

LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM JESUS' TEACHING METHODS: APPLICATIONS IN THE CONTEMPORARY EDUCATION

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Abstract

There are abundant teaching methods within the traditional style. However, many teachers continue to struggle to integrate instruction, freedom, and Discipline in ways that increase learners' understanding, autonomy, and regulated ethical behavior. The gap is that Traditional teaching methods promote responsibility and performance in isolation from the learners' decisions and participation. This process produces defective and ineffective leaders and followers. In His teaching methods, Jesus presents a unique integration of sound instruction, freewill and redemptive discipline. These lead to learners' transformation and responsible followership. There is limited research on the application of the three included variables in the teaching process to address the leadership challenges teachers face in the classroom. This study analyzed Jesus' teaching methods and derived lessons from them. The design was qualitative, based on content analyses. Textual data were derived from extant literature and relevant Bible texts. The primary data was elicited from the Bible, the secondary data from related literature and theories of teaching methods. The integration of Instruction, free will, and Discipline into the teaching methods was relevant to the expected learning outcomes. Jesus' method of teaching clearly elicits the understanding of the instruction. The learners are then left to freely decide how to respond to the instructions. This freedom leads to self-regulation, but it also carries disciplinary consequences, both merits and demerits. This is important for training learners who become leaders in influencing others. This has implications for the kind of teachers hired, the teaching methods applied, and the learning outcomes expected.

Keywords: Instruction, Freewill, Discipline, Education, Leadership lessons, and Jesus' teaching methods

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Introduction

The influence of leadership is not imposed on followers. Rather, it is freely assimilated and accepted by followers as a relational context to team with the leadership. The traditional teaching method influences learners through instructions and discipline. This is because this method is teacher-based. Jesus' method backgrounds Instructions and Discipline on Free Will. Hence, while the traditional methods pursue responsibility and performance, Jesus' method bade the learner to follow the Instructions by choice, with the understanding of sure consequences for decisions made.

In the education sector, the teacher is the leader; the teacher gives clear instructions, allows learners limited decision-making autonomy, and promotes personal discipline to attain set goals. Golegou et al. (2026) argue that leadership expressed through pedagogical processes enhances learners' engagement, motivation, and success. The teacher's instruction, well-controlled and delivered, can serve as a source of leadership training to help the learner gain knowledge and form consistent behaviors aligned with the learning outcomes. This is because instructions are ways of communicating the teacher's expectations, guiding learners' thought processes, and prompting them to action. Specifically, the teacher's instruction initiates a process from thoughts to outcome.

The instruction intended here is devoid of control, manipulation, and domination. Instead, it scales with learners' participation and feedback, equipping learners to create knowledge and meaning in the learning process (Agu et al., 2021). It is the outcome of meaning that translates from cognition into the psychomotor domain, specifically the leadership aspect. This way, the teacher promotes leadership traits in the learners through facilitation rather than through demands and commands. When given instructions, freewill allows learners to act independently in the learning process. Freewill is the basis for engagement, which allows the learner to interrogate and reflect on the instruction. During this process, the individual learns deeply by engaging, exploring, and making personal decisions effectively and efficiently.

The learner is not passive in the learning process; they do not receive instructions without contributing to their outcomes (Akpan et al., 2020). The process allows the learner to take responsibility for instruction, engage in critical thinking, and contribute to team goals. Discipline integrates instruction and free will. This is not a matter of transactional stick; instead, discipline instils personal principles, creates a path for growth, and fosters self-awareness and self-regulation. The individual becomes responsible and pays attention to standards in the learning process. Discipline restricts the individual to a structure, which improves concentration and performance in the learning process. This process leads to long-term personal development. (Credit for Teachers, 2025). Discipline is necessary for order, accountability, and the orientation towards goal attainment. The point is that discipline conserves and directs energy and time. Hence, the learner can freely plan the instructions and achieve them within the provision of human and financial resources. This is leadership in learning and practice. Instruction, freedom, and discipline are the three main factors in Jesus' teaching method.

These factors are basic in His teaching by divine authority, questions, and parables. These methods of teaching allow for individual choice, attention to instructions, and moral and spiritual accountability. The teaching method is not authoritarian, but authoritative. Consequently, in His instructions, He directs and empowers the adoption of free will under the constraint of discipline. This process grounds a relational interface between Jesus and the learner. The learner engages in his or her own mind, the instructed curriculum, with a relational free will and discipline. Consequently, this study investigates the current leadership lessons a learner can gain from Jesus' teaching methods, free will, and discipline.

The following sections of the paper are the biblical basis of the study, the theoretical basis, the conceptual interpretation of instructions, free will and discipline, a review of teaching methods, illustrations of Jesus' teaching methods, contemporary applications of Jesus' teaching methods, leadership learning outcomes, recommendations, and conclusion.

Teaching is integral to leadership. Both are related and influential. The history of teaching and instruction has been teacher-centered. This means that the teacher is active while the learner is receptive and passive. The teacher possesses authority and control. Though the learner owns some knowledge in the process, they are not active participants. They become engaged without much critical thinking or reflection (Akpan et al., 2020). The current shift is learner-centered. This context encourages the learner's active participation in the learning process with autonomy. This implies that the learner contributes to the learning process, thereby improving their experience in the taxonomy of knowledge and leadership. Teaching methods are situation- and context-adaptive. Hence, there is no universally accepted pedagogy. What becomes acceptable and effective may be determined by context, learners' learning characteristics, and the curriculum's objectives (Golegou et al., 2020). Hence, there is a need for flexibility in the instructional process to meet learners' needs. Practically, these needs differ from learner to learner. The teacher becomes extremely sensitive to this situation to attain the rationale for teaching and learning. In the educational sector and leadership research, the leader-teacher achieves better outcomes in imparting knowledge, prepares a standard curriculum, and sustains expected learning goals.

Free will in the context of student-centered approaches leads learners toward deeper understanding, knowledge creation, interaction, and exploration. Beyond instruction, the learner becomes responsible, self-aware, and capable of leading. According to Akpan et al. (2020), these values are relevant to effectiveness across followership to leadership and learner to teacher. This is because free will provides the platform for the learner to make decisions, lead innovations, and own personal tasks and duties.

Discipline is no longer punitive and controlling. Instead, it has been transformed to encourage a learner towards self-direction, regulation, and responsibility. This implies that the disciplined learner does not always need to be told what to do. The person understands required expectations, becomes accountable, adapts to learning in a controlled environment, grows, and develops in the learning process (Credits for Teachers, 2025). Environments that are contextually aligned with the discipline enhance

learners' performance, sharpen concentration, and reduce misunderstandings. In corroboration, Clement et al. (2017) assert that discipline fosters character and instills values akin to good behavior and feedback. The integration of instruction, free will, and discipline in the learning process is not completely conclusive. This is because there can be no tilt toward freedom without adequate structural constraints, or toward concentration control and the erosion of autonomy. These two divides present challenges and inefficiencies in the learning process.

The teaching model of Jesus provides a comprehensive approach, where instructions are guided, free will is within a framework, and discipline is redemptive. To this extent, His method of using parables, questions, and illustrative stories clarifies instructions. The human free will is encouraged through Jesus' respect for the choices of others. To instill discipline, Jesus emphasizes obedience, accountability, and moral behavior. The proper combination of these concepts in this study builds a mutual link between the traditional teaching context and the teaching methods of Jesus.

Biblical Bases for the Study

The teaching methods of Jesus combined instruction, free will, and discipline. He communicated his instructions through parables, metaphors, questions, stories and discussions. These methods engage listeners and learners in understanding the intended meaning, making the embedded instructions memorable. Concentrating on Jesus' most frequently used parables, which often contain metaphors, questions, and stories, three are highlighted to identify the instructions inherent in them. The parable of the Sower deals with four main responses to instructions. This parable presents the way people respond to the message of the Kingdom of God. It is a good ground to study how learners receive and respond to teachers' instructions. The seeds that fall in the pathway represent those who hear instructions but do not understand them (v.19). These are those who receive instructions with fear and enthusiasm, like the seeds that fall on rocky ground; they make progress to observe the instructions, but they fail to attain success due to trials of the world (vv. 20–21). In verse twenty-two, some hear the instructions, respond by faith, but the cares of life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the instructions, making them unfruitful. Finally, unlike the first three cases, the fourth response comes from the one that fell on good ground. They represent learners who receive instruction with faith and obedience (v. 23).

The Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37) provides instructions on compassion and responsibility for the welfare of others, as it distinguishes the attitude of the Good Samaritan from those of the Levite and the Priest. The lawyer who asked the question that made Jesus tell the parable understood who his neighbor is (Luke 10:36–37). Jesus then placed a responsibility on him to go and do likewise. The three participants understood the unspoken instructions presented by the man who fell among thieves. Two of them, who knew better, responded unconcerned about the wounded. Nevertheless, the Samaritan made a different decision.

The prodigal son illustrates divine instructions on forgiveness and restoration (Luke 15:11-32). The lost son refused to adhere to the instructions of the father. This led him to a life of waste, prodigality, and regret. His older brother also refused his father's instructions to accept his brother back into their home, as one received from the dead. In and of themselves, instructions differ not because they are good or bad, but by their responses to the situations. To this end, Jesus used the three parables highlighted above to instruct learners who received his words as true. Such people were exposed to deeper thoughts, reflection, and engagement. Hence, the parables were told not for their literal meanings, but for the spiritual depth they reveal.

Free will is a gift from God; this was established in Genesis 2:16-17, when Jesus asked Adam and Eve to eat of every tree of the garden, but not of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. They were free to obey God or to disobey God. In all His dealings with humanity, Jesus respects our free will. For the teacher to be centered on the learner, his instructions must be communicated in ways that clearly show that the learner is free to obey or disobey them. This means that the learner's commitment is voluntary. Jesus invites people to open the doors of their hearts unto Him; He does not compel but appeals to them (Revelation 3:20). In Mathew 19: 16-22, the rich young ruler freely chooses not to become a follower of Jesus. At a certain time in his earthly ministry, some of his disciples chose not to follow Him anymore. Jesus did not coerce any of them to change their minds; not that he did not love them, but that he wanted them to exercise their human free will. One then realizes that in the parables of the Sower, the Good Samaritan, and the prodigal son, what made the differences in each case is the free will choice each of them made. When learners engage freely in the learning process, they actively discover rather than passively receive (McLain et al., 2023).

Discipline, whether of structure, control, or punishment, leads to transformation, resulting in outcomes such as obedience and accountability. Inherent in his instructions and his respect for free will is internal reinforcement to align with them. There are no external stimuli. This was the point Jesus made in Matthew 7:24-27. In the texts, the wise builders obeyed Jesus' instructions. The foolish builder was disobedient to his instructions, indicative of true wisdom. Such wisdom requires voluntary self-denial (Luke 9:23) and obedience to God's commandment (John 14:15).

Theoretical Bases

The integration of instruction, free will, and discipline provides a structure for learning and its leadership outcomes. In this construct, instruction clarifies understanding, free will situates voluntary decision, and discipline guides towards application and transformation. The constructivist learning theory and instructional learning theory align with the above thoughts. In instructional learning theory, the teacher serves as a leader who provides an appropriate learning environment and processes. The teacher provides instruction and curriculum and sets appropriate goals for learners. The teacher does not control the learners; rather, they provide instruction that leads to learning outcomes. The theory indicates

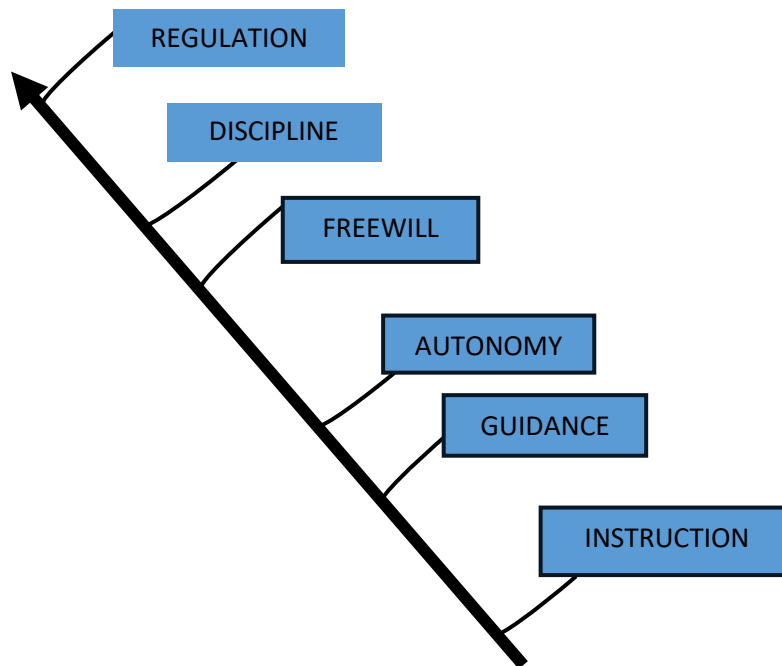
the need for the learner's collaboration; it did not recognize free will and discipline as the foundation for collaboration and engagement in keeping with the teacher's instructions to attain the desired educational objectives (Educational Leadership Degree, 2023). In His parables, Jesus provided instruction for his listeners through their meaning and by requesting that they go and practice what they had learnt.

The constructivist learning theory relies on learners' experiences, reflections on them, and environmental feedback to construct knowledge. In line with this study, the theory allows the independent discovery and social interface for the learner to understand meaning. This aligns with the current study, which suggests that learners are at their best when they are part of the learning system; they make voluntary choices about what they understand. Just as in the Jesus method, learners do not comply by force; instead, they engage in reflection and the interpretation of learning data. Marymount University (2024) found that constructivist learning theory allows the learning process to be learner-centered. Thus, the learner becomes a participant, a collaborator, and an analytical person.

Conceptual Interaction of Instruction, Freewill and Discipline

Conceptually, the interaction of instruction, freewill and discipline produces effective leadership in a learner. Each element represents guidance, autonomy, and self-regulation, respectively. These are derivatives of integrating Jesus' teaching methods, educational theories, and adopted leadership theories. Embedded in the teaching method of Jesus Christ is the practical contribution of instruction, freewill and discipline. Contemporary theories explain the mechanisms by which the three elements affect learning and produce the expected leadership outcomes in learners.

Figure 1: Conceptual Scheme



The instruction element communicates what is to be learnt and the values to be internalized. This element is evident in Jesus' teaching methods, which advance the communication of truth to learners. Educational Leadership Degree (2023) explains that, from a theoretical perspective, instruction makes leadership effective. Thus, the teaching methods communicate the purpose and the expected outcomes. Hence, the leader-teacher lays the foundation for leadership through guided and directive instruction.

The learners freely and voluntarily decided to participate in the learning process by adhering to instructions. In Matthew 19:16-22, Jesus interfaced with the rich young man. He was seeking eternal life (V. 16). Jesus instructed him on the need for obedience to the law and for a total commitment to the Lord (V. 17-19). Though this issue was particularly important, Jesus allowed the young man to decide. Jesus granted him the autonomy to make decisions. He refused to follow Jesus to enter life eternal (V. 22). According to constructivist learner theory, the young rich ruler interacted with Jesus, reflected on his own discussion, and, through that interaction, decided (Simply Psychology, 2025). Constructivism is learner-oriented. In the case of Jesus and the young rich ruler, the young man understood Jesus's instructions but chose to reject them. Under constructivist theory, free will leads to intentional collaboration and participation. This is because such free individuals internalize knowledge and choose the path of action. Marymount University (2024). Freewill grounds engagement and equips learners to become leadership collaborators.

Given instruction and free will, discipline regulates learners' behavior. They can show responsibility, accountability, and practice what they understand. This is consistent with Jesus' teaching method. He communicated discipline through commands for obedience, death to self,

and the application of instructions coordinated with the word of God (Luke 7:24-27 and 9:23). Under disciplined conditions, learners understand behaviors through modelling and the repetition of instructions (Simply Psychology, 2024). The institution of discipline imposes a structure of learners' behaviors and establishes an appropriate learning environment, which leads to performance (National University, 2022) and transformation.

Review of Teaching Methods

A teaching method is a function of a learner's understanding of instructions. Teaching methods aid learners' cognitive and behavioral development. Hence, methods are shifting from teacher-centered to learner-centered pedagogies. This shift is important in the context of this study for successfully progressing from instruction and freewill to discipline. The teacher-centered methods circumvent the learner's free will; they focus on instruction and discipline imposed by the teacher rather than on what the learner appreciates or generates.

The review of teaching methods is specified into teacher-centered and learner-centered methods. The learner-centered approach is modern. It focuses on learners' involvement and engagement. Consequently, the method uses teaching as a tool for learning. In other words, teaching is a means of learning. Until the learners assimilate the knowledge intended to be communicated, the circle is incomplete. Golegou et al. (2026) argue that learners' understanding will equip them to solve real-world problems, innovate, and conduct research. In learner-focused teaching methods, the teacher serves as a facilitator, energizing learners to take responsibility for what they understand (Agu et al., 2025). In this context, learners exchange ideas to advance their knowledge. When free will is factored into this learning process, learners investigate ideas and own the very concepts they learn. Examples of learner-centered teaching methods include Constructivism (Akpan et al., 2020; Golegou et al., 2026); Problem-based Learning (Golegou et al., 2026; Agu et al., 2025); Interactive Teaching Method (Agu et al., 2025); and Active Learning Method (McLain et al., 2023). All those teaching methods involve instruction, free will, and discipline, in the form of rules and regulations, responsibility, and self-control (Clement et al., 2017; Credits for Teachers, 2025). Jesus' teaching method is not only learner-centered but also encompasses all the other methods discussed in this study.

Traditional teaching methods are centered on the teacher. This is hardly the process Jesus used. In this method, the teacher dominates the learning process and styles as the basic source of knowledge. The teacher lectures the students by giving instructions. Passively, learners listen and jot down whatever they understand and in tests, quizzes, and examinations, they reproduce the same knowledge as reflectors of their teachers' knowledge base (Agu et al., 2025). This teaching method affords teachers significant control over class management, but it does not allow learners to engage or think. In support, Golegou et al. (2026) emphasized that the Teacher-Centered method does not encourage knowledge creation but leads to memorization, recall, and reflection of the teacher's thoughts. The Traditional teaching method is old-fashioned. However, in cases of

introducing new knowledge, inventions, or discoveries, it is especially useful. Unfortunately, its usefulness does not last long due to innovations and Artificial Intelligence, which quickly make new knowledge and products obsolete.

Jesus' Teaching Methods, Instruction, Freewill and Discipline

The Jesus method of teaching illustrates instruction, freedom, and discipline. It provides real-life examples of how to implement leadership through a teaching methodology. When Jesus told a parable, the story was not for its own sake but to teach spiritual truths (Jesus Film Project, 2018). The parables of Jesus reveal normal experiences in ways that bring out deeper meaning (Focus, 2026). He used these as instructional strategies to guide his listeners to participation and decision-making (Christianity.com, 2026). Learners' responses will differ, as in the parable of the Sower. However, everyone is free to choose the preferred response. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, instructions are based on values and social responsibility. Freedom and commitment are not foreign to instructions.

The rich young ruler exercised his autonomy by rejecting the limitation that Jesus placed on him to follow Him. In learning Leadership, the learners remain authentic. They are neither forced nor coerced. In John 6:66,67, some followers of Jesus left Him, and He left them to go. The caution and danger are that without the practice of the instruction, discipline is absent, and transformation cannot take place. Hence, in Matthew 7:24-27, the application of instruction is consistent with wisdom, which leads to success. Alternatively, refusal to apply instruction is evidence of foolishness.

Contemporary Applications of Jesus' Teaching Methods

The teaching methods of Jesus have contemporary significance. In an AI-ridden academia, Jesus' methods of instruction, Freewill and discipline can refocus the learner's attention on engagement, collaboration, critical thinking, and decision-making. By involving learners in the learning process, Agu et al. (2025) affirm that this will deepen assimilation and generate new knowledge. This may result from interactions and experiential learning (Akpan et al., 2020). According to Liud et al. (2024), the method of Jesus supports learners in thinking critically, improving their communication skills, and fostering innovation (McLain et al., 2013).

Jesus' teaching method (McLain et al., 2023) limits active learning. He engages learners in the process through questions and innovation to encourage action (Golegou et al., 2026). In line with contemporary teaching methods, Jesus led learners to discover the outcomes of knowledge for themselves. In modern terms, this is experiential learning (Lee, 2006). Thus, Jesus allowed learners to ask questions and make enquiries to own the knowledge arrived at. In the 21st-century digital age, Jesus' method can be digitized to enhance knowledge transfer (Liud et al., 2024). Technology allows interaction and participation. In the same way, Jesus' teaching method encourages learners to engage and perform (Golegou et al., 2026). The two processes find common ground in sharing

knowledge and enhancing performance to innovate the learning experience.

Contemporary teaching methods have led to improved scholarship in the development of morality, accountability, and social responsibility among learners. Liud et al. (2024) note that the development of character and morals was a prominent feature of Jesus' teaching methods. These teaching approaches promote autonomy, self-control, and ethical behavior (Clement et al., 2017). Hence, just as it has become the emphasis of modern teaching methods, Jesus highlighted cognition, as well as moral value and social usefulness. Golegou et al. (2026) found that these values reduce negative learning behaviors and enhance positive learning outcomes. This implies that discipline is a function of instruction and free will. The relevance of the contemporary application of Jesus teaching method reveals a holistic scheme which can be applied in education and organizational leadership. The summary of Jesus' teaching method is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Contemporary application of the teaching methods of Jesus

Elements	Bible Test	Biblical Meaning	Contemporary Implications
Instruction	Matt 13:3-9 & 18-23, Luke 10:25-37	Parables & stories & questions	Development & teaching strategies & curriculum planning
Freewill	John 6:67	Decision-making	Autonomy, engagement, and participation.
Discipline	Matt 7:24-27	Keep & obey	Responsibility, accountability & self-regulation

The table shows that the elements of instruction, free will, and discipline have biblical foundations. Each has its own relevant meaning, with implications for contemporary teaching methods.

Learnt Outcomes in Leadership

Different from the course's learning outcomes, which are listed at the beginning. These learnt leadership outcomes are derived from the integration of instruction, free will, and discipline. Hence, they imply the knowledge and competences which the learner has acquired. The outcomes consist of cognition, affective and behavioral areas. The learner gains knowledge and understanding. This is referred to as cognition. This outcome is necessitated by the leaders' grasp of the instructions. This also allows conceptual and theoretical understanding. This will develop relevant communication skills to impact acquired knowledge (Maryville University, 2024).

The learner acquires behavioral skills and other competencies. The learner makes critical decisions and solves problems. He or she can manage conflict and collaborations with team members to motivate and influence others. Because the learner is a participation in the learning process

(Richardson, 2024), the learnt concepts are applied to the benefit of others.

The learners' character is formed. Values deepened and attributes changed. These values and principles create a positive environment and shared values. Hence, learning is advanced, leading to transformation beyond mere head knowledge. This means that knowledge leaves the head and settles in the heart, for practice and actions.

Independent decision-making is a derivative of freewill. The learner can make an informed choice. This outcome implies learners' empowerment, participation, and responsible contribution. The learner contributes to the learning outcomes. The learner accepts the outcome, takes responsibility for their actions, and leads other learners without coercion.

The outcomes of self-discipline and the regulation of the learner's behavior align with the third element. The knowledge and skills gained are applied and practiced. Goals and objectives are achieved. Performance advances, pointing to the relevance of regulated behavior resulting from discipline.

Recommendations

The integration of instruction, free will, and discipline is relevant to the learning outcomes of every teaching method. To sustain this, instructions should be stated clearly. Participation in the learning process should reflect the learner's free will. Discipline should align behavior with expectations, and the knowledge gained should be applied.

Leadership is influence. A teacher is a leader who influences the teaching process. This means that leadership training can be implemented through learner-centered teaching methods. The teaching approach should focus on engaging learners in teamwork, group discussions, and leadership duties. Reporting and feedback should be sustained.

Traditional Teaching Methods focus on the teachers. Hence, it does not engage the learners. Thus, it does not align with Jesus' teaching methods. Learners should be the center of every teaching method. Teachers should be the means to the end of making sure that learners understand engagement and practice. It must be clear that learners in teacher-centered methods find it more difficult to assume responsibilities, show confidence, and engage in decision-making. So, this method is not recommended.

The integrated learning approach develops the learner's character, morals, and autonomy. Competence is good, but character is better. One who has imbibed good morals and autonomy provides a candidate for ethical leadership. Educational leadership should require integrity, meekness and service from its teachers and learners.

Self-regulation is a characteristic of a disciplined learner. Just as a good follower can make a good leader, a well-disciplined learner can be a leader as well; he or she will impact by example and foster the replication of moral values and self-regulation. The teacher should reinforce structure, rules, and regulations in the learning environment.

Conclusion

Traditional teaching methods promote responsibility, but performance is measured in isolation from learners' decisions and participation. This process produces defective and ineffective leaders and followers. In His teaching methods, Jesus presents a unique integration of sound instruction, freewill and redemptive discipline. These lead to learners' transformation and responsible followership.

This study investigated the possibility of deriving leadership lessons from Jesus' teaching methods, including Instruction, free will, and Discipline. This was also the intention: to apply Jesus' teaching methods to contemporary teaching methods. An effective teaching interprets the three included variables just as Jesus did. These methods are current and consistent with contemporary educational leadership studies. Instruction gives direction, Freewill allows individual autonomy for engagement and participation, and discipline grounds the practice of knowledge, for transformation and outcomes. Most modern teaching methods are learner-focused and encourage participation, autonomy, and structure. This teaching process aligns with the Jesus method, which links the two approaches, meaning that the Jesus Teaching method can be applied to solve contemporary teacher-learner problems.

This study highlights a holistic teaching method. This includes cognitive, behavioral, and affective domains. Hence, effective teachers will transform learners from knowledge to engagement and to the teaching of others. The effective application of Instruction, free will, and Discipline provides a strategy for developing learners into leaders. When this model is applied in the mold of Jesus' teaching method, the outcomes are that learners become knowledgeable, Autonomous, disciplined and equipped to lead others. Therefore, educators and policymakers can adopt the model to establish moral-based leaders in our contemporary society.

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