

# Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

Info: (651) 283-0568 Discipleship Training Ministries, Inc. www.dtminc.org Today's Date: August 29, 2021

## Handing Over The Ministry To Others

by Dan Trygg

“And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> 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, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’” Matthew 28:18-20

“You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, <sup>2</sup> and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others also.” 2 Timothy 2:1-2

“And He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastor-teachers, <sup>12</sup> for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; <sup>13</sup> until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature person, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. <sup>14</sup> As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; <sup>15</sup> but truthing in love, we are to grow everything into Him who is the head, even Christ, <sup>16</sup> out-from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.” Ephesians 4:11-16

**In all these passages, there is a common theme: People in leadership are handing responsibility to those they have been investing in.**

**In Matthew 28, it is Jesus who gives the charge to His apostles to “discipline all nations”.** Disciples are not simply converts, or students. They are not merely people who assent to a system of belief. **Disciples are apprentices, practitioners, trainees. The apostles were not only to tell people about Jesus, they were to train them to actively follow and live like Jesus.** The Lord specified what that process entailed. First, **it called for a radical separation from their past, by choosing to be baptized into Jesus’ name.** Baptism was a word picture of death to their previous life, identity and allegiances by engaging in a death and burial into Christ through immersion in water, ...followed by a rising to new life in Christ as they came from the water to a new identity and focus for their lives. They were now “Christ-ones” (“anointed-ones” – 1 Cor. 1:21), ones in whom the Spirit of Christ dwelt. **The apostles were then to train these new followers to observe all that Jesus had commanded them, ...His apostles.** We are all to be on the path of training-to-live as Jesus lived, ...to do all that He had taught His apostles. This is not simply about listening to teachings, or learning theology, ...**this is learning to be led by the Holy Spirit, and to actively do ministry to others in the body of Christ and those outside.**

**In 2 Timothy 2, Paul instructed Timothy to “be empowered” (or, “empower-yourself”) by the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And he was to take the things he had heard from Paul, and entrust them to other people who would be faithful to teach still others also.** Paul had invested in Timothy’s life, and mentored him, both by teaching, training and also giving him ministry assignments, so that Timothy had become seasoned and mature. At the time Paul was writing this letter, Timothy had become one of the leaders in the church at Ephesus. He had been there before, along with Paul, on Paul’s third missionary journey. So, many of the people knew him from that time he had spent there working alongside Paul. Now, however, he was there without the apostle, and **Paul was counseling him to disciple others. Paul told him to take the things he had learned from him and entrust them to “faithful people”, people who would in turn be able to teach others, as well.** This is discipleship. This is what Jesus was talking about. This is what they were doing in the home church meetings in Jerusalem, in the early days, ...and it was same interactive group dynamic from Acts 2:42-47 that Paul and the other apostles were replicating wherever they went. **They expected to be able to entrust others with the ministry.**

**In Ephesians 4, Paul described what he had in mind in a bit more detail. He said that Jesus gave certain people gifts to equip everyone in the body of Christ.** The thing that is noticeable about these gifts (vs. 11) is that they are all “word gifts”, ...that is, every one of them are centered on preaching or expressing the word of God in some way to others in the body. Whether it is general biblical teaching, or specific words from the Holy Spirit, **the purpose was to fit the members of the body out with the ability to begin to invest in one another’s lives, ...whether by words, acts of practical service, or supernatural expressions of power.** In verses 15 and 16, we see that **we are to help each one to become established in a personal experiential relationship with Jesus, so that we all could be led by Him to serve one another.** Those with the “equipping gifts” do not own, dominate or keep the functions of ministry in the body. That would be very counter-productive. **Their whole purpose is to help others discover what it is that God wants to do in and with them, and encourage them to get involved in expressing the reality of Jesus to one another in love.** The goal is to disciple others: to train them to do all that Jesus commanded the apostles, ...in accordance with the leading of the

Holy Spirit in their lives. **The end result of body-life is that we all discover how God works in our own lives, and actively engage in serving one another to build each other up. The whole plan is to equip and entrust others with ministry.**

**In the kingdoms of this age, people with power tend to keep the benefits of that power to themselves.** They accumulate wealth, recognition, and often use their influence to dominate or control others. Leaders in this evil age tend to gather and collect power and prestige to themselves. They control and protect their interests, and guard their place of authority. **In the kingdom of God, however, things are totally the opposite. Power and influence are to be invested in others.** Opportunity and recognition are extended to others. Those who are gifted do not feel the need to guard or protect what they have, ...they give it away and invest in others (Matt. 10:8). They rejoice to see their trainees become effective at serving others, ...even when they are no longer the center of attention or recognition. **Instead of dominating, controlling or protecting their interests, ...they freely encourage others to "take the ball and run with it".** They do not have to micro-manage. **They can trust that the Word of God, the Holy Spirit, and sound, interactive body-life will keep things on track.** If they are training disciples to become capable active practitioners, then they will also become mature ones, ...able to guide yet *others* to replicate the same dynamic in their lives. **It is when leaders keep people immature, by not equipping and entrusting them with ministry, that unhealthy things can creep in.**

**Fifty years ago this coming week, God engineered my entrance into ministry.** I had no idea what I was doing, ...but God had set that up for me, too. I was starting my first term at Bethel College, right after Labor Day in 1971, where my first class every morning was Bible Survey. I read through the entire Bible in the next four months. I took what I was learning, and tried to break it down to the young people I was working with. I don't know what it was like for them, but they stuck around, and the group began to grow. After that first semester, **a seminary student came to our church to do some field education. He introduced me to the idea of discipleship, and disciplined me.** After a few months with him, **I started implementing those principles** into our youth group. As those young people grew up, several became leaders in campus ministries at their colleges, and others became ministry leaders in their churches, and even some pastors came from that ministry work. **The goal was always to invest, train, and turn them loose.** By "accident" (actually, by following the Word of God and the longings of our hearts), we also stumbled across and developed an interactive dynamic that was deep, honest and powerful. We experienced the basic elements of body-life in Christ.

From 1980 to the present, I have always invested in people, doing Bible study and one-on-one discipleship, but I would have to say that **the most effective ministry was where there was a small group of honest seekers that gave support and accountability to what people were learning, and gave them an opportunity to invest in and serve others.** As I look back, I can see how God seemed to assemble such groups at different times and places in my ministry, ...even when I did not understand what He was doing. Beginning in 1989, God began to open my eyes to the body-life concept. I began to see how important it was to create an environment where people could have the opportunity to minister to others as part of our training. I had understood this on an individual level before, but now **I could see how significant it was to encourage everyone to see that they each had gifts and insights to bring to the table, and they were responsible to take initiative for their own spiritual growth and development.** Part of that was to learn how to expect God to work in and through *them* to *serve others*, ...to help *them* grow. Those who have done that have matured. **Those who have been part of a healthy, honest, interactive group in Christ have remained sound and productive.** Those who have disengaged, and separated themselves from healthy interaction, have floundered.

As I look at the dynamics of what God is doing in our midst at Bethany, I am confident that I can *entrust* the ministry to you, the members of the body. I don't need to be present. I don't need to be in control (I never *have been!*). I don't need to steer or monitor what is happening. THAT is not, and has not, been my job. **My job has been to equip you to "take the ball and run with it". My job has been to create a vision for your own life in Christ, ...where you know He is available to actively guide and direct you, and use you to build up others in the body. My job has been to sow the seeds of healthy spirituality and interaction, and entrust the growth of those seeds to you and the Holy Spirit.** I expect to only be gone for a matter of weeks, but I am confident that I am not "needed" to prop things up, or to "make things happen". We are all seeing God leading *you* already. This will be a good experience, ...a good test and realization time..., where we will see and appreciate even more what God is doing in our midst.

In closing, I want to direct your attention to four principles from 2 Timothy 2:3-6. Paul tells Timothy to **"suffer hardships together** as a good soldier of Christ." Ministry will have its costs, sacrifices and hardships. Be willing to face them and walk through them together. "No soldier gets entangled in the affairs of everyday life, so that you might please the One who enlisted you as a soldier." We all must live in this world, but don't allow worldly concerns and drama take too much of your time and focus. **Don't get tangled up in things of this world.** Focus on the kingdom. Then, like an athlete, "we must compete according to the rules". **Walk in integrity.** Don't cut corners. Maintain a solid and positive witness by how you live. Finally, "the hard-working farmer will be the first to share in the crops." **Work hard. What is the context? Making disciples! ...taking what you have learned and entrusting ministry to others, ...those who will be capable and faithful to teach and invest in still others also.**