

## Making Missionary Disciples

### How to Live the Method Modeled by the Master – Curtis Martin

#### Introduction

- “With Christ joy is constantly born anew...” Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*
- Everything begins to change when a culture of missionary disciples is established...lives are changed.
- How do you change culture? Build a clear vision.
- Evangelizing and disciple-making are like farming – ultimately, God controls the harvest, but there are principles and activities good farmers utilize and lesser farmer do not.
- Three foundational habits in fostering effective evangelization: Divine Intimacy, Authentic Friendship and Spiritual Multiplication (win (encounter)-build (grow)-send (witness)).

#### The Three Habits

- Evangelization flows from who we are in Jesus – from our baptismal vocation and ongoing encounter with him.
- 1) Divine Intimacy:
    - The habit upon which everything else rests.
    - Evangelization is first and foremost the work of God, we will be fruitful in the mission if we ourselves are abiding in deep union with Him. (He is the vine, we are the branches).
    - Jesus defines eternal life in light of relationship – not knowing things about God, but being in relationship with the living God. (Inviting people to be in friendship with Jesus).
    - God is calling us so intimately that we become family, we become adopted members of His perfect family, the Blessed Trinity – a deep, covenantal friendship.
    - God Transforming Us – through regular, personal encounters we become changed. If you place a cold rod in a hot fire, the rod takes on the properties of the fire – warm and glows.
    - The fruits of the Holy Spirit begin to manifest themselves in our lives.
    - Seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and fear of the Lord.
    - The nine fruits of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.
    - Growing in Divine Intimacy – four practices the early disciples devoted themselves to:
      - 1) The Apostle’s Teachings
      - 2) The Breaking of the Bread (sacraments)
      - 3) Fellowship
      - 4) Prayer
    - “Apart from me you can do nothing.” (John15:5) First, we must encounter Jesus personally.
  - 2) Authentic Friendship:
    - We must genuinely love the people we are serving, accompanying them in life and personally invest ourselves in them, truly become a friend.
    - Evangelizers take on the “smell of the sheep.” Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*
    - Jesus personally entered the world and became one of us.
    - Jesus met people in their particular circumstance, he did not passively wait for people to come to him; he went out to the people. (Incarnational Evangelization)
    - The personal time outside of formal faith formation is often where lives are changed the most and more fruitful.
  - 3) Spiritual Multiplication:
    - This is impossible without the first two habits.
    - Clarity – is the laser focus which keeps us on task.
    - Conviction – prioritize our actions to make them fruitful.
    - To invest in a few people so as to form them as followers of Jesus and equip them to go out and do the same for others; not just disciples, but missionary disciples.
    - Foster an ever-growing chain of missionary disciples; today, many just focus on the first generation, namely, the people already showing up in the pews and programs.
    - This is about developing a relationship with others.
    - When we live the first two habits without the third, we do not bear as much fruit.

- Growth is incremental – one person reaching out to three and so on.

## The Method

- “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few...” (Luke 10:2)
- We live in a time of great opportunity.
- The best catechetical resources can never replace a living witness; the priest is the single greatest factor in fruitfulness and effectiveness.
- Jesus lived a life of authentic friendship with a relative few and he imparted both faithfulness and fruitfulness.

### 1) Win

- Lead people to a life-shaping encounter with Jesus – facilitating moments of encounter with Jesus.
- God wants more from us than merely following rules, He wants a relationship with each of us.
- Is Jesus the center of my life?
- Either starting a new relationship or strengthening an existing one.
- The Gospels are a series of encounters with Jesus. Scripture speaks to us where we are at in our lives.
- Sharing the Gospel: Winning Hearts for Christ
  - + “Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.” Pope Francis
  - + The joy of Christian life stands out – our witness, hospitality and example attracts others.
  - + We must share the Gospel, but also our very lives, invest personally in people.
  - + Invite others to put Jesus first in their lives.
- Sharing the Gospel: The Message
  - + We need to share the heart of the Gospel message – God loves us and has a plan for our lives (each of us has a purpose). Even though we turn away from him (through sin), he still loves us so much that he became one of us through Jesus (he wants a personal relationship with us), who died for us and rose again so that we might have new life in the Church. He wants to bestow his mercy on us (sent the Holy Spirit to guide us and initiated sacraments for closer relationship) and offer us a better life than we experience without him. He offers eternal life, happiness forever with him in heaven.
  - + The good news – we are each created to be amazing in God’s salvation plan!
  - + The bad news – when we sin, we choose to separate ourselves from God. Sin is universal and creates a chasm so great no human, even with best efforts, could bridge the gap between humanity and God.
  - + The even better news – God sent Jesus, who lived and died, so that we can become who God meant us to be.
  - + Salvation is a gift, freely offered each day. Before a gift can be owned, it has to be accepted. To accept God’s saving gift means making a decision to be a disciple of Jesus – making a gift of ourselves in return.

### 2) Build

- The influence of friendship cannot be overstated. (Saints came in clusters because they were friends).
- Commit to building personal relationships with others.
- Things that are most natural in life are learned by modeling, not mere instruction (i.e. learning how to walk). Holiness is the same way, instruction is needed, but demonstration is more effective.
- For friendship to become discipleship there is a clear choice to put Jesus at the center of human relationships.
- Intentionally select a few people. Jesus only chose 12 men. Key moments were with only Peter, James & John.
- How to Build:
  - + Help the other person live more deeply every day as a true disciple of Jesus: read teachings of the Apostles, frequent sacraments, prayer, retreats, faith formation.
  - + Train people on how to evangelize: sharing the Gospel message, sharing your testimony, lead small faith groups, mentor others. (“More is caught rather than taught”). Let others observe how you do it.
  - + Give disciples opportunities to practice leadership: boosts confidence, offer constructive feedback.

### 3) Send

- On Pentecost Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to the Apostles – they boldly went out and used their training.
- They changed from disciples to disciple-makers.
- “Make disciples of all nations”. (Matthew 28:19)
- Becoming a disciple-maker requires deeper unity with Jesus.