

## ***THINK TRAINING CENTER NOT INFORMATION STATION***

In seminary, I was taught about theology, evangelism, preaching, and ministry. Seminary educated and informed me, but the work of ministry trained and equipped me. I experienced the difference between education and training while in Glencoe, GA, during my orientation as an officer in Federal Bureau of Prisons. This training was not just informational; it was practical. We threw each other on the mats in self-defense classes. We shot firearms at targets in firearm classes. In both cases, passing these courses meant showing proficiency in a hand-to-hand struggle and hitting a target. Likewise, the transformative culture is about training more than informing. Although information is a part of it, the goal is to see a proficient use of the information; it is not what you know but what you do that counts. Jesus did things this way with His *I do, you watch, then you do it, and I will watch* approach to ministry.

To sum this section up, a transformative culture expects individuals to develop their own ability to hear from God, to become producers, not consumers, and conduits, not containers, and to teach the next generation to do the same. Anticipating quality that will lead to quantity and fruitfulness that comes from faithfulness, this culture also expects people to come onboard taking on the responsibility of a well-trained crew, not the expectations of passengers.

## ***PASSIONATE INTUITIVE DISCIPLER***

The discipler is the one called to make disciples. It is the call of every Christian to be a disciple who makes disciples. This disciple-making discipler is surrendered completely to the fact that God has called him to be a part of His plan to bring transformation to individuals and the world.

Notice that "intuitive" is a critical component of the discipler. By "intuitive," I mean a discipler who innately sees and responds to the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of another. The best example of this is a reflex or a conditioned response. A reflex is the autonomic or automatic response to a stimulus. For example, when the doctor hits your knee in the right place, you kick automatically. A conditioned response, on the other hand, is the training of an automatic response to a stimulus. The best illustration for this is a trained police or military officer. I have heard many trained officers tell about situations where their "training kicked in," or they will use terminology like "muscle memory." What they are referring to is the hours of training and scenarios that they have been put through that have conditioned them to respond to a situation intuitively. While many professionals such as police, EMTs, and emergency nurses and doctors go through a rigorous training that conditions them to instinctively protect and save lives, most Christians remain untrained and even surprised by opportunities to lead others to spiritual salvation. This automatic sensitivity and response to the spiritual condition of others comes from the training that has moved the discipler from knowledge to character, a process we will address later in the book.

In addition, passion is essential to being a discipler. The truth is most Christians have not experienced God and His transformational work to a level that we are passionately compelled to share it. The Gospel, meaning Good News, did not get its name just because of its message; it got its name because people experienced it. They discovered a transforming relationship with God as a result of forgiveness that came through Jesus' sacrifice. This Good News they experienced compelled them to share with others.

When was the last time something good happened to you and you went through a 12-week course before sharing it? My wife has often gotten onto me for forgetting to tell her the good news of others, such as a child's birth. I get in double trouble because I have not memorized the details such as weight, length, and number of fingers and toes (ten is preferred). On the other hand, I've had no problem sharing the good news of my own children's birth. In detail, I could share length, weight, time, date, and the weird cone shape of their heads. While I quickly forget to share the good news of others, I have never forgotten and will passionately share the good news, in detail, of things that happen to me. The difference is it happened TO ME. What happens to others just does not evoke

the same passion in me as what happens to me. Many, probably most, Christians experience the Gospel like second-hand information; thus, it does not produce the passion God desires.

Most Christians can be trained to share their story of regeneration – that is when they first accepted Christ and were saved. They may even be interested in glorification and last things – the day, either through death or Christ's return, that we will be with God in heaven. What is missing are stories of sanctification – the process by which God transforms us day by day to be more like Christ. Stories about the everyday redemptive acts of God in me are the most relevant connecting points to a lost person. Having experienced them, they can be shared intuitively with passion.