

How to be an Excellent Disciple, Authority, Part 2

Luke 6:39-40

We're looking at Luke 6 verses 39 and running to the end of the chapter. This is the final section of Luke's record of the Sermon on the Mount. If you look at verse 39 again, the parable, "Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit?" If you're mindful of the principle of influence, you will turn away from ungodly authority to follow godly authority. If you're mindful of that principle of influence, you're going to turn away from ungodly authority and follow godly authority.

Verse 40, look at it there. It says, "A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher." That is to say, Jesus says, you will be influenced by somebody. You will become like the one you follow. In Jesus' day, the sight of teachers and their disciples following after them was a very common sight. Rabbis would be followed around by eager disciples who were asking them all

kinds of questions, studying their ways, their teaching, mimicking their lives.

They basically lived life together with a, with a rabbi and his disciples, teaching them principles, guiding them, modeling the principles, as together they walked through the many and variegated issues of life together. We, we refer to it as like master and apprentice, or mentor and protégé. In India, it's the guru and his shishya. In Japan, it's the sensei, Mr. Miyagi, wax on/wax off and Danielson. Right? Young impetuous Danielson. But here in our country and in modern times, we tend to think we've advanced far beyond that. That, that disciple/teacher relationship is only like in karate school or whatever.

And we tend to forget that we send out children off every day to school for a third of the day, or more. To be influenced by teachers who are trained to instruct and influence students. They're actually very skilled instructors. And if anything, we have become just as systematic and formal about education influence and influence, as any ancient culture. Many of which took the teacher/student relationship just as seriously as we do.

After all, if you can influence the children, you can steer the future. No disciple will excel his teacher, which is why we take education experience so seriously for good reason. You can lead people no further than you yourself have traveled, right? That's one thing to know here. That's the first half of this proverbial saying; it's axiomatic that a disciple will not rise above his teacher.

But the principle here that provides a warning is also providing us with an encouragement, which comes in the second half of verse 40. This has to do with the verb that's translated there in the ESV. Look at it there, "When he is fully trained." That's the one verb, fully trained, disciple is going to be just like his teacher. This is why the blind follower and the blind leader wind up in the same hole.

This principle of influence means the blind student is going to become just like his blind teacher, sharing in his bad character, sharing in his bad doctrine, sharing in all the resulting sins that flow out of that life. Jesus said in Matthew

23:15, "Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte. When he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as you yourselves." As goes the teacher, so goes the student.

Both teacher and student are culpable in the outcome. Evil teachers produce evil students. Superficial teachers produce superficial students. Prosperity gospel begets prosperity gospel. Sub-Christian behavior produces sub-Christian behavior. Religiosity produces more religiosity. Conversely, though, good and godly teachers produce good and godly students. And a teacher, a disciple, when he is fully trained will be like his teacher.

The verb we're looking at there in verse 40 is *katartizo*, translated here, fully trained. Elsewhere, though, it has to do with equipping. When he is fully equipped, when he is trained up, when he's prepared and sent out for a specific purpose. This is the idea. One commentator said the verb involves the notion of equipping or pairing in the sense of making someone adequate or sufficient for something.

This is an oft used verb, word throughout Scripture, it gives us an idea of what Jesus has in mind for discipleship, influence. Here's some images in Scripture: A fully trained disciple is like a well-prepared room. When the master of the house, he prepares it for his guests and it's well suited, fully equipped for everything needful for that, that guest' comfort and well-being.

A fully trained disciple, when he's fully equipped, he's like a, a garment that a woman fashions and assembles and then brings into completion and she readies it for the wearer's use. A fully trained disciple is like the vessel of clay, formed by the potter. The potter has set out to fashion, form, finish this vase, fire it in the kiln and ready it for delivery suitable for a particular use.

A fully trained disciple is like an ocean-going vessel, outfitted for heavy seas. He's like an armed armada, armed by the admiral, readied for the war. All these images and many, many more in Scripture, the idea conveyed in the verb, verb

*katartizo*, it's this readying, it's this preparation, it's this training, equipping, edification, building up, strengthening, readying that disciple for a specific purpose.

If the influence in your life is a blind guide, you're going down. But if the influence in your life is a good and godly teacher, it's going to lead from one level of growth to another. On the one hand, becoming fully trained involves correcting, even rebuking things that hinder growth. But in the other hand, it involves much building, building up, teaching, instructing, training, reinforcing new habits of thinking, new behaviors, new speech patterns, new habits of living.

This is why it's so important that we, beloved, must be together, live life together. Lone wolf Christians living on the fringes of the church, take an analogy from pack animals. Take an analogy from the herd. The wolves get the ones, the stragglers, don't they? Don't stay on the outside. Get into the middle. We got to see each other's lives. We got to see each other's habits. See each other's thinking. And the older must influence the younger. And the younger must serve and learn from the older.

We already considered how the principle of influence is something to be wary of, something to treat with care and caution, but as we said before, we need to be careful who's influencing us because you will be influenced by somebody. You will become like the one you follow. And that is how God created us. That's according to his design, to be influenced most immediately by his own glory. "God created mankind," Genesis 1:27, "in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."

God is immutable, he's unchangeable, he's eternally perfect. Mankind, as his creatures, we are mutable, we are changeable, we're moldable, malleable, we're perfectible. God has intended for us to grow in grace and in knowledge to mature, to become complete. This is by his design. This is a principle of our essential humanity, to become like the one we worship. To become like the one we follow.

So who's influencing you? How are you being influenced? And how are you influencing others? Remember how we said last time,

we applied Jesus' teaching in verses 39-49, this conclusion here. We apply it by looking forward and we apply it by looking backward. So who is your Paul? And don't tell me, well, I'm, I've been a Christian for many, many years. I'm pretty good. Don't really need a Paul.

Don't say that. You're just revealing all your pride. Okay? And you're showing that you're not as mature as you say you are. Everybody needs someone they look ahead to. Who's your Timothy? Who are you influencing? Are you intentional about it? We are both influencing and being influenced by others. It is a principle of what we are as Christians. You are salt. You are light. Others are looking at our lives, others are listening to our doctrine and listening to our speech. They're following our patterns of living.

So if you're mindful of this principle of influence, you'll turn away from ungodly authority to follow godly authority. If you follow ungodly authority, you're going to fail spiritually. But here's a third point. If you follow godly authority, you'll thrive spiritually. You'll thrive. The word confidence, that's



our confidence. If you follow godly authority, you will thrive spiritually.

What does thriving spiritually look like? Can I have you look at the text? Thriving spiritually means, verses 41-42, that you'll see clearly. Verses 43-45, you'll bear good fruit. Verse 46, you'll listen to and obey Christ's teaching. And the final verses, verses 47-49, thriving spiritually means you are going to build your life on a solid foundation. Does that sound good? It sounds good to me.

Because of the fall and its effects, we're born into sin. We're subject to influences. We're even attracted to influences of ungodliness, voices of ungodly authority. Ephesians 2:2 tells us that we're under the, "influence of the prince of the power of the air, the spirits who, the spirit who's now at work in the sons of disobedience." It's the principle of influence there again.

But we can also be influenced for the good. And if we're intentional about it, we'll pursue being influenced by the good.

The fall of Adam revealed something else. The plan of God to consummate all things in Jesus Christ, who is both Son of Man and Son of God. As immutable God, Jesus Christ is the unchanging one, the same yesterday, today and forever. As mutable man, Jesus Christ was perfected. He was made complete in fulfilling all the will of God. Luke points to that twice in the early chapters.

All of us who are found in Christ are no longer in Adam; we are now in Christ. And if we are in Christ, we're complete. That is to say, anybody found in Christ, positionally perfect, counted righteous in Christ. Full assurance. No need for an indulgence paper. We won't have those for sale during the AWANA chili cookoff. You have full assurance in Christ. You look to him, a righteousness that's not your own found in him.

But those who are positionally perfect, they're changed inside. They have a new nature. They are being perfected practically. They are being matured, growing, becoming more like him. And that is the essence of discipleship, to be increasingly conformed to the image of God, which has been perfected and revealed among men in the person of Jesus Christ.

That's why Paul said, Colossians 1:28, "Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom that we may present everyone mature in Christ." All godly leadership has that goal in mind. All godly leadership. Godly leadership is not about pursuing wealth and power, personal ambition.

In fact, Peter confronted all those false motives of shepherding in 1 Peter 5:1-3. He said this, "Shepherd the flock of God that's among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly as God would have you, not for shameful gain, but eagerly." Shameful gain is not just money. It's pride of place. It's fame. It's influence. It's favors. Peter says, "No, you shepherd the flock of God not for shameful gain, but eagerly. You don't do it domineering," those who are over, "over those who are in your charge, but you're being examples to the flock."

No true shepherd, no true shepherd following the pattern of Christ is in spiritual ministry for what he can get out of it. He's not in it for ease. He's not in it for pleasure. It's not

about prominence and status. It's not about protecting, defending yourself, gaining for yourself. No other motive drives a true under shepherd of Jesus Christ except to see people know Christ. And to grow and mature in the love and the knowledge and the holiness of Christ.

That, in fact, is the true reward of all spiritually legitimate ministry. As the apostle John put it, 3 John 4, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth." The apostle John had been living a long, long time and he says, "I have no greater joy than this." As Paul told the Thessalonians, such a beloved church, he said, "For what is our hope, our joy, our crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? For you are our glory and joy."

True shepherds, beloved, they love others, not themselves. That's why you hear John, the apostle, using such affectionate language to refer to fellow Christians under his care. He calls them beloved. He calls them little children. Paul called Timothy, "my son, my son in the faith." Like John, he also repeatedly and affectionately called Christians beloved.

Listen, true shepherds, shepherds after God's own heart, they're striving to know and grow in Christlikeness. Just as they lead others to grow in Christlikeness. That's because true shepherds, under shepherds under Jesus Christ, they realize they're Christians first, shepherds second. Actually, the more accurate term as I keep using is under shepherd. They're operating under his authority. They point everyone to follow and obey him, the only Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Paul told the Corinthians, 1 Corinthians 4:16, "I urge you, then, be imitators of me." Why, is he self-centered? Does he think he hit the high mark? No. He's saying, "Be imitators of me," 1 Corinthians 11:1, "as I am of Christ." Told the Philippians, "Brothers, join in imitating me. Keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us." Why? Because in him, they can find a pattern of how to grow in Christlikeness.

True shepherds are not afraid to open their lives to other people. In fact, turn to 1 Thessalonians chapter 1. We'll close

with this. True shepherds are not afraid to open their lives to other people. True Christians are not afraid to open their lives to other people, to let people in, to bring them close. They're eager to do that. Why? To let people see how they walk. Either to be confronted and encouraged to stimulate their own growth in Christlikeness or to influence others to grow in Christlikeness.

Not a lot of that going on today, is there? A lot of people isolated. All of people into their own thing. A lot of people into their own entertainment, their phones, their internet profiles or whatever. A lot of teachers and preachers out there are into a mega churching, proliferating their images on screens, in as many sites as they can get them in. Getting onto every conference platform where no one really knows them at all.

That is not the New Testament pattern. The New Testament pattern is closeness, access, intimacy, relationship. Remaining aloof from people is totally counterproductive. When it comes to being influenced by the right people and you influencing people. This is the model of discipleship: Teachers and disciples, older disciples, younger disciples, we all need to come close together, to live life together, to learn sound doctrine

together that teaches us to walk in patterns that promote holiness and love and joy.

Here in 1 Thessalonians 1:5, look at the middle of the verse. Paul continued. Notice how, how continually he appeals to their knowledge of himself. "You know what kind of men we've provide to be among you for your sake. You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the world in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, so you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. Not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone for the everywhere, so that we need not say anything."

Turn the page to chapter 2. Verse, let's go to verse 3. "Our appeal does not spring from error or impurity or any," attain, "attempt to deceive, but just as we've been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts. For we never came with words of flattery, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed," something only God can see, so, "God is witness. Nor did we seek glory from people, whether from you or for others,

though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you've become dear to us."

Such tender language used there. This is how every true shepherd, every elder, every deacon, every older Christian aspires to minister to others. It's a pattern set by Christ, modeled, and followed by his apostles, pursued by all people in spiritual influence. Keep reading.

"For you remember, brothers," verse 9, "our labor and toil: we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. You are witnesses, and God also, how holy, and righteous and blameless was our conduct toward you believers. For you know how like a father with his children, we exhorted each one of you, encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory."



I could point to example after example, but that's enough to show you how this principle of influence and discipleship is worked out between Paul and these disciples, the Thessalonian church. The same principle is at work here at our church, too, if we'll follow these patterns of leadership, follow these patterns of discipleship. Older mature Christians teaching and influencing less mature Christians. As older saints open their lives for inspection, as younger saints open their lives for inspection, saying, Come on in. I want to learn; I want to grow. Older saints saying, I want to, I want to influence you so, look at my life.

If we're mindful of these points, beloved, first consequence: Who we follow as leaders is a matter of great consequence. Second: the principle of influence, both a warning and encouragement. If we're mindful of those points, then, thirdly: We can have confidence. Confidence knowing that following and imitating godly authority is going to help us thrive spiritually. The joyful blessings of clear vision according to the text, abundant fruitfulness, obedience to our Lord and Savior, which is a solid foundation. All that will be ours.

Well that's enough for now. We're well out of time. But we have more to see and to learn about this issue of turning away from ungodly authority and turning and following and submitting to the authority of Christ and following those who are pointing us to him. But for now let's close in a word of prayer.

We thank you, Father, for sending the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the great shepherd of the sheep. We thank you that because of your decree and power, not one of your sheep will be lost. Christ promises it, that among all that you've given him, not one is lost. He will hold us fast. He will keep us close. The Lord knows those who are his and let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity. We pray that would be true of us, Father, as we follow godly authority, as we turn away from ungodly authority, as we look for those who model for us habits that lead to godliness, who promote sound teaching, who display sound and godly examples in their lives.