

# 8 Insights from Jesus' Development of Leaders

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Jesus didn't need people to help him. He didn't need twelve disciples. Yet he chose them. He could have been born, grown in stature and wisdom, taught, been put to death, raised from the grave, and returned to heaven without messing with twelve guys and their issues.

Jesus didn't need to wrestle with things such as the tension from the men leaving their families, competing for status, arguing over who's greatest, asking frustrating questions and an ultimate betrayal.

However, working through other leaders was God's plan from the beginning. They were called the twelve disciples in the Bible, but they were also leaders. Jesus taught the disciples to take responsibility to *influence* people for the Kingdom of God. They advanced the mission of God. They were first His disciples, but also leaders. That made them spiritual leaders with a vision more significant than their own.

You and I do the same. We are responsible to select, develop and empower leaders to advance God's purposes. There are hundreds of books on leadership, and dozens on developing leaders. I love and appreciate many of them. But it all stems from the master developer who invested deeply in his team.

## Jesus did 8 things to develop spiritual leaders; He...

### 1) Selected carefully.

Jesus spent the night in prayer before he chose the disciples. (Luke 6:12-16) He didn't rush into it, and he wanted the Father's heart in the process. Jesus clearly chose for potential over a proven track record.

Their life before Jesus was relatively simple. The disciples had experienced nothing of what Jesus would teach them about the Kingdom of God. They knew a relatively one-dimensional life and were now introduced to the supernatural realm. Their thinking was challenged, priorities changed, and in time their purpose became clear.

### 2) Made the mission clear.

The vision was inspiring, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few." (Luke 10:2), and the mission was clear:

*He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."* **Mark 16:15-16**

Leaders need a purpose; no one can lead in a vacuum. Set the direction for your business and inspire the people to a better future. Have you made the direction clear to your leaders? Do they know what it looks like to accomplish the mission?

### **3) Invested the necessary time.**

When Jesus appointed the twelve, the scripture says, “that they might be with him” (Mark 3:14). Leadership development was never designed to be an online experience only, just reading books, or learning that lacks practical experience. All these things are good and helpful, but at some place in the process, the person who’s developing the leaders needs to be with them modeling and showing the way.

This time can be one-to-one, small group, and some virtual connections to help with quick communication. Because they were with him, they saw Jesus serve, submit (to the Father), obey, suffer and love. That first-hand look changed them from the inside out.

### **4) Loved unconditionally.**

Jesus loved the twelve to the point of sacrificing his life on a cross. Even when they ran, hid or even denied him, he remained with them and for them. Jesus didn’t love in word only; He redeemed and restored. Jesus said to Peter who denied him, “And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.” (Matthew 16:18)

### **5) Taught practically.**

From casting out demons to healing the sick, Jesus taught them, showed them and expected results. The disciples were hungry to learn because they practiced leadership in real life and saw what worked and what didn’t. For example, they asked Jesus to teach them to pray (Luke 11), and He did. Jesus also gave them more in-depth teaching on how to pray and fast.

(Matthew 6:5-18) And a front row seat to Jesus’ style of preaching must have been amazing! Teaching with an academic level of research is good for the integrity of your content, but it also needs a level of practicality that works in everyday ministry. Give your leaders an opportunity to lead.

### **6) Corrected as needed.**

Jesus was not afraid to confront what needed correction. For example, when Jesus discerned that the level of faith was too small among his band of leaders, that frustrated him, and he corrected them. From fear in a storm (Matthew 8:23-27) to forgetting about the five loaves for the five thousand and the seven loaves for the four thousand (Matthew 16:5-11), Jesus called them out. “You of little faith!”

When Jesus predicted his death, Peter objected. “Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.” (Matthew 16:21-23)

Speaking the truth in love is an essential part of developing leaders. Candor is required. The leaders you develop are counting on you to call out where they need to improve and help them get better.

## **7) Empowered freely.**

*Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age. Matthew 28:18-20*

Jesus received his authority from the Father and then transferred that authority to the disciples. He wasn't afraid to trust his disciples with responsibility, give them authority, and let them lead in a fully empowered way. That's the example set for us.

## **8) Sent them boldly.**

*When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. Luke 9:1-2*

The result was great Kingdom return!

At some point, ministry must move outside your business and into the community. It's there that we connect with those who don't follow Christ. And Kingdom return is best measured in changed lives.