them. He exhorted them to imitate his life and walk with Christ, to copy his pursuit of God, his Christian lifestyle.

But Paul was not there for them to copy. We instinctively think he ought to have gone to Corinth so the believers there could imitate him. Instead, he sent his disciple Timothy. By imitating Timothy, the believers there could imitate Paul.

“I urge you to imitate me. For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church” (1 Corinthians 4:16–17, niv). He had invested in Timothy such that he was confident that imitating Timothy would be imitating Paul and, ultimately, imitating Jesus.

**Long-Lasting Investment**

Many people have heard of Michelangelo. He was one of history’s greatest painters and sculptors. His works have been exalted for centuries. But few know of a man named Lorenzo. He discovered Michelangelo early in his development, took him into his home, treated him as a son, and disciplined him in the ways of art. Some considered Lorenzo’s ability greater than Michelangelo’s. But no matter who is better, Michelangelo might never have become the great artist he was if Lorenzo had not poured his own life and discipline and talent into him. Lorenzo disciplined Michelangelo in the ways of art and all humanity has benefited from this.

The Navigators® helps others come to know Jesus Christ and be more like Him as they navigate through life—a goal captured by The Navigators’ motto, “To Know Christ and to Make Him Known®.” Characterized by intentional, Bible-based, life-to-life discipleship, The Navigators makes disciples of all nations and equips those disciples to do the same for others, producing generations of disciplermakers.

Disciplermaking—Life-On-Life Approach

**BY ROGER FLEMING**

**Original Disciples**

One does not teach faith and love with words alone. Disciples’ hearts cannot be set on fire by theories. Fire kindles fire; iron sharpens iron; faith calls forth faith; life begets life.

Multitudes heard Jesus’ words, but only his circle of Twelve saw him walk on water and command a legion of demons; beheld him transformed in supernatural radiance on a mountain top; witnessed him sweat blood in a garden. Multitudes heard testimonies of those he healed, but only a small circle saw his love in the way he touched a leper or drew a blind man away from the crowd. Thousands enjoyed a feast on the mountain or drew a blind man away from the crowd.

Jesus’ words often confused this hardy band of followers, but his life discomfited and even offended them. Not only would he go through Samaria, but also he would talk privately with a “wicked” woman of that race (John 4:1-42). He joined tax collectors and other lowlifes at their tables and seemed intent on offending all religious officials. He put off dignitaries and received children.

And it was his life that convinced them of the truth of his words. Even when they did not understand what he said, they continued to follow him, convicted by all they had heard and seen that Jesus Christ had the words of eternal life (John 6:69).

**The Pattern for Discipleship**

On the eve of his crucifixion, Jesus could say to his Father, “I have revealed you to the ones you gave me from this world. . . and they believe you sent me” (John 17:6-8, nlt). Three years of life-on-life involvement turned his words into deep personal conviction born out of their experiences with him.

God with us. The life of Jesus Christ, Immanuel, served as a living pattern to shape his disciples so that his astonished enemies observed that these ordinary men who stood so boldly before them had been with Jesus (Acts 4:13). No textbook gave these men such courage. They had carefully observed their master’s life (1 John 1:1) and now by the power of his indwelling Spirit they imitated him. Jesus radically transformed concepts held by the Twelve about God, about himself, about his Kingdom, about his message. He drew them after himself in a fast-paced, demanding work where they could watch
**John 15:1-8 (The Message)**

him deal with nature and demons, and with people from every station in life. He gave them jobs to do and problems to solve. He pushed them to the limits of their endurance (Mark 6:45-56) and drew them aside for periods of reflection and rest (Mark 6:31-32). He led them into deepest sorrow (John 16:20-22), and then, at last, they shared an incomparable joy together in an upper room.

They learned their lessons in open-air classrooms surrounded by filthy beggars, mutilated lepers, thronging multitudes, and malicious officials. Always they fastened their attention on Jesus to see what he would do. Later their own lives would reflect his.

**Discipling Leaders**

My own growth in discipleship is marked by people whose lives spoke to me of Jesus Christ. I don’t know all that shaped them but I know how close association with them served to mold me into the person I am today.

One such person was Cecil Davidson, a Navigator staff member, who opened his home to me and other servicemen like me. He was God’s choice to be my mentor, model, and guide into a life of discipling others.

I spent most of my off-duty weekends for two years in his home learning—learning what a Christian marriage looks like, what values are truly important, how to manage finances. I learned from him what it meant to give myself to others in love, how important each person is, of God’s sovereign power, of forgiveness and loyalty, of standards of excellence, of sensitivity to others, of patience, of the importance of inner conviction, of practical help instead of strong challenge. And what I learned came not so much from Cec’s words as from watching him live what he learned.

**A Real Example**

Once we arrived a few minutes early for a meeting at the church and found the room in disarray from previous users. Cec set to work arranging chairs, placing song books, and setting up the podium area. It would have been embarrassing to have stood and watched, so I joined in. When the crowd arrived along with those in charge, Cec’s work permitted the meeting to begin without confusion or delay. Yet no one knew that an alert and willing leader had set the stage for a successful meeting. I soon discovered this was typical of the man. I cannot imagine how the spirit of a servant could be taught in a classroom, yet Jesus prized that above most qualities we could name. Our Lord came among us as a servant and insisted his followers exhibit the humility of servanthood in all their relationships (Luke 22:24-27). Cec was a true servant of God, and his life showed me what servanthood is.

However imperfectly I responded, Cec left an indelible mark on me. Years later, my family and I hosted overnight guests from a visiting church group. As I stood at the window with my morning coffee, enjoying the brightening sky, I noticed the windows of their van were heavily fogged with morning dew. Cec would clean those windows. The thought intruded into my quiet contemplation. It took only a few minutes, but cleaning the windows enabled our company to go safely on their way. It was over 20 years ago that Cec patiently coached me to become more alert to others’ needs. There was ample opportunity, though: Cec hosted overnight guests every weekend.

**Discipling Families**

Perhaps the most wonderful opportunity for life-on-life discipling is the family unit. We are disciples of our homes, for good or ill. A stable, godly couple who follows Jesus Christ is likely to produce succeeding generations of the same kind. God’s final word to his people through Malachi called them to repent of their unfaithfulness in marriage so succeeding generations might be godly.

Of all the lessons I learned from Cec nothing compares with what I learned about being a Christian husband and father. Yet Cec never gave me one verbal lesson on being a Christian husband and father. Yet I never knew meal times could be fun, enjoyable, and stimulating. While I was growing up I always came to the table after everyone else had begun, wolfed down my food, and left before anyone had finished. But Cec led us into stimulating conversation, had us tell about our day, shared jokes and riddles, and played mind games. I looked forward to meals for fellowship which often continued right through the clean-up chores. And I regretted times when I had to miss them.

Years later guests in our home made an interesting comment about our meal times: “For you, food is incidental to the meal. You come together to enjoy fellowship.” Now where did that come from?

My own children are on their way to adulthood as they pass through their teen years. Much of the best of our home they have experienced lies in lessons Cecil Davidson never preached to me. He lived them to me, life on life.

---

**Invest Yourself in People**

**By T. Max Melonuk**

**Paul, the Disciplemaker**

In Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians, he shared his heart and burden for these people to walk obediently with God. He reminded them that since he had led them to Christ, he had a fatherly love and care for...