

Paul H. Dixon
Christ Above All in Discipleship, Part 3
circa 1993

Unedited Transcript

Paul H. Dixon:

As we meet together and think together for the last time in this academic year about Christ above all in discipleship, we've thought about the doctrine of discipleship and the emphasis that is placed in the New Testament. Christ, our example, Paul, our example. We've considered together the demands of discipleship over two consecutive Mondays as to the kind of people we need to be if we're going to be involved in other people's lives. And then if I could this morning, I would like to just briefly highlight the design of discipleship, kind of thinking about how we go about it. I can still remember the day in Northern Ohio when we had a wonderful evangelistic campaign and had a key guy in a motorcycle gang get saved in this particular week. And when this guy made his decision for Christ and took me to the jail to get involved in other people's lives, I could still remember I went up to a deacon and said to that deacon, "Now what this young man needs is someone to get involved in his life and to disciple it."

Paul H. Dixon:

Deacon said, "Great idea. How do I do it? Love to do it. How do I do it?" And it's amazing to me that in our churches that are so committed to the word of God, and though often a pastor will have a new converts class, so few of the leadership are involved in the biblical principle of discipleship. And again, I would emphasize that I'm aware that every time the word of God is preached or taught or anytime we're together on any informal basis, discipling is taking place. But it at least appears to me that there ought to be some grasp of how to go about bringing a brother and sister in Christ, new convert, family member, friend, from here to here.

Paul H. Dixon:

It's interesting when we think about this, that Paul talked about it and what his objective was. We know that in 2 Timothy 2:2, he said, "The things that thou has heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit that of faithful men who shall be able to teach others also." 2 Timothy 2:2 is so crucial to this subject. Notice what he said in Colossians 1: 28 and 29 as to his goal in discipleship. The first chapter of the book of Colossians, two verses, 28 and 29. Speaking of Jesus Christ, he said, "Whom we preach warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom. And here's the goal: that we may present every man perfect, complete, mature in Christ Jesus, were unto I also labor striving according to his working, which works in me mightily." Two fantastic verses. Paul said, "The spirit of God is working in me. I can't do this by myself. But through his enablement, the objective is to present every man, every woman, every child, everyone I'm ministering to to take them to completeness, to maturity in Christ Jesus." That's what discipleship is all about.

Paul H. Dixon:

That somehow you want to help me reach a new level of maturity in Christ, that I want to help you do the same thing as a student at Cedarville College, that you want to do that for one another in the dormitories. That's what the faculty are endeavoring to do in the classrooms and the staff as you come into their offices. And we think about the summer, and you're going to be involved in local churches or on Gospel teams or on mission fields that somehow you're going to have a plan, a strategy, if you will, to present those you're working with perfect, mature in Christ Jesus.

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I want to again indicate that what helped me early on was the biography of Dawson Trotman, again encouraging you to get this book on your reading list and pick up a copy before you go home and have it for the summer, simply entitled Daws, D-A-W-S. And a few weeks ago, when I started this series, I went back into my library and reread several books. And again, I kept coming back to one of the first books that I read and then went to the bookstore and they said, "It's out of print." But since they told me that, it has been reprinted. It's simply entitled Disciples Are Made Not Born. It is small, a paperback by Walter Henrichsen, H-E-N-D-R-I-C-K. I believe it's S-E-N or S-O-N. It's put out by Scripture Press. It's \$7.99. But Disciples Are Made Not Born, those two books, if you have those in your library regarding this topic will be extremely helpful to you.

Paul H. Dixon:

May I even encourage you this summer, for those of you are going to be home, and maybe even for those of you, when you think about next fall, and I know that many of you are making plans as to what you want to accomplish next fall when you return, decide that you're going to exercise 2 Timothy 2:2 and pick out some faithful men, maybe two or three, four, women, men, that you're going to have some time with, with the goal to get them. And they're going to build into your life to maturity in Christ. I've had people say to me, "I don't know that I could approach someone to do this because it almost sounds arrogant or prideful that I want to help you when I really need help myself." Oh, that's a given.

Paul H. Dixon:

I could go to any of you students, to any of the faculty, staff right now and say, "I'd like to have you in a discipleship group." And I would preface that by saying, "I need this as much or more than you do." And I am saying that with all honesty. You would build into my life as I would hopefully have the opportunity to build into your life. So it's not a matter that somehow someone is at some great spiritual height that's going to bring someone else along. No. I've never met anyone who didn't have something to share with me and who didn't contribute to my life. So we're going to do this. We're going to approach someone. There's no magic time, although generally I found the best time was about 6:30 in the morning. I still remember one of the first groups that I had.

Paul H. Dixon:

This was back in the middle seventies. And I know that 6:30 is not one of the great hours of the day for a college student, especially with study hours and so forth that sometimes go into the wee hours of the morning. But this particular day, it was our first session of about a 10 week session, and some of the guys at the college were in that group and the blizzard hit. And if you think this last winter was something, I have never seen anything in my life like the blizzard of, what was it, '77, '78, somewhere back in there. It was so bad. I mean, not only did we have the snow, but we had horrendous winds and they were building up drifts and snow banks that morning.

Paul H. Dixon:

I woke up when the alarm went off and Pat said, "They aren't going to be here. I mean, you might as well forget it. There's no way they can get here." You couldn't drive a car. It was so bad. She said, "They will not." I said, "Yeah, but you think about it. If they come and I'm not up, I've got to get up just in case they come." Would you believe it? At 6:30 that morning, the doorbell rang. I looked out and here were guys covered with ice and snow. We lived on Scott Street at the time, and they had actually walked there and they said, "We could not walk like this. All of us had to walk like this because of the driving

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snow and the wind." But they were there. Every one of those guys today has a significant ministry for God. Now, I'm not sure that just the time that we had together contributed all that much to make that possible. But I think their commitment to being there at 6:30 in the morning said something about what they wanted to do with their lives.

Paul H. Dixon:

And we generally would meet from 6:30 in the morning until eight o'clock. And we spend the first part of the time just sitting around and talking and getting to know one another and just maybe some coffee and some donuts or whatever. And then we'd get into talking about the book that we're reading. I am committed to reading books, and your group reading the same book, whatever it might be, and interacting about it. It might be RA Torrey's Power of Prayer. It may be a book on discipleship, like we've talked about. It may be another biography. It may be a book on forgiveness, but we read a book and talk about that and we always memorize scripture.

Paul H. Dixon:

Christian growth is vitally tied to the word of God and hiding the word of God away in our hearts. I would imagine that, for most of you, you've memorized the word in Sunday school. Some of you did it in Awana, some of you in other programs, but don't ever get away from memorizing the word of God. Deuteronomy 30:14, "The word is very nigh thee in thy mouth and in my heart that thou mayest do it." Psalm 119:9-11, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word. Thy word I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee." So scripture memory, we work on scripture memory. Incidentally, we always start with the basic navigator verses. You say, "Basic navigator verses? You mean like on assurance of salvation?" Oh, yes. 1 John 5: 11 and 12. "You mean like assurance of victory over sin?" Oh, yes. 1 Corinthians 10:13. "You mean assurance of forgiveness?" Right. 1 John 1:9. "You mean assurance of answered prayer?" Yes. John 16:24.

Paul H. Dixon:

But those are so basic. Listen. What I found in my groups of some outstanding kids on this campus, most had not memorized those verses and almost every one of them told me, "I've never been through a program like this." After we have our time of informal interaction and talking about the book we're reading and practicing our verses one another, we get into our actual study. Let me give you 10 topics to study together. The very first session is on assurance of salvation. You say, "You mean you take juniors and seniors at Cedarville College and take them through a session on assurance of salvation?" Absolutely. Two reasons. Number one, I'm again amazed at how many had never been through it. Number two, what's the ultimate objective? To commit to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also. You want to take them, you want to model a program that they can take and use the rest of their lives. So you take them through the basics. The first one is assurance of salvation. The second is victory over sin. Number three, forgiveness from sin.

Paul H. Dixon:

Okay? So we want to have victory in our lives, but what happens when we don't? What do we do when sin comes into our lives? Forgiveness. Number four is unanswered prayer. Five is the importance of the word of God. Six, we study the Holy Spirit. One of the most overlooked topics in evangelical fundamental churches today is what the Bible really teaches about the Holy Spirit. Seven is how to know the will of God. Eight, witnessing. Nine is the local church and its importance in our lives. And then we

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conclude with the study on this matter of disciple building and how they are going to spend the rest of their lives discipling others. After we go through these studies of assurance of salvation, victory over sin, forgiveness, prayer, the word, Holy Spirit, the will of God, witnessing, the local church, disciple building, then we have prayer. We get a prayer list going, always get down on our knees. That's not the only way to pray, but frankly, I at least have found that it's important to get down on our knees together and to pray.

Paul H. Dixon:

Sometimes during the week, we may see one another, spend some more time together just chit-chatting over a meal or whatever. But we're committing ourselves to one another for at least a 10 week period of time to endeavor to fulfill 2 Timothy 2:2. Young people, if you, if I together could reach a thousand people a day in 1994, we would see 365,000 converts. At that rate, if no one else were born, we could not reach our population in a lifetime. But did you know that if you win one and disciple them and I win one and disciple them and somebody else wins one and discipled them and we have three people who get saved and discipled this year. And everyone goes out and is committed to doing the same thing, and the next year we have nine people and then we have 27 people. And then after four years, we have 81 people. And after five years, we have 243.

Paul H. Dixon:

Did you know that in 20 years, using that process, we can reach three and a half billion. And by the year 21, we could have reached 10 and a half billion people. That's why Christ is above all in discipleship. I'd like for us just to all turn where we are and get on our knees and ask God to help us to be the one in this summer that's approaching, give you a little bit of time to pray, and then I'll lead us. Our father, as Paul said, we can only do this through you who works in us mightily. We are so weak. We lack the courage and the boldness. We get discouraged with our own sinfulness. And father, I would pray that you'd help us depend upon you to take advantage of the divine appointments that will be ours during the summer months. God, may we come back having had the opportunity to be involved in lives for your glory. In Christ's name, Amen. Have a great day.