

**“DLT and A Discipleship Culture”
Connection 2024 Workshop
Gary Matsdorf
May 29, 2024**



DLT (Discipleship and Leadership Training) is like an umbrella over the Foursquare global family, helping us develop ways to get better 1) at strategic discipleship; 2) at wholistically training leaders; 3) at defining what we believe; and 4) at ministering the baptism with the Holy Spirit, including its empowerment to be effective ambassadors for the kingdom.

As of 2024, DLT has developed these “pathways” to help us reach these goals—

DLT Engine (attached)

DLT Modules (list attached)

DLT Modules’ Methodology of Dialogic Education

- **Empowers indigenous leaders**
- **Facilitates discussing issues otherwise not discussed**
- **Facilitates asking questions of and contextualizing the modules**
- **Creates a framework for discussing and pastorally responding to current social concerns**

Schools of Ministry

Children’s and Teenagers’ Initiative

Culture of Discipleship—

- **Global Council definition of a disciple**
- **Partnership with Equip (formerly Kingdom Story)**
- **Importance of creating a Discipleship Framework**
- **Importance of wholistic discipleship (head/heart/hands)**
- **Equip’s Two-Lane Highway analogy (attached)**

“THE DLT ENGINE”
Gary Matsdorf
January 2024 Revision

DLT (Discipleship and Leadership Training) is the Global Council’s response to the four top findings of the Global Council’s 2016 National Strategic Assessment—the need to globally improve our efforts at **1)** “making disciples” (creating a global culture of discipleship); **2)** training leaders (including both character transformation and skill improvement); **3)** recovering an emphasis on Holy Spirit fullness and moving in Kingdom authority; and **4)** addressing “doctrinal drift” (endeavoring to produce materials that reflect what Foursquare believes globally on key issues and directing Foursquare leaders and disciples to resources where they can ascertain “what we believe” [i.e., what do the *Declaration of Faith* and *Global Distinctives* actually mean when exegeted]).

There are two distinct aspects to DLT that must be separated in our understanding.

- 1. THE THEOLOGY/PHILOSOPHY OF DLT**—DLT is first and foremost a theology and philosophy of making disciples. It is built on the theology of our Four-Stage methodology for fulfilling our missiology. We term this “the DLT Engine.” Whenever we think of DLT, we must think of the “engine”—“making disciples...creating a culture of discipleship and holistically training leaders.” This “engine” emphasizes that as we disciple all Christ-followers, we equip them in “head, heart and hands” to be ever maturing in Christ and giving themselves to kingdom *works of service* (Ephesians 4:12).

The DLT “Engine”—

- a. Emphasizes “character-based discipleship” which affirms the need for ongoing transformation into the image of Christ.
- b. Emphasizes that every Christ-follower has a story and is a leader in their own sphere of influence. Every Christ-follower can be a disciple-maker.
- c. Emphasizes “incarnational learning,” meaning that biblical knowledge and understanding are to show up in one’s life.
- d. Emphasizes that as people are discipled, we will identify those called to “vocational ministry” who will then be appropriately trained.
- e. Recognizes that discipling believers and training leaders are most effective when presented through a combination of three *ongoing* venues—**formal discipleship and training** (classroom-type training), **non-formal discipleship and training** (conferences, seminars, conventions, church services, reading), and **informal discipleship and training** (mentoring, apprenticeship-type training, day-to-day life-based discipleship) *Discipleship and leadership training are only as effective as the practice of all three venues.*

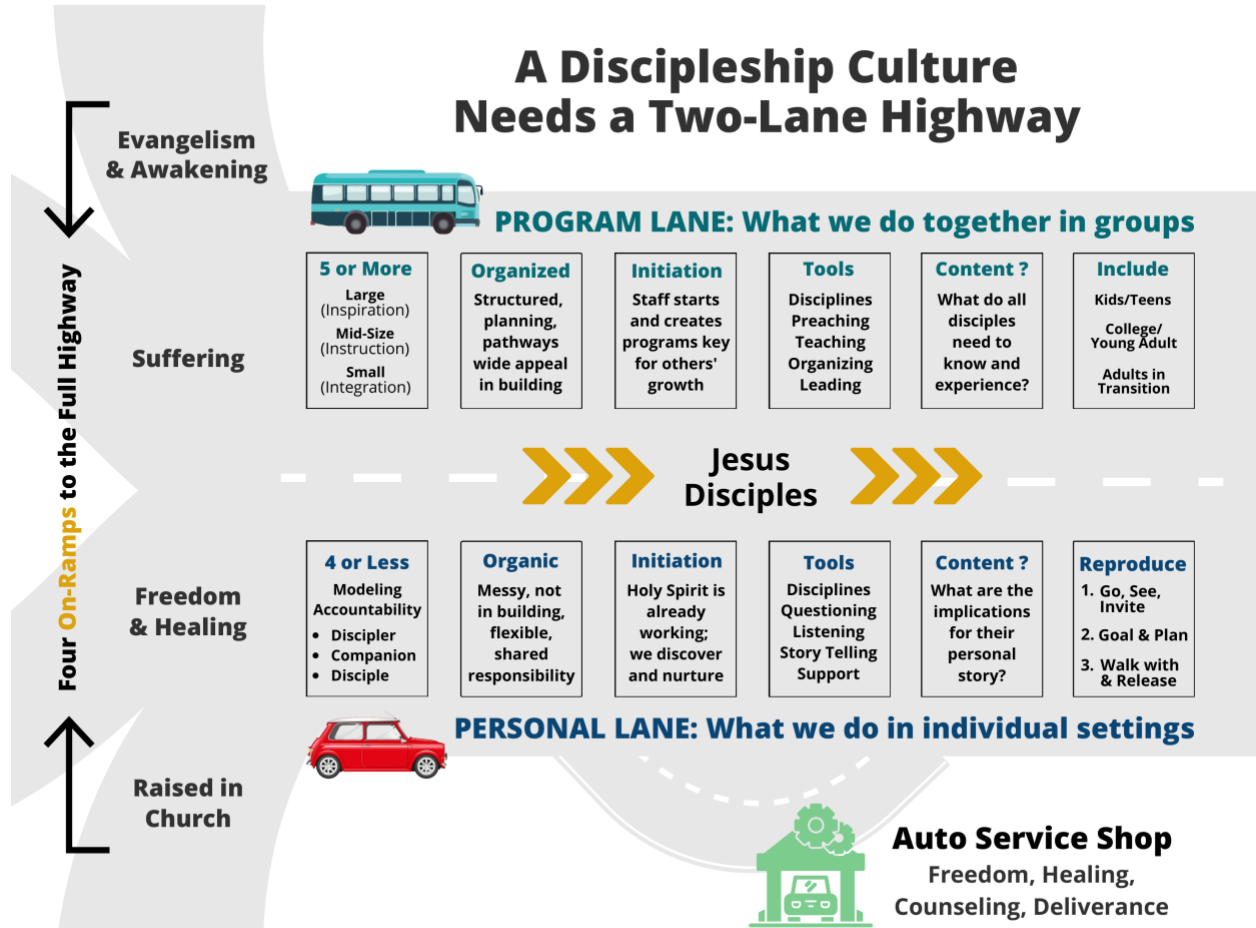
- 2. THE DLT MODULES (Courses)**—in order to address the NSA finding regarding “doctrinal drift,” and to provide content for making disciples and training leaders for nations where content is lacking, DLT has written ten modules. There is also a DLT global writing team which continues to write modules (following the methodology of the original FMI In-Service Leadership Training [ILT]).

The eleven modules to date (January 2024) are—

- *Foundational Understanding of Discipleship/The Four-Stage Missiology*
- *Developing Transformational Leaders/Disciple-Making Made Simple*
- *Hermeneutics*
- *Grace and Spiritual Formation*
- *Church Leadership (updated 2023)*
- *Holy Spirit Fullness (Baptism with the Holy Spirit)*
- *Kingdom of God*
- *Grace and Legalism*
- *Ecclesiology*
- *Family*
- *Evangelism and Global Missions*
- *Biblical Stewardship*
- *Discipling Children and Teenagers*

In addition, churches/nations could add their own modules/courses, or use recognized Foursquare discipleship and leadership training materials, such as *Operation Solid Life*, *Doing What Jesus Did*, *The Journey...* with the hope that “the DLT Engine” would “drive” whatever discipleship or leadership content is used.

A Discipleship Culture Needs a Two-Lane Highway



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DISCIPLESHIP AND LEADERSHIP TRAINING
Biblical Stewardship

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I. Course Description:

This is a study and discussion of biblical stewardship. It will begin with a general overview and biblical theology of stewardship, and then move to several particulars we are called to steward. It will show that stewardship is part of God's original intent for humankind (Genesis 1:28) and includes financial stewardship, relational stewardship, stewardship of one's family, stewardship of the Earth, and stewardship of our time and work. The module will also discuss being content with what God has given each of us to steward.¹

II. Course Objectives:

- A. To develop a general overview of biblical stewardship.**
- B. To develop a theology of biblical stewardship.**
- C. To examine key stewardship lessons in the Parable of the Bags of Gold (Matthew 25).**
- D. To examine key stewardship lessons in the Parable of the Manager (Luke 16).**
- E. To examine stewarding our work.**
- F. To examine financial stewardship.**
- G. To examine the biblical concept of tithing.**
- H. To examine God's promises of provision and being content with one's standard of living.**
- I. To examine principles for stewarding our time well.**
- J. To examine stewarding our relationships.**
- K. To examine our responsibility to steward creation well.**

¹ The writers are aware that several additional areas of stewardship could be addressed but have limited it to these topics in keeping with the overall length of the average DLT module.

G. TITHING²—

- **Tithing is taught in Foursquare’s Article of Faith #22—“We believe that the method ordained by God to sustain His ministry and the spread of the gospel after His command, is ‘tithing.’ It is generally accepted throughout all Foursquare churches, not only as God's method to take care of the material and financial needs of His church, but to raise the spiritual morale of His people to the extent that God must bless them.”**
 - **The statement, “it is generally accepted throughout all Foursquare churches,” is an acknowledgment that specifics of tithing have been interpreted differently throughout Church history, including within Foursquare itself. Overall, however, tithing is an important and powerful core essential which Foursquare embraces, confesses and practices.**
- **Tithing refers to giving one-tenth of one’s profit to the Lord.³**
 - **There is also debate in Christendom (including Foursquare) as to “where” the tithe should be given. The general understanding in Foursquare is that the tithe is to be given to one’s local church with no restrictions or designations, referenced in Malachi as the storehouse (Malachi 3:10).⁴**
- **Tithing first appears in the Bible when Abraham spontaneously gave a tenth of everything (his spoils of war over King Kedorlaomer) to King Melchizedek (Genesis 14:18-20). Tithing also appears as a spontaneous tribute to Yahweh in Jacob’s promise to give Him one-tenth of all He’d given him if He would ensure Jacob’s safe return home from his journey to Harran (Genesis 28:20-22).**
- **The tithe in the Old Testament is sometimes used interchangeably with firstfruits (Deuteronomy 26:1-14); other times it is a separate designation (Nehemiah 12:44).⁵**

² Financial giving to the Lord today is generally seen in terms of “tithes and offerings.” Offerings in this sense refers to financial giving above and beyond what one understands the tithe to be. It is often also more specified financial giving (such as to missions or to alms funds), whereas the tithe is given without restriction or designation.

³ It is often debated in the modern world where taxes are withheld from one’s paycheck whether that is one-tenth of one’s gross or net income. An argument that it is one’s gross income is seen by some as referenced in the modifier, “**bring the whole tithe**” (Malachi 3:10, emphasis added). There is no consensus on this matter in Foursquare, but most pastors advocate giving one-tenth of one’s gross income.

⁴ In many Foursquare churches this is giving to the church’s “general fund” and not to such designations as missions, youth, camps, alms, etc. If one contributes to any of these “designated ministries” it is to be in the form of an “offering” above and beyond one’s ten percent tithe. Malachi’s **the storehouse** is a historical reference to **storerooms in the temple of the Lord** (2 Chronicles 31:11-16) which is how it’s often associated with the local church.

⁵ “Although there is little question that the tithe was required under the Mosaic Law, the specifics of how it was administered is debated by biblical scholars...those who argue that the tithe was a regular practice before its codification in the Law overlook that the references to pre-Law tithing in Genesis are infrequent episodes at best. In

- **The Levites tithed to Yahweh on the tithe they received from the Israelites for their priestly service (Numbers 18:26).**
- **Tithing taught the Israelites to revere the Lord as the Giver of all their possessions and ability to work (Deuteronomy 14:23).**
- **On occasion the tithe directly supported the foreigners, the fatherless and the widows (Deuteronomy 14:29).**
- **Tithing was to be practiced joyfully (Deuteronomy 14:26), a principle Paul later applies to all Christian giving (2 Corinthians 9:7). Paul also notes that Christians should give generously, with a self-motivated willingness, not reluctantly or under compulsion (2 Corinthians 9:7).**
- **“Nowhere does the New Testament require Christians to tithe in the sense of giving 10 percent.”⁶ Others would disagree stating that Jesus indirectly endorsed the continuation of tithing ten percent (Matthew 23:23).⁷**
- **What is clear is that—**
 - **Based on Jesus’ focused attention on motives and holistic practices of giving (Matthew 23:23), the overarching message of the New Testament is that regular, enthusiastic, generous, and cheerful giving should be every disciple’s practice. Despite theological debate over the tithe in the New Testament and early Church, this module concludes that the tithe should be part of this giving.**
 - **The New Testament restates principles associated with tithing in the Old Testament, such as supporting those in ministry (1 Timothy 5:17-18; 1 Corinthians 9:13-14); helping the poor and needy (1 Corinthians 16:1-4); and trusting God to supply one’s needs if one gives (2 Corinthians 9:6-8).⁸**
- **Tithing in Church history—**
 - **“Christian opinions on tithing differed in the early church between those who sought distinct separation from the perceived legalism inherent in**

the New Testament, the ambiguity surrounding tithing is even greater... unfortunately, Church history does not provide a unified, definitive answer either about tithing for Christ-followers” (Dr. David Moore).

⁶ Morley, Brian, *Tithe, Tithing*, in Elwell, Walter (Editor), *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, Baker Books, Grand Rapids, MI, 1996, pg. 779. “We want to be respectful of the benefit and blessing of a ‘10% principle’ as an appropriate guide or starting minimum in one’s giving to a local church but locate such a principle within the larger context of a Spirit-led communal discernment that prevents it from becoming a moral absolute for all believers for all time” (Dr. Aaron Friesen).

⁷ “Neither in the Gospels, in the Book of Acts, nor in the writings of the New Testament Apostles is the subject of tithing addressed nor its practice noted. This may be because the predominately Jewish early Christians practiced tithing as part of the membership in the Temple or synagogue. Or it may be that the New Testament churches did not practice tithing *per se*” (Steve Overman).

⁸ “Giving at least 10% of our income is part of the spiritual heritage we share with God’s people in the Old Testament, going all the way back to Abraham. It is a practice we should continue to imitate” (Pastor Marcela Joo Munoz).

Judaism and those who saw ongoing parallels between Jewish and Christian priesthood.”⁹

- **Irenaeus (2nd century) stated that tithing is the “beginning amount” and that Christians should give above and beyond ten percent.**
 - **Jerome and Augustine advocated that Christians should at least tithe.**
 - **Luther generally approved of tithing. Calvin was indecisive.**
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- **SPECIAL NOTE—though the tithe is to be given to the local church “with no strings attached,” this module values openness and transparency and all churches and ministries are highly encouraged to openly report how the tithe is spent once given.**
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- **Exegetical and Pastoral Challenges—the Doctrine of Tithing—**
 - **The matter of asking Christians to give financially has unfortunately been misused at times throughout Church history.¹⁰ In the 21st C, this usually takes one of four prominent forms—**
 1. **Guiltting believers who don’t tithe and give offerings by stating that they are robbing God. This is based on a misapplication of Malachi 3:6-12 which states that the nation of Israel (including Malachi’s generation) has perpetually broken covenant by turning away from Yahweh’s statutes. They are being given an opportunity to return to Yahweh in the form of covenant obedience (vv. 6-7). One such specific of covenant disobedience that must be changed is then addressed (robbing God by failing to bring the whole tithe as prescribed in the Law) [vv. 8B-10]; but this specific is only an example of Israel’s failure to “[carry] out His requirements” (vs. 14) to maintain covenant.¹¹ There is no exegetical evidence that Malachi is giving a generalized**

⁹ Meeks, Charles, *Tithe*, in Barry, John D. et al (Editors), *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, Lexham Press, Bellingham, WA, 2016, digital only.

¹⁰ Tithing or giving does not mean one can **buy** forgiveness or God’s blessing. The tithe and offerings are expressions of thankfulness and obedience to a generous God and an act of generosity toward others. Roman Catholic indulgences at the time of Martin Luther are a classic example of this abuse.

¹¹ “Here in Mal 3:8, tithes and offerings are the specific ways in which the community may return to Yahweh. The understanding is that keeping the commandments regarding the tithes and offerings is just as important as keeping the other commands and ordinances. To violate these ordinances would also incur Yahweh’s displeasure and punishment. Primarily, the motivation for giving the tithes and offerings is obedience to God” (Mignon R. Jacobs, *The Books of Haggai and Malachi—The New International Commentary on the Old Testament*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 2017, pg. 293).

principle applicable to all Christ-followers (namely, that failing to tithe is robbing God).¹²

2. **Making the principle of financial prosperity guaranteed if one tithes and gives offerings. It is true that God blesses His people in response to faithful and obedient financial giving (Luke 6:37-38; II Corinthians 9:6-11). Therefore, we want to trust Him to bless; but it violates the overall nature of the kingdom of God to view it in terms of a guaranteed level of financial prosperity if we give (cf. Philippians 4:10-12).¹³ It is best to see tithing as an act of worship directed towards God with no thought of return.**
3. **Communicating the gospel chiefly as a means toward financial prosperity rather than a message about a covenant relationship with God through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. This is a consequence of #2 above and is sometimes known as “The Prosperity Gospel.” It reduces faith to focusing on and trusting in human effort or viewing it as an eternal right that entitles and guarantees material goods and health. This is “effectively making faith an efficacious supplement or substitute for the cross.”¹⁴**
4. **Inferring that if a Christ-follower gives ten percent of their income their financial/material obligation to their Christ-following community is finished or complete. The New Testament writers push against the emphasis and value Western culture often places on individualism and move believers toward a more others’ focused approach to financial giving that has a sensitivity toward helping the needy among them (Acts 4:32-37; 2 Corinthians 9:1-6).**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS—

1. **What did you learn in this section on tithing that was biblically new?**
2. **What is your personal reaction to the “Exegetical and Pastoral Challenges” section?**
3. **How do you practice tithing in your personal life as a disciple?**
4. **If you are a Lead Pastor, how do you teach and practice tithing in your local church?**
5. **If you are a Foursquare leader, what is your opinion regarding “each local church should tithe to the Foursquare denomination?”**

¹² It is much better to present tithing in the context of maturity in discipleship; if one is not yet there in their discipleship journey, they ultimately can be.

¹³ This can also be described as an over-emphasis on realized eschatology, violating the general “already but not yet” nature of the kingdom of God.

¹⁴ Edwards, Joel, *Pentecostalism and the Prosperity Gospel* in Thompson, Phyllis (Editor), *Challenges of Pentecostal Theology in the 21st Century*, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, London, UK, 2020, pg. 83.

- 6. Foursquare's Article on tithing in the Declaration of Faith states that "we believe that the method ordained by God to sustain His ministry and the spread of the gospel after His command, is 'tithing'." Do you agree or disagree and why?**