2 Thessalonians 3:7-9 - 7 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example, because we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you. 8 nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we kept working night and day so that we might not be a burden to any of you; 9 nor because we do not have the right to this, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you, that you might follow our example. NASB

Now see here the importance of our own spiritual maturity. If helping others follow Jesus means teaching them to live the Christian Life effectively and productively, we must ask, is our Christian Life effective and productive? Are we loving Christ and also our neighbor, in the church and outside the church? Does our life reflect the basic disciplines feeding ourselves daily on the Word of God? Are we communing daily with God in prayer? Do we fellowship regularly with other godly Christians? Is all of this transforming our lives and making us more like Jesus? See here a healthy gage of our own spiritual health.

2. Commitment to Christ – As we help others follow Jesus it is important to exemplify a life that has Christ in first place. This means we generally have our life’s priorities in the right order. Our relationship with God and Christ, our marriage and family, career, church, and relations to others need to be handled in a way that honors God and is consistent with Jesus teaching, and generally in that order. If you spend too much of your time on lower life priorities so that your relationship with God and your marriage is on the rocks, it should be obvious that you’re not qualified to guide others in healthy Christian living. Therefore it is important for the disciple to have the commitment to Christ in the highest place, and therefore a properly ordered set of life priorities.

Ephesians 5:15-17 - 15 Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. 17 So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. NASB

3. Separation from sin – Disciplers who are helping others to follow Jesus must obviously be walking and living in repentance from sin. This is not to say we never sin, but that our life is not dominated by any sin and that when we do sin we deal with it properly in confession and repentance. In fact, this is one of the great lessons we must teach those we disciple, that is, confession and repentance of sin and the humility of recognizing our own sinfulness and dealing with it in a godly way (2 Cor 7:9-11). Obedience to the Word is a main qualification in discipling. If you’re not doing the Word, you cannot lead others to do the Word.

James 1:21-22 - 21 Therefore putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. 22 But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. NASB

4. Ability to independently study the Bible – Of course one important aspect of Christian life is growing in the grace and knowledge of God through the Word. Our faith is didactic and we are always learning. Young Christian believers must learn how to feed themselves on the Word and grow in an understanding of Christ and His teaching. As Christ followers we must learn “every that He commanded” (Matt 28:20), and also to teach others the same. One main lesson you will be teaching those you disciple is how to both study and understand the Bible.

Matthew 28:18-20 - 18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the
nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. " NASB

5. Ability to effectively counsel others from Scripture – As new believers learn to navigate the Christian life, they will have all kinds of questions about how to honor God as they relate to the world and others. Helping others follow Jesus means that we know how to find the wisdom of God in life’s many and varied situations so that we can honor Him with godly choices. We may not always know the right answers and choices for life’s complex situations, but we need to know how to guide them to find the answers in the Word, and also sometimes seek the help and advice of godly pastors in the church. In fact, one lesson they must learn is to discern who godly Christian leaders are and also to submit their lives unto their leadership and guidance.

Hebrews 13:7 - 7 Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith. NASB

Hebrews 13:17 - 17 Obey your leaders, and submit to them; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you. NASB

6. Ability to clearly and spontaneously articulate the Gospel – The Christian life is never detached from the Gospel. The Person and the Work of Jesus is at the heart of everything we do. We are always and ever living in relationship to Him, and always live with our minds saturated with the wisdom, promises, and exhortations that Gospel brings. It is the food of our very lives and like a fountain of holy cleansing, it is living water to our souls. New believers must learn the Gospel well, not only so that they can be assured of their own salvation and what they have believed, but also so they can teach others. One main reason for this is every Christian needs to learn to evangelize and make disciples of others which cannot be done without an ability to clearly articulate what the Gospel is.

Colossians 4:5-6 - 5 Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. 6 Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned, as it were, with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each person. NASB

To be sure, one does not have to meet every one of these qualifications without flaw to start discipling, but they are general guidelines to determine the level of our spiritual health. Here are a few more important probing questions to help gauge your spiritual health.

- Does your commitment to Christ dominate your lifestyle? Are you disciplined in the ways of Jesus and is this exemplified by the fruit of the Spirit and through basic Christian disciplines such as:
  - Daily meditation on the Word
  - Daily communion with God through prayer
  - Regular Christian worship, fellowship, and service in the Church
- Are you acutely sensitive to the Holy Spirit’s conviction of sin, and do you and deal with sin quickly through confession, faith and repentance.
- Do you know how to study the Bible and explain its meaning? Can you teach to others to do so? Do you study (at any level or in any way) the Bible on a regular basis?
- Can you provide basic biblical counseling to those seeking direction through life’s difficulties? Are you equipped to teach others to live so as to glorify God?
- Can you clearly articulate the Gospel concisely, accurately, and persuasively? Below is an excellent example of how this can be done.