

7 DISCIPLER/MENTOR Training

Season 2 Episode 7: **Breaking Up Is Hard To Do** (24 minutes)



Episode Time Markers:

0:10- Introduction to Season 2

1:01- Introduction to Breaking Up

2:48- Cutting Ties with a Failing Relationship

7:05- Preventative Strategy 1

8:25- Preventative Strategy 2

11:05- Preventative Strategy 3

15:10- Cutting Ties With a Successful Relationship

23:10- Conclusions

INTRODUCTION

The success of Jesus' discipleship strategy is seen in the generations of genuine, active disciple makers to this day. 2,000 years have passed and the close-knit relationships and teaching that Jesus provided the 12 is still changing the lives of people. With all the obstacles, all the variables that come with human nature, the strategy of Jesus is the proven model. The New Testament shows us how to handle both healthy and unhealthy breakups we will experience as we invest deeply in the lives of less mature believers. In this session we will look at both of these and learn how to minimize unhealthy breakups, and how to better prepare ourselves for the healthy ones.

Breakup Scenario 1: Cutting ties with a failing relationship

Many people who spiritually mentor others will feel the sting of a wayward disciple. Jesus warned us about this. In Mark 4:14-20 Jesus told a story about sowing of Gospel seeds and the different kinds of ground they fall on. The good news in this passage is that some believers will be fruitful in their walk with Christ and impact lives. The bad news is that the other 75% of Gospel seeds will not survive for long. A couple examples:

- Jesus had Judas. He seemed like a normal disciple at the beginning, but over time his heart turned dark to the point of betraying the Son of God. And Jesus had called Judas His friend (Matthew 26:50).
- Paul was deeply hurt by Demas. He was on Paul's ministry team, but his heart turned cold and he abandoned them. Paul records this, saying that ["Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world"](#) (2 Timothy 4:10).

What can we do to minimize these most difficult situations of desertion?

1- Preventative Strategy ONE is Foundational Discipleship.

We believe that everyone who trusts Christ as Savior should have the opportunity for Foundational Discipleship. This helps them understand the life-giving disciplines of Bible reading, prayer, Christian fellowship, and confession. Foundational Discipleship is a layer of protection from desertions, as it provides the necessary tools a baby Christians needs. If we are faithful in setting Foundational discipleship, we will minimize desertions of new Christians that the church experiences.

2- Preventative Strategy TWO is Prayer.

Prayer is extremely underrated. Jesus went to prayer the night before he invited the 12 to be in his inner circle. He asked His Father to make it clear to Him about who should join Him and also asked God to prepare the hearts of the 12 as they decided whether or not to join the team. Prayer doesn't end when we are convinced that God wants us to connect with a certain person as a mentor, it is only the beginning. Prayer is the hallmark of a disciple maker who wants to see disciples stay around.

["Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God."](#) (Colossians 4:12)

Epaphras prayed the kind of prayers that changes our course of life. If we pray like this as we connect with someone, and continue it through our time of investing in them, we will have protection from Satan's attacks. We should never underestimate the power of intercession in the daily battles of those we love.

3- Preventative Strategy THREE is to Patiently Use Common Sense.

We should be aware of how serious a problem the struggling believer is experiencing. Some things are short detours, while others are more detrimental like those we see with Judas and Demas. There are times we need to be firm yet supportive to help a struggling believer through a lull.

The apostle Paul learned the power of persisting with young Mark who walked away from the missions team due to fear. Paul determined that the deserter was no longer welcome. Over time Barnabas, one of Paul's closest friends and missions partners, invited Mark to come back to the team. Paul refused. Barnabas insisted. The two argued and ultimately walked away from one another indefinitely. Barnabas began a new team with Mark. As years passed, Paul realized the power of what Barnabas did for Mark. Paul wanted saw that Mark was of benefit to the ministry and welcomed him back. .

“Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.”
(2 Timothy 4:11)

At the time Paul wrote this, Mark was more mature and had developed a deeper faith. Barnabas had persevered and was willing to invest in Mark. Its a story of giving someone some space and believing in them for the long haul. We should not be too quick to cut ties. Cutting ties should be a last resort.

Breakup Scenario 2: Cutting ties with a SUCCESSFUL relationship

Do you really cut ties when a relationship has been considered successful? The answer would be yes.. as soon as possible! A breakup due to success is actually just a change in the way we interact. We should be working toward autonomy— a sense of spiritual independence. It is God's design for our relationship to eventually change. It's healthy. Consider two illustrations to help you understand this truth.

1-The Sherpas of Nepal. Sherpas are experienced guides who lead expeditions amid all the deadly challenges to the peak of the tallest mountain in the world. Sherpa's must meet certain qualifications before they can lead groups on the ultimate climb.

- They must own the right tools.
- They must be determined to help others in spite of the dangers.
- They must have trained under the care of an experienced Sherpa.

2- The Nuclear Family. The goal for parents is to raise a child to be a mature, independent adult. There are four basic stages that a family experiences that are age or age-appropriate responsibilities:

- An infant is totally dependent on the parent for their survival.
- A child grows a little less dependent for every need in life.
- A young adult experiences less and less dependency
- A parent who has now come full-circle and is now responsible enough to care for the lives of others.

The illustrations of both the Sherpas and parents clearly illustrates that everything we do in discipleship transforms aimless wanderers into purposed disciple makers. Good spiritual mentors guide their disciple toward a healthy breakup, moving them from dependance to independence.

Other Verses/Passages:

Mark 4:14-21; Acts 15:38-41;
2 Timothy 4:11

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