

004 The Simplicity of Discipleship

Jack: Welcome to the Apprentice Approach Podcast Episode 4, where the ripples far exceed the splash. This is your host, Jack McQueeney. Many Christians struggle with making disciples; they feel busy, overwhelmed, and not qualified. We understand this struggle, which is why we've created a Bible-based framework so any believer can master the art of discipling.

Today we begin the first of two episodes with Skip and Buzzie Gray. I believe this will become a great resource for you as Skip brings great humor, yet profound wisdom to discipling. He met The Navigators as a student at Wheaton college, then joined The Navigators' staff in 1953. Over the years, he and Buzzie, his wife, have been on loan at different times to the Billy Graham Crusades, Campus Crusade for Christ, The Pocket Testimony League, Youth for Christ, and the Latin American Mission to help stimulate their discipling efforts. He also oversaw both the U.S and Canadian Navigator work in the 70's. Now they minister to physicians, both locally in Colorado as well as across the U.S. Skip and Buzzie know about both spiritual and physical reproduction. They have three children, 13 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren. Unbelievable! You'll find the two books he's authored: [*Navigating Insights*](#) and *Navigating Church* in our show notes.

Skip and Buzzie have been heroes and good friends of ours for a number of years and a real joy to work with. Today's episode focuses on the simplicity of discipleship. We'll unpack how discipling can be done anywhere, anytime, by anyone, as long as you have intentionality behind it. Let's dive in!

Jack: Well good morning, Skip. We are excited to spend a little time together this morning with you and we've got a

couple questions centered around this area of discipleship that we've talked about. The first question I wanted to hone in on was, you know we as The Navigators, we have chosen discipleship as our attempt to accomplish the Great Commission. I wanted to ask you, in those early days, what was the thinking, the reasoning behind some of those decisions and why we chose discipleship?

Skip: I think that in the early days it was not a strategic decision, but it was a practical decision – that Daws [Dawson Trotman] was in Long Beach, he was in contact with Navy people, and so he just did what was at hand without any thought about movement or anything larger than that. But, it was a matter of obeying Jesus' command- his final words to go make disciples in all nations. And, it was one-on-one, life-on- life, with nothing strategic in mind at the time... until the day came along in the middle of World War II and said you need to organize and register and then they had to begin to think in terms of a larger picture.

Jack: Skip, in your mind, in those early days, how was discipleship defined? What did that look like to you guys back then?

Skip: Well, Jesus in John defines discipleship in three areas. In John 8, it's a man or woman that continues in the Word of God, which includes application. In John 13, it's a person who walks in love. And in John 15, it's a person who bears fruit; and, fruit in the Scripture means both character and influence. And John 15:8, a disciple is a man or woman who is of godly character and influencing others. We teach what we know, we reproduce what we are; and so, those three things were preeminent in the emphasis and still are in most areas of the Nav ministry.

Jack: That's great. Talk to us a little bit about your experience in discipleship.

Skip: Well, when I was a senior in high school, my pastor, Dr. Lloyd Perry of the First Baptist Church in Wheaton, used to take me with him whenever he would speak in churches around Chicago. And I was being disciplined by my pastor without my knowing what was happening! And then later, a classmate of mine at Wheaton, Howard Davis, who was a World War II Navy Long Beach Navigator, disciplined me- met with me, and helped me with learning how to do Bible Study and encouraged me to memorize Scripture. So it was a classmate at Wheaton who followed up on what the pastor had begun.

Jack: Yeah. So, this area of discipleship- Skip, you've seen a lot over the years- trends and different things have happened culturally. Is this still relevant for us today? And if so, why is it so important?

Skip: Well, it's not only culturally relevant, it's Biblically relevant; because, it's the last thing Jesus said before he departed from the planet. And, his first sermon had to do with character: the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5, 6, 7). And, his last message was: "take this message to the outermost part of the earth" and God is not willing that any should perish. So, our responsibility is to share the Gospel with everyone we can in a loving way and then let the Holy Spirit work in the hearts of people accordingly, as He wants to.

Jack: You know there's folks out there listening today thinking how this might or might not apply to their situation, as they attend church, as they go to work, as they're working out, as they take their kids to different activities and rub shoulders with folks. Why is this so important for average folks, like you and I, to get in order to advance what Jesus has asked us to advance?

Skip: Well one of the first commandments in the Scripture is: "be fruitful and multiply," and that had to do with having children. But, every baby on the planet has two parents and the same thing is true spiritually... generally speaking. Every

spiritual baby has one or two parents: someone who loved them and cared for them and nurtured them spiritually. We don't have to think in terms of large numbers. There's seven billion of us because we obeyed the first command and there might as well be seven billion spiritually, for having obeyed the same command in a different arena.

Jack: Tell us about ...as you've thought about this area for your own kids, and as you've ministered to your own kids through the years... how this heartbeat of discipleship rang through the Gray family.

Skip: Well, discipleship begins at home and the Lord expects parents to be the primary disciplers of their own children. There are only three things we can do: we teach, pray, and model. That's the alpha and the omega of the process of discipling. If we do that: we teach the Word of God, we pray for our children and with our children, claiming the promises of God like Isaiah 54:13: "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord and great shall be the peace of thy children." So, we claim the promises of God for our children and then we model: we live it out and they can see it in us; and, they may wonder for awhile and take time to sort it out, but they will come home and they will embrace the intimacy with the Lord, as we have.

Jack: You know as you've looked at situations, as you've supervised staff, as you've mentored and coached staff over the years, are there any keys that you've thought about in this area for our kids- things that we need to do well and we need to think about with intentionality?

Skip: Well, I have a saying that Buzzie has, over a period of time, slowly begun to adjust to, which is: "if it ain't fun, it ain't the will of God." So often, we make church attendance and Sunday School and Bible reading and all that heavy, whereas most of the time it should be light and fun... and she may want to comment on that. I'll push the microphone over in

her direction.

Buzzie: Finish what you're saying

Skip: Haha! Finish what I'm saying. But, if it's light; if it's fun; if there's activities that the kids enjoy: fishing, hiking, swimming, camping... if we can package the Message in a lighthearted, loving, fun way, which includes their friends, we will be successful.

Buzzie: I only have a problem with: "if it isn't fun, it isn't the will of God," because I know that there are some things that are in the will of God that are hard and painful. But, I agree with Skip: we just tried to do fun things with the kids and include sharing the Word and we didn't ever do any heavy Bible Study. But, we did memorize scripture, we did have quiet times together, and each of our children is walking with God, though one of them had some trouble along the way. But, all of them are walking with God- they're sharing their faith, they're passing on their lives to other people, and they love us. We're so grateful.

Jack: Well Skip, one of the questions that I have is how did you catch this vision of discipleship- multiplying your life through other men and women. How did you catch that?

Skip: Basically, I caught it from meeting with the Nav Rep who was a classmate at Wheaton. He invested his life in me and my pastor asked me to follow-up (because that was a term we used with the Billy Graham Crusade, "follow-up") a young high school dropout at Wheaton who had come to know Christ. So, I began meeting with Dick. At the same time, two of my faculty members asked me to meet with a YMCA member from Germany named Peter Schneider, who was visiting various YMCA's in the U.S. So, I began to meet with Peter and help him with two things: Scripture memory and quiet time. And I had three months with him, and then he went back to Germany and started an organization called "A Bible in Every Home" and has had a

long, fruitful ministry. I believe he is with the Lord now. The first two guys I met with ended up a German former Submarine Officer who started a ministry in Germany and the other guy ended up being the Dean of a Seminary; so, I was greatly blessed. And, I was just one step ahead, sometimes one step behind. You don't have to know a whole lot, you just have to be willing to experiment with trial and error; and, if you have a humility about your spirit and love, people understand that and appreciate it and respond to it.

Jack: Yeah, that's great because I think there's a number of folks out there that probably are in that boat. They may have never been disciplined themselves and they are trying to figure out ways to disciple someone else. What would be your encouragement, your recommendation to them?

Skip: Well, you do two things with money: you spend it or invest it. You do two things with your life: you spend it or invest it. And, the only place to invest life is in another life, but we're not talking about having a class or being a platform speaker. We're just talking about a half an hour, once a week in Starbucks, talking about your quiet time, sharing with each other... and it's always a two-way street. You not only share with someone, but you listen to what God is saying to them and you learn as much from them as you do from anyone else. It's give-and-take, it's one-on-one. It's low-key, unstructured- quiet time and scripture memory.

Jack: One question I have is, that you mentioned that, it's "one-on-one." So, I have heard it said that some of these things can be passed on through small groups, through larger groups. Speak into that Skip.

Skip: Well, information can be disseminated in small groups or large groups; but it's more than information, it's what's going on in your life. And, the three things that you want to talk about when you meet are: Principals, Promises, and Problems. If you talk about those three things, you need to do

that one-on-one. People are not going to talk about their problems in a group and you never get beneath the surface if it's in a group, or rarely. But, if you do just one-on-one, say: "How are things really going in your marriage, your job, your church, your neighborhood," then you can deal with issues from a Biblical point of view and help them grow.

Jack: We've learned that discipleship can show up in a lot of different ways, at different times, but it always happens when we're available and ready to share the Good News. It requires a level of intentionality to create safe environments for the one you're discipling.

In our next episode, Skip and Buzzie share more about their own personal experience with discipleship and the endurance needed to run the race well. We hope you have enjoyed this episode and feel encouraged and equipped. For more resources, our blog, and to sign up for weekly emails, visit our website: theapprenticeapproach.org. And if you haven't subscribed to The Apprentice Approach podcast in iTunes, do it today. Until next time, this is your host Jack McQueeney, "believing God for generations of men and women like you."

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