

Defining and Doing DISCIPLESHIP



The ultimate destination of every Christian education journey must be spiritual discipleship. Spiritual discipleship, simply defined, is the process of becoming more like Jesus Christ. It is a transformational process rather than simply

an educational process. Education about God and His Word are not enough. Even the demons know about God (James 2:19). Many liberal theologians can quote Scripture, yet deny the truth of the Word of God. The apostle Paul said that knowledge must

lead to transformation for it to make any spiritual difference (Romans 12:1,2). So what does discipleship look like?

Ephesians 4:11-16 provides a clear picture of the fully formed disciple. The disciple is one who has been equipped to do the ministry of the church. Disciples are individuals who are in love with God and with His people (Ephesians 4:15, 1 Corinthians 13),

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who are actively engaged in ministry within the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:12,16; 1 Corinthians 12; Romans 12), no longer tossed about by false doctrine (Ephesians 4:14), and are reaching out to those who need to develop a relationship with God (Ephesians 4:16). These individuals function in unity within the body of Christ to accomplish God's will and purpose for the local body (Ephesians 4:13).

Obviously not everybody in the church has achieved the status of a fully functioning disciple. Each of us is in a unique stage of spiritual development. This gives teachers a great deal of job security. It also gives them a clear destination. Teachers can't be satisfied with simply exploring the spiritual map and talking about the journey. They must lead their students on a spiritual field trip that will help them move toward spiritual maturity ...

Teachers that work with teens can challenge their students to expand their knowledge beyond the basics. No longer are [high school] teachers satisfied to teach adding and subtracting. Now they challenge their students to use those principles to learn abstract concepts taught in algebra, geometry, trigonometry, and calculus. During the teen years, students must be challenged to think outside the box to determine how all they have learned before can impact situations they will face in the future.

Christian educators often lose the respect and attention of their teen students because they approach their students in the same manner they would approach elementary children if they were teaching them. They tell Bible stories simply repeating the biblical account, they repeat basic Bible information that has been mastered in the earlier years, and they expect their students to embrace each doctrine they teach without question.

Young teens may accept this approach, but as students arrive at the upper reaches of their teen years, they find this approach boring and unfulfilling. Teens want to explore beyond the basic story line to see if it is true and determine if it has practical relevance to their lives. If the principles of the story can't work for them, they really have little desire to embrace them. That's why a resource like *Engaging the Soul of Youth Culture* is great for helping teachers understand youth culture and reach teens more effectively with the gospel.

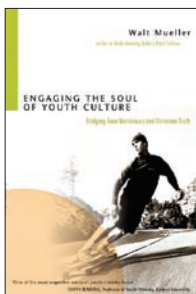
The key word for working with teens is relevance. If you can't answer the "so what" question when you are preparing a lesson, you need to go back and do more preparation. The "so what" question basically asks, "So what difference will this lesson make in the real-world life of the students I teach?" You'll notice that *Radiant Life* curriculum gives you a head-start by answering these three big questions at the beginning of each lesson: "What's the big idea? Why does it matter? How do I live it?"

Teens are at the age when they can be challenged and they will challenge you. Don't feel offended if your teens question the Bible and the values you hold. They are in a process of developing their own beliefs based on their understanding of Scripture. Be careful to honestly share the biblical text and encourage your students to grapple with its implications in their lives. **D**

*Find out more about how to connect with teens through their learning styles in the rest of Clancy's book, *Reach All Your Students*. See below for details.

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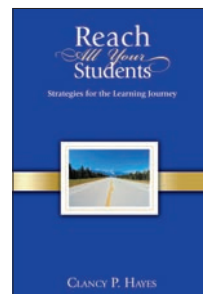
TEACHER'S TOOLBOX



Engaging the Soul of Youth Culture

Arm yourself with a deeper understanding of the way teens think and communicate, and you'll be better equipped to effectively reach them with the gospel. This resource lets you grasp youth culture better by analyzing the words and symbols today's teens use and translating what they are saying to adults.

Paper. 240 pages. 03LK0555 \$17.00



Reach All Your Students

Discover how to disciple every student. Clancy P. Hayes expertly explains the four main learning styles—visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile. By understanding the specific ways your students learn best, you can help each one effectively apply Bible lessons to his or her life. Not only will your confidence grow, but you'll also have a whole class excited about the spiritual journey God has for them.

Paper. 208 pages. 02LK1041 \$9.99