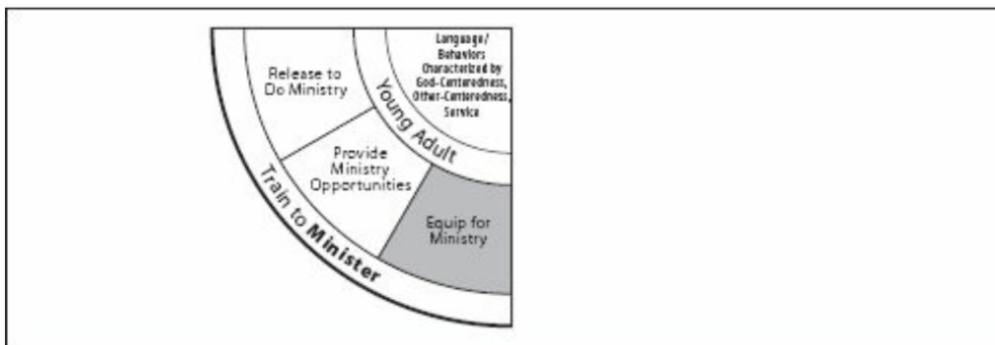
8. What are some service or church ministry opportunities you have access to currently that could be used to help disciples grow?

Review

- A spiritual child has made the transition into young adulthood when there is evidence that his or her heart has changed from being self-centered to being God-centered and others-focused.
- The disciple-maker intentionally looks for these changes as a cue that the disciple is ready for ministry/service.

day 2: EQUIPPING TO MINISTER

The intentional leader trains disciples to serve and to develop the attitudes and behaviors of a spiritual young adult. We call this equipping for ministry.



Churches often rely on Bible colleges or seminaries to equip people for ministry, yet all Christians are called to ministry, regardless of their formal education (see 1 Peter 4:10-11). If we limit ministry to those who have formal training, we force a majority of the church body to live in the spiritual nursery. God-centered service is the key difference between spiritual children and spiritual young adults.

1. Using the diagram above, what are the three things an intentional disciple-maker does to train a spiritual young adult?

- _____
- _____
- _____

Tasks or People?

Equipping disciples to minister is more than giving them a task to accomplish in the church. Some tasks — such as handing out bulletins, ushering people to their seats, or singing on a worship team — are important for running the Sunday morning service, but they do not train disciples to minister relationally. Disciple-makers need to intentionally guide spiritual young adults through the relational dynamics of ministry as well as give them ministry tasks.

2. Where do you fall on the line of what's important? Place an "X" where you fall.

A job completed on time

Everybody getting along in harmony

Knowing that you did what needed to be done

Knowing that people were helped

Being sure a task is completed

Making sure people grow spiritually in the process

Marking toward the left on the lines above indicates that you are more task-oriented. The more you marked to the right, the more people-related you are. Both tasks and people are important, but tasks are not more important than people. Tasks are discipling opportunities. Young adults often serve with unrealistic expectations of themselves and others. That's why equipping them for ministry involves preparing them for disappointment and for success.

Preparing Disciples for Disappointment

3. The following are potential pitfalls a disciple might fall into while serving in ministry. Check the ones you have experienced.

- ☐ Feeling like a failure because nobody noticed
- ☐ Losing motivation because no one said thanks
- ☐ Being hurt because someone was critical
- ☐ Wanting to quit because my efforts didn't measure up to what others had done
- ☐ Being surprised when people had different expectations of me

4. Jesus prepared His disciples for extreme rejection. Read Matthew 5:11-12. What motivation did Jesus tell them to have so they wouldn't give up?

Spiritual young adults need to find their security in their connection with God. Even though no one else may notice, God sees what they are doing out of their love for Him and for others. When no one says thank you or even criticizes us, Jesus said that God gives heavenly rewards. When disciples understand this, they are less likely to be discouraged. As intentional leaders, we need to teach these truths proactively. This will help young adults deal with disappointments when they come. It is an important part of their connection to God.

Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (Matthew 5:11-12)

Preparing Disciples for Successes

There is nothing like success in ministry. The exhilaration of a job well done can be intoxicating; however, disciples who are new to serving can overestimate their abilities.

5. Read the following scenarios and identify ways the disciple could have overestimated himself or herself or the situation.

- Michael learned to play a worship song on the guitar and sing it without looking at the words. When the small-group leader invited him to sing his song, every-one joined in and sang the chorus with him. The next week, Michael announced to his leader that he had volunteered to be the new worship leader for the youth ministry.

What kind of potential problems might Michael have set himself up for?

- Susan just returned from a prayer retreat and is excited about her new commitment to prayer. She already planned a weekend and reserved lodging for her small group so she could teach the group how to pray.

What things has Susan potentially misjudged that may set her up for problems?

If you were discipling Michael, you would need to be careful not to squelch his enthusiasm; however, you would also need to help him understand the potential challenges of being a worship leader. Leading worship is demanding, both musically and spiritually. Susan's leader would need to help her avoid spiritual pride and consider all the other needs of the group. Prayer might not be the biggest need right now. Also, Susan might not be ready to teach yet; she has been through the material only once herself.

Focusing on the Big Picture

Jesus also prepared His disciples to balance their successes with a heavenly vantage point. After the disciples returned from a fruitful ministry assignment, Jesus acknowledged their enthusiasm. Then He equipped them by highlighting God's big picture; their names were written in heaven (see Luke 10:17-20).

The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name."

He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

(Luke 10:17-20)

6. Read Luke 10:17-20. How would the assurance that your name was written in heaven — salvation — give you balance in ministry?

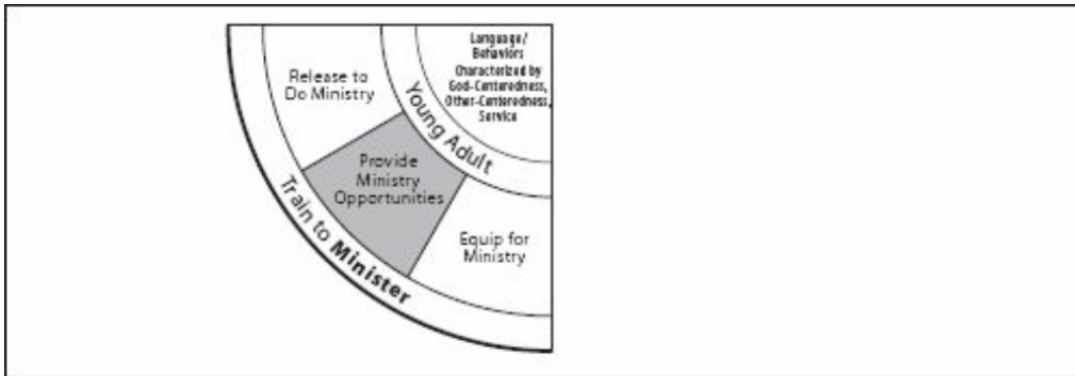
Equipping young adults for ministry means helping them have a kingdom perspective, that being the mission of making disciples. Disappointment is inevitable, but if disciples are trained to expect resistance and thanklessness and are reminded that they serve God not people, their disappointments won't stop them. Disciple-makers can also prepare young adults so that they won't be swept away by people's praise. That way they can stay on target and grow as disciples who love God and people and serve both.

Review

- Equipping spiritual young adults to serve requires preparing them to remain balanced when disappointment or success occurs.
- Balance is found when we focus on God's bigger picture of our salvation and on building His kingdom.

day 3: PROVIDING MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

Intentional leaders must give disciples a place to serve and grow as they mature into the stage of spiritual young adult. We call this providing ministry opportunities. After disciple-makers see a heart change from self to others, they know that the disciple is moving to the young adult stage. It is time to further equip that person for ministry by giving him or her greater opportunities to serve. The end goal is to release young adults to serve on their own.



Luke 9:1-11 tells about Jesus sending His disciples out to preach the gospel in neighboring villages. They proclaimed the message wherever they were allowed, served the people by healing their illnesses, and cast out demons. But Jesus did not leave them to minister alone; they still needed His coaching. When they returned, He listened to their report of what they had done.

1. What do you think Jesus talked about with the disciples when they returned? Circle your answers.

- A. How nice the weather had been
- B. What it was like to be rejected by some and accepted by others
- C. What it was like to proclaim the kingdom message
- D. How much money they made
- E. The meaning behind His teaching about the harvest
- F. What it was like to trust in God's provision

Jesus provided multiple ways for the disciples to participate in ministry. Sometimes He sent them to help others, other times they served food to crowds, and still other times they preached publicly. His disciples were allowed to get in the game. He did not simply teach and expect them to learn sitting on the bench nor did He abandon them to themselves. We think Jesus probably talked with them about B, C, E, and F when they returned.

See One, Do One, Teach One

A doctor reported that the phrase used in his medical training was "See one, do one, then teach one." In other words, his training began with watching a procedure. Next, he was allowed to participate in the procedure under supervision. Finally, when he was experienced, he began teaching someone else. Maybe the medical school got this pattern from Jesus? In any case, a spiritual young adult will grow in ministry with this approach.

2. Let's apply this concept. What ministry opportunities would be best for you personally to use a "See one, do one, teach one" approach?

- ☐ Leading a small group
- ☐ Teaching a Bible class

- ☐ Helping out in youth group
- ☐ Serving in the children's Sunday school with you
- ☐ Preparing and delivering meals for hurting families
- ☐ Making a hospital visit
- ☐ Other _____

3. Write out two examples of "See one, do one, teach one" for a ministry you would train a disciple to do. Break down a service opportunity into the equipping sequence of "See one, do one, teach one."

Here are some examples:

Leading Small Group	
See One	Invite a disciple to see how you prepare for a group and watch you lead the session.
Do One	Invite the disciple to lead a group session under your supervision and then with you gone.
Teach One	Invite the disciple to show another group member how to prepare and lead a group session.
Shepherding Group Members	
See One	Take the disciple with you as you connect with an absent member by calling the person, visiting his or her home, or meeting the individual for coffee.
Do One	Assign the disciple the task of connecting with another missing member of the group that week.
Teach One	Have the disciple teach another group member how to connect with a missing group member during the week.

Your turn:

See One	
Do One	
Teach One	

See One	
Do One	
Teach One	

Serving the Community

The word *ministry* is often too narrowly defined as church programs, such as Sunday school, youth ministry, and so forth. The New Testament concept of ministry included many things: making clothes for poor people (see Acts 9:36-42), serving food to widows (see Acts 6:1-6), and washing people's feet (see 1 Timothy 5:10), to name a few. Repairing a sink, watching children so parents can go on a date, and mowing a lawn are all ministries and can be used to help spiritual young adults mature.

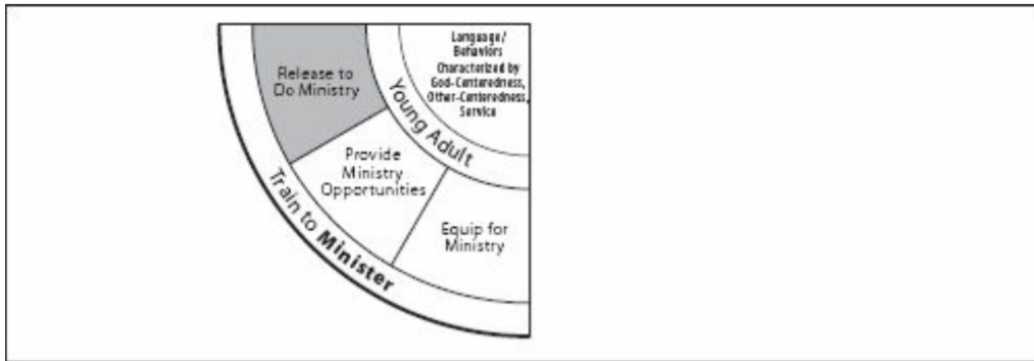
As a way of instilling a ministry mindset, we set aside a Saturday just before Christmas for all the small groups at Real Life to serve in their communities. Some of the groups rake leaves or shovel snow. Others paint rooms and clean homes. One team goes around to all the tire stores to offer hot drinks and snacks to employees who are changing tires in the cold. All of these are ways of doing ministry. We call the day "Presence." This ministry helps people in our community, but it also helps spiritual young adults see ministry they can do outside of the church's walls and programs. Remember, Matthew 28:18-20 says to go to the world. Ministry happens in the church and in the world. Use every occasion as an opportunity to make disciples.

How have opportunities to "get in the game" of ministry impacted your growth?

Review

- Intentional leaders provide specific opportunities for disciples to get involved in ministry.
- A process of "See one, do one, teach one" helps spiritual young adults grow.
- Lead your disciples to serve in the church and the community.

day 4: RELEASED TO DO MINISTRY



Releasing disciples for ministry helps prepare the disciples to lead. The coach must give them more responsibility and authority; only then will they take ownership and become confident and less dependent on the coach.

1. Read 2 Timothy 2:2 . Rewrite this verse as a note from a small-group leader to a new leader as that person starts his or her first group. What should the note say to do?

Dear _____,

(Signed)_____

Paul's words are for every disciple-maker. We do not pour our life into disciples to send them to the stands to watch. Disciple-making is a sacred trust. The disciple-maker obeys Christ by building an army for battle, not wax figures for a church museum.

The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others. (2 Timothy 2:2)

Releasing People to Ministry

Acts 6:1-7 says that some widows in the church were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. The apostles refused to stop their ministry of prayer and teaching the Word, but they did not ignore the problem. Instead, they released seven trusted leaders to minister to the neglected widows.

2. Read Acts 6:1-6. What happened to Stephen and Philip after they served the widows in the food line?

In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word."

This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

(Acts 6:1-6)

3. What did Stephen do in Acts 6:8-10?

Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, did great wonders and miraculous signs among the people. Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called) — Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia. These men began to argue with Stephen, but they could not stand up against his wisdom or the Spirit by whom he spoke.

(Acts 6:8-10)

4. What did Philip do in Acts 8:4-6 and 8:40?

Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ there. When the crowds heard Philip and saw the miraculous signs he did, they all paid close attention to what he said... .

Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea.

(Acts 8:4-6,40)

As we have seen, Jesus released the disciples to do ministry and help Him feed the five thousand. In Acts 6, we see the apostles following His example and releasing disciples to feed the widows. But next we see them working as disciple-makers on a mission to reach others. We will talk more about this next week, but for now, see the progression of how the apostles released these new disciples to do ministry.

Spiritual young adults still need coaching. They are free to minister but still need the encouragement and guidance of an intentional leader. They must learn how to set healthy boundaries and answer spiritual questions on their own. Let's look at each of these.

Healthy Boundaries

Disciples can't do it all. They need help to keep the main thing the mission of Christ. That is what the apostles were able to do in Acts 6. Reread Acts 6:1-6 and answer the following questions.

5. What boundary did the apostles set that required others to serve the widows?

6. How do you think Stephen and Philip might have missed out if the apostles had not released them for ministry?

7. What do you think would have happened to the church if the apostles had refused to release these two for ministry?

The apostles literally said, "We should not stop serving the Word of God in order to serve food to widows." In other words, their priority was teaching the Word, so they gave the ministry task of serving the widows to the new disciples. Had the apostles not set this boundary, disciple-making for Stephen and Philip would have suffered, and the church would have slowed or even stopped in reaching the world for Jesus Christ.

Answering Spiritual Questions

Disciples are bound to encounter questions they have not thought of before. Disciples are learners. Don't rob them of the opportunity to find the answers on their own.

8. Which two of the following would most likely cause disciples to grow? Circle your answers.

- A. Being told the answer to a question they did not ask
- B. Searching the Bible to answer a question that is bugging them
- C. Being told to study a topic without a reason for studying it
- D. Being shown resources they can use to find biblical solutions

The two answers most likely to cause growth are B and D. Spiritual young adults have questions, but they are not like infants or children. They can find the answers for themselves.

Liz was struggling with a recent death in her family and had many questions. Melinda answered some, but then she showed Liz how to use a Bible concordance. Melinda turned Liz loose to study all the Bible passages about death. In the process, Liz found answers and learned more than she originally asked for. As Liz can tell you, one of the best ways for disciples to learn answers to spiritual questions is to do personal study.

Releasing disciples for ministry means handing off responsibility, setting boundaries, and using their questions to motivate them to find answers. All of this is done from a heart that loves and serves Jesus Christ.

Review

- When we release disciples for ministry, we help them grow by setting healthy boundaries and learning how to find answers to questions.

day 5: A BREAK FOR REVIEW

One of our favorite sayings is “Repetition is the key to learning.” You have been given a lot to think about in the last ten weeks. Today is dedicated to reviewing some of it before we move to the final phase of the discipleship process. Please complete the exercises from memory before looking back in the book to check.

Jesus’ Command

The starting place is Jesus’ command. During the time you have been studying and meeting with your small group, you may have seen other good endeavors that Christians have mistakenly put in the place of Jesus’ command.

Here are a few we have seen:

- Offering humanitarian aid
- Providing access to Christian education
- Helping people achieve financial prosperity
- Training families to stay together

These are all good things and can surely happen in the context of fulfilling Jesus’ command, but what was His command?

1. Fill in the blanks from memory. This was covered in week 1, day 1.

Jesus commanded us to go into the world and _____ of every nation.

2. Three other action words show us what is entailed in obeying that command.

To make disciples, we must be _____, _____, and _____.

3. How has your understanding of this command changed over the last ten weeks?

Definition of Disciple

Having the same goal in mind is essential for any team to succeed. People define what a disciple is in many ways. We took our definition from Jesus’ call to the first disciples (see Matthew 4:19).

4. Fill in the blanks from memory:

A disciple is one who is _____ Jesus.

A disciple is one who is being _____ by Jesus.