

KEY QUALITIES AND CHARACTERISTICS TO LOOK FOR OR CONSIDER AS YOU BEGIN TO SELECT YOUR DISCIPLES WHO WILL MAKE DISCIPLES

Who should you select for the members of your 12?

In II Timothy 2:2 Paul tells Timothy to find “Faithful Men” who can teach others. Working off of the acrostic F.A.I.T.H.F.U.L. M.E.N. we can have a suggested starting list of qualities that would be important to look for in potential DiscipleMakers. (We even have two more qualities for W.O.M.E.N.)

F. = FAITHFUL – People who are faithful to Jesus and faithful to His Word. They are faithful in service. They outserve everybody. They are fully consecrated to God. They are surrendered to Jesus with a truly sanctified heart. They are faithful in the sense that they are “full of faith.” They are constant, consistent, people of their word, full of integrity and pure. You can trust them. They follow through on what they say they will do. They are committed and sold out to Jesus. They have proven to be sacrificial to the cause of Christ. They are faithful to you as their leader. They have been faithful to the Discipleship vision and model that God has given you to implement. They have attended the courses, classes and retreats. They have been faithful in the homework and assignments. They have been faithful to memorize Scripture. They have been faithful in “little things” and they are about to be entrusted with much... the Discipling of a young Christian.

A.= AVAILABLE – They really want to meet with you and they are willing to re-arrange their schedules to make quality time happen with you. You don’t have to chase them down to meet with them. They are very good about returning phone calls to you and have proven to you that meeting with you regularly is a very high priority to them. They know that on-going discipling can’t happen without regular, unrushed appointments with you. They make themselves available to you.

I.= INTIMATE WITH JESUS – They are constantly drawing closer and closer to Jesus. They passionately love Jesus and sacrifice for Him. They are people of prayer and worship. They love being with Jesus. Obeying Jesus is their highest priority. Their highest priority is to be like Jesus and to please Him at all costs.

T.= TEACHABLE – They are teachable. They are “correctable.” They allow you to speak into their hearts. They allow you to correct them and even invite you to do it. They see the value of listening to you and learning what God is teaching you. They change when you ask them to change something that is detrimental to their witness or their walk with God. They want to be “coached.” They don’t know it all. They have a basic humility that causes them to listen well and apply what they are learning. They respond well to correction, reproof and rebuke. They invite your constructive criticism. They are hungry to change, if necessary, to be more like Jesus or to be more effective at DiscipleMaking.

H.= HEART AND PASSION FOR THE VISION – They really get it. They are sold out to the cause of Christ and the mission of making Disciples that make Disciples. They see the value of The Master’s Plan and they are excited about implementing it. They “see” beyond what is going on... and they are excited about what God is getting ready to do. They talk about the vision of making Disciples of Jesus. They are willing to rearrange their lives and values to pursue the high calling of making Disciples.

F.= FRUITFUL – They win souls. They have a passion for lost people that results in fervent intercession and supplication (fervent, passionate begging) for those without Christ. They are people of influence. They make things happen. Their Life Groups (small groups) actually grow and attract people. They are successful at soul-winning and connecting new Christians into their group and into the church. They are willing to be pruned by The Father for the sake of more fruit. They are not content with the status quo and they want to continually be improving and abiding in Christ so that they can win more souls. They truly believe that Jesus meant it when He said that His Father was glorified when we bear MUCH FRUIT! (John 15:8) They are willing to try new strategies to “by all means win some.” They are willing to set goals and pray and work to see these goals met. They are willing to be trained to be more effective at reaching people for Jesus. They believe that Jesus can make them “100X” people who are truly fruitful for our Lord. They are not happy or content with their present level of fruitfulness.

U.= UNDER AUTHORITY – They see the value of being under authority and they recognize that effectiveness, power, authority, leadership, blessing, protection and much fruitfulness results from properly being under godly authority. They joyfully submit to you as to the Lord. They see the value of submission. They realize that they can’t be a good leader if they haven’t proven to be a good follower. They know that only those under authority will be given godly authority. They covet proper covering and the protection that comes from being under the authority that God has given them to honor and follow.

L.= LOVE – They love you and you love them. They have a love for Jesus and a love for people. There is a natural affinity, affection and attraction (for close friendship) between you and them. You really enjoy being with them and hanging out with them. They want to be close to you. They want to be in your 12. They are willing to pay almost any cost and do almost anything to help you accomplish God’s vision for reaching the lost world.

M.= MIGHTY IN SPIRIT – They are mighty in prayer and intercession. They are mighty in spiritual warfare. The power of their godly spirit can influence and motivate others. They are mighty in God. Their spirit is moved and powered by God. These are God’s Generals!

E.= EMULATABLE – They live a life worth emulating. They have solid integrity. They have a strong, pure, righteous spirit. You know that you can trust a new Christian with them. They can properly say, along with Paul, “Imitate me as I imitate Christ.” They are good role models as Christians, spouses, parents, servant leaders. They have irreproachable character.

N.= NAMED AND NOMINATED BY GOD – As you fervently prayed over them God chose them for you. Jesus spent all night in prayer seeking His Father’s direction regarding the selection of His original 12. God will guide you, and of all the qualities mentioned, this is probably the “trump card” that is more important than the others. If God has called you to work with someone and include them in your inner circle of Disciples...then you need to obey God even if they are missing some of the other qualities and characteristics. God will hand-pick your Disciples for you - if you let Him. Begin now to pray and ask God to give you your Disciples.

For our ladies... you can use the acrostic F.A.I.T.H.F.U.L. W.O.M.E.N. and add the W. and O. with the following:

W.= WINSOME, attractive personality. They are gentle, loving, compassionate, Christ-like, full of mercy and grace. They are “likeable”...other ladies just like being around them. They are good friends. They are full of encouragement and favor for others.

O.= OBEDIENT TO JESUS – They pray and they obey. They are serious about obeying their Lord Jesus no matter what it costs.

No doubt, this seems like an impossible and idealistic list. I almost feel like saying, “Man, if I can find somebody that is all of this, I shouldn’t be discipling them...they should be discipling me!” or “If they have all of these qualities before we begin to work with them do they even need us to disciple them at all?”

The truth is that probably very few people – before they are disciplined – will exhibit all of these qualities or characteristics. Peter and John didn’t necessarily have all of these qualities before Jesus called them to follow Him. But our Lord must have seen the potential in them and of course, the Father, told Him who to pick for His 12. They weren’t perfect before or after Jesus spent 3 years with them. But they all had incredible potential that the Holy Spirit could use and develop. Jesus looked for the right heart attitudes in His Disciples.

Your Disciple doesn’t have to be totally perfect and totally Christlike before you begin to disciple them. However, with the discernment of the Holy Spirit, we can trust that the Lord can show us the heart and potential in each of the people that we will serve and lead. These qualities or characteristics may be only in “embryonic form” when you first begin to pour your life into your special Disciple. God will help you to help them to develop in these areas.

Hopefully you can see many or most of these qualities in the potential Disciple that you are prayerfully considering. God can help you to train and coach your God-chosen Disciple in the areas where maybe they need to grow and develop some more.

On the other hand, if you can’t imagine the potential Disciple ever measuring up in any of these areas... you probably shouldn’t enter into a Discipling relationship at this level with them. You can still love them, bless them, and at points, coach them but you would probably be wise not to invest too much of your limited time with someone who didn’t exhibit any of these qualities or only a very few of them.

God will guide you as you fervently seek His will and direction in this matter. God has already chosen Who He wants you to Disciple. He already knows their name. Ask Him to lead you to the people He has chosen for you to invest your life into – for a long time. No wonder Jesus spent all night in prayer before He chose His 12!

One more thought, this is a good checklist for each of us. If this is what we should be looking for in someone else we ought to ask Jesus to make us examples in each of these key areas so that we can model them for the Disciples that Jesus gives us.

Look over the list and check the ones that you feel good and strong in - and note the ones that you need to work on with God’s help. By God’s grace and power we can all be FAITHFUL MEN or FAITHFUL WOMEN.