

THE POWER OF ONE



There are times when "fewer" is better than "many." The classic illustration of that is Gideon; you know the story well. Another stark example is Jesus and His twelve disciples. He trained individuals, not crowds. It is intriguing to notice that Jesus, as the creator of the universe, chose to mentor only 12. Surely, as God, He could have handled 1000 at a time. But He deliberately focused on 12. Then as He worked with them, much of the interaction was one-on-one. He did not always treat them as a group.

God's Plan for Leadership Training: Relationship

God designed discipleship and leadership training to take place within the context of a personal relationship. Our tendency may be to think that having a class of 50 potential leaders would be better than mentoring one. But focusing on one may have more impact than having 50 in a group. It is impossible to have a close relationship with 50 people at once. Leaders cannot be mass produced. Each person has unique strengths and weaknesses that can be corrected or leveraged. But that won't happen in a large group. History is full of illustrations of great leaders who were brought down because of a single weakness. Strengths are dangerous as well. It has been said that "a weakness may be a strength over-done." A leader can be so good at something that he takes it too far. For instance, "vision" that is unchecked by reality frustrates followers and makes the visionary merely a dreamer. A strength in organizational skills over-done can snuff out the work of God because of being too project oriented. Being a "people person" can become an excuse for not getting work done. Since we all have different strengths, we need individual attention to help us harness and focus our lives. That is best done, one-on-one.

It is possible to disciple a number of new believers at one time. But if you are going to mentor men to leadership positions in the church, you may need to limit yourself. As a missionary in South Africa, I trained pastors in a non-formal, church-based program. At one time I was training three men for the pastorate. That was too many. Two of them got the short end of the stick. I found that it was not possible to devote adequate time to all three at once.

God's Timeframe for Developing Leaders: The Long View

If we are "now" focused and "me" focused we will struggle with the idea of small numbers. Mentoring is an exercise of delayed gratification. If you are "now" focused, then mentoring is not for you. The results of pouring yourself into others may not show up for years to come. Often your protégé's success will occur after you are off the scene. So if you want instant "success," you don't want to get involved in mentoring. Secondly, the "me" focused person will not mentor others. Mentoring is a commitment

to be successful vicariously through others. The mentor must be willing to see others succeed, even if none of the credit comes back to the mentor. There is nothing glamorous about one-on-one mentoring. It is done quietly and often at odd hours. Few people even know you are doing it. Mentoring requires humility that is satisfied with seeing others succeed.

*One faithful member was feeling rather blue,
met with a neighbor, and then there were
two.*

*Two earnest members each enrolled one
more, doubling their number, then there
were four.*

*Four determined members just couldn't wait
'til each one won another, and then there
were eight.*

*Eight excited members signed up sixteen
more. In six more verses, there'll be a
thousand twenty-four!!*

Don't under-estimate the potential of mentoring just one other man. It doesn't need to be formalized. No one needs to know you are doing it. It just needs to be intentional. But imagine the impact you would have over a 20-year period of time if you would focus on just one man at a time and give each one three years of your life. That would be a seven-fold multiplication of yourself. That is HUGE!

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BMW offers several workshops centered on how the local church can and *must* take a proactive approach to leadership development. To find out more about these workshops, check out our website at www.biblicalministries.org/companionconcept.htm