

RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP (LESSON 61)

THE OPERATION OF THE TYRANNUS PLAN (CONTINUED). The key passage regarding discipleship is Ephesians 4:1-16. They are Paul's instructions on how the church should make disciples. First, all Christians have a calling. "Walk worthy of the calling with which you are called" (4:1). Not every believer is called to preach, but every believer is called to be a disciple. Scroggie points out that "calling" occurs 10 times in the New Testament and always refers to the call of God. This calling begins the moment of conversion and continues for life. "The gifts and callings of God are irrevocable" (Romans 11:29). This leads to a detailed explanation of the Tyrannus paradigm which was practiced in the church at Ephesus. It has to do with how to make disciples of believers. It requires people to make disciples, and it requires people to become disciples. Disciple-makers are described as men called by Christ and given to the church to prepare saints (11). Disciples are to be the saints in the church. Why are believers to be disciples? "For the work of the ministry" (12). "Ministry" is another word for service. Serving Christ is actually a part of the discipleship process. There is no discipleship without serving. Saints aren't to become mature and then serve; they are to mature as they serve. That is the divine order. Without serving there will be not maturity, thus no discipleship. Christians who don't serve aren't mature, no matter how much Bible knowledge they have. Smith comments, "Ephesians 4:11-16 turns our understanding of how disciples mature on its head...In some Christian ministries, we assess how mature a believer is based on how much he knows. But the New Testament assess the maturity of a believer based on how much he obeys (e.g. John 14:15; James 1:22-25)." He continues: "Ephesians 4:11-16 teaches a radically different order. In verse 11, leaders are given to the church. In verse 12, they equip God's people (to know Christ, serve, etc.). In verse 12, God's people serve. In verse 12-13, the result is that obedient disciples and the body of Christ mature through this process. The biblical progression of maturity is not believe – mature – serve, but believe – serve – mature." The Tyrannus paradigm is radical, because it reverses our preconceived concept of maturity and the qualification for serving Christ, at least the initial qualification.