



Leader Development Topic #4: *Developing Others*

Introduction:

Reading the gospels closely, it becomes clear that nearly everything Jesus did was in part to develop his disciples. He worked with purpose to put them into precarious positions where they would need to exhibit faith (the storm in the boat) and constantly invited them to partner with him in his work (feeding the 5000). Jesus could have accomplished it all by himself but would have lost the chance to develop his followers and friends for the future of His Church.

Bridge Group Goal:

Equip Bridge Builders

Bridge Groups have 3 goals: Experience the Gospel, Engage in Community and Equip one another as Bridge Builders.

Groups that successfully develop others will create equipped bridgebuilders. By modeling Jesus' leadership, groups move from being led by one fearless leader to a gifted community who build bridges out of their identity as a group and each member individually.

The Character of Christ: Empowerment

Jesus gave power away. Peter walked on water. The twelve and the seventy-two were sent out to heal the sick and cast out demons. Jesus entrusted His followers with power left and right! Why? Dallas Willard says it was so that people "would know the immediate availability of the Kingdom of God" as they put their faith in Jesus. Jesus knew experiencing His power through partnership was the quickest route to transformation. Read Matthew 14:15-33, then consider the following questions about empowerment.

Questions:

1. How do both of these stories show Jesus values empowering others ?
2. How do the disciples initially interact with Jesus when facing the hungry crowd? How do they react when they see him walking on the water? How does Jesus respond to them in each situation ?



3. What was Jesus' intention with the storm and how do we see this in the disciples' response in verse 33? How have you experienced Jesus working through you in your own life?

Leader Development: Developing Others

Jesus intentionally let his disciples engage their faith in practice. Faith with no opportunity to engage in real world application will simply die. As a Bridge Group leader, you will primarily be developing people spiritually. This might sound super-spiritual and intimidating, but it's simply developing someone so they are growing in knowing and becoming more like Jesus – that's *discipleship*. And the skills needed to develop someone spiritually are the same in developing an athlete, employee, or even a child.

A lot of this spiritual development will happen naturally and supernaturally as your group meets regularly. Imagine if the group didn't just grow as a whole, but if each person grew from wherever they are on Day 1 to who they could be in Year 2? What if the woman who's never opened up a Bible before starts to read it or the couple attending decides to lead their own group?

Habits of a Leader who is a Developer¹

When Jesus said "go and make disciples" to a group of uneducated men, he was calling them to be developers. If he trusted them to develop others, then the skill should be attainable for all believers. The disciples became developers because they saw the ways that Jesus developed them and made those ways into habits in their own lives. You can do the same!

1. Be a Model.

Scripture teaches that "God gives growth", not us (1 Cor. 3:7). But God chooses to use us to help others in their spiritual journey. When you focus on continuing to grow and develop in your own spiritual journey, then others around you will be challenged to grow as well.

2. Be Open.

Leaders who are developers know that rich and substantial relationships provide the best opportunity for growth and development. The best way to get to know the soul of a person is to

¹ This content adapted and used with permission from: Mac Lake, *Leading Leaders* (Columbia, SC: 100 Movements Publishing, 2019), 14-19.



allow them to get to know you. Gently reveal yourself at a level deeper than you currently know them, and they are likely to follow, allowing an authentic relationship to begin to develop.

3. **Be Intentional.**

One of the first excuses leaders give for not developing others is lack of time. This is where being intentional can help. Development conversations don't always have to be an hour-long. Some of the most life-changing moments in our lives can come in a five-minute conversation where a leader asks a question that causes you to reflect on some aspect of your life.

4. **Be Prepared.**

When Jesus taught the disciples, he often asked them questions. He would also reply to a question with a question of his own. When you have good questions, you have lots of tools on hand for developing others. Some examples of great discipleship questions are:

- *How full are your emotional, physical, and spiritual tanks right now?*
- *If you could see God do one thing over the next thirty days, what would it be?*
- *What has God been saying to you through his Word recently?*
- *What passion is the Spirit stirring in your soul lately?*
- *What season best describes your spiritual life right now: winter, spring, summer or fall? Why?*
- *What truth of who God is do you need to believe more deeply right now?*

5. **Be Challenging.**

James 2:26 says, "faith without works is dead". An active and developing faith takes steps outside of your comfort zone to do things that cause you to have a greater dependence on God. Consider giving a challenge to people in your group or on a team you lead like praying with a neighbor, leading a meeting, helping someone who is struggling, or taking on a project. Challenges like these stretch their abilities, helping them grow in competence and confidence.

Reflection:

1. Who could you ask a question under the "Be Prepared" habit section?
2. What is a challenge you could give to someone you are developing and know well?
3. Which of the five habits of a developer is the easiest for you to practice? Which is the most difficult?