

Session 23: Expect Non-Sequential Growth

video: 24_en_non_sequential.mp4

time: 4 MINS

link: www.zume.training

Study Guide:

When people think about disciples multiplying, they often think of it as a step-by-step process. Something like: (1) First prayer. (2) Then preparation. (3) Then sharing God's good news. (4) Then building disciples. (5) Then building churches. (5) Then developing leaders. (6) Then reproduction.

When we think this way, kingdom growth seems to be an easy-to-follow, linear and sequential process.

One problem is that's not how it always works. A bigger problem is that's not how it often works best!

If we want to see the kingdom of God grow rapidly we need to expect and even encourage non-sequential growth.

This process of disciple-making is non-sequential. Many people tend to think of it as a linear and sequential process: prayer, pre-evangelism, evangelism, discipleship, church formation, leadership development, and reproduction. That is not necessarily how it works.

Imagine a timeline with five points on it: birth (B), the first time someone hears and understands the gospel (1), when someone chooses to follow Christ (+), when they begin to multiply [apply what they learn and pass it on to others] (M), and death (D).



In this scenario, the length of a spiritual generation is essentially the time from point 1 to point M. If we practice following up new believers with something like the Greatest Blessing approach we looked at previously, we can change this to look more like the following:



In this scenario, the length of a spiritual generation is still the time from point 1 to point M. You will note that the time is significantly reduced. This can make a tremendous difference over multiple generations as that effect is multiplied.

It is possible to have a scenario in which people are practicing multiplication before they commit to Christ. For example, say you find someone who is interested in spiritual matters but is not ready to give their life to Christ. They are, however, open to gathering some of their friends and family to study the Bible. You can show them how to do that and how to train others to do the same. It could be that they have reproducing groups and leaders being equipped before the first person chooses to follow Christ. This means we can disciple people into salvation rather than viewing discipleship as something that can happen only after someone chooses to follow Christ. That might be represented by this timeline:



In this scenario, over time (after several generations) the length of a spiritual generation can begin to approach the time from point 1 to point M. In some situations, where people are unable or unready to hear the gospel immediately, it is still possible to achieve a similar effect through teaching multiplicative patterns as they apply to other issues such as community development. Then, when the opportunity presents itself, the network can be exposed to the gospel. That might look like the following:



In a sense then, the biggest issue in multiplying disciples is quickly discovering who is good soil. Who will be a person who is faithful to apply what they learn and pass it on to others? Such people are worth focusing time, energy, and effort into developing. Those are people with whom you need to establish mentoring relationships. When you are working among people outside your existing network of relationships, it is imperative that you filter for this type of individual. Such people are critical for the extension of the Kingdom into new geographic areas and population segments and relational networks.

Ask Yourself

- Have you ever seen a new believer multiply quickly?
- What things do we do that actually slow or stop this from happening intentionally or unintentionally?