

## **CHAPTER 59**

### ***HOW CHRIST EDUCATED HIS DISCIPLES***

#### **1. THE EDUCATION OF THE DISCIPLES WAS UPPERMOST IN CHRIST'S MIND.**

- a. More than half of His recorded words are addressed to them.
- b. Gradually and steadily His ministry resolved itself into the definite work of training the twelve.
- c. Many miracles were wrought exclusively for their instruction.
- d. One-third of the parables were addressed directly to them.
- e. The last year and a half of His ministry was spent in intensive training.
- f. Christ realized they were to be witnesses of His life and example and would later carry the gospel into all the world.

#### **2. MOST OF THEIR EDUCATION CAME THROUGH DIRECT CONTACT AND ASSOCIATION WITH HIMSELF.**

- a. They watched, observed and absorbed everything He said and did.
- b. They saw Him handle thousands of problems and little occurrences throughout His daily life.
- c. Slowly and steadily they were transformed into His likeness.
- d. They listened to His teachings and absorbed His values.
- e. Like the slow process of nature they came to act, believe and think as He did.
- f. Through association and companionship they received vital training.

#### **3. CHRIST'S EYE WAS NEVER OFF THE DISCIPLES — HE WAS ALWAYS LOOKING FOR AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A POINT.**

- a. To correct a misconception.
- b. To rehearse a lesson forgotten.
- c. To point it out and clarify the erroneous thinking of the religious leaders of their day.
- d. To explain His actions if the disciples were ever in doubt.

#### **4. CHRIST BELIEVED IN HIS DISCIPLES AND MADE THEM FEEL CONFIDENT THEY WOULD SUCCEED.**

- a. He expressed belief in their abilities and assured them they would make good.
- b. He knew their doubts and anxieties because of their lack of formal education and experience.
- c. Yet, He communicated to them the feeling He would help them and see them through to the end.

#### **5. HE ASKED QUESTIONS AND ENCOURAGED FEEDBACK AND INTERCHANGE.**

- a. This approach disclosed His constant interest in the disciples' progress.
- b. It also shook them out of lethargic habits of mind and made them think for themselves.
- c. This type of question-and-answer interchange is one of the most powerful means of teaching.
- d. It reveals the weak spots in understanding, as well as reinforces the strong.

#### **6. CHRIST DESIRED THAT THEY ASK HIM QUESTIONS.**

- a. When the disciples were still in doubt, He wanted to know so that He could more completely ground them in truth.
- b. Quite a considerable portion of the gospels is occupied with their queries and Jesus' explanations.
- c. He never reacted in anger or with impatience whenever they grilled Him in unclear areas or inquired about something they didn't comprehend.

#### **7. JESUS TAUGHT THEM HOW TO THINK AND OBSERVE ACCURATELY.**

- a. This was one of His great hallmarks as a teacher — He caused them to look below the surface and think things out.
- b. He urged them to question current-day opinions and ideas and never to accept so-called truth on mere assumptions.
- c. He taught them how to reason, how to investigate and how to test all present forms of thought in pursuit of truth.

**8. HE NEVER INDULGED IN ABUSIVE SPEECH OR SARCASM.**

- a. He treated them as mature adults and guarded against intimidation that would have shaken their confidence.
- b. He held their self-respect and dignity in highest esteem.
- c. Christ knew that to ridicule them would be fatal to their education.
- d. He did express disappointment at times which implied that He expected better things of them.
- e. But He never showed signs of impatience or scorn for their incapacity, just the disappointment of a teacher whose scholars aren't doing their best, who knows they can do better if they can only try harder.
- f. When called for, Christ openly rebuked them for presumptuous or other sins hurtful to their character.

**9. CHRIST ENCOURAGED REST AFTER DIFFICULT AND LENGTHY SESSIONS TO LET THE LESSONS SINK IN.**

- a. All good teachers know that the time of rest that follows a period in which new matter has been taken into the mind is vital and necessary for mental development.
- b. Conceptions then become more clear and complete and solidifies a sure lodgement in the mind.
- c. Thus, He tried to avoid distractions before His ideas had time to root.
- d. The Bible implies that Christ took the disciples away for a rest after strenuous work and much teaching.

**10. CHRIST ENCOURAGED THE DISCIPLES TO BE THEMSELVES AND TO RETAIN THEIR INDIVIDUALITY.**

- a. He did not make them copies after one pattern.
- b. That which was native to each man and marked him off from all others He carefully preserved.
- c. He intensified in each disciple the desire to develop his own personality and to follow with vigor his own natural gifts.

**11. HE INSTILLED IN EACH MAN A DEEP SENSE OF PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY.**

- a. One of Christ's great principles — always present — was His carefulness to keep alive in each disciple a deep sense of responsibility.
- b. He taught them to guard against every defect, for their own followers would copy them — faults and all.

**12. CHRIST USED 'PROGRESSIVE ASSIMILATION' AS AN ADVANCED FORM OF TEACHING.**

- a. This is called the 'experimental method' or giving them greater challenges as they were able to receive them.
- b. Something was proposed which they had to solve for themselves.
- c. A deep mystery, or a parable arrested their attention — they were asked to solve it.
- d. Christ taxed their faculties to the utmost.
- e. He knew that a problem thought out and solved was better for their development in their later stages of training than giving the answer ready-made.
- f. In following this procedure of 'progressive assimilation' He was preparing His disciples to face virtually any challenge the devil and the world may hurl at them.

**13. THEY LEARNED BY DOING.**

- a. Christ didn't do everything for the disciples, but left something for them to do themselves.
- b. They weren't to be just spoon-fed throughout their training or mere passive recipients of His teaching.
- c. They were to go out and take part with Him in the very Work itself.
- d. They must now put to use the knowledge they had learned and bear the brunt of responsibility.
- e. Effective teaching never stops with theory; it goes on into training and practice.
- f. In the case of Christ's disciples, He moved them steadily along these two paths.

**14. CHRIST ALWAYS HAD IN MIND THEIR MISSION AFTER HIS DEATH.**

- a. Their training must be thorough and complete.
- b. No stone must be left unturned until they were ably qualified and prepared to enter their calling.
- c. Christ covered all the essentials so that His men were fully ready and able.
- d. They knew what to do and were confident, with God's help, they could do it.
- e. The only thing lacking was God's Spirit, which they would receive within a few days.
- f. With this last ingredient, they would now go forth with might and power and shake the world.