

Jesus' Model of Education

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Jesus was able to influence a handful of disciples who became church and mission leaders by means of a truly holistic approach to leadership training. What Jesus did in his ministry is often referred to as discipleship. It implies the biblical principle that life begets life, and therefore it is hardly possible to separate what is taught from the person who does the teaching.

We can look at education either as communication of information that returns to us during examination week, or as character formation—education for life, as some people call it. Jesus took the existing model of

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mentoring and apprenticeship that was extant in his context and perfected it to a level that has never been surpassed.

What we often forget, however, is that Jesus' teaching was not sufficient in itself to guarantee that his disciples would live it out according to his expectation. They needed what he referred to as "power from on high" (Acts 1:8) to be able to fully deliver what was expected of them. Therefore, even in Jesus' model there was an element of power that superseded, confirmed and solidified what the disciples had received from the master. Broadly speaking, Jesus' model included the following steps or elements:

1. A mentor with a godly character.
2. A mentor with a perfect blend of word and deed in the power of the Spirit.

3. A mentor with a mission (seen as a magnetic personality).
4. A core of disciples, personally chosen by the master.
5. Discipleship through common living.
6. Participation in the mission of the master.
7. Short projects (without the master's presence) in the context of discipleship.
8. Subsequent correction by the master.
9. A plan for the future—the true mission.
10. Power from on high—obedience in the absence of the master.

Seen from the perspective of these basic points, education goes beyond information and character formation. It is a blend of the two plus the indispensable bestowal of power of the Holy Spirit so that disciples can effect change in the world around them and thus cooperate with God in the expansion of the Kingdom. ☉

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