

The enemies of Christian discipleship

By Dave Batty

There are many different problems that can destroy our effectiveness in discipling new believers. In this session we will look at several common enemies of Christian discipleship. Don't be surprised if you face other enemies than the ones listed below. Our challenge is to face these enemies and overcome them.

Steps to Overcoming the Enemy

<p>1. Apathy</p>	<p>1. It takes time and energy to do Christian discipleship with excellence. It requires that you have passion, dedication, and commitment.</p> <p>There are easier ways to teach new Christians—simply dump new information on them, and consider your work done. But that is not Christian discipleship training.</p> <p>If you are going to do Christian discipleship training with excellence, it will require you going beyond the minimum, and investing personal time and energy in the lives of your students.</p>
<p>2. It's messy</p>	<p>2. This work is much like caring for a baby. It is a lot of hard work with very little immediate rewards. You need to face the reality of how hard this work is. You also need to focus on a long-term vision, seeing where they will be in 12 months, 5 years, 20 years.</p>
<p>3. It's not popular</p>	<p>3. The Pharisees and other religious leaders were often creating lots of problems for Jesus. Doing discipleship training is not the most glamorous kind of ministry.</p> <p>We need to stay focused on Jesus and his attitude.</p> <p>Hebrews 12:2-3 NIV</p> <p>Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.</p>

<p>4. Spiritual warfare</p>	<p>4. Satan does not want you to be passionate about discipleship training. He will do everything he can to discourage you from this kind of ministry. He will seek to undermine all you do in this area.</p>
<p>5. Seeing this as <u>My</u> ministry – <u>My</u> people</p>	<p>5. When we begin to take credit for this ministry and see it as ours, we set ourselves up for big problems. This is God's ministry, not my ministry. I cannot take credit for helping those in the program. God does the transforming.</p> <p>1 Corinthians 3:6 NIV</p> <p>I planted the seed in your hearts, and Apollos watered it, but it was God who made it grow.</p> <p>Jesus told the parable of the rich fool who was very successful, yet took credit for all he had, and saw it only as for his benefit.</p> <p>Luke 12:16-21</p>
<p>6. We have head knowledge about the Christian life, but our heart remains unchanged.</p>	<p>6. If a new Christian is to become a successful follower of Jesus, there must be a change at the heart level, not just in the head. It requires a change that goes beyond external change.</p> <p>Psalms 51:10 NIV</p> <p>Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.</p> <p>David calls on God for help. He knows that he needs more than an external minor change. He needs a change at the deep heart level.</p> <p>Matthew 11:20 NIV</p> <p>Then Jesus began to denounce the cities in which most of his miracles had been performed, because they did not repent.</p> <p>Jesus was greatly disappointed because they had experienced the miracle working power of God in their community, but the people remained unchanged in their hearts.</p>

<p>7. Losing the anointing</p>	<p>7. The Old Testament has stories of those who started out with a heart to follow God, then turned their back on him. King Saul is one of the most prominent.</p> <p>There is a real danger in success. We can start with great sense of needing God’s help, but as we become more skilled in our ministry we can begin to rely on our own competence instead of continuing to rely on the Lord.</p>
<p>8. We become bored with the same old way of doing things. The method loses its meaning.</p>	<p>8. We need to keep our priorities on target. It’s not about my comfort as a teacher or staff. If a doctor says, “I have done 300 brain surgeries the same way. I am bored of doing it the same way. I think I will change the way of doing it so it won’t be so boring to me.” If you need brain surgery, do you want the doctor changing his method just because he is bored?</p> <p>We need to focus on the basic fundamentals of Christian discipleship, not because it is what we like, but because it is what is best for the new Christians we are discipling.</p>
<p>9. Delusion</p>	<p>9. Satan will do everything he can to deceive us, and move us away from God’s truth. We need to stay focused on God’s truth. We need to be attentive to what is happening in the lives of the new Christians we are caring for. We cannot assume we know what is going on today based on what was happening 2 days or 2 years ago.</p>
<p>10. Enabling—offering the wrong kind of help</p>	<p>10. As we seek to disciple new believers, we need to be careful that we do not end up offering the wrong kind of help. New believers need to take responsibility for their problems, and the steps they need to take to deal with these problems in a Biblical way. We need to understand our correct role as a discipler, and not cross over the line and start offering the wrong kind of help.</p>

Twelve reasons why people leave Teen Challenge and relapse

This list of reasons why people leave Teen Challenge and relapse was developed by Don Rhymer of Pivot Ministries in S. Norwalk, CT. He compiled this list from contacts made with those who left Teen Challenge. Don uses this material in the *Group Studies for New Christians* course entitled, *Growing Through Failure*.

1. No consistent prayer life.
Matthew 26:41, Philippians 4:6, John 15:4-6
2. Their knowledge exceeds their experience. They fail to mature because they are not personally applying what they are learning.
1 John 2:12-14
3. They have not sold out completely to God. Two major areas they fail to give to God are materialism and opposite sex relationships.
4. They have been institutionalized for many years and have not developed self-discipline. They function okay with strict boundaries but are not able to handle the freedom required to function as a responsible adult in society. They are not able handle the responsibilities and freedoms that come later in the program and either leave or become a disciplinary problem. Some even set themselves up for failure so they will not be graduated so they can stay in the program.
Proverbs 6:6-7
5. They never learned to accept authority. As a result they frequently refuse to listen to those in authority.
 - A. Pride James 4:6
 - B. Rebellion 1 Samuel 15:22-23
6. They are stubborn and hard headed.
Acts 7:51, Deuteronomy 10:16
7. Ignorance of the devil's devices and the reality of spiritual warfare.
2 Corinthians 2:11, Ephesians 6:12
8. They made it through the program but never let God deal with them through their every day work and responsibilities. They tried to get by with doing as little as possible on their jobs, often trying to cut corners, rather than doing their best.
Luke 16:10

9. They were not a genuine Christian. Or, they never experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They failed to appropriate God's power in their lives.

John 3:16, Acts 1:8

10. They spent the whole time judging others rather than dealing with the sin in their own lives first.

Matthew 7:1-5

11. They were more concerned about the gifts of the Holy Spirit than the Giver of these gifts. They were interested in the outward expression, instead of developing spiritual character and experiencing the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

John 17:3, Matthew 7:16, Galatians 5:22-23, Matthew 3:8, Romans 6:21-22

12. Lack of God given goals. They were playing when they should have been praying.

Proverbs 29:18

"Set your minds, then, on endorsing by your conduct the fact that God has called and chosen you. If you go along these lines there is no reason why you should stumble."

2 Peter 1:10 Phillips New Testament