

4.11 DISCIPLING SPIRITUAL INFANTS 3

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MOVING DISCIPLES FROM BEING CONSUMERS TO CONTRIBUTORS

INTRODUCTION:

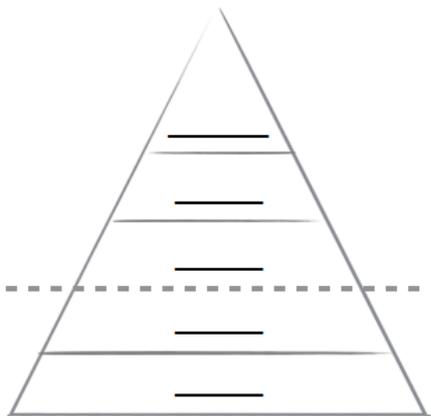
THE DILEMMA: Many have wrestled with how to help Spiritual Infants:

Do we simply get them involved and sort out any misunderstandings as we go?

OR

Do we get their hearts sorted first and then later introduce them to opportunities to serve?

1. PYRAMID OF MATURITY DIAGRAM



A: _____

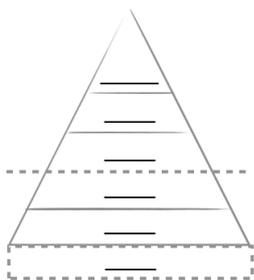
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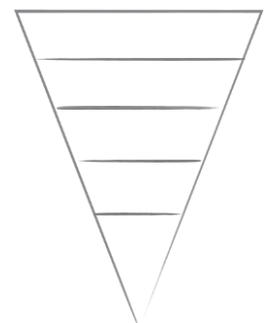
2. LESSONS OF THE PYRAMID



#1 _____

#2 _____

#3 _____



NOTES/REFLECTION: _____

3. EXTRACT FROM 'INVEST IN A FEW' (BY CRAIG ETHEREDGE)

The Holy Spirit is the one who causes spiritual growth. You can't make someone grow spiritually any more than a farmer can make a crop grow. Spiritual maturity is solely a work of God and a miracle to watch. What does the Spirit do that causes growth?

First, it is the Spirit who gives us new life in Jesus. He is the one who opens our minds and hearts to hear and respond to the Gospel (1 Cor 2:12-13). As He brings God's Word to the heart of the wayward person, He also brings conviction of sin, our lack of righteous living and the sudden expectation of judgment to come (John 16:8-11). He is the one who draws us to Christ (John 6:44), causes us to be born again (John 3:5-8), makes us new on the inside (2 Thess 2:13), and places us into God's family (Romans 6:4; Col 2:12; 1 Cor 12:13).

From beginning to end, the Spirit draws us and brings us into a relationship with Christ. Once a person is a believer, the Spirit's job is not over; in fact, He's just getting started. The Spirit lives in every follower of Jesus (Rom 8:9-11). He actually takes up residence in our lives (1 Cor 6:19-20). He leads us (Rom 8:4), teaches us (John 14:26), comforts us (John 14:16), and grows us to look more and more like Christ (Titus 3:5-7). He helps us in our weaknesses (Rom 8:26). He guides us into truth (John 16:13), and He empowers us to serve God (Micah 3:8). He gives us courage to tell others about Christ (Acts 1:8), and He produces lasting change in our lives (Gala 5:22-23). As you abide in Christ (John 15:4-5) and keep in step with the Spirit (Gal 5:25), He works through us to produce spiritual fruit in others that will remain forever (John 15:8). In reality, it is the Spirit who does the work of growing every believer toward maturity and fruitful living. You may ask, *"If that's the case, then why don't we see more people fully mature and following Jesus?"* The answer to that question lies in our part of the spiritual growth process. While the Spirit does the work of growth on the inside of us, we must participate with Him. Paul told the believers in Philippi, *"Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him,"* (Phil 2:12-13 NLT). The Spirit is the one who gives us the power and desire to please God, but our job is to work diligently to obey God and revere Him in everything we do. The Spirit does His work, but we have work to do too. So what's our job?

First, we must live under the control of the Holy Spirit day by day and moment by moment. Paul called this *"walking in the Spirit,"* (Gal 5:16). We need to keep in step and walk at His pace and along the path He has for us. Imagine walking with a good friend along a well-worn path. As you walk together, there is fellowship; you talk about what's on each other's hearts. You share openly and freely. You are both headed in the same direction. That is what God wants from you. He wants to walk with you step by step, through each day in constant fellowship, leading you and directing your life through His Spirit within you. Unfortunately, many people don't walk in fellowship with the Spirit like this. Why? Some resist the Spirit's direction. When the Spirit prompts them to speak, they stay silent. When the Spirit prompts them to forgive, they hold on to the offense. When the Spirit prompts them to act, they stay still. Disobeying the Spirit's leading is called *"quenching"* the Spirit (1 Thess 5:19). Just as you quench a fire by pouring water on it, many people quench the Spirit's influence in their lives simply by disobeying him.

Another reason some fail to walk in the Spirit is by doing the things the Spirit warns them not to do. If you begin to veer off road from God's will, the Spirit will warn you, convict you and challenge you. But if you ignore the Spirit's warnings and persist, you *"grieve"* the Spirit (Eph 4:29-30)... Repeatedly quenching and grieving the Spirit virtually brings all spiritual growth to a screeching halt. This is why so many never grow and never produce spiritual fruit in their lives. So, our job is to keep in step with the Spirit (Gal 5:25), to follow His lead and obey His promptings. We should be available to be used by God (Matt 11:28-29), to abide in Christ through prayer and God's Word (John 15:4), to seek to obey all that Jesus has taught us in every part of our lives (John 8:31) and to be busy making disciples who make disciples.

Quotations from English Standard Version (ESV) unless stated