



Leadership by Discipleship
by Kris Swiatocho

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EDITOR'S NOTE: The following article is part of the Jesus . . . Single Like Me series.

Jesus lived his life as a single adult till his death. Because he lived his life as a single adult, he understands every aspect of what you and I are experiencing today. This series examines the "singleness" of Christ in relation to our singleness with the hope you will be encouraged to walk this journey you have been given. A journey that not only leads to the cross for our salvation but to his resurrection for our future.

It's another Saturday morning, and I am about to teach a singles ministry leadership breakfast. I love teaching on leadership, as I believe it's the core of our ministries. Prayer is what starts it, leadership is what grows it and relationships are what maintain it. Well, it was freezing that morning. I knew the leaders who were coming had preferred to stay under the covers in their warm beds. Why in the world were they coming to this breakfast anyway? Why in the world did some of them get up at 4 a.m. to drive three hours to be here? Why would folks who are not paid to lead singles want to know more about leadership? Why would God use me in such a way to show them?

Because even after many years of teaching on leadership, writing blogs, articles, promoting my resource Web site, not to mention all the other zillion resources that are out there on leadership, leaders are still asking the same questions. Why? Because they are still not doing what needs to be done to begin with. The enemy has cleverly diverted our efforts to build our ministries. He has sidetracked our goals to be more about numbers than relationships. He has moved our eyes to be so focused on the few that show up that we forget about the others God has brought. The enemy continues to thwart our energy toward things that don't build, thereby leaving us in the same place year to year. Our ministries grow for a while then appear to become apathetic. All our best leaders quit or get married or move on into other parts of the church to serve. We continue the struggle and wonder if we should just quit. I mean, are we really making any difference?

Yes, leaders and pastors, you are making a difference. Your desire to show up on a cold morning to hear about leading your singles proves what God is doing through you. So let's not give up but instead continue on with the journey of growing your ministries the way Jesus did . . . by growing one by one.

Jesus, Single Like Me gives us an example of the importance of leading by discipling others. What is so inspiring to me is that he was single doing it. His singleness allowed him more time to pour into others. More time to pray and more time build relationships. Jesus had such a short time on this earth. He had to work quickly to show us how to do it so that we could continue the work he started.

The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!" When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?"

They said, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?" "Come," he replied, "and you will see." So they went and saw where he was staying, and spent that day with him. It was about the tenth hour. Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter) (John 1:35-42).

Jesus, Single Like Me Teaches:



1. To look for those who are faithful to be leaders.

These men were already serving under John the Baptist. They had been learning about the coming Messiah through John. When building God's ministry, we need to look for those who have been serving, leading and/or are consistent in their church/ministry attendance. It's not that every person has to be a leader, but instead has the possibility of becoming one. If you are faithful in one area of your life, you are more than likely faithful in other areas. When I meet a potential leader who I see is coming to church and serving, thereby producing fruit, that sends up a flag to get to know him or her better. Just like Jesus, we should be watching for those God brings to us.

2. To look for those who are available.

These men were available to follow Jesus. So many times in God's ministry we first seek those who are already very involved in other areas. We choose them first because we know they are faithful and committed. However, are they available? They may need to lay something down to take up the area of ministry you are seeking them for. I know it's a temptation to seek these people first but remember there are other people aren't serving anywhere and would make a better choice. If someone is already serving the Lord then leave him or her alone and focus on who God is bringing you that is new. It may take some extra training, but the outcome could be a leader who stays with you longer.

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3. To look for those who are teachable.

These two men (Andrew and more than likely John, the writer of this book) followed Jesus because their leader (John the Baptist) told them he was the Lamb of God, the Messiah who had come to save the world. They were intrigued and wanted to know more. When building God's ministry, we need to be especially sensitive to those who are teachable. Do they know God well enough to hear his voice and follow? What is their attitude like? How do they take direction? How do they handle change? Are they following Jesus for the right reasons? Jesus shows us through these men what to look for and how their motives should be to follow him.

Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?" (John 1:38a).

4. To look for those who care for others.

You can pray a ministry into being, find great leaders but only through relationship building by caring does it maintain and ultimately build new leaders. These men were concerned for Jesus and where he would be staying. They also wanted to know so they could spend some time with him. When building our ministries it's important to get to know your leaders personally. Spend time with them by phone, e-mails, texting, coffee, dinners, etc. Get to really know them so 1) you are affirmed with where you believe God is placing them to serve/lead; 2) so you can know ahead of time what obstacles could come up such as being a single parent, struggling with an ex-spouse, out of work, sickness, etc. that could affect their work; 3) so that you can pray with them about their struggles (because you have gotten to know them); 4) to help them find their team that will serve under them or eventually take their place; 5) to keep the team unified in the vision God has given you to pass on to them; 6) to keep the focus on God and not them.

They said, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?" "Come," he replied, "and you will see." So they went and saw where he was staying, and spent that day with him. It was about the tenth hour (John 1:38b-39).

5. Jesus teaches us to find others to help us in our work.



This even includes family. When building our leaders we need to remind them to always be looking for others who would make great leaders/servants (because life happens, we need to be constantly building new leaders). Be ready to share the gospel no matter what situation you are in. Andrew went and told his brother Simon (who would become Peter, one of the most powerful Christian disciples) about Jesus and eventually brought him to the Lord. When is the last time you shared your faith with someone else? Spent time with others who had potential as a leader/servant in your singles ministry? Leadership building takes time but it's worth it in the end, as it will lengthen the life of the ministry.

Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus (John 1:40-42a).

6. Jesus poured his time into his disciples.

He could see their future. Can you see the future of those you are leading? Are you encouraging your singles of what and who they can become in Christ? Jesus would change some of his followers' names. These new names were prophetic in who these men would become. As pastors and leaders we can also rename those who we lead by helping them see who Christ will be through them. As you lead and empower those God gives you, you are building the next leaders of the church, of the world. Don't be afraid to come alongside and help them become who Christ wants them to be. Give away the ministry!

Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter) (John 1:42b).

Jesus through this small but powerful scripture shows us the simple way to find our leaders. We know Jesus prayed, spent time with these men, sought to know their hearts (and gives us the same power to know men's hearts, too, through the Holy Spirit), and encouraged and empowered them to take the next step. Jesus had to because his time was limited on this earth. Because you don't know how long you have on this earth or in your current position, you must use all those opportunities to pray for your leaders now and to come. Drop a quick text or e-mail to encourage them in their day. Take time to train and teach them what is expected; charge them with the responsibility God has given them, allowing their gifts to be used and directed by the Spirit. Then sit back and see what God is going to do, as we are all faithful in our own journeys to become like Christ.

Well, so it was very cold that morning but so worth it. What was supposed to be a two-hour breakfast lasted through lunch. I think we could have gone all day but some had to get back home and some had to work. The questions kept coming in with others piping in to share their experiences. Who would have known that breakfast was not what people were really hungry for? You know, that is what Jesus has been asking us since the start of man. What are we hungry for? Thirsty for? Jesus said, "Come and follow me."

Applications:

1. What are some ways you find your leaders?
2. How are you caring for your leaders?
3. How are you building or training your leaders?
4. What are some of your struggles as a leader/pastor?



Kris Swiatocho is the President and Director of TheSinglesNetwork.org Ministries and FromHisHands.com Ministries. Kris has served in ministry in various capacities for the last 20 years. An accomplished trainer and mentor, Kris has a heart to reach and grow leaders so they will in turn reach and grow others. She is currently working on her third Bible study, *From the Manger to the Cross: The Men in Jesus' Life*. Her second Bible study, *From the Manger to the Cross: The Women in Jesus' Life*, was published last fall and is available on her websites. Her first book, *Singles and Relationships: A 31-Day Experiment*, was co-authored with Dick Purnell of Single Life Resources.

TheSinglesNetwork.org Ministries helps churches, pastors and single adult leaders evaluate, develop and support their single adult ministries through high-energy speaking engagements, results-oriented consulting and training and leadership development conferences and seminars. Click [here](#) to request a FREE "How to Start a Single Adult Ministry" guide.

FromHisHands.com Ministries is Kris's speaking ministry. If you've ever heard her speak, you know that Kris is the kind of speaker who keeps the crowd captivated, shares great information and motivates people to make a difference in the lives of those around them! She speaks to all church audiences on everything from "first impression" ministry to women's topics to singles and young adults. She can speak on a Sunday morning, at a woman's retreat or for a single adults conference. Bring Kris to your church today!

Singles and Relationships by Kris Swiatocho and Dick Purnell

Many singles are Christians who wonder if God will ever bring a mate their way or if they should just stop focusing on a future with a marriage partner and live the single life to the fullest. Kris Swiatocho and Dick Purnell offer solid biblical answers for singles in this newest title in Dick's popular 31-Day Experiment Bible study.