

## ***How can golf help us with Disciple making in the local church?***

"Where's the flag" my mother used to say to me when we played golf. She wanted to know where the target was for her golf swing. The humorous element to this is that I knew she could only hit it about 50 yards at a time. Nevertheless, she demonstrated what all golfers want to know in golf. Where is the target, I am hitting the ball toward? "Where's the flag?"

The illustration of golf as a picture of disciple-making in the local church is brought to life by the NavPress book by Ron Bennett called Intentional Disciple Making. In golf, you have mainly three types of clubs. You have the driver for knocking the ball a long way down the fairway. Now there are several types of drivers depending on the situation. Then you have "irons" which have different angles to place the ball at different distances close to the green. Once you are on the green then a different kind of club comes to play for accurately hitting the ball toward the hole which is called a putter. It is very challenging to play golf with only one of these kinds of clubs. You learn to coordinate these three types of clubs to be able to score better by getting to the hole in the least number of strokes. In his book, Ron draws a parallel between golf and disciple-making in the local church.



The Driver in golf represents the large group meeting in a church. This is a very important meeting because it gives the people in the church a sense of unity as they worship the Lord through music and teaching of the Scriptures. Sometimes the pastor knows how effective the message was and sometimes he wonders. Most research shows that the people listening to the message do not remember it 24 hours after the message unless they take notes and discuss it.

The irons in golf represent the smaller group meetings such as classes or small groups. It is in this meeting that people get closer to each other and the leaders get to know the people in their group and learn where they are in their journey with Christ. Sometimes in these groups, we learn where people are in their maturity, but we don't know how to help them take their next step. It is not an intentional disciple-making environment. If the leader knows how to get close, then he learns where the person is on their journey and then knows what to do to ask the right questions to help them take their next step into maturity.





The putter represents the one to one relationship a person has with another person in which they both agree on the target that they believe God wants them to grow toward. That target is illustrated by God's purpose in Isaiah 46:10 in which the prophet writes "I know the end from the beginning says the ancient of days, my purpose will stand." What is God's purpose for us? That is explained in Romans 8:29 where the apostle writes "For whom he foreknew he predestined to be conformed to the image of his son" God's purpose is to see men and

women be like Jesus. Jesus was a disciple maker. I like to say that God wants us to become Christ-like Disciple Makers. This illustrates the target God wants for each of us. When we meet with people, we learn in the one to one time to know what their need is and the areas of life that are not like Christ and we sow scripture into their life and water it so that God will bring the growth. This would be in the golf illustration called "putting". When we putt in golf you always putt till it goes in the hole or it reaches the target.

Recently, a church education leader who had been led to Christ in the Viet Nam wartime called me up and began to describe his church. He wanted his church to become a disciple-making body of believers, but he wasn't sure how to change it. He had been discussing this with his pastor. We set up a phone appointment and I explained the golf illustration of disciple-making in the local church. When I was done, I didn't think I had done the best job of describing the situation. They hung up and I wondered if they would call me again. 10 minutes later the education leader Bob called and was excited. He told me that the pastor had asked him how the golf game (disciple making) was going to the church. He told me that he told the pastor "the people in our church don't know where the hole is." That answer impacted me greatly. If there is one thing in golf that is critical to success is to know where the hole is which is marked by a flag. If you as a pastor or leader want to be successful in disciple-making in your local church, you are going to need to know where the "hole" is in your church efforts. Likewise, your leaders and members are going to be very clear where the "Hole" is. Then we can ask "are all the efforts of the church from the large group meeting to the small groups to the one to one aiming at the flag of developing Christ Like Disciple Makers?"



If that is where you are in your ministry in your local church, then this book "Coach the Bible" is designed to help you develop Christ-like disciple-makers. Along the way, you will be able to

evaluate your structures and determine how they are contributing to reaching your goal of raising up mature Christlike Disciple Makers. Can you envision that happening in your church?

The first step is to evaluate where you are in your own path of maturity. We will be looking at a path of maturity that will measure your commitment to Christ, your convictions from the Scriptures that solidify your daily actions. You will be able to explore your character and your competence to make disciples. You will be given scriptures and case studies to guide you personally in your growth. When these things are in your life then you will be able to turn around and help others by knowing where they are in their journey of following Christ. When you know that you can learn the "Putting Illustration" on page 9 and develop your skills of "putting" into another person's life. Just as the Scriptures says in I Cor. 3. Paul says, I planted, Apollos watered but God brings the growth. The exciting adventure of investing time and Scripture in someone else's life is most exciting because to collaborate along with God in helping people grow to be like Christ.

How is the golf game in your church? What is working well and what needs improvement? Is it clear where the "hole" is? Usually, you can tell whether it is clear by what the church is measuring. If you are measuring attendance, or income or something else and not the development of "Christlike Disciple Makers" then where will things in your church end up? This book has 52 examples and sets of questions to help you in your one to one ministry. Imagine along with you your leaders having Scripture in their hearts and hands to invest in another fellow believer to help them grow toward the image of Christ. This is the most exciting divine encounter to see God use us to bring growth in another person.

May this tool be of help to you in your most important work. This is for every believer. God can use you to invest Scripture in other's lives. Start by using the assessment tool and then see the Scriptures listed and turn to the page on that area. Read the case study, the scripture; then answer the questions if they were being asked to you or you can use the assessment to evaluate where someone else is in their journey. Then you can lead them to the Scripture that will produce transformation and life change.

We coach how to use the tool in your church ministry or other life ministry situations. Contact Navigator Church Ministries or NavPress to gain access to personal coaching in these areas of ministry.