

Discipleship and the Delta Model

Helping someone else grow using the Delta Model

By: Mike Wilkerson

What do you actually *do* in your "quiet time"?

Do you read a large chunk of scripture as your mind wanders to and fro? How much scripture do you have to read for you to reach your "quota" of scripture reading and move on for the day? How does your quiet time actually build your relationship with God?

Now, imagine you are discipling someone else, helping him or her learn to spend time in the Word, among other things. What would you recommend that he actually do? Just read and pray? Then what? If he's never experienced this on his own before, how will he know how to do this effectively?

And what about those other things? Dealing with lust? Anger? Patience? Assurance of Salvation? How do you structure those conversations to be intentional, fruitful, and biblical?

Here are some reasons why The Delta Model can be a helpful tool in the discipler's tool belt.

- 1) It is completely Bible based, requiring no additional curricula, books, or materials that wouldn't already be use for routine Bible study.
- 2) The template of questions is short and easy to remember.
- 3) The model drills down into the kind of inner life issues that are important for the discipler and disciple to discuss.
- 4) The model is biased toward action, repentance, and change, rather than simply information gathering and interpretation.
- 5) The model is "self tuning," meaning that it generates very personalized and timely reflection wherever, whenever, and with whomever applies it. This is because it begins with the question "(given this passage) what does God want *from me*?" One affect of this self tuning trait is that the same model could be used with a new believer or leader as well as with very mature ones. What changes with maturity will simply be the level of discourse and insight that surfaces as a result of using the model as a probe.
- 6) A conversation about one Delta "thread" is just about the right size and scope for one, compact, one-on-one meeting.
- 7) Using the same model for personal devotions, one-on-one discipleship, and group meetings helps one to build momentum and rhythm asking these sorts of questions in all of those settings. Thus, it's a leveraged way of helping small group leaders lead their groups better.

So, for example, a discipleship curriculum could consist simply of a standard set of passages that make for good bite sized Bible studies on standard themes. The discipler may customize or supplement this standard set with passages that are particularly timely choices for a given disciple. The disciple would study each passage and walk through the Delta Model exercise for himself. Then he would meet with his discipler to talk about it. The discipler would be trained to listen to the disciple's responses and ask appropriate follow-up questions, and pose challenges and encouragements.

The Delta Model in a Nutshell

For a full treatment of the Delta Model, see the document entitled *The Delta Model*. A brief overview is included here for convenience.

The Delta Model is a template based approach to guiding bible application personally or group discussions. Any given biblical text or topic can be “poured” into the template of questions to produce rich, meaningful, relational, biblical dialogue that results in greater understanding of God and personal transformation.

The following is the standard template of Delta Model questions. Each question builds upon the previous question. Each of the questions aims to stimulate a specific kind of thought—noted in parentheses--which you can read about in *The Delta Model*.

1. What is the **will of God**? (*Understanding*)
2. In light of God's will, **what is He like**? (*Understanding*)
3. What are practical ways that we can **put the will of God into practice**? (*Application*)
4. In light of God's will, what are **practical ways that we blow it**? (*Application*)
5. What **thoughts** are revealed by these actions? (*Analysis*)
6. What **beliefs about God** are revealed by these actions? (*Analysis*)
7. **How are you doing** in this area? (*Evaluation*)