Unit 3:

Relationships and Discipleship

Contextualizing Our Relationships

**Phase One:
Who are You?**

Barrier:
Are you one of "them"?

Mutual satisfaction, acceptance, and trust

Barrier:
Are you enough like me?

**Phase Two:
Let's Be Friends!**

Barrier:
Are we willing to change for each other?

Emotional openness and appropriate ways to resolve conflict

Barrier:
Do you (or I) want to work towards a good (or more intimate) friendship?

**Phase Three:
Intimate Friendship**
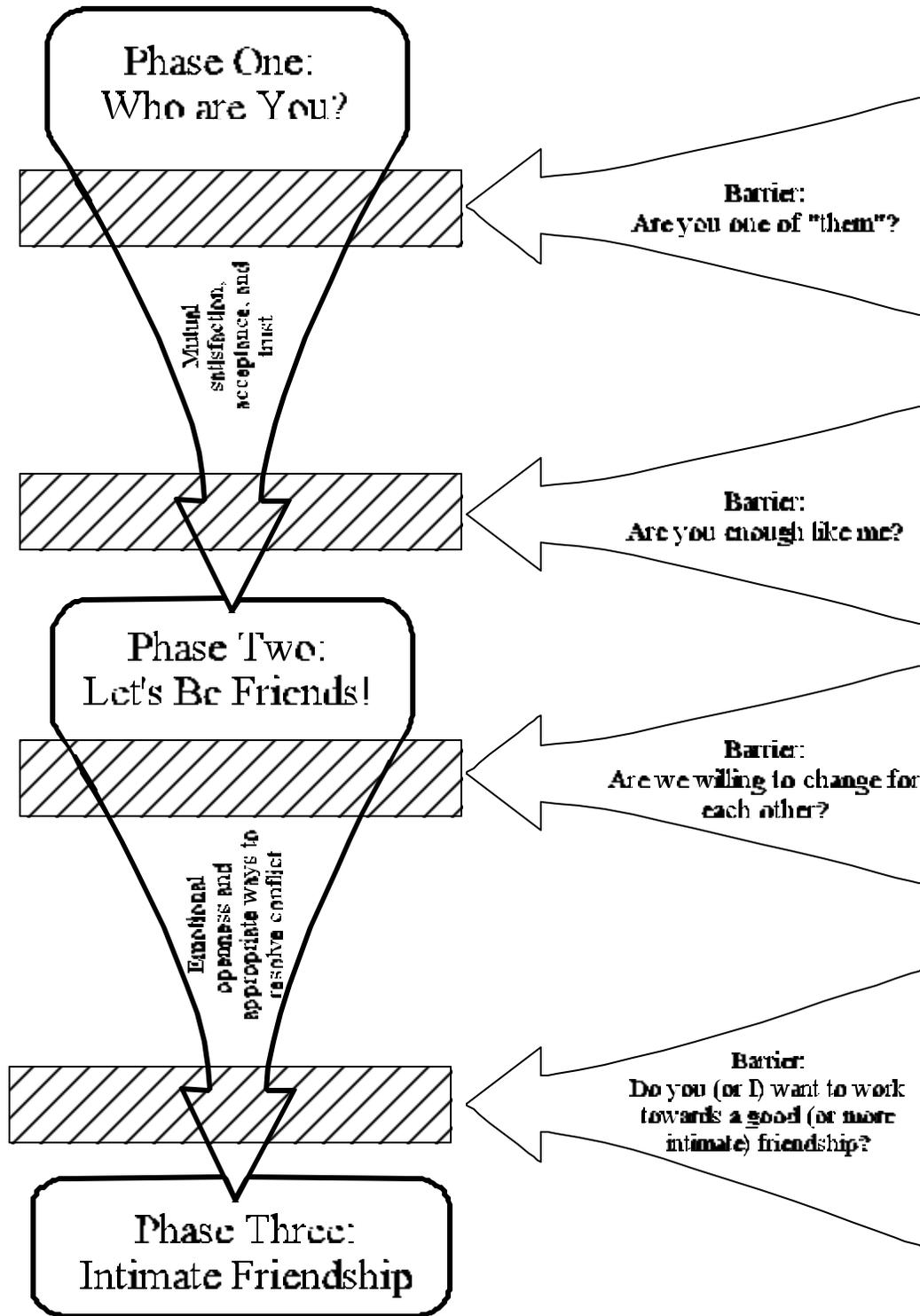
Phase One: Initial Uncertainty

1. The approach-avoidance factor in intercultural relationships:

    a. J. H. Turner suggests seven basic needs shared by humans that motivate us to interact with others (from Gudykunst and Kim, *Communicating with Strangers*, p. 190):

        i.   Our need for a sense of security as a human being
        ii.   Our need for a sense of trust (this need involves issues of predictability; "I trust you will behave as I think you will")
        iii. Our need for a sense of group inclusion
        iv.   Our need to avoid diffuse anxiety
        v.   Our need for a sense of a common shared world
        vi.   Our need for symbolic or material gratification
        vii. Our need to sustain our self-conception.

        Question: How do these proposed needs relate to the biblical perspective?

    b. Anxiety in developing relationships

        Though friendships are the means by which many of the above needs are met, we all share the experience of encountering anxiety when we enter into new relationships. One early goal of any relationship is to reduce that anxiety through developing shared communication patterns with the other. While this is moderately important when communicating with those of our own culture, it becomes very important in intercultural communication.

    Combining our need to develop relationships as foundational to our self-conception with our need to avoid uncertainty yields an approach-avoidance motivation. Thus, while we want to develop relationships with others in the intercultural setting, doing this results in greater uncertainty and anxiety for us, and we may tend to avoid them as a result.

2. In this phase of the relationship, we tend to base all of our judgments on our respective cultural maps. Since we have no personal history of relating to the potential friend, we base initial impressions on what we perceive to be his/her culture, ethnic identity, etc.

3. How do we reduce uncertainty, especially in the intercultural setting?

    Every culture have established its own general procedures for reducing uncertainty and anxiety in the process of friendship/relational development. That strategy is built on the culture's values and understanding of humanity.

Consider, for example, what might be suggested as strategies for reducing uncertainty in cultures in Hofstede's work related values taxonomy:

Power Distance	Large	Small
	Determine your 'power relation' to the other Know the other's title, and use it appropriately.	Give the other's ideas equal weight to your own. Respect the other's freedom to make their own decisions.
Uncertainty Avoidance	High	Low
	Move to new levels in the relationship only when you are sure of your footing. A general schedule for the relationship is acceptable. Prepare to work hard at the relationship. Avoid disagreement.	Take risks in the relationship. Avoid rigid scheduling--be spontaneous. Allow disagreements as a source of creative energy in the relationship.
Individualism/ Collectivism	Individualist	Collectivist
	Communicate frequently; ask questions. Allow necessary time to develop the relationship. Mutual attraction is important. Give every person time for privacy. Allow for individual opinions.	Use leading statements rather than direct questions. Discover the background (including family). Sharing responsibility for decisions, actions, etc. with the friend is important. Privacy is not important; shared harmony is.
Masculine/ Feminine	Feminine	Masculine
	Develop warmth and intimacy based on mutual respect. Overt competition should be avoided. Personal fulfillment is important in the rela-tionship. Freedom to share on personal matters is important.	Make sure the other is acceptable for your "place" in society before establishing a friendship. Some healthy competition is good for the relationship. Though we have friends, we should not completely depend on them.

4.   To move from this phase to the next (friendly relations), you need to experience mutual satisfaction, acceptance, and basic trust. This can be accomplished through appropriate relational development strategies, which will vary from one intercultural setting to another.

Phase Two: Friendly Relations

1.   During this phase, you will be able to co-exist at a certain level of comfort with the other person. However, if you desire to move on to a friendship, you must move beyond this. While you will still place a major reliance on cultural maps, you now have a history of relating in which you have discovered through individual observations who the other person is. As a result, your reliance on cultural maps lessens.

2.   In order to move into a genuine friendship, you must continue the mutual satisfaction, acceptance, and trust built in the first phase of the relationship. In addition, you must now experience emotional sharing/openness and appropriate conflict resolution strategies.

3.   One barrier to reaching the third phase of friendship is that of similarity. The more you are like someone, the less anxiety and uncertainty you will experience in developing an intimate relationship. Dodd has captured a means of explaining this through proposing the *homophily* principle (*Dynamics*, pp. 229-39; see also Gudykunst and Kim, *Communicating with Strangers*, pp. 197-99), which is the idea that we tend to share information with similar persons.

As could be expected, the more alike we are, the more readily information is received and the more frequently persuasion occurs. One proposed way to measure the amount of homophily is the Scale of Perceived Homophily (adapted from Dodd, *Dynamics*, p. 238; lower scores indicate similarity, higher dissimilarity):

Attitude Dimension		
Thinks like me	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Does not think like me
Behaves like me	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Does not behave like me
Similar to me	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Different from me
Like me	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Unlike me
Background Dimension		
From social class similar to mine	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	From social class different from mine
Economic situation like mine	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Economic situation different from mine
Status like mine	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Status different from mine
Background similar to mine	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Background different from mine
Value Dimension		
Morals like mine	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Morals unlike mine
Sexual attitudes like mine	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Sexual attitudes unlike mine
Shares my values	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Doesn't share my values
Treats people as I do	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Doesn't treat people as I do
Appearance Dimension		
Looks similar to me	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Looks different from me
Same size that I am	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Different size than I am
Appearance like mine	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Appearance unlike mine
Resembles me	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Doesn't resemble me

Question: Dodd does not specifically deal with the bond that all Christians have, namely being in Christ. How does this enhance the possibility of significant friendships among cross-cultural Christians?

4.   Another significant barrier is that of mutual accommodation.

5.   A final barrier that may be mentioned is that of a conscious movement towards intimacy.

Phase Three: Intimacy/Friendship

1.   Cultures define intimacy differently. It might be helpful for us to note some characteristics of American friendships (from Stewart and Bennett, *American Cultural Patterns*, pp. 100-3):

   a.   People choose their friends based on spontaneity, mutual attraction, and warm personal feelings. In contrast, Japanese friendship patterns involve obligation, duty, and ritualized interaction.

   b.   Relations with friends are kept separate from work or social obligations.

   c.   Friendships are formed in shared activities--doing things together. Our friendships form around the activities: we may have church friends, school friends, bowling friends, party friends, etc. Generally, keeping things compartmentalized allows for a large number of friendships, none of which is necessarily intimate (especially for American men).

2.   Developing intimate friendships (or discipleship): Building **trust** (from Mayers, *Christianity Confronts Culture*, pp. 5-73):

   a.   The *prior question of trust* (PQT) is the question asked before all other questions:

> IS WHAT I AM DOING, THINKING OR SAYING
> BUILDING OR UNDERMINING TRUST?

   b.   *Developing the trust bond* calls attention to levels and stages of trust involvement, monitoring the relationship, and the transfer of trust.

   c.   The *acceptance of self* permits the person to accept himself as he is at any given moment, to understand his own strengths and weaknesses, and to be willing to live with them. This then prepares him to accept others, including God.

   d.   The *acceptance of the other* is the application of self-acceptance to others so that one can

interact and accept them as fully responsible members of their own life-way.

e.   *Mutual respect* involves balanced reciprocity in interpersonal relations, leaving both persons valid and intact. The following should be used as a check list to remind us of practices that confirm mutual respect (from pp. 67-8):

    i.   Acceptance of the limitation of living standards of each culture. As one gains knowledge of the limits of each living standard, one increasingly accepts positive aspects of each.

    ii.   Lack of criticism of negative aspects of each culture. Differences are not necessarily inferior. It is wise to examine the reasons why differences exist and to be sensitive to them.

    iii.   Ability to make comparisons between the cultures without accompanying negative implications. This is expressed in positive appreciation of the other culture along with one's own.

    iv.   Real contentment of lifestyle is experienced by each one residing there. This does not mean abandoning oneself or one's personality. One's security and satisfaction there is genuine.

    v.   Easy fluency with the language and idiom of each culture. Language is a living means of communication and takes time to master--especially the humor expressed in language.

    vi.   Control of righteous indignation involving practices considered wrong, until change comes about via converted members of the culture.

    vii.   Expression of humility within the context of either culture one is involved with, not flaunting one's own experience within the crosscultural setting.

    viii. Ability to distinguish between personal tastes, historic backgrounds, and moral issues (absolutes).

    ix.   Understanding and practicing the ethical code within the other culture without strain and to the degree one's own conscience permits. When one's conscience does not permit, the ability to express this in ways that highlight the issue but do not alienate the person.

    x.   Understanding the basic means of communication in each culture and handling this

effectively, irrespective of age, sex, status, etc.

Discipleship in Cross-Cultural Context

Discipleship in a New Culture: Some Preliminary Issues

1. Friendship: we assume that the ideas noted in the notes on cross-cultural relationships carry over into the discipleship relationship.

2. Curriculum: should the approach to developing a discipleship curriculum be "content" or "needs" (either "real" or "felt") centered, or some combination of these? (E.g., do we teach the Bible, or do we teach students?)

3. Cultural models of discipleship: within the new cultural setting, are there appropriate cultural models of discipleship that can be borrowed and used within the Christian context?

4. Teaching methodologies: what models may be employed?

5. Multiplication: a major goal of discipleship is reproducibility--how may that be inculcated within the cultural setting?

6. Discipleship in the organizational setting: some obstacles to consider (adapted from Kathy E. Kram, "Creating Conditions that Encourage Mentoring", in *The 1985 Annual: Developing Human Resources*, ed. J. William Pfeiffer and Leonard G. Goodstein (San Diego: University Associates, 1985), p. 240):

Feature	Potential Obstacles
Reward System	1. Mission "promotion" is based solely on bottom-line results (however the mission defines these) 2. No recognition exists for developing nationals or building relationships that provide mentoring functions. 3. No appropriate "rewards" or "incentives" are offered to mid-career missionaries who might provide mentoring functions; they may be come stagnant, resentful, and withdrawn. 4. Relationship-building efforts are viewed as a distraction from the work (however the "work" is defined).
Work Design	1. The design of jobs provides little opportunity for junior missionaries or nationals to interact with senior missionaries. 2. Job definitions do not include the responsibility to provide mentoring functions either within or without the mission. 3. Tasks are highly individualized, requiring little or no collaboration among those who may have complementary relationship needs.
Performance-Management Systems	1. No performance-managements systems exist; thus, there is little opportunity or encouragement to discuss objectives, performance, and potential. 2. Formal systems exist but are not used effectively; little coaching or counseling is provided. 3. Formal systems exist, but mission members do not have the interpersonal and/or intercultural skills or the motivation to use them.
Organizational Culture	1. Values and rituals support "results" and discount the importance of relationships in spiritual and/or career development. 2. The leaders of the mission are concerned with short-term results and do not model or reward concerns for personnel development. 3. Trust among mission members, particularly at different hierarchical levels (or across cultural boundaries), is low.

Individuals' Assumptions, Attitudes, and Skills	1. Mission members are not aware of the importance of mentoring in spiritual and/or career development.
	2. Mission members lack the interpersonal and/or intercultural skills to initiate, build, and maintain supportive relationships.
	3. Self-confidence is low; junior missionaries (or nationals) are afraid to ask for guidance and coaching, or senior missionaries are too unsure of themselves to offer advice.

Biblical Considerations

1. Roots for the concept of discipleship.

   a. Linguistic root: *manthano* ("to learn"):

      i. Basic sense: to direct one's mind to something

      ii. The use "consistently implies an intellectual process that always has external effects and involves a conscious or unconscious intellectual initiative" (Rengstorf, TDNT Abridged, 552)

   b. The concept in the OT: though the concept of learning was present, the idea of discipleship as we see it in the NT is almost non-existent. Though there were schools of prophets, the term "disciple" for that relationship was not used.

   c. The concept in secular Greek:

      i. Apprentice
      ii. One who went with a teacher to learn from him.
      iii. One who belonged to a certain school of philosophy.
      iv. One who adhered to the teaching of another (even if the other was long dead).

   d. The Rabbinic concept: a student of Scripture and its interpretation under the strong guidance of a teacher in the path of that teacher's tradition. The student usually chose the teacher. The term used by the rabbis was *talmid* rather than *mathetes*, and it was the idea of the *talmid* which we see carried over into the NT.

   e. The noun form (*mathetes*) is in the most general sense a pupil. It implies both a relationship with a particular teacher and an intellectual link with those who are distant in time (e.g., Socrates was a *mathetes* of Homer).

2. The range of uses in the NT.

   a. It always involved attachment to a person, most often directly to Jesus

b.   Disciples of people other than Christ.

  i.   Disciples of John the Baptist (Matt. 8:14, Mark 2:18, Luke 11:1, John 3:25).
  ii.   Disciples of the Pharisees (Matt. 22:16, Mark 2:18).
  iii. Disciples of Moses (John 9:28).
  iv.   Disciples of Paul (Acts 9:25)?
  v.   Disciples of false shepherds (Acts 20:30).

c.   Disciples of Christ

  i.   Disciples in secret (Joseph of Arimathea, John 19:38).
  ii.   Followers of Jesus during His earthly ministry (John 6:60-66)
  iii. Christians in general (Acts 14:28, 15:10, 19:9)
  iv.   The twelve apostles (Mt. 10:1)

3.   Defining discipleship: discipleship is the process of making disciples! What is a disciple?

a.   NT characteristics:

  i.   Follows the general characteristics of *talmid*, but Jesus is LORD, not just a rabbi.
        The primary task is not just transmission of His teachings, but witness to His
        Lordship.

  ii.   People who have a deep, abiding commitment to a person (Christ), not a philosophy.

    (1)   They hold to Jesus' teaching (Jn. 8:31-32)
    (2)   They love one another (Jn. 13:35), and help each other (Mt. 10:42)
    (3)   They bear fruit for Christ (Jn. 15:8) and are partners with Him in service (Luke
          5:1-11)
    (4)   They are to make other disciples (Mt. 28:18-20)
    (5)   They are the family of Jesus (Mt. 12:46-50)
    (6)   They are to put Jesus ahead of all other earthly commitments (Mt. 8:21-22;
          Luke 14:26-27), which involves a call to suffering for the sake of the Gospel
          (Mt. 10:17ff).

b.   Definitions from more recent evangelical literature:

  i.   "A true disciple is one who has a love for the person of Christ, confidence in the
        word of Christ, and is completely committed to Christ in service and obedience" (J.
        Dwight Pentecost, *Design for Discipleship*, p. 20).

ii.   "May we become disciples who are: (1) committed to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, (2) reliant on the power of God, (3) guided by the Holy Spirit, (4) absorbed in evangelizing the lost, and (5) devoted to building the saved, that in everything God might be further glorified through us." (Leroy Eims, *Disciples in Action*, p. 320).

iii.   "A disciple is a Christian who is growing in conformity to Christ, is achieving fruit in evangelism, and is working in order to conserve his fruit." (Gary W. Kuhne, *The Dynamics of Discipleship Training*, p. 13).

iv.   "Characteristics of a progressing disciple include: (1) a supreme love for Jesus Christ, (2) fervent love for others, (3) denial of self and choosing the cross, (4) a life spent following Christ, (5) continuance in His word, and (6) a forsaking of all to follow Him." (Ron Jenson, "Gearing the Local Church for Discipleship").

c.   Definitions of discipleship also vary:

i.   The three levels of discipleship (D-1, D-2, D-3) of Donald McGavran (*Understanding Church Growth*, Fully Revised ed., p. 169):

(1)   Level D-1: The turning a non-Christian society for the first time to Christ.
(2)   Level D-2: The turning of any individual from non-faith to faith in Christ and his incorporation in a church.
(3)   Level D-3: Teaching an existing Christian as much of the truths of the Bible as possible.

ii.   Ron Jenson distinguishes between technical discipleship (one-on-one) and corporate discipleship (in the local congregation, from *Dynamics of Church Growth*, pp 158-60):

> Technical discipleship describes the intense concentration of attention on a man or small group of men for the purpose of spiritual growth and leadership development. Technical discipleship uses Christ's training methods--instruction, demonstration, involvement, and evaluation. . . .
>
>   The focus in technical discipleship is on the one-to-one relationship or the one-to-three-or-four relationship (small group) of the one who makes disciples and those who learn. A person looks to another person for instruction, counsel, training and fellowship.

(1)   Corporate Discipleship:

> Although this kind of concentration on leadership (technical discipleship) is necessary, we do not believe that technical discipleship is the New Testament model for discipleship in its fullest sense. God has designed the internal climate and program of the church in such a way to disciple those who are exposed to and involved in the church. . . .
>
> God has initiated two processes in the local church which result in the discipling of its members. Without them, discipleship in the fullest sense cannot occur.

(a) The first process that God uses in the church is the exercise of spiritual gifts.

(b) The second process inherent in the local church is . . . the full range of the "one another" expressions found in the Epistles (including caring, exhorting, rebuking, praying, encouraging, and stimulating). The types of one another commands are found in the following chart:

Exhortations	Love one another (John 13:14, 22, 34, 35, 15:12, 17, Rom. 12:10, 13:8, 1 Thess. 3:12, 4:9, 1 Pet. 1:22, 1 John 3:11, 3:23, 4:7, 4:11, 2 John 5); Prefer one another (Rom. 12:10); Have the same mind towards each other (Rom. 12:16); Pursue things that build up one another (Rom. 14:19); Accept one another (Rom. 15:7); Greet one another (Rom. 16:16, 1 Cor. 16:20, 2 Cor. 13:12, 1 Pet. 5:14); Serve one another (Gal. 5:13); Bear one another's burdens (Gal. 6:2); Be kind to one another, tender-hearted (Eph. 4:32a); Forgive one another (Eph. 4:32b, Col. 3:13b); Be subject to one another in the fear of Christ (Eph. 5:21); Regard one another as more important than yourself (Phil. 2:3); Bear with one another (Col. 3:13a); Comfort one another with words of the return of Christ (1 Thess. 4:18); Encourage one another (1 Thes. 5:11a); Build up one another (1 Thes. 5:11b); Seek that which is good for one another and for all men (1 Thes. 5:15); Consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds (Heb. 10:24); Confess your sins to one another (James 5:16a); Pray for one another (James 5:16b); Be hospitable to one another without complaint (1 Pet. 4:9); Clothe yourselves with humility towards one another (1 Pet. 5:5)
Prohibitions	Do not judge one another (Rom. 14:13a); Do not put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way (Rom. 14:13b); Do not lie to one another (Col. 3:9); Do not speak against one another (James 4:11); Do not complain against one another (James 5:9)
Truth Statements	We can be encouraged by each other's faith (Rom. 1:12); We are individually members of one another as part of the body of Christ (Rom. 12:5, Eph. 4:25); If we walk in the light, we have fellowship with one another (1 John 1:7); If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us (1 John 4:12)
Paul's Hope	May God grant us to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus (Rom. 15:5); There should be no division in the body, the members should have the same care for one another as do the members of our physical bodies (1 Cor. 12:22-26)

4. The goal of discipleship: **empowering people to progress towards completion in Christ**

a. Anderson builds the following discipleship chart on the framework of Colossians 2:6-10 (Anderson, *Victory over the Darkness*, pp. 230-1):

	Level 1: Identity *Complete in Christ* Col. 2:10		Level 2: Maturity *Built up in Christ* Col. 2:7		Level 3: Walk *Walk in Christ* Col. 2:6	
	Conflict	Growth	Conflict	Growth	Conflict	Growth
Spiritual	Lack of salvation or assurance (Eph. 2:1-3)	Child of God (1 John 3:1-3; 5:11-13)	Walking according to the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21)	Walking according to the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23)	Insensitive to the Spirit's leading (Heb. 5:11-14)	Led by the Spirit (Rom. 8:14)
Rational	Darkened under-standing (Eph. 4:18)	Renewed mind (Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:23)	Wrong beliefs or philosophy of life (Col. 2:8)	Handling accurately the Word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15)	Pride (1 Cor. 8:1)	Adequate, equipped for every good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17)
Emotional	Fear (Matt. 10:26-33)	Freedom (Gal. 5:1)	Anger (Eph. 4:31), anxiety (1 Pet. 5:7), depression (2 Cor. 4:1-18)	Joy, peace, pa-tience (Gal. 5:22)	Discouragement and sorrow (Gal. 6:9)	Contentment (Phil. 4:11)
Volitional	Rebellion (1 Tim. 1:9)	Submissive (Rom. 13:1, 2)	Lack of self-control, compul-sive (1 Cor. 3:1-3)	Self-control (Gal. 5:23)	Undisciplined (2 Thess. 3:7, 11)	Disciplined (1 Tim. 4:7, 8)
Relational	Rejection (Eph. 2:1-3)	Acceptance (Rom. 5:8; 15:7)	Unforgiveness (Col. 3:1-3)	Forgiveness (Eph. 4:32)	Selfishness (Phil. 2:1-5; 1 Cor. 10:24)	Brotherly love (Rom. 12:10; Phil. 2:1-5)

b.   Four mutually-interlocking aspects may be noted:

  i.   Establishing identity (Who am I or who are we in Christ?)

  ii.   Understanding God (Who is God?)

  iii.   Understanding truth (What is truth, how is it to be discovered?)

  iv.   Understanding growth and development (What does it mean to progress towards completion in Christ?) What do we see about growth in the NT? The following chart summarizes the major emphases:

Growth in the New Testament

Growth in our relationship with God	Individually	Growth in . . .
		  faith (2 Cor. 10:15; 2 Thes. 1:3; 2 Pet. 1:5-8)
		  knowledge of God (Col. 1:10)
		  grace and knowledge of Christ (2 Pet. 3:18)
		  all aspects into Him (Eph. 4:15)
		  respect to salvation (1 Pet. 2:2)

	Corporately	Growth . . .
		    as the body of Christ (Col. 2:19)
		    into a holy temple in the Lord (Eph. 2:21)
		    in giving thanks to God (2 Cor. 4:15)

Growth in godliness	Individually	Growth in . . .
		    faith, moral excellence, knowledge, self-control, perseverance,
		    godliness, brotherly kindness and Christian love (2 Pet. 1:5-8)
		    walking as we ought to walk (1 Thes. 4:1)
		    behaving properly towards outsiders (1 Thes. 4:9-12)
		    love (Eph. 4:16, Phil. 1:9, 1 Thes. 3:12, 2 Thes. 1:3)
		    generosity (2 Cor. 8:7; 9:10-11)

	Corporately	Growth in . . .
		    edifying the church (1 Cor. 14:12)
		    the work of the Lord (1 Cor. 15:58)
		    love of outsiders (1 Thes. 3:12)

Discipleship in Cross-Cultural Context:

These aspects must be engaged in discipleship in all cultures, but the means of engaging them in a discipleship setting will vary from culture to culture as well as from group to group within a culture.

1. Discipleship always takes place in the context of relationships.

2. The four aspects of movement towards completion in Christ do not have to be worked through sequentially (e.g., monochronic!)--they can be intertwined (polychronic).

3. They do not have to be scheduled, but they are areas that must be developed in the process of discipleship. In cultures where scheduling communicates a business relationship, we can communicate a "business" mentality in discipleship by scheduling its development!

4. They are not to be developed only in the cognitive areas (see Anderson's chart above) and are not to be divorced from the real circumstances of life.