



Assigning Homework

“But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it – he will be blessed in what he does.”

Jas. 1:25

- I. Reasons for giving homework:
 - A. Sets an expectation for change
 - B. Offers hope to the disciple
 1. The disciple is not just talking about his problems, but actively participating in solving them by learning about and applying biblical principles through his assignments.
 2. The disciple is practicing biblical principles, which bring change *between* sessions.
 3. The disciple *experiences* God when taking risks of obedience.
 - C. Forces the disciple to interact with the Word of God and experience the teaching and convicting work of the Holy Spirit
 - D. Helps the disciple to set goals and to clarify expectations
 - E. Brings *your* goals into focus through the homework given to your disciple
 - F. Distinguishes those who truly want to change from those who just want to “vent”
 - G. Enables the discipler to accomplish much more with the disciple than the time frame of a session would permit
 1. Emphasize that most change will take place *outside* the discipling sessions, as the disciple implements God’s commands and reads the lessons.
 2. Reinforce that God wants him to take action. **“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.” (Jas. 1:22)**
 - H. Keeps the disciple from becoming dependent on the discipler
 1. The disciple learns what God expects of him in light of Scripture. He applies God’s Word to his life and sees that it works!
 2. The disciple learns that the discipler will not do the work for him.
 3. The discipler’s role becomes defined as a coach or shepherd rather than a person on whom to become dependent.
 4. His experience with Christ and His Word builds his faith in and dependence on God and yours also as you see God work in your disciple.
 - I. Enables discipler and disciple to gauge progress or the lack of it
 1. Past homework, successfully completed, can be an encouragement when reviewed by the discipler with a discouraged disciple. This review may show him that he has come farther than he thinks he has.
 2. Incomplete homework without valid excuse, should lead to loving admonishment by the discipler.

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- a. Encourage him to do better next time.
- b. Tell him you expect it to be done.
3. Failure to do homework often brings the disciple to a point of terminating the discipling, because he is faced with expectations he is unwilling to meet.

II. Suggestions for different types of homework:

A. Lists

1. List of those people the disciple needs to forgive by first name and their offenses against him - See *Helping a Disciple Forgive, CTD*.
2. List of sins in which the disciple has engaged - See *Helping a Disciple Confess Sin, CTD*.

Note: If a disciple refuses to do forgiveness/confession lists after you have given him the reasons (see: *How to Help a Disciple Forgive and Confess, CTD*), then you *cannot* continue with discipling or your time together will turn into merely a Bible study. Suggest that there are many other methods of discipleship with which he may be more comfortable.

3. Code of Conduct: List of rules made by parents for children and a correlating list of consequences for transgressions of those rules
4. Chores and tasks to accomplish
5. Fears, worries
 - a. Ask the disciple to list all of the things he regularly worries about, if it is a persistent problem.
 - b. Ask him to confess his fears to the Lord in your presence as a witness.
 - c. Ask him to face his fears and commit them to the Lord ~ Follow the *Steps to Releasing Fears to God*, in *Releasing Fears, CTO*. It is recommended that every disciple do a fear list at some point in the process.
6. Specific confession lists from topical studies or on a particular topic, i.e. *Self-Esteem vs. God Esteem, The Controllers, The Perfectionist (CTO)*, a list on rebellion against authority, if that has been a pattern
7. List of things to dwell on to renew his mind (See *Renewing Your Mind, CTO*.)
8. *Sexual Sin Confession* for those who have or had sexual sin patterns (See CTO website for this prepared checklist, as well as the *Preparation for a Sexual Sin Confession for the Discipler*.)

B. Action-oriented assignments

1. Seek forgiveness from those he has offended. You, as the discipler, may need to role play this with your disciple.
2. Admonish, in love, someone who has offended him. Again, a role play with your disciple to coach him on how to confront may be needed.
3. Make a list of things he fears to do, and then do one of them. You may need to accompany your disciple in doing the feared activity the first time.

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4. Do loving acts toward a difficult person. Record the deed on a log sheet.
5. Practice renewing his mind by changing sinful thinking to godly thinking. Reassign this frequently throughout the discipling process.
6. Reach out to others through phone calls, notes, hospitality and visits.
7. Praise and encourage family members once a day.

C. Memory work

1. Scripture verses
 - a. Assign a command or promise relevant to the disciple.
 - b. Encourage him to include the scripture verse as he practices renewing his mind.
2. Helpful outlines
 - a. *Renewing Your Mind Outline, CTO*
 - b. *1-2- 3-4-5 Memory Outline, CTO*

D. Word studies or scriptural research assigned to the disciple on a particular area of need in order for him to better understand God's perspective

1. Promises of God
2. Godly traits: gentleness, love, patience, submission, etc.
3. Personal sins: gluttony, drunkenness, lying, laziness, etc.
4. Problems your disciple is facing, such as dealing with enemies, false teaching, persecution and temptation

E. Studies and books published by CTO Ministries

1. *Who's in Charge?* is a set of self-studies on the sovereignty of God and the call to suffer.
 - a. These lessons are designed for individual, as well as group use.
 - b. They are a free download from the CTO Website.
2. *The Christian: Called To Sexual Purity* is a book of twelve studies
 - a. Includes the following topics: God's Design for Sexuality, Sexual Sin, Sex in Marriage, Guarding the Mind, Redeeming the Sexual Relationship in Marriage, God's Design for Sexuality for Singles, Dating and Courtship.
 - b. These may be used anytime in the discipling process.
3. *The Home: Called to Obedience* is a book of studies, designed for marrieds or singles who have an understanding of the CTO principles, to further their growth in their roles in their homes.
4. *The Christian: Called to Brokenness* is a book designed to teach concepts about a broken and contrite spirit and various trials that can induce the breaking of self-will.

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- a. It may be used individually, as well as in a group.
 - b. It includes a Discussion Guide for use in a group.
5. *The Christian: Called to a True Identity in Christ* is a book designed to expose idols and false identities upon which self-reliance is built and how to dismantle them.
- a. It is recommended that *The Controllers* studies are completed before considering the use of this book.
 - b. A disciple should understand his controlling strategies in order to relate them directly to his idols and false identities.
6. *Setting Your Marriage on a Biblical Course* is a book designed for intervention in a troubled marriage when time does not permit for the entire CTO discipling process.
- a. It does not carry the “*Called to*” title or the same logo as other CTO books because the ministry does not want people to believe they have finished the discipling process after completing only eight lessons.
 - b. This book should be used in conjunction with the *Who’s in Charge?* studies.
7. *Essentials of the Faith* is a set of ten self-studies, designed for those who desire further clarification about basic principles of the faith – may be used individually or in a group
- a. The unbeliever will benefit from these studies which explain the basics of the faith.
 - b. The discipler may use these with someone who is a believer, but not grounded in the faith before starting the discipling process with him.
 - c. The disciple who has finished CTO but wants further studies may find these to be a good review of the basics, while still offering some new insights.
 - d. These studies are a free download from the CTO website.
 - e. These lessons may be used individually or in a group.
- F. **Daily Log** (Can be found on the CTO website under *Discipling Tools*)
1. Ask your disciple to **record** sinful behavior, when it occurred and *what triggered it*, such as anger, outbursts, masturbation, involvement with pornography, times a bulimic person vomited, other excessive behaviors, addictions.
 2. Ask your disciple to **record** acts of self-discipline.
 - a. Chores and tasks to be accomplished and when they were completed
 - b. Personal devotions
 - c. Positive changes in behavior, such as remembering to use the *1-2-3-4-5 Memory Outline* or *Renewing Your Mind Outline*
 - d. Praise or encouragement of a spouse, children and others

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3. Keep a log of activities, “escapes,” especially if the disciple doesn’t have the right priorities.
 - a. When?
 - b. Where?
 - c. With whom?
 - d. How much time was spent on this activity?

III. Homework Evaluation:

- A. Offer praise and encouragement for what is done.
 - B. Offer accountability for homework that is not completed.
 1. Ask your disciple for reasons why homework wasn’t done.
 2. Evaluate your disciple’s opinion of the homework you assigned.
 - a. Be sure it is a reasonable amount for the present status of the disciple.
 - 1) More than one simple task a day may be overwhelming for a deeply depressed person.
 - 2) Be willing to agree with your disciple that your expectations were too high **if** facts back up his evaluation.
 - 3) Be open to the Holy Spirit’s leading.
 - 4) Give a less overwhelming assignment if your disciple resists. Then return later to the original assignment, if it’s a crucial assignment to growth and if the disciple is trying to avoid it because it’s difficult.
 - b. Be sure your pride, as the discipler, is not interfering with an honest evaluation of the assignments you are giving.
 3. Be willing to write a forgiveness or a confession list *with* a disciple who arrives not having compiled the list. The first time in making a list may be very difficult for some disciples.
 - a. If this happens again,
 - 1) tell your disciple he must do it in the future.
 - 2) remind him to use the *Checklist for Forgiveness and Confession* to trigger his ideas for his list and check for names. It can be downloaded from the CTO website under *Discipling Tools*.
 - b. If he says, “I can’t do it,” tell him, “With God’s help, you can do it.” (Phil. 4:13) Perhaps he should memorize this verse!
 - c. If his first attempts to compile a list are limited, praise him and help expand his list. Don’t make an issue out of it.
- *Remember to give a new checklist for each list he writes.*
4. Assign homework that has an attainable goal or your disciple may become discouraged.

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5. Meet with a disciple who did not do his homework and give encouraging reasons for doing his assignments.
6. Rebuke a disciple when his homework is *repeatedly* not finished.
 - a. In most cases, give room for the Holy Spirit to work, while continuing to call him to accountability and teaching scriptural principles.
 - b. If your disciple has a *pattern* of not doing homework, meetings with him should be terminated until his homework is completed. Give him hope that when he does his homework, you will meet with him again, if you still have time available.
 - c. When he is unwilling to do the homework, a disciple usually removes himself.
7. Homework is the “rubber-meets-the-road” area; it separates those who are serious about changing from those who aren’t.
 - a. The most difficult assignments usually involve reconciliation.
 - 1) You will often find that Satan tempts with great resistance on this assignment because many times, relationships are restored and God is greatly glorified through reconciliation and/or the disciple is released from guilt.
 - 2) They are the most humbling acts of obedience and require taking risks.
 - 3) You must not let him “off the hook” for being reconciled with all key people in his life: spouse, parents, ex-spouses, children, even when there are “big” issues between them.
 - b. You may allow the disciple extra time to do his reconciliation, but if he refuses or keeps making excuses, you will need to terminate the discipling.

Note: Refer to *Initial Sessions of Called to Obedience, CTD* for concrete ways to assign homework. The first six sessions are outlined in detail for the individual and the couple and are available on the CTO website.

Be specific, creative and innovative in homework given!