

The Contagion of Creativity

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Introduction.

- A. Men and women are burned out in the discipleship journey.
- C. Many say I came, I saw, I concurred.
- D. Discipleships is a demanding process, and it is evident in the objectives that determine outcomes.
- E. I saw a sign on a church recently that said, “What are we trying to do to these people.”
 - 1. The pastor told me he realized he didn’t understand what his objectives were.
 - 2. A mist in the pulpit is a fog in the pew.
- F. Discipleship must be clear; Paul’s ministry objective is found in Colossians. (Colossians 1:28-29)
 - 1. Paul gives us his process.
 - 2. Paul gives us his purpose.
 - 3. Paul gives us his passion.
 - a. Without a clear set of objectives we cannot bring someone to maturity.
 - b. To say I offer a template of what we should be asking our disciples to become.
- I. Discipleship involves a number of factors.
 - A. Discipleship involves COMMITTED individuals.
 - 1. Our commitment is to the person of Christ.
 - a. We can live for Christ wherever we are.
 - b. Living for Christ involves relationship to a person, not a program.
 - 2. Our commitment is to body of Christ.
 - a. This is not just our church.
 - b. Jesus builds the church; we reach the community.
 - 3. Our commitment is to the community of Christ.

a. This involves a world-wide vision.

b. The body of Christ is world-wide.

B. Discipleship involves people who are COMPETENT.

1. We need to know something.

a. This is not just knowledge, for the higher the knowledge sometimes the poorer the impact.

b. We don't need to get on a head trip but on a people trip.

2. We need to feel something.

a. This involves passion.

b. Passion drives obedience.

3. We need to be doing something.

a. This involves consistence.

b. This involves obedience.

4. Show me a committed, competent person and I'll show you a disciple.

C. Discipleship involves COMMUNICATION abilities.

1. This means an individual who can impart what he possesses.

2. This is not just inside the body but outside the body.

3. This means in private and in public.

4. A man or woman who walks with God at home is a genuine disciple.

5. If your Christianity doesn't work at home don't export it.

D. Discipleship involves CREATIVITY.

1. This involves being fully alive in Christ.

2. This means growth.

3. This means not being married to the status quo.

E. Discipleship involves a CHANGING individual.

1. Christianity is not static but dynamic. (2 Corinthians 2:18)

2. The one who is changing is equipped to help change others.

II. In order to be a disciple maker you must determine what you want to develop in the people you disciple.

A. I am passionate about being creative in ministry.

1. It upsets me when the church stifles their creativity saying, “You can’t do that.”
2. If God wants you to do something different then you can do it.

B. The contagion of creativity contains four items.

1. There is no one without significant creative potential.

- a. This is proven in research and in life.
- b. We do have limitations but this usually concerns our low self image.
2. I teach how to study the Bible for yourself.
 - a. Many professionals tell me they feel inadequate to study the Bible themselves.
 - b. We need a new Reformation, returning the word of God to the people.
 - c. Greek and Hebrew is a privilege but it’s not essential to understanding the Bible.
 - d. Some mature Christians don’t even realize what the original languages are.
 - e. Your task in discipling others is to build the confidence of those you minister to.

2. Conditioning is the killer of creativity.

1. Two morticians.

a. Parents and teachers who stifle their children’s thinking by saying, “Don’t ask stupid questions.”

1. Creative parents produce creative children
2. Boring parents produce boring children.
3. Teachers who stifle students’ potential.

a. A student who has poetic talent excels at it.

b. He later told me in 5th grade he worked on a creative project and the teacher tossed it in the waste basket.

c. I was a hell-raiser in my school days and some of my teachers didn't help me develop.

d. Watch the kids who cause trouble; they might be the next missionary or pastor who impacts the culture.

4. See people not in terms of what they are but what they might become.

b. Television is a counter productive medium.

1. It contradicts everything you are trying to teach your children.

2. We need to turn off the TV, the killer of creativity.

2. We need to realize how easily creativity can be killed and avoid that trap.

3. The conditioning process, however, can be reversed.

a. This takes effort.

b. How badly do you want to get involved in the creative process?

c. There is a price to pay in becoming a fully alive individual.

4. Creativity is a lifestyle not a method.

a. We can't turn creativity off and on like a light switch.

b. We need to let creativity invade every area of life, especially loving and worship.

C. Now I want to ask two questions

1. Why are you interested in creativity?

2. How can I begin to develop creativity in my life?

D. Three reasons to be concerned about creativity.

1. Be concerned about creativity because of the nature of God. (Ephesians 5:1)

a. God created individual snowflakes.

b. God created individual fingerprints.

c. God created individual people.

d. C. K. Chesterson said, "The world will never starve for wonder but only for the want of wonder."

- e. The kind of person God is the kind of person we are becoming.
 - f. It's embarrassing that we can take the exciting word of truth and make it dull.
2. Be concerned with creativity because of the nature of the Christian life. (John 10:10)
 - a. Christ wants us to live, not merely exist.
 - b. Christ wants us to be free. (John 8:36)
 - c. My background was extremely legalistic until I learned grace at Dallas Theological Seminary.
 1. I repudiated legalism intellectually in 1947.
 2. I still struggle with it emotionally.
 3. Many people today need to hear the freedom we have in Christ.
 4. Perhaps many people don't want to be Christian or go into ministry because they see us.
 5. We need to be liberated in Jesus Christ.
 6. How many men over 50 are still tracking for Christ? Not many. They are striving for retirement. You may retire from a job but not from life or ministry.
 3. Be concerned with creativity because of the nature of our calling. (Matthew 5)
 - a. We are salt and light. We need to stop hiding our lights. We need to develop a taste for people on the outside of the church. Woody Allen said, "Man is at a crossroads; one path leads to despair, the other to destruction. Let us pray for wisdom." Our response to the world crisis is to hold seminars. We need God's creative ideas how to impact this world, and we need to resist placing our ideas in a book.

III. How do we activate creativity?

A. Experience is an asset.

1. Older people have something to offer.
2. Some of them have finally realized they have spent their lives for nothing.
3. I can tell where a person is by how they view their ministry; is it a problem or a privilege?
4. If your ministry is dead it has no problems.
5. The problem solving process is dynamic, changing with the times, lest we answer questions nobody is asking.

B. We talk too much and listen too little.

1. We need to get around laymen.
2. The average layman sees no connection between what he hears on Sunday and what happens on Monday morning.

C. Hobbies and the fine arts are assets.

1. My most creative people are musicians and artists.
2. We have record burning ceremonies to get kids off rock but we often fail to educate them about alternate forms of music.

D. Read things outside your field.

1. In Search of Excellence is a great book about the church yet it has nothing to do with the church.
2. We need to expand our interests.

E. Writers are creative.

1. Get people to keep a journal.
2. We don't need copycat ministries; we need new thinking; we need drama; we need music.

F. Use questions to get at what people think.

1. Kids ask questions all the time.
2. My oldest son taught me about asking penetrating questions.
3. Spend time with creative people.
4. Creativity is caught more than taught.
5. We need to apply the truth we know, for example older women teaching younger women. (Titus 2)
6. John Henry Newman said, "Fear not that your life will come to an end; fear that it will never have a beginning."
7. My passion for you tonight is life abundant in Jesus "Christ, being liberated by the work of the Spirit.
8. Let us look for creative individuals to impact our world for Christ.