

Lay-Leadership Training Manual



Introduction:

In many places the layman is the main strength of church planting and ministry but often those laymen have not had the opportunity for training. Wesleyan World Missions continues to emphasize the need for a trained and ordained ministry as well as the steps leading up to ordination, including academic preparation for the District Ministerial License. However, there is a felt need to develop a limited training manual for laymen who are involved in ministry. The following topics have been developed in this training manual by missionaries and church leaders who have been involved in this type of training.

- Servant Leadership – Dr. Art O’Dell
- Spiritual Disciplines – Rev. Gary Wiley
- Discipleship – Rev. Jeff Fussner
- Evangelism – Dr. Jim Lo
- Starting A Church – Dr. Jim Lo
- Bible Study Methods – Dr. John Connor
- Leading a Bible Study – Dr. John Connor
- Sermon Preparation – Dr. John Connor
- Basic Doctrines – Dr. John Connor

This manual was developed under the following guidelines:

- No topic should have more than **three lessons**, fewer than three is acceptable.
- **Simple** – it is for people who use English as a second language and it is written so that translation is not too complicated.
- **Easy to lead** (teach) – the seminar leader may be a person with at least three years of ministerial experience who holds, at the minimum, a district ministerial license. While there is no teacher’s manual, the concept of “teacher” or “seminar leader” is carried by implication within the manual.
- **Bible based** – This manual uses biblical examples as illustration and backs up points with scripture.

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- **Discussion oriented** – discussion questions are included. The expectation is that students will do the lessons on their own, but that there will be community time (seminars or class meetings) in which students come together for interaction with a designated leader.
- **Practical** – practical exercises are built in to enforce each topic. The goal is to teach basic practical skills rather than theoretical knowledge.
- Each lesson should take about **1 hour** to complete with room to expand if the student has a particular interest in that topic. Optional exercises are included for this purpose.
- **Graphs and pictorial illustrations** are simple and direct, recognizing the need for the broad cultural spectrum.

- **Workbook material** in which there is fill in the blank, chart, or “list the concepts” are included. The manual is meant to be a discussion workbook.

Acknowledgments:

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Dedication:

This manual is dedicated to those hardworking, often unacknowledged men and women who, as lay-people, provide leadership to a local church in answer to God’s call and direction.

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LEADERSHIP MANUAL

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Servant Leadership

By
Dr. Art O'Dell

Lesson One

Objectives

1. The student will be expected to learn the five major principles to be developed in a servant leaders personal life as discussed in this lesson .
 2. A student should be able to understand the how these principles relate to them as Christian leaders.
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Part One: The Leader's Personal Development

Introduction

In this lesson we will study principles that form your identity as a leader. They will challenge you to examine your core values, your motives for leading and your strengths and weaknesses both as a believer and as a leader. The following principles must be understood and practiced in the life of a successful "servant leader."

Principle #1: Character (Proverbs 2:1-11)

Read Proverbs 2:1-11

Solomon provides us with excellent advice for developing the character qualities essential to good leadership. Leaders cultivate character by acquiring wisdom and understanding. These qualities do not come without a price. They require the kind of dedicated and persistent labor exercised in mining for gold and silver. Leaders must diligently search for the wisdom that is buried within God's Word.

That means using the right tools, exercising patience and diligence - and as we dig, asking God to provide us with insight and understanding (verses 1-4). Only God can open our eyes to see spiritual truth and then enable us to apply that truth to our lives (Ephesians 1:18). As God fills our minds with wisdom, our character will develop so that we will possess the ability to consistently make the right choices—choices that are just, fair and moral.

Read Galatians 5:22-23 and list below the nine qualities of one whose character is being developed by the Holy Spirit:

1. -----
2. -----
3. -----
4. -----
5. -----
6. -----
7. -----
8. -----
9. -----

Define and discuss the following additional Character Qualities you as a leader should strive to develop:

- Integrity (1 Samuel 12:1-4)
 - What does it mean to have integrity?
 - How does one’s lack of integrity affect his ability to lead?
- Honesty (Proverbs 8:7-8)
 - Name two ways in which you have not been honest in the past.
 - What can you do to assure that you will be honest in the future?
- Fairness (Philippians 4:8) The Bible uses the word “just” to describe someone who is “fair.”
 - Describe what it means to you to be “just” or “fair.”
- Consistency (Philippians 2:12-13)
 - What does it mean to be consistent and why is this important for leadership?
- Dependability (Philippians 1:5-6)
 - Can you recall a time when there were problems in a group you were involved with because you failed to complete your part of a task?
- Friendliness (Ephesians 5:1-2)
 - Are you friendly with strangers?
 - Are you kind and courteous in conversation?

Principle #2: Commitment (Romans 12:1-2)

A few days after Peter declared, "I will lay down my life for you," (John 13:37) he failed in his commitment by denying Jesus three times. In John 21:15-19, Jesus restored Peter and then affirms his confidence in Peter by stating that Peter would ultimately "lay down his life" for him. Then Peter asked Jesus about John...would he die the same kind of death? Jesus’ reply said, essentially, "Peter, don’t worry about what John or anyone else does, *you follow me!*" Likewise, our commitment to Christ is not dependent upon what others are doing. This is especially true for leaders, who should set an example by the strength of their commitment.

Take an Commitment Inventory

1. When I say I will do something, I always follow through.	Yes	No
2. People follow me because they always know I will do what I say.	Yes	No
3. I have faced times when it would have been easy to give up but I kept going because of my commitment to the task.	Yes	No
4. When I assign tasks to others they understand that I am counting on them to complete it.	Yes	No
5. I understand that my commitment to Jesus Christ means that I am also committed to living out Christian principles in my life.	Yes	No

Principle #3: Self Discipline (1 Corinthians 9:24-27)

The apostle Paul understood the importance of discipline. In this passage he emphasized that as followers of Christ our spiritual lives form the core of our character.

As we spend time in the disciplines of the spirit we are to have the focus and determination of an athlete. During the course of a race, runners don't stagger from one lane to another. They fix their attention on the finish line and run a disciplined race toward it. So also boxers train with purpose and build up their physical stamina so that they will hold out through the final rounds.

Paul followed the example of an athlete. Why? Because he wanted to have the self-control to finish the race without being disqualified. Godly leaders need to cultivate this same kind of spiritual fitness. This will even affect other areas of leadership life—our treatment of others, our source of answers to major decisions, and the skills we use in accomplishing our daily tasks.

Everyone develops habits. A habit is something we do automatically and routinely. Leaders need to form habits of self-discipline—habits such as physical fitness, balance between work and home, handling finances, faithfulness to the task, reading God's Word daily, cleanliness, perseverance, and others.

Note the following components of Self Discipline and score yourself on a scale of 1—10, 'One' being "no discipline" and 'Ten' being "well disciplined."

Trait	Score (circle the number)
Composure (Calm and focused on the issues)	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
Presence of mind (able to grasp the important details)	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
Self-possession (not intimidated or able to be bullied)	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
Restraint (not allowing anger to control you)	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
Follow through (complete what you say you will do)	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10
Focus (keeping your eye on the goal)	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10

Self-discipline may be defined as that quality that allows a person to do what needs to be done even when he/she does not feel like doing it.

Read: Proverbs 31:10-31. This passage is about a woman who exhibited great self-discipline in her own life and reaped the rewards of her efforts. Note the following self-discipline principles that are apparent in this passage:

Qualities of a Leader...

- Is noble and greatly valued (v. 10).
- Gets the job done regardless of what it takes and therefore has the full confidence of others (v. 11).
- Works hard enough to make a profit (vs. 11-15).
- Delays gratification and pleasure to invest his or her profits and then tirelessly works his or her investments for maximum return (vs. 16-19).
- Generously participates in the larger community by sharing his or her profits with the needy (v. 20).
- Has no fear of the future (vs. 21-27).
- Is honored, respected, admired, praised and rewarded (vs. 28-31).

Principle #4: Courage (Joshua 1:1-9)

Leaders need courage to make the tough decisions they're faced with every day. Joshua certainly faced such a crisis in his leadership role. God realized Joshua's need for courage and gave him guidance that would strengthen his faith.

- A. What did God cause Joshua to remember (verses 1-3)?
- B. What did God command Joshua to do (verses 7-8)?
- C. What did God promise Joshua (Verse 9)?

Leadership, by its very nature, inspires people to move in directions they would not otherwise have been willing to move. From time to time, good leadership requires excursions into unexplored territory, and requires a leader to be courageous.

The same sources of courage that empowered Joshua are available today for any leader who will accept them. When faced with a risky decision, the godly leader will look to God in prayer and to God's revealed Word for the perspective and courage needed to make the right choice.

Read: Numbers 14:1-10.

It was one thing when the children of Israel murmured and complained about their provisions and their leadership during the first two years in the wilderness. It was far more serious when they decided they could no longer trust the lord.

The tragedy at Kadesh was not caused merely by grumbling, but by outright rebellion against the purposes of God. The Israelites had convinced themselves that their children would be killed if they attempted to take the promised land, and they therefore drew back in fear - doubting God's ability to provide for them. It was their children, however, who later occupied the land under Joshua's leadership.

By pursuing a strategy they hoped would avoid pain rather than trusting the Lord, the Israelites actually caused themselves more pain. A result of their lack of courage was that they were forced to endure an additional thirty-eight years of wilderness wandering. When that generation died, the new generation was ready to take the land.

Obedience to the precepts and principles of Scripture does in fact require significant risk, because to trust God is to pursue the invisible over the visible. But if try to play it safe by both pursuing the promises of the world system, and trying to live a spiritual life - our growth will be stunted. "For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith" (Hebrews 4:2).

Memorize:

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go"
- Joshua 1:9

Principle #5: Priorities - Luke 12:16-21

Every leader must ask the question, "Where shall I invest my time and energy?" Or to put it another way, "What should my priorities be?"

Jesus told the story of a man whose main priority was himself and his possessions. In telling this story Jesus not only warned against the danger of greed, but also pointed out the futility of priorities that are not in line with God's will.

The man in the parable had clear priorities. First, he wanted to accumulate wealth. Second, he wanted to use his wealth to secure his own future. This man started with the wrong motives and unfortunately failed to achieve either of his priorities. He died before he could either expand his business or enjoy retirement. Jesus applied this parable to anybody whose priorities reveal a heart absorbed with self instead of God.

Questions for Reflection

A. What are your top five priorities?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

B. Are you struggling with selfish ambition and greed?
C. If so, how has that struggle affected your priorities?

Servant Leadership Lesson Two

The Leader's Skill Development

Objectives

As a leader, each day in your life is filled with decisions on how to structure and run the organization of which you are a part. To do so requires that you use your natural leadership skills and develop the additional skills you will need. Our objective is for you to learn five of these basic skills as a part of your leadership development.

Skill # 1: Accountability (2 Samuel 11:1-5, 27)

Read 2 Samuel 11:1-5, 27

Effective leaders use the same standards for themselves that they apply to others. They hold themselves accountable just like everyone else on the team. Maintaining such accountability involves seeking total honesty. Skilled leaders consistently receive feedback from those who work above them, beside them and for them. A failure to provide a structure for such accountability will lead to a crisis of character and leadership.

The tragedy of King David underscores what can happen when leaders fail to create a structure in which they are answerable for their personal behavior, their use of their private and professional time. Ultimately, as he did with David, God will hold every leader accountable.

David was the king who had it all. He enjoyed an intimate walk with God, a family, a stable political position and an unbroken string of military victories. The one thing he didn't have was Uriah's wife. And that was what he wanted. While the rest of his army was at war, he stayed at home. With nobody to answer to he committed the acts of adultery and murder described in our primary text for this lesson.

The most important verse in this chapter is verse 27. There Samuel informs us, "But the thing David had done displeased the Lord." While David could hide his sins from his associates, he couldn't hide them from God. One day the prophet Nathan confronted David, and the king discovered that even kings are accountable for their actions.

Wise leaders don't wait for a crisis to establish accountability. They establish structures and relationships that harness their sin and unleash their potential.

Discuss:

- A. Do you practice total honesty?
- B. In what areas of life do you sense the greatest need for accountability?
- C. Do you have an accountability partner for your private and professional life - someone you trust, with whom you can be totally honest, and who is willing to ask you the tough questions about various areas of your life?

Skill #2: Decision-Making (Nehemiah 1:1-11)

Decision-making is one of leadership's core competencies (basic foundational abilities). In fact, decision-making is a key determining factor in whether one is a poor leader or not. Decisions reveal values and intelligence. Decisions require obedience to and dependence upon God. Decision-making demands wisdom. In fact, making decisions affects just about every thing leaders do.

Where can a leader go to get help in this essential component of life and leadership? Let's begin by studying a leader who depended upon God and had a proven record in the decision-making business. Of all the Bible's leaders, Nehemiah provides one of our best examples of how to make right decisions.

Read: Nehemiah 1:1-11. Discuss the list of qualities below that help to explain why Nehemiah was so effective in this essential leadership task.

- A. He carefully studied the situation (vs. 2-3).
- B. He understood those who were hurting (v. 4).
- C. He humbled himself before God (v. 4).
- D. He prayed (vs. 5-11).
 - a. A prayer of adoration
 - b. A prayer of confession
 - c. A prayer of petition
- E. Ultimately, Nehemiah knew what every great servant leader knows: All wisdom comes from God. We need to make decisions according to what God considers to be wise. What strategies do you presently use in making decisions?
- F. How could the method Nehemiah used help you?

Summary

It is crucial to make wise decisions. It is very difficult to make wise decisions when you make all your important decisions independent of God. In the story recorded in the book of Nehemiah, the people of Israel made a bad decision because they left God out of their plans. James 4:15 says "Instead [of leaving God out of our plans] we ought to say, 'If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that.'"

Skill # 3: Problem Solving (Nehemiah 6:1-14)

Read Nehemiah 6:1-14

One way in which individuals prove their leadership ability is by using their problem-solving skills. Nehemiah certainly demonstrated his capability in that way. While the walls of Jerusalem were rapidly taking shape, Nehemiah's enemies tried to sidetrack him from the project with a number of different strategies. First, they tried to lure him out of Jerusalem by repeatedly inviting him to a summit (vs. 1-4), but Nehemiah rejected their invitations and focused his attention on the job at hand.

Second, they accused Nehemiah of leading a revolt against King Artaxerxes—a potentially devastating lie (vs. 5-9). Nehemiah addressed this problem by confronting his enemies head-on. He exposed their lies and prayed for strength (v.9).

Third, Nehemiah's enemies tried to intimidate him into violating the law of God by urging him to seek refuge in the temple (vs. 10-14). Nehemiah realized that their ultimate motive was to discredit him as a godly leader. But he solved the problem by obeying God and seeking his strength.

As a leader you'll face problems. They can't be avoided. But you should follow Nehemiah's example:

- A. Retain your focus. Read Philippians 4:13-14: How is Paul's focus expressed here?
- B. Confront any false accusations against you immediately and with integrity. Read Matthew 18:15-17: What are the steps to be taken whenever it is necessary to confront someone who has done wrong?
- C. Pray to God for strength and wisdom, you'll find, as Nehemiah did that God is eager to help.

Read: James 3:13-18

What is the evidence of earthly wisdom?

What are the evidences of heavenly wisdom?

Summary

Leaders must face and solve problems. No matter how powerful the opposition may seem, God is a powerful ally. How much more effective to ask God, the One who sees and knows all, for help than to try to formulate a solution on your own.

Skill # 4: Team Building (2 Samuel 23:8-17)

A mark of a great leader is how many great people will join his or her team. David's team was comprised of "mighty men." Because David attempted mighty things, only the mighty could keep up with him. Those who could not keep pace could not join the team. One who attempts mighty feats had better be capable of recruiting a mighty team.

David did that. His was one of the most celebrated teams in the entire Old Testament. This group was the all-star team of his battle-hardened warriors. Several things stand out as we consider how David pulled his team together.

- A. First he spent time with them in battle. These men were completely devoted to David. His inner circle consisted of those men who had fought alongside him. He knew their capabilities, because he had seen what they could do with his own eyes.
- B. He sacrificed for them. When three of his mighty men risked their lives to obtain drinking water for him during a battle, David was so impressed by their exploit that instead of drinking the water he poured it out as an offering to God, in thanks to God for the mighty men who were willing to risk their lives to bring him water.
- C. They enjoyed victory together. Time and again David and his mighty men faced seemingly insurmountable odds and saw God deliver them.
- D. David honored them. These men were well known throughout the land as "David's Mighty Men." That phrase served as a banner that set them apart as extraordinary.

Jesus formed the most impressive team ever assembled. Matthew 2:14-17 records the calling of Matthew to his team. Jesus demonstrated two important principles of Team Building with the selection of Matthew.

- A. He recruited specific people for specific reasons. Teams are made of players who have assigned positions. They are expected to contribute something they do well—ideally better than anyone else on the team.
- B. Jesus recruited an odd player. He began with a group of Galileans—working men, mostly fishermen, all with strong Jewish backgrounds. Then he added Matthew, a tax collector and hated publican, to the mix. Jesus also recruited Simon, the Zealot, who was at the opposite end of the political spectrum from Matthew. He taught his team of individuals to understand, appreciate, and love each other. Jesus molded his team into a tightly knit unit. But he recruited each of them on the basis of their individual strengths. He recruited people who would contribute to the other members of the team and to the team's overall objectives.

Team-building guidelines.

- 1 Pray for guidance.
- 2 Evaluate the need.
- 3 Determine the skills needed.
- 4 Recruit people who have the required skills.
- 5 Train them to work together as a team
- 6 Keep the objective clearly focused.
- 7 Support your team.

Skill # 5: Vision Casting (2 Corinthians 12:1-6)

Read 2 Corinthians 12:1-6

Looking ahead into the future, that great unknown, is an essential characteristic of effective leadership. In fact few things are more important to effective leadership than vision. Leaders have to see things that others don't. Their vision must transcend the "What do we do now" and enter "What do we do next" mode. A leader can rise above the tyranny of the urgent and get to the truly important. Godly leaders who are followers of Christ must first have a vision of who God is and the future he holds for them. They must also have a sense of what God has called them to do.

The apostle Paul had both. Through a miraculous vision, he was taken into heaven where he saw images too spectacular to communicate; images he wasn't allowed to communicate. That vision enabled him to undergo intense hardship and pain with an unwavering faith in God.

But there was a second vision Paul possessed. The first was of heaven, his future home. The second was a vision of his earthly ministry among the Corinthians. He knew God had called him to minister to the Gentiles (Romans 1:5). And he knew that the Lord was directing him to return to the Corinthians a third time. Elsewhere he spoke about his vision to take the Gospel to Rome and to Spain (Romans 15:23-24).

As you seek God through his Word and through prayer, ask him to show you himself. Ask him to give you a clear image of the work he has called you to. After personally experiencing the God-given vision the godly leader must know how to "cast" the vision to his/her followers. Elisha, one of God's great prophets, provides an essential principle for the visionary leader. Read the story in 2 Kings 6:15-17.

Steps to Effective Vision Casting

- A. Define the vision. As clearly as possible the leaders must describe to the team what he/she believes God wants them, as an organization, to do.
- B. Refine the vision. Get the input of the team.
- C. Determine the strategy. The leader and the team work together on the methods that will accomplish the vision.
- D. Implement the strategy. Determine what can be delegated and to whom. Set goals. Establish time frames.
- E. Mobilize the troops. Get as many as possible involved.
- F. Follow-up. Make sure everyone is getting assignments done.
- G. Evaluate.

Nothing brings more satisfaction to a servant leader than to see vision accomplished through the joint efforts of everyone in the organization...and nothing defines the leader more favorably than when he cares not who gets the credit.

Questions for Reflection

- A. What is the focus of your life?
- B. Are you a person of passion for the things of God, or is that passion just a sporadic experience for you?
- C. Do you believe that God has given you a vision for ministry?
- D. Do you think you have the ability to "cast" the vision to others?
- E. Are you willing to lead others without regard for who gets the credit?
- F. Can you work well with others and are you willing to delegate major roles of responsibility?

Servant Leadership

Lesson Three

The Leader's Relational Development

Objectives

1. The student will be expected to learn the importance of building effective relationships.
 2. The student will learn that the power to influence reflects the strength of the relationship with the one being influenced.
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Introduction:

One of the most important aspects of your leadership role is the manner in which you relate to other people—your peers, the people you lead, and those who lead you. This lesson will help you develop God-honoring and effective relationships. The principles we will be studying in this category are:

- Encouragement
- The Meaning of Servanthood
- Interpersonal Relationships
- Power and Influence
- The Leader as a Mentor

Principle # 1: Encouragement (Acts 9:27)

Read Acts 9:27

Few functions a leader performs are more important than that of keeping hope alive. During those times in which others are lost in a dark and seemingly endless maze of despair, effective leaders will drive away the darkness with positive projections for the future. They will infuse those around them with optimism regarding themselves, others and the future of the organization. They know when to draw alongside of someone. They sense whether a team member needs a quick admonition or a shoulder to cry on.

No other New Testament character illustrates the ability to encourage more strongly than Barnabas - whose name means "Son of Encouragement." The disciples in Jerusalem were understandably afraid of Saul. As a devout Pharisee Saul had hunted down and persecuted followers of Jesus. Because of his reputation for hatred and cruelty to Christians they questioned the validity of his profession of faith in Christ.

Due to this suspicion it seemed that Saul's ministry would never get started. And that might have happened had not Barnabas stood in the gap beside Saul, leading him to the apostles and testifying concerning his conversion and early ministry.

Barnabas encouraged the apostles to bless Saul's ministry, and they responded favorably. Barnabas provided the support that Saul needed to secure the blessing of the church on his ministry. Effective Leaders, like Barnabas, sustain hope by offering words of support.

- A. Suppose for a moment that Barnabas had said nothing on Saul's behalf. What might have happened?
- B. In what ways did his actions demonstrate both love and courage?

- C. What could you do to follow the example of Barnabas?
- D. What are some ways you can encourage the members of your church?

Read: 1 Samuel 18:1-4. How did David and Jonathan encourage each other?

Principle #2: The Meaning of Servanthood - John 13:1-17

A famous Basketball coach once wrote about the "dangers of me." He said, "The most difficult thing for individuals to do when they are part of the team is to sacrifice. It is so easy to become selfish in team environment; to play for me. It is very vulnerable to drop your guard and say, 'This is who I am and I am going to open up and give of myself to you.' But that is exactly what you have got to do. Willingness to sacrifice is the great paradox. You must give up something in the immediate present—comfort, ease, recognition, quick rewards—to attract something even better in the future."

Serving others can be tough; expending your energies and resources in the interest of others can be exhausting. Yet the most effective leaders are servants. Nobody demonstrated this better than Jesus on the night prior to his crucifixion. Alone with his disciples in a room in Jerusalem, Jesus did the unthinkable. When there was no servant to carry out the custom of foot washing, Jesus assumed the role. The Master became the servant. The greatest and most high became the least and the lowest.

Jesus was able to do this because he was secure in himself. He knew who he was and where he was going (v. 1). But Jesus also served his disciples because he loved them (v.1). While these two reasons would have been enough in and of themselves, the Lord had another reason for his actions. When he had finished washing the disciples' feet, Jesus told them, "I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you" (v. 15) The Lord didn't tell them what he had done but rather commanded them to do as he had done. They weren't to become full time foot-washers but instead, full time servers of men and women. They were to become servant leaders.

Read: Hebrews 4:14-16. What are some of the ways Jesus is shown to model servant leadership in these verses?

Leadership by definition means power and influence. The question of power is one of the most important issues for a leader to resolve. No one has ever had more power than Jesus. He calmed the raging storm, cast out demons, caused blind eyes to see, walked on water, and healed the lame. Yet he consistently used his power to serve others. And he called his followers to do the same thing (John 13:15).

- How do use our power to serve others?
- Paul urged Christians to treat others as members of their own families. In what ways can you help make the members of your church feel a part of your family?
- You are a leader. Therefore you hold some power and influence over those you lead. Have you ever thought of the people in your church as members of a family? Consider the following qualities that are evident in a family and show how they can apply to your relationship to your church family.
 - 1) Care
 - 2) Concern
 - 3) Love
 - 4) Responding to a crisis

5) Family gatherings

6) Joy, laughter, fun

Paul singled out Timothy as an example of Servant Leadership when he commended him to the Philippian church as a leader who would serve them well (Phil. 2:19-24). Timothy embodied three principles of servant leadership.

- A. The servant leader must define what his or her leadership is going to produce. (Timothy had genuine interest in others' welfare.)
- B. The servant leader knows whom he or she serves. With that understanding comes a knowledge of the accountability that he or she has to others and, ultimately to God. Timothy served Paul by serving those whom Paul had commissioned him to lead. In turn, both Paul and Timothy served the Lord and helped the Philippians to achieve what the Master had commissioned them to accomplish.
- C. Servant leaders help their followers succeed. Paul stated that he knew of "no one else like" Timothy (v. 20). Jesus taught that the greater the service the greater the leader (Matthew 20:26-28). To be truly unique—or highly valuable—be a leader, like Timothy, must serve the church by helping followers succeed.

Principle # 3: Interpersonal Relationships (Philemon 1-25)

Read the book of Philemon.

Leader/follower relationships are sometimes difficult to handle. Advice about this varies widely. Some would advocate that the leader keep his distance and not become too familiar with followers. Others say you cannot lead people you do not know well. In his letter to Philemon, Paul models an enviable leader-follower relationship with two difficult followers.

The book of Philemon makes an important statement about leader-follower relationships. Paul had led Philemon's runaway slave, Onesimus, to accept Jesus Christ as his personal savior. Onesimus was now a Christian. Ethically and legally, Onesimus was bound to return to his master Philemon.

That's the point at which Paul stepped in and wrote this letter to his friend Philemon, who was also a Christian. Although Onesimus still legally belonged to Philemon, Paul urged Philemon to treat him "no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother. He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord" (v. 16).

The Paul-Onesimus-Philemon set of relationships described in this letter is rich in leader-follower principles. Underlying all of it is Paul's plea for this slave owner to treat his slave with human dignity and brotherly love. Leaders lead more effectively when they bear in mind that they are leading fellow humans. Followers follow more willingly when they view their leaders as fellow humans. Not a bad starting point for the whole complicated subject of leadership, is it?

Even the strongest relationships break down. Trusted allies will betray you. Key subordinates will fail. Does that mean that the relationship is finished? Let Jesus and Peter answer that question. Look at Acts 2:14-40 and observe as a restored ally advocates for the friend he has so tragically wronged.

If there is one truth that Peter's amazing turn-around illustrates, it's the fact that God allows his people room to fail but then permits them to get back up and still be used by him. If God treats us in this manner, doesn't it make sense that we should extend the same freedom to those we lead?

For Discussion:

- A. When you, as a leader, notice a significant conflict between some of your followers how would you try to help them resolve it?
- B. How does the issue of favoritism relate to interpersonal relationships?

Principle #4: Power and Influence (Psalm 82:1-8)

Read Psalm 82:1-8.

Power is essential to leadership. Without it leaders can't lead. Unfortunately, power and influence are not always used to help others. If you are a leader, you have some share in these assets. You have power over others; they listen to you and you influence them. What you do with that power and influence matters more than you may realize.

The author of Psalm 82 describes a scene in which God chastises and challenges Israel's judges. Because of their role as God's delegates and image-bearers, he refers to these men as "gods." Rather than defending the unjust and judging with partiality, they were accountable to defend the "weak and the fatherless" and to protect the rights of the "poor and the oppressed" (v.3). They were to exercise their power in a godly manner, one that would rescue the needy and deliver them from the control of wicked individuals (v. 4).

These men were assigned godlike functions in their roles as judges, but the psalmist predicted that they would fall like mere men (vs. 6-7). While their power may have given them a sense of invincibility, they would one day be called upon to answer to the supreme judge (v.8). Since all leaders face the same fate, we must exercise our power and influence with grace and love.

Questions for Reflection

- 1) What mistake did the judges of Israel make with regard to their power?
- 2) How can you avoid that same mistake?

Read: Mathew 20:20-28.

- 1) What do you think the mood of the disciples was as they walked along with Jesus and listened to his predictions of things to come?
- 2) What was the family of Zebedee really asking for in verses 20-23? (Think beyond the obvious answer and imagine their dreams.)
- 3) What was the response of the other disciples (v.24)? What generated their response?
- 4) Jesus identified their understanding of power positions in verse 25: "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them." Then in verses 26-28 he informed them of his approach to power and leadership. What did Jesus require of one who wanted to become great?

Memorize: Matthew 20:28

"The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Principle #5: Mentoring (Acts 9:26-30)

Read Acts 9:26-30.

Mentoring is a teaching and learning relationship in which one person invests in others as a steward of time and resources. (Step by Step, a mentor's guide, EYL, 1997)

Examples of Biblical Mentoring:

- Moses mentored Joshua.
- Elijah mentored Elisha.
- Elizabeth mentored Mary.
- Barnabas mentored Paul.
- Paul mentored Timothy.

Paul is probably the best known and most frequently quoted biblical writer, having written at least thirteen of the New Testament books. He was a great evangelist and missionary, travelling the known world and proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ after his dramatic conversion. But behind this great man was a little-known character whose role in Paul's life was one of the crucial hinges upon which history turned.

On the island of Cyprus, in the Mediterranean, lived an unassuming man named Joses. Although we're not told the circumstances of Joses' conversion to Christianity, we know that he sold his possessions and travelled to Jerusalem to present the money to the church. The leaders of the church in Jerusalem gave Joses a new Christian name. They called him Barnabas, the Son of Encouragement (Acts 4:36-37).

Barnabas' appointment with history began when he came to Paul's aid and began to mentor him shortly after his conversion on the road to Damascus. Even though the church elders in Jerusalem feared and distrusted Paul, Barnabas brought him to them and defended him concerning the truth of his conversion. The two later travelled together, preaching, healing and planting churches.

Paul became the dominant character of the New Testament (after Jesus, of course) but we must never forget that behind him stood a "Son of Encouragement," a mentor. When Paul wrote to Timothy, a young man he later mentored, he passed on the heritage and ordered Timothy to do the same when he said, "The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others" (2 Timothy 2:2).

Questions for Reflection

- 1) What do these examples from scripture teach us about mentoring?
- 2) What do you think Barnabas would say was his life's greatest accomplishment?
- 3) Do you feel any personal debt of gratitude to Barnabas?
- 4) What kind of vision for mentoring does Paul cast?
- 5) In your leadership role, why do you think you ought to be a mentor?

Spiritual Disciplines
Lesson 1: Prayer and Fasting
Rev. Gary Wiley

Objectives

1. **To understand that prayer sets the stage for all effective ministry.**
 2. **To understand you cannot effectively minister with first “listening” to God.**
 3. **To understand the true purpose of fasting.**
-

Part One: Prayer

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. -
Mark 1:35

The Gospels make it clear that Jesus had an active prayer life from the very beginning of his public ministry to the night of His arrest. Jesus not only prayed in public but also spent long hours in private communion with His Father. He spent the night praying to God before He appointed the Twelve apostles (Luke 6:12), After feeding the five thousand - when the crowds wanted to seize Jesus and make Him their king - Jesus withdrew to pray, regain perspective, and commune with His Father (John 6:15, Matthew 14:23). And then before His arrest, Jesus spent some agonizing time in prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:39).

Jesus lived his life of prayer before His disciples. They learned from His example. On one occasion they made a request of Him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples” (Luke 11:1).

The prayer model that He taught them includes the basic components for communication with God:

⁹ "This, then, is how you should pray: " `Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, ¹⁰ your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹ Give us today our daily bread. ¹² Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.' -
Matthew 6:9b-13

It has been said about prayer that when all is said and done, more has been said than done. We talk a lot about prayer and the importance of prayer. We even promise to pray for one another. However busy schedules, our lack of discipline, and the attacks of the evil one can cause us to not invest enough time in this.

In our relationship with Jesus Christ it is vitally important that we have a daily time alone with God. This time must be scheduled and become part of our daily discipline. Unless it is scheduled, it will get pushed aside by other concerns and perhaps even forgotten. The result of times in my own life when I did not have a regular, scheduled devotional time was that my spiritual sharpness and passion for God were compromised. When I made my daily time alone with God a priority, God began to use me in new and incredible ways.

How Are You Currently Prioritizing Your Time?

Take a survey of a typical day in your life. How much time do you spend in the following activities each day and each week? Be honest with yourself -God is already well aware of how you spend your time.

ACTIVITY	Time spent daily	Time spent weekly
Time alone with God		
Recreation and Relaxation		
Work and/or classes		
Church & cell group activities/discipleship		
Travel		
Time with friends		
Family time		
Reading or studying		

Are you surprised? Which activities are taking up most of your time? Are you satisfied with the amount of time you are spending alone with God?

The question sometimes comes up concerning when is the best time of the day to schedule time alone with God. Some people have their special time with God at night, others during the day. I recommend that you give the part of your day to God when you are the freshest and most alert. An important part of your time alone with God is putting on the spiritual armor that He makes available to you on a daily basis. If you are a night person and choose to have your time alone with God in the evening, be sure that you use your time alone with God to prepare for the next day.

The Listening Room

When we think of prayer we generally associate it with talking to God. However, a very important part of prayer is allowing God to talk to us. A Japanese pastor once invited an American pastor to visit his home. He took his guest to a beautiful garden behind his house. There he had constructed a little house with just one room. The pastor explained to his guest, "This is my 'listening room.'" (Neighbour 1996:60)

You may not be able to build a special building or have a special room in your house, but you do need to have a place where you can meet privately and personally with God. It is very difficult to have a special time alone with God when you are in the middle of the hustle and bustle of your family life or while seated on a bus. You need to find a place where you will not be distracted by the radio or the television.

For you to be able to hear the voice of God you will need to give Him your undivided attention. You will need to allow Him to speak to you through His Word and through your inner spirit to give you the direction that you need to live victoriously in your Christian life and to be able to minister effectively to those whom God has entrusted to you for their spiritual growth.

How can you know that you are hearing God's voice and not confusing it with something else? God will never contradict His written Word when He speaks to you. If you receive an impression about something, that should be your first test – Is this in agreement with what I know about God? Sometimes you will sense something that you know did not originate with you. As you continue to pray and read the Word, the Holy Spirit will confirm what He has shown you and will give you peace.

It is very important to keep a spiritual journal. It serves not only to record the things that you sense God is saying to you, but also to keep track of your spiritual growth and progress. You can be greatly encouraged as you go back and read how God worked in your life at a particular time. Sometimes we forget what we have experienced or what God has said to us. Having it in writing keeps us accountable to the message we have received from God, and keeps our memories of his work in our lives fresh.

Praying God's Word

God has given us a tremendous privilege to communicate with Him in prayer. The Bible teaches us that He has invited us to approach the throne of grace with confidence so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need (Hebrews 4:16). We are also assured that Christ always lives to intercede for us (Hebrews 7:25), and that the Holy Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express (Romans 8:26). We have another powerful tool in our prayer and that is praying the Word of God. When we pray the Word we are combining two very powerful weapons that God has given us to have victory and to accomplish His purpose in His children and in His Kingdom. Second Corinthians 10:3-5 tells us:

“³ For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. ⁴ The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. ⁵ We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”

I was recently challenged to pray Scripture for my wife, my children and for those whom I am interceding. I praying from 1 Peter 5:2-3 for my pastor: “I pray that my pastor will be a shepherd of God's flock that is under his care, serving as an overseer- not because he must, but because he is willing, as God wants him to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to him, but being an example to the flock.”

When you pray God's Word you do not have to doubt whether or not you are praying in accordance with the will of God. It *is* His will. It is His will to accomplish His Word. God will answer mightily as you pray His Word.

Praying Through

As I was growing up in the church I remember hearing the older people talk about “praying through.” I did not understand then all that it meant, nor did I have the patience to put it into practice. Basically “praying through” means praying until we receive the answer or until God releases us from the burden to pray. As long as God burdens us with a specific concern, we must be faithful to pray.

We are living in a world of instant communication. We can send a letter by e-mail and that message arrives in a matter of seconds. Other inventions of the past century help us to cook our meals faster (microwave ovens), see news from around the world sooner

(satellites), and arrive at our destinations more quickly (jet airplanes). We often grow impatient when it comes to our prayer lives. We want to see instantaneous responses to our prayers. But Jesus teaches us the importance of persistent prayer in Luke 18:1-8.

¹ Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. ² He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. ³ And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.'

⁴ "For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care about men, ⁵ yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually wear me out with her coming!' "

⁶ And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. ⁷ And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? ⁸ I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

I have learned that we must be specific and strategic in our praying. God wants to accomplish specific things in a person's life. The enemy is working specifically against what God wants to do. We must not be haphazard in our prayer lives and in our intercession. The following chart is a model that you can use to help you to be more effective in praying through.

Date I began to intercede	Persons and Situations to pray for	Date prayer was answered

Here are nine steps to help you make your prayer more effective:

1. Set aside a specific time for prayer.
2. Find a quiet place.
3. Ask God for His protection as you pray - you are engaged in battle.
4. Confess.
5. Worship and meditate.
6. Listen quietly.
7. Pray with faith.
8. Believe that your prayers will be answered (Mark 11:24).
9. Give thanks. (Freidzon 1999: 10-11)

Part Two: Fasting
The Importance of Fasting

The spiritual discipline of fasting is taught and practiced in both the Old and New Testaments. An important aspect of your spiritual life and discipline is growing up in your faith and becoming responsible for your own spiritual growth. A regular time of fasting will help you in your pilgrimage toward spiritual maturity.

Fasting is not just giving up a meal or two. It is a time to seek the presence of God and enjoy special communion with Him as you spend time praying and reading His Word. The

time of fasting enables you to remove your focus from physical satisfaction and concentrate on the spiritual aspect of your person in order to have intimate communion with God.

Fasting has been misunderstood and even abused. There is evidence of that in both the Old and New Testaments. In Isaiah 58:1-5 the prophet tried to correct abuses that were common in his time:

¹ "Shout it aloud, do not hold back. Raise your voice like a trumpet. Declare to my people their rebellion and to the house of Jacob their sins. ² For day after day they seek me out; they seem eager to know my ways, as if they were a nation that does what is right and has not forsaken the commands of its God.

They ask me for just decisions and seem eager for God to come near them.³ 'Why have we fasted,' they say, 'and you have not seen it? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you have not noticed?' "Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please and exploit all your workers.⁴ Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife, and in striking each other with wicked fists. You cannot fast as you do today and expect your voice to be heard on high.

⁵ Is this the kind of fast I have chosen, only a day for a man to humble himself? Is it only for bowing one's head like a reed and for lying on sackcloth and ashes? Is that what you call a fast, a day acceptable to the LORD?

Jesus also dealt with the abuses of fasting in Matthew 6:16-18.

¹⁶ "When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. ¹⁷ But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

In the final analysis, fasting is profitable for both body and spirit. Fasting has positive health benefits and can prepare the body for a nutritional diet. Fasting give the body a rest. By denying our physical needs for a period of time we can draw close to God and focus on the spiritual side of our lives. Let God guide you as to how often and for how long you should fast.

Exercises for this lesson:

1. Secure a prayer journal and begin to pray with purpose and strategy.
2. Ask God to give you verses to pray for your family members and for those whom you give spiritual leadership.
3. Put into practice "praying through" using the chart in the lesson to chronicle God's answers.
4. After reading and meditating on Isaiah 58:1-5 and Matthew 6:16-18, set aside a time to fast and pray. Keep your journal at hand to record the direction that God gives you for your spiritual life and ministry.
5. Be prepared to share your experiences with your study group.

References

Neighbour, Ralph W., Jr. *The Arrival Kit*. Houston: Touch Publications, 1996.
Freidzon, Claudio J. *Un Verdadero Encuentro*. Buenos Aires: Rey de Reyes, 1999.

Spiritual Disciplines

Lesson 2: Stewardship

Objectives

1. **To rethink our understanding of stewardship – it includes more than money.**
 2. **To learn the meaning of three important Greek words and how they will affect the way we see our ministry.**
 3. **To live by grace in relationship to our practice of stewardship.**
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Introduction

When we hear the word stewardship we immediately think of money. When our church observes Stewardship Month we automatically know that the pastor will be preaching about how we should tithe. For many years that is what stewardship meant to me, but I am learning that while it does involve our finances and how we manage them - it really involves a lot more than that.

It is true that Jesus spoke a lot about money: there are more references to money than there are to prayer in Jesus' teaching in the Gospels. The Bible tells us that where our treasure is, there our heart will be also (Matthew 6:21). When our heart is in the right place and we begin to understand the principles of stewardship, we will be prepared to take on the task of managing our responsibilities according to God's will for our lives.

Stop for a moment and write a short statement that describes what comes to your mind when you think about stewardship.

When I have taught about the giving of our tithes and offerings apart from the stewardship of the entire person, it has sometimes created misunderstanding and mistrust in my own ministry. Pastors are sometimes afraid to teach about tithing because it might appear that they are asking for a pay raise. But stewardship involves much more than tithing. When the people in my congregation were discipled in the truth that stewardship is a way of life and it involves everything, not just money - then the money part of stewardship fell into place as well.

The Concepts of Oikos, Oikonomos, And Oikodomeo

Oikos

There is a Greek word that is the key to a better understanding of stewardship. That word is *oikos*. *Oikos* simply means family or household. We can even expand it to include our circle of influence. Your *oikos* has been defined to include those people with whom you spend at least one hour per week. Some people have a small *oikos*; some have a large *oikos*. There are several significant uses of the word *oikos* in the New Testament. When Jesus delivered the demon-possessed man in the region of the Gerasenes, he begged Jesus to allow him to go with Him. But Jesus did not let him. Instead he said, "Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had

mercy on you.” Jesus literally told him to go to his *oikos* and share the message with them. In Acts 16 when the Philippian jailer asked Paul and Silas what he must do to be saved, they responded, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household (*oikos*). Using the definition of *oikos* to include those people with whom you spend one hour or more per week, you discover that your *oikos* include more than your immediate relatives, but also your work associates, your classmates, your friends and neighbors. These are the people to whom God has called you to minister. And that takes us to another Greek word related to the word *oikos*. This word is *oikonomos*—a word that means steward, manager or administrator.

Oikonomos

In Luke 12:42, Jesus says, “Who then is the faithful and wise manager (*oikonomos*), whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time?” This steward or administrator is the person the master has assigned to supply all the needs of the servants of his household (*oikos*). Dr. Ralph W. Neighbour, Jr. explains that the steward (*oikonomos*) provides food to the servants at the appropriate times. Obviously, the steward does not use his own personal resources to do this. The only resource at his or her disposal is that which has been entrusted to him/her by the master. He/she can’t distribute food unless the master has first provided it. (Neighbour 1996:46)

We generally struggle with stewardship because we think that we are giving to God something that belongs to us. The real steward knows that he or she has nothing that belongs to them, but that everything comes from God. When I recognize who is the true owner of the wealth, the time, and the talents in my possession, I am freed to distribute them as the Master wishes. To be a wise and faithful steward I must be wise and faithful in two directions: toward my Master and toward those to whom He has called me to serve. I have to maintain a life of intimacy with God as we saw in the lesson on prayer and fasting, so that I will have something to share with those who are in my sphere of influence, my *oikos*. 1 Peter 4:10 says, “Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering (*oikonomos*) God’s grace in its various forms.”

Oikodomeo

That leads us to a second word related to the root word *oikos*. That word is *oikodomeo* and it literally means to build, as in the construction of a house. But the word is also used to refer to building or edifying fellow Christians. Let’s take a look at two examples:

“We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build (*oikodomeo*) him up.” - Romans 15:1-2

“What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening (*oikodomeo*) of the church.” - 1 Corinthians 14:26

A steward is one who is in constant contact with God through prayer and Bible study (as we saw in the previous lesson), who recognizes that he or she has a responsibility to an *oikos*, that on their own they have nothing to share with that *oikos*, but must receive it from the Master, and then is faithful and wise to distribute what they have been given to build

up and edify the Church, the body of Christ. What you receive from God in the “listening room” is what He may want you to share with the members of your *oikos*. Others are depending on you to be a faithful steward of the spiritual riches you have received from the Lord. We will deal with the important of being a steward of our spiritual gifts in the next lesson.

A Quick Review...

<i>Oikos</i>	A small group of people who have a special relationship with each other	Mark 5:19; Acts 16:31-34
<i>Oikonomos</i>	A steward, one who faithfully dispenses what the Master provides	Luke 12:42; 1 Peter 4:10; Malachi 3:8
<i>Oikodomeo</i>	To build, to edify other members of the body of Christ and the <i>oikos</i>	Romans 15:1-2; 1 Corinthians 14:26

Being a Steward in the Financial Area

Once we truly understand the concept of God’s ownership in our lives it should not be too difficult to surrender our control over the financial area of our lives to God as well. The Bible teaches the principle of tithing - that is, giving 10 percent of our income back to God - from the earliest pages of the Old Testament. We see Abraham giving a tenth of the spoils he had taken in battle to Melchizedek (Genesis 14:20). Jacob promises God a tithe of all his possessions after his dream at Bethel if God will be with him and watch over him in his journey, allowing him to safely return to his father’s house (Genesis 28:20-22). The principle of tithing was already well established before God made it part of the covenant law that Moses gave to the Israelites.

In Malachi (3:6-12) we discover that to *not* tithe is to rob God of what is rightfully His. To hold back from God what is His puts us under a curse. God takes very seriously our recognition of His sovereignty in our lives. When we do not return a tithe to the Lord we are in as much as saying that what we have has been self-generated. We are not recognizing that it is God who has provided us with employment or good crops, with health, and with all that is necessary for us to live. We give to God, not because He needs us to give to Him, but so that we remember and acknowledge His sovereignty in our lives. As we give in obedience we experience the many blessings that He wants to pour out on us. As we are obedient God takes our offerings and makes us His partners in accomplishing the great work of His Kingdom.

One of the most exciting parts of living the Christian life is living under grace. Some people believe and teach that tithing is an Old Testament concept and is part of the law. They would go on to say that since we are now living under grace we are freed from the law and its demands on us, therefore we do not have to tithe. There is something wrong with that teaching and we only need to examine a few examples of life under the law and life under grace to see that this is far from the truth. In Matthew 5:21-22, Jesus said:

“You have heard that it was said to the people long ago. ‘Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgement.’ But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgement. Again, anyone who says to his

brother, 'Raca,' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell."

Again in Matthew 5:27-28, Jesus said,

"You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

What do we discover in just two of the many examples of life under the law compared to life under grace? The expectations are higher under grace than before. The key to remember is that Jesus is not laying down more law that we have to try to keep. Rather, he is revealing what we can become and how we can live with the power and presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives. There are now higher expectations and we can live up to these expectations by the presence of the living Christ in us.

How does this apply to stewardship in the financial area? The New Testament teaching on giving does not mention ten percent or the tithe - the focus is on giving liberally or generously. From 2 Corinthians 8:1 through 9:15 we find teaching about finances. Let's focus on just a few of these verses:

And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. - 2 Corinthians 8:1-3

"We want to avoid any criticism of the way we administer this liberal gift." - 2 Corinthians 8:20

So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to visit you in advance and finish the arrangements for the generous gift you had promised. Then it will be ready as a generous gift, not as one grudgingly given. - 2 Corinthians 9:5

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. - 2 Corinthians 9:5

Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. - 2 Corinthians 9:7-8

You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. - 2 Corinthians 9:11

What percentage of your possessions belongs to God? If you answer ten percent, your answer is wrong. All of your possessions belong to God. When you recognize that all that you are and all that you have belong to Him, you can open your hands, your heart, and your life to give to Him freely and generously. And He will "throw open the floodgates

of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it” (Malachi 3:10).

Exercises for this lesson:

1. Make a list of the people who would be included in your oikos.
2. In what ways are you presently a wise and faithful steward? What do you need to change to be an ‘oikonomos’ that will please the Master?
3. Tell the story of your personal pilgrimage as a steward in the area of finances.
4. Read 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 and copy into your notebook all the references to liberal or generous giving.
5. Be prepared to share your experiences with your study group.

References

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Spiritual Disciplines

Lesson 3: Spiritual Gifts

Objectives

1. **To show that the use of spiritual gifts is directly related to our prayer life and our stewardship.**
 2. **To identify the spiritual gifts mentioned in the New Testament.**
 3. **To discover the spiritual gifts that God has given to us.**
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Introduction

Spiritual gifts have been described as the lifeblood of the body of Christ. The gifts are given by God through the Holy Spirit to believers in order to edify the Church. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 12 that he does not want us to be ignorant concerning spiritual gifts. He goes on to tell us that there are different kinds of gifts, but only one Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but only one Lord. There are different kinds of workings, but the same God works all of them in all men (Corinthians 12:4-6). What that tells us is that spiritual gifts should not be something that divides or confuses us. The gifts have their source in the One who gave His life for the church, is the Head of the Church, and desires that the Church be healthy and built up in every way. This is confirmed in verse 7 of the same chapter: "Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good."

To have a healthy understanding it is important to focus on the Giver of the gifts and not on the individual gifts that we might have. An unhealthy focus and comparison of the gifts caused problems in Corinth, and has potential to cause problems today. It is no coincidence that Paul includes the great chapter on love in the middle of his treatment of spiritual gifts. "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing" (1 Corinthians 13:1-3).

The following definition brings together some key truths concerning spiritual gifts:

A Spiritual Gift is a special divine empowerment bestowed on each believer by the Holy Spirit to accomplish a given ministry God's way according to His grace and discernment to be used within the context of the body of Christ. (Ministry Tools Resource Center 2000)

Remember that '*oikodomeo*' word?

In the previous lesson we looked at three Greek words. The final word, *oikodomeo*, is directly related to the spiritual gifts. It is important to understand that God is Lord over the spiritual gifts, as much as He is over our finances, our time and our talents. Therefore, we are stewards of the spiritual gifts He has given us. We must be prepared to use these gifts in the context of the body.

For many years I believed in the spiritual gifts. I believed that God had given me some, but I didn't understand how and when each believer was to use his or her gift. Now of course some gifts are obvious. We can understand the use of the gift of teaching, the gift

of giving, the gift of serving, but what about the gift of knowledge, of wisdom, of exhortation, of healing, or of miracles?

I used to wonder how these gifts fit into the life of the church. A typical worship service would not permit each person to do what 1 Corinthians 14:26 says:

“When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church.”

I have come to realize that the best place for us to put our spiritual gifts into practice in the context of the small group. That could be a cell group, a Sunday School class, a support group or any other type of setting where three to fifteen people have gathered as the body of Christ. When Paul was writing to the New Testament church about spiritual gifts he was writing to house churches, not congregations meeting in church buildings. In these house churches the exercise of individual gifts was possible.

When we meet with this group of people, who know us intimately, we are free to put into practice the gift that God has given. There is even freedom to experiment and discover our gifts. To edify (*oikodomeo*) the body of Christ, it is necessary that each member be in constant contact with the Head of the body, who is Christ. A steward (*oikonomos*) cannot afford to neglect his or her time alone with God; otherwise there will be nothing to share. If there is no love, the gift will be ‘like a sounding gong or a clanging cymbal’ - used improperly and ineffectively.

Identifying the Spiritual Gifts

The spiritual gifts are identified in three major passages of the New Testament: 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, and Ephesians 4. Take some time to read these three passages and write in the appropriate list the spiritual gifts that you find:

1 Corinthians 12	Romans 12	Ephesians 4

Can you think of any other spiritual gifts you would include? Some have suggested that the following are other spiritual gifts. What do you think?

- Artistic creativity, *Exodus 31:1-11; 2 Samuel 6:12-16; 1 Kings 7:14.*
- Craftsmanship, *Exodus 30:22-31; 2 Kings 12:11-13; 2 Chronicles 34:9-13; Acts 18:3.*
- Hospitality, *Genesis 18:1-8; 1 Peter 4:9-10; 3 John 5-10.*
- Music, *1 Samuel 16:14-23; 1 Corinthians 14:26; Ephesians 5:18-20; Colossians 3:15-17.*
- Voluntary poverty, *Acts 4:32-37; 1 Corinthians 13:3; Philippians 4:11-13.*
- Apostleship *Acts 9:13-17; 1 Corinthians 9:19-23; Galatians 1:15-17; Ephesians 3:6-8.*
- Celibacy, *Matthew 19:10-12; 1 Corinthians 7:7-8, 32-35; 1 Timothy 4:1-5.*
- Exorcism, *Matthew 10:1; Luke 10:17-20; Acts 8:5-8; 16:16-18; 19:13-16.*
- Prayer, *Luke 11:1-13; Acts 16:19-34; Colossians 4:12-13; James 5:16-18.*
- Suffering, *Acts 7:54-60; 1 Corinthians 13:1-3; Philippians 1:12-14; 1 Peter 4:12-16.*
(Schwarz 2001:99)

How do you discover your spiritual gift(s)?

There are several ways that we can identify our spiritual gift(s). One of the more popular ways to identify potential gifts is through a spiritual gift inventory. One of the best tools available is a book by Christian A. Schwarz, [The 3 Colors of Ministry](#). This book is available in several languages including English, Spanish and German.

As we disciple new Christians we must not neglect preparing them to exercise their ministry gifts. If the gifts are indeed the lifeblood of the body, then we are doing a great disservice to the body and its health if we are not helping people to see how God wants to use them to make the body strong and grow. While an inventory can indicate a tendency of giftedness, the only place the true manifestation of spiritual gifts will be discovered is in the context of a need within the body of Christ.

Joel Comiskey suggests four key principles to help people discover their particular gift in the small group environment:

- Find out about spiritual gifts by reading the gift passages (1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, and Ephesians 4). It would also be helpful to read one or more of the excellent books on the subject of spiritual gifts.
- In the small group try to exercise as many gifts as possible.
- Check your desire. Exercising a gift should not be a chore. You should enjoy it. Do you like explaining Bible truth? Perhaps, you have the gift of teaching. Do you pray for people in the group and see them healed? Perhaps you have the gift of healing. Do you love to bring refreshments and organize group events? Perhaps you have the gift of helps. Are you drawn to visit a cell member who is having problems? Perhaps you have the gift of mercy.
- Look for confirmation from those in the group. People will be edified by your gift. Watch for their replies. What do they confirm in you? Do they notice your capacity to clarify the meaning of Scripture; it's likely that someone will tell you that you have the gift of teaching. (Comiskey 2001)

Bringing it all together

The Bible makes it clear that we are not isolated persons in our Christian walk. We are part of a body and we each have a function within that body. Paul had a vision for how the body is to function in the context of the spiritual gifts. He writes:

³ Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit-- just as you were called to one hope when you were called - ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. ⁷ But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.
- Ephesians 4:3-7

¹¹ It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, ¹² to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

¹⁴ Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶ From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. -
Ephesians 4:11-16.

God gave each of us spiritual gifts for a purpose, to build up the body of Christ. When we are actively involved in building up (*oikodomeo*) the body, we discover our true purpose and find fulfilment in our Christian service.

Exercises

1. Experiment in a small group setting with those gifts that rated high in the inventory.
2. Consult with people you respect and who know you well to see what their assessment of your spiritual gifting is.
3. Commit yourself in prayer to be a faithful steward of the gift(s) God has given to you.
4. Be prepared to share your experiences with your study group.

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DISCIPLESHIP
Lesson One
Rev. Jeff Fussner

Objectives

1. Know what characteristics to look for in a potential disciple
 2. Make a plan of how you will begin to spend time with your disciples.
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Introduction

A Christian disciple is a “learner” or an “apprentice” of Jesus Christ. In Matthew 28:19 Jesus gave us the commission to make disciples of all nations. That is the task given to the whole Church of Jesus Christ. It is an enormous responsibility that can be accomplished if each of Jesus’ disciples help a few other believers become committed learners too. In 2 Timothy 2:2 the Apostle Paul instructed Timothy to take the things he had learned from Paul and commit them to reliable people who would be able to teach others also. So we see the chain of discipleship: Paul → Timothy → Reliable People → Others.

The study of Jesus’ life can be helpful to us in learning how to disciple others since the methods that he used can be adjusted to many kinds of settings. In this lesson we will study some of those principles so that you can begin to think about how you will be a part of the discipleship chain and help others also to be committed learners of Jesus Christ. You will find these principles explained more fully in the book *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, by Dr. Robert E. Coleman.

It is important for you to consider a couple of principles as you begin this lesson. The first one is that lay people can disciple other believers and help them grow as Christ’s disciples. This kind of ministry is not just for pastors. Christ’s commission can only be carried out if all the members of his church take part in it. Please keep in mind that everything that is said about ministry involvement in this lesson is directed to faithful lay people who are serving the Lord.

The second principle is that all Christian disciples are disciples of Jesus, not of human leaders. When this lesson talks about “your disciples” you should always remember that this is a convenient way of referring to the people you are helping. However, please remember that the ministry of discipleship is not about molding someone into your image, but rather, helping someone grow into the image of Christ. It would be good to pause right now and say a prayer asking the Holy Spirit to guide and teach you as you look into the Word and consider how to be His instrument of blessing to others.

I. GETTING STARTED

Have the names of at least one or two people whom you will disciple. If you are not yet sure of any possibilities, you will need to begin praying for the Lord to lead you to the right people.

Let’s first look at Jesus’ example. Jesus ministered to the masses of people and taught his followers, but he selected 12 apostles to whom he could devote more time and attention. In doing so he prepared them to work with him in ministry.

Jesus' Example

Notice what Jesus did in the following scriptures:

- Mark 3:14 – Why did he choose the 12 apostles?
- Luke 6:12-13 – What did Jesus do before selecting his disciples?

Notice also from the following scriptures that Jesus took three of the disciples with him on special occasions. Who were the three disciples and what did they experience?

- Matthew 7:1 -
- Luke 8:51 -
- Matthew 26:37 -

Most of the twelve apostles were common, working-class people. Apparently they did not have any special education beyond what was given in the local synagogue. Look in Acts 4:13 at what the Jewish religious leaders thought about them. Why did Jesus choose these particular men? What characteristics did he find in them that showed they had potential to be faithful and fruitful followers?

1. They were hungry to know God. Jesus found his first disciples, as they were being baptized by John the Baptist, in the revival movement he was leading. Look at John 1:35-51.
 - Who were the first ones to talk with Jesus?
 - What did they say to their friends about him?
2. The 12 disciples were teachable. They wanted to understand God's word and so they would ask Jesus to explain to them the meaning of his parables, (see Matthew 13:36). Even though they were slow to understand many things, Jesus was patient with them because they were willing to be taught.
3. They were honest about their spiritual needs. Their willingness to confess their sins and be baptized by John showed their honesty.

Personal Application

Let's think about how to apply Jesus' example in our own lives. Who do we know around us who are hungry to know God better, who are wanting to grow spiritually? We can be an influence in the lives of one or two other people to help them become strong disciples of Jesus.

- Be aware of people around you with whom you have a natural connection: friends, family members, young believers who look up to you.
- Be sensitive to those who are open to God, and are hungry for spiritual things.
- Invest yourself in those who are teachable and honest about their own needs.
- Start with one or two people.
- Start praying now that the Lord will lead you to the right people.
- Invite them to spend time with you studying the Bible and praying together.

Spend time now in prayer for the potential disciples in your life. Place the name(s) of one or more (no more than three) people in the space provided. If you are not sure of

particular names, continue to ask the Lord to guide you during this next week until you can fill in this space.

With the help of the Holy Spirit I will give spiritual care to the following people:

After you have recorded particular names, prayerfully ask them if they would like to spend time together with you learning how to grow spiritually and be good disciples of Jesus.

II. SPENDING TIME TOGETHER

Jesus spent time with his disciples. He called them to be with him. For the first year or more they just traveled about with Jesus and watched him as he preached in the synagogues, taught the people and healed the sick. They ate meals together and spent much time talking as they traveled. We need to notice how Jesus demonstrated some important spiritual disciplines to his disciples.

Jesus' Example

- He demonstrated how to pray. Read Luke 11:1-4.
 - What was Jesus doing before he taught his disciples about prayer?
 - Did he initiate the lesson or did his disciples?
 - What important principles about prayer do you find in the example he gave the disciples (v. 2-4)?

- Jesus demonstrated confidence in the inspiration of the Old Testament:
 - John 10:35
 - Mark 7:13
 - Luke 8:12

- Jesus also demonstrated how to use the Word of God. In the New Testament he made 66 references to the Old Testament in the gospels (Coleman 1991, 76).

- Jesus demonstrated an evangelism life-style to his disciples. Read John 4. Notice especially verses 27-38.

Personal Application

The way to apply Jesus' example to your life is to make time for your disciples to be with you. Here are some suggestions:

- Make a regular time for studying the Bible and praying together
- Take them with you when you do ministry, let them observe you
- Take one or more with you when you travel
- Have them join you in a work project
- Have some recreation time together
- Share meals together

Place a check mark beside one or more of the above suggestions that you might use for starting to spend time with your disciples. Determine which one will be your starting point. You may also write in your own ideas for spending time together. In the following space write down a possible time when you will begin spending time with your disciple(s):

DISCIPLESHIP

Lesson Two

Objectives

1. Understand the importance of completely consecrating your own life to Christ -before working with others.
 2. Begin discerning a few basic needs of those you will be discipling, which will require your loving care.
 3. Be able to wisely select ministry assignments that fit the spiritual condition of those you are discipling.
-

I. SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Jesus made clear the spiritual commitment he expected from his disciples. He wants more than just our belief that he is the Son of God and Savior. To be his disciples means that we are committing our entire life into his hands to be shaped by his will.

Read the following verses and match the summary by writing the letter in the space

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| Luke 9:57-62 ____ | a. we must count the cost of becoming a disciple |
| Luke 16:13 ____ | b. our love for Jesus is shown through obedience |
| Matthew 5:48 ____ | c. we must love perfectly as God does |
| John 14:21,23 ____ | d. follow Jesus on his terms, not ours |
| Mark 8:34-38 ____ | e. following Jesus requires dying to our own will |
| Luke 14:28-30 ____ | f. cannot serve two masters, must choose |

For further study consider also the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7. These are the principles of living for his followers. Notice what Jesus teaches about:

- Handling anger
- Moral purity
- Honesty
- Our reaction to being wronged and loving our enemies
- Spiritual disciplines
- Money
- Worry
- Judging others

Personal Application

It is very important to understand that following Jesus as a true disciple requires the power of the Holy Spirit. No one can live the life that Jesus requires without the cleansing and the infilling of the Spirit. A critical part of the discipleship process is to help our disciples to experience the Spirit-filled life, and to grow in God's grace. Let us consider how to help them in this process.

Jesus prayed for his disciples in John 17. In verse 19 he said, “For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.” Jesus did not need to sanctify himself in the sense that he had to be cleansed from sin or filled with the Spirit. But he sanctified himself in the sense of setting himself apart for God’s purposes, so that the disciples could be also set apart for God.

We must first consider our own lives before the Lord before we attempt to help others know him better. We do need to have our hearts cleansed and filled with the Holy Spirit, and we need to be first consecrating (fully committing) ourselves to God’s will in all parts of our lives. When we are walking with the Lord in this way, his grace will flow out of our lives to bless and help others.

Take time now to pray. Carefully commit your whole life and will to Christ for the sake of the work he has given you to do. Do you feel that you are withholding anything from him? Ask Jesus for the grace to commit that area to him. Trust him now and every day for his cleansing and infilling.

As we sanctify ourselves to the Lord for the sake of other disciples we then support them in the following ways:

- Spend time with them in studying the Bible and praying together. A weekly time is very important.
- Pray for them; for their spiritual, emotional, physical, and relational needs. The Lord will give you insights and concerns for them and will draw you to prayer for victories.
- Talk with them about their questions and needs. As your relationship grows with them, they will share with you. Take these opportunities to encourage and challenge them to turn over the total control of their lives to the lordship of Jesus Christ. Pray with them for definite victories and rejoice with them over God’s answers to prayer.
- Share with them your own vision for God’s work. Talk with them about ministry and helping others know Jesus as Savior.

It is through this kind of personal attention and encouragement, one believer with another, that people will grow spiritually and become faithful disciples of Jesus.

If you have not done so yet, talk with your disciple(s) about studying the Bible together. Spend time this week looking for prepared Bible studies at your local church or Christian bookstore. You may also do your own study beginning with a short gospel, like Mark, and then progressing to other short books like Ephesians, Philippians, or Colossians. When you make a final decision, write the material you plan to use in the following space:

II. MINISTRY ASSIGNMENT

Jesus spent special time with the 12 apostles, and especially with Peter, James and John, so that they would know him better and grow spiritually. But he was also preparing them for ministry. Christ would return to his glorious place in heaven and entrust them with carrying on his ministry on earth.

Jesus' Example

It seems that for the first year or more the disciples did not do much other than stay with Jesus and observe him as he moved about teaching, preaching and healing. When he was beginning his third general tour of Galilee, Jesus sent his disciples out to minister also (Coleman, 84).

You can read about this in Mark 6:7, Matthew 10:5, and Luke 9:1. The most complete account is in Matthew 10. Turn to that chapter now and read this story.

Notice the instructions Jesus gave them:

Matthew 10:8-10	– trust God to supply all needs
Matthew 10:11	– seek worthy persons who will help carry on God's work
Matthew 10:17,18	– expect hardship
Matthew 10: 20, 21	– the Holy Spirit will help in times of persecution
Matthew 10:16	– be as wise as serpents and as innocent as doves

Notice also:

Matthew 10:1	– Jesus gave power and authority to his disciples
Mark 6:7	– He sent them in pairs for mutual strength and a stronger witness

The time will come, when those you have been discipling grow spiritually, to involve them in ministry with you. As you help them discover their spiritual gifts they should be given assignments that fit with their gifts. Your pastor can help you as you work with them to discover their spiritual gifts. If you are leading a cell group, or a house fellowship, you will find ways to naturally involve your disciples in ministry.

Start with small assignments and then give them larger ones as they gain experience. Here are some examples:

- Pray for a non-Christian, or a new believer
- Make a home visit
- Help set up for a service or fellowship time
- Help someone who is sick or in need
- Lead a Bible study
- Present the plan of salvation to an unbeliever
- Meet with a new Christian for Bible study and prayer
- Begin to disciple one or two young believers and lead them through the discipleship process.

As Jesus gave ministry assignments to his disciples he also spent time with them to hear their experiences and give further instructions. Consider the following scriptures that show how Jesus did this:

Mark 6:30	– the 12 returned to Jesus to give a report of what they had done
Luke 10:17	– the 70 returned with joy and reported to Jesus
Luke 10:18-21	– Jesus was full of joy and praised God
Luke 10:20	– Jesus used it as an opportunity to warn against pride

Jesus gave continuous review and application of principles during his disciples' ministry experiences:

- Mark 9:17-29 – the need for fasting and prayer to lay hold of answers
- Mark 6:30-44 – took them away to rest and share, but showed them and involved them in the importance of ministry through teaching and feeding the multitudes
- Luke 9:50 – the importance of patience and acceptance of others' ministry who were not a part of their group
- Luke 9:51-54 – rebuked them for impulsively wanting to destroy those who did not receive their message

Jesus gave his disciples “on-the-job training.” He used two types of opportunities to teach and counsel when the disciples were most open to what he had to say: when they were in the middle of ministry experiences and when they had failed in something.

It is important for you to monitor the progress of your disciples as they do the work of the ministry. Do not release them too soon from your care and attention. Give them encouragement and advice. Do not be threatened by their success either. With the Lord's help they will do great things and we will learn from them too! The important thing is that everyone in the body of Christ is contributing to bringing others to Jesus and helping them grow spiritually. It takes everyone doing their part.

III. THE GOAL OF DISCIPLESHIP

The time will come when your disciples will be mature and able to disciple others the way you have disciplined them. They will continue on that chain of disciple making just as we saw in 2 Timothy 2:2, Paul → Timothy → Reliable People → Others.

It is thrilling to be part of the great process that has gone on through the centuries of church history since the time of Christ. With God's help you can play a part in the history of the church.

Discipling means drawing close to one or two people who are hungering for spiritual things and:

- taking time to be with them
- helping them develop and grow spiritually
- helping them learn about ministry from your example,
- giving them some simple assignments
- monitoring their progress and giving feedback
- giving them more involvement as they grow

The time will come when you will release them to do the same thing with others and then you can begin again with someone else. The Lord bless you richly as you take part in fulfilling Christ's Great Commission.

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Evangelism

Dr. Jim Lo

Lesson One

Lesson One Objectives: This lesson will seek to help the learner to....

1. **Define evangelism.**
2. **List the biblical position on witnessing.**
3. **Identify the source of power for doing evangelism.**
4. **Define three parts of evangelism.**

Being God's Witness

There used to be a woman who attended my church who said,
"A person's religion is a personal matter. Being a Christian is a personal thing and therefore one should not talk about it to others."

? What are your thoughts about what this woman said?

I have met others who also felt like the woman who attended my church. Yet the Bible commands us to be witnesses for Jesus Christ, telling others about His love and the salvation He offers to all mankind.

? How would you define "witness"?

Bill Bright of Campus Crusade defines a witness as any Christian who bears testimony of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ by life and by lips. In other words, a witness is one who first receives the Gospel himself, and then proclaims that truth to others. A person can not teach or testify to a truth that he or she does not personally believe and practice.

The writer of Psalm 107 wrote, "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so." (2)

Jesus, in Matthew 28, gave the following command,
"Go into all the world and....make disciples of all nations..."

- a. Read Acts 20:24-27 and verses 31 and 32. After you have read these verses answer the following questions.

Knowledge question: According to Paul, how important was it for him to be a witness for Jesus Christ?

Reflection question: At this point in your life, how important is it for you to be a witness for Jesus Christ?

- b. Read 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15.

Knowledge question: What was the motivating factor that caused Paul to want to be Christ's witness?

Reflection Question: What should be the reason for you wanting to be Christ's

witness?

- c. Read Luke 9:26.

Knowledge question: How does Jesus feel about the person who is ashamed of Him?

Reflection question: What are ways in which a person can show that he or she is ashamed of Christ?

Reflection question: Have you ever been ashamed of Christ?

- d. Read Matthew 4:19.

Knowledge Question: What does Christ want every Christian to be?

Reflection question: What do you think it means to be a “fisher of men”?

Application question: What does it mean for you to be a “fisher of men”?

The Biblical position on witnessing

To be a witness for Jesus Christ, the Christian must believe certain truths that are recorded in God’s Word, the Bible.

1. Every person is lost.
 - a. Matthew 9:37-38
 - b. John 4:28-39
 - c. Romans 3:23
2. Jesus Christ is the only Savior that people need.
 - a. John 14:6
 - b. Acts 4:12
 - c. 1 Timothy 2:5
3. Christians have a responsibility to share with others about Jesus Christ and His salvation.
 - a. Acts 1:8
4. The early church was actively involved in witnessing.
 - a. Acts 5:42
 - b. Acts 8:4
 - c. Acts 15:35
5. God gives the increase. In other words, God does the saving.
 - a. Acts 2:41,47
 - b. Acts 4:4
 - c. Acts 11:18

Defining Evangelism

The word that is used to describe Christians going forth to witness for Jesus Christ is *Evangelism*.

Many definitions have been given for evangelism. I will present three of them:

Evangelism is proclaiming the Good News of salvation by grace through

Evangelism

faith toward the goal of making disciples of Jesus Christ, resulting in their incorporation into the church.

Another definition is:

To evangelize is to present Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit that men will come to put their trust in God through Him, to accept Him as their Savior, and to serve Him as their King in the fellowship of His church.

Archbishop William Temple

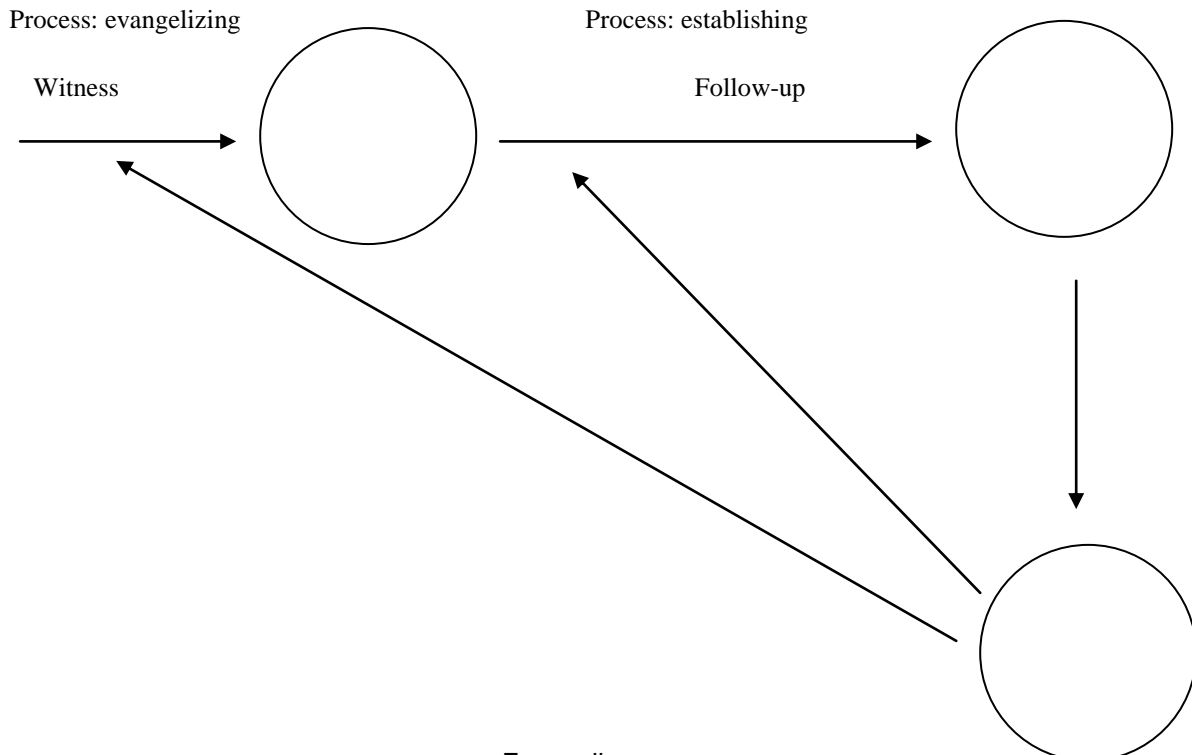
Perhaps the definition I like best was given by D.T. Niles of India. He stated that evangelism is *“one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread.”*

In each definition presented there is a common theme. Evangelism is sharing with people who have not heard the message of God’s salvation and telling them what it means to be saved by Jesus Christ. Each definition also emphasizes an important aspect of evangelism that one must remember.

In the first definition the emphasis is on the **goal** of evangelism.

Too often, success in evangelism is seen as a verbal response by a non-Christian, indicating his or her personal support of a new set of convictions reflective of the Christian faith. The stress is on the verbal response. I surely do not want to sound as if I am not glad when one verbally testifies to becoming a Christian. In fact, there is great rejoicing in heaven when a sinner repents and accepts Jesus Christ as his or her personal Savior. But the goal of evangelism is not just to get a verbal response. The goal must also include helping the new believer to become established in the faith and equipped to serve Christ.

Elmer Eims illustrates this in the following manner:



The focus of these lessons on evangelism is on the first aspect, being a witness. But we must not forget that the evangelism process also includes helping to establish new converts in the Christian faith and to help equip them to serve God. The second two aspects, of establishing and equipping, will be covered in other lessons.

In the second definition the emphasis is on the **power** of the Holy Spirit.

No amount of persuasion or ability on the part of the witness will ever avail to move any person toward a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ apart from the work of the Holy Spirit in His convicting and regenerative power. Salvation is of the Lord, totally and completely.

Bill Bright, Ten Basic Steps Toward Christian Maturity

The Book of Acts is truly about the Holy Spirit. Despite seemingly overwhelming difficulties and hardships the early church was still victorious. The Gospel message, within 70 years, was being preached to the ends of the known world. What was the secret of the early church's success? They depended upon the Holy Spirit.

Acts 1:8 states:

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

When Christians go and share their faith with someone else, they should do so in the power of the Holy Spirit. Christians need to remember that even if they are intellectually bright, gifted with many abilities, and have great personal determination, without the Holy Spirit their efforts to evangelize will not come to much at all. Christians can only be effective witnesses when they trust and depend upon the dynamic power of the Holy Spirit to work in and through them.

In Colossians 4:2 to 6 we have Paul's teaching on evangelism. Read what he writes:

Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; praying at the same time as well, that God may open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; in order that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak. Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of opportunity. 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.

In the context of evangelism, Paul makes it clear that we are to devote ourselves to prayer. The Greek word that is used for "devote" means to persevere continually. What Paul wanted his readers to understand is that prayer and evangelism must go together. A Christian who takes evangelism seriously will also take prayer seriously.

What should we be praying for?

1. We should pray that God would open up a door for Christians to share God's Word.
 - a. In other words, God is the One who opens up doors of opportunity for us to witness to others as we pray.

- b. Satan tries all he can to prevent Christians from sharing their faith. He does not want the door of the God's Word to be opened. For this reason we must do battle and pray for opportunities.
- 2. We should pray that we may reveal the mystery of God's salvation through our lives and through our words which have been empowered by the Holy Spirit. Though God does use our words and our lives, it is still the Holy Spirit who does the convicting of hearts regarding sin, who reveals the truths of salvation to sinners and who draws them to Christ.

In the third definition the emphasis is on the **humility** of the witness.

The Christian witness should never act as though he or she is better than the person being witnessed to. Christians must always remember that they were sinners, saved by the grace of God. Or as someone said to me once, "We are all money-less, hungry beggars who have been invited to eat at God's banqueting table."

Evangelism Lesson Two

Lesson Two Objectives: This lesson will help the learner to...

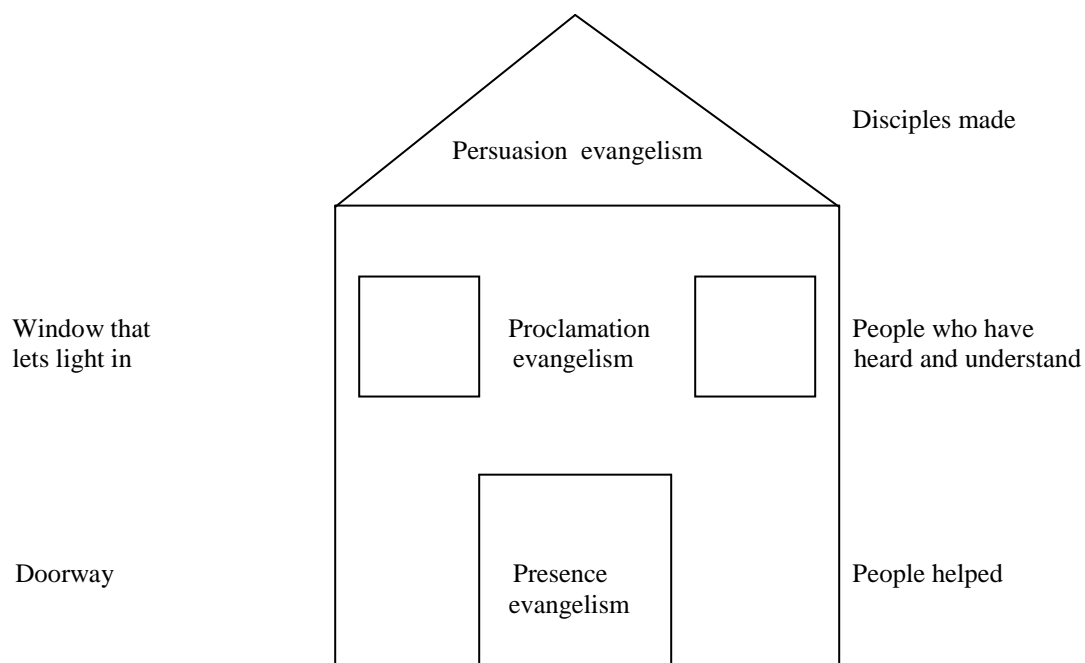
1. Describe three approaches to evangelism.
2. Discuss the importance of presence evangelism in resistant areas of the world.
3. Define the concept of *power encounter*.

Three Approaches to Evangelism

At a conference on evangelism one of the moderators made the following statement, "Evangelism is just opening your mouth and telling another person about Jesus Christ."

? Do you agree with the moderator's statement?

A part of evangelism is being able to verbally share with someone else about Jesus Christ and the salvation He offers to all peoples of the world. However, evangelism is also much more than this. C. Peter Wagner teaches that there are three approaches to evangelism. We can illustrate his teachings by drawing a house.



Presence Evangelism

Presence evangelism recognizes that the presence of Christians can be an important evangelizing factor. Christians do evangelism by living the Gospel in front of those who do not know Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. In a way, this is the “doorway” to evangelism. Before Christians will be able to share God’s message of salvation with those who are not Christians, one of the first things they must do is to earn the right to enter into the lives of un-believers. This takes place by learning how to build relationships with people.

I liked ministering in Africa. I learned so much about the importance of building relationships with people. When I first got to Bulawayo, Zimbabwe I spent many hours in my office. My reason for spending numerous hours there was that I needed a quiet place in which to learn the SiNdebele language...or I needed to spend time preparing my message for Sunday service...or I had to respond to correspondence from prayer and financial supporters in America.

Then one day Rev. Elias Moyo came to visit me. After going through the polite formalities of greetings Rev. Moyo came to the point as to why he had come to visit me. “Umfundisi (pastor) Lo, you spend too much time away from the people you are supposed to be ministering to. You need to get out of your office and get with people. If you don’t your ministry in Africa will be a failure!”

Rev. Moyo was right. How could I reach people with God’s message of salvation if I did not spend time with them? If I was going to have an effective ministry I needed to be building relationships with those I wanted to share with by going through the “door” that would allow me to spend time with them.

The life of a Christian should be a positive testimony which reflects God’s love and concern for a world that is in need and hurting. Christians discover what these needs and concerns are by spending time with people.

In presence evangelism Christians are concerned, not only for the spiritual welfare of individuals, but also for their physical and psychological welfare.

A criticism that has been directed at the Church is that even though it has been good in the area of personal evangelism where the spiritual needs of a person are addressed, it has not always done well in addressing such issues like injustices against the poor, racial discrimination, and poverty. The attitude of many Christians is that their job is to try to change the hearts of men, not the structures of society.

Presence evangelism contends that Christians should be concerned, not only with verbally sharing the salvation plan of Jesus Christ, but also with the “physical” welfare of individuals as well.

The Manila Manifesto contains the following statement:
“Good News and good works are inseparable.”

Illustration: I saw this take place while I was ministering in Mozambique. The Church leaders had gathered together to discuss how they could better serve those who lived in Mafalala, a shantytown on the outskirts of Maputo. After much discussion they identified some of the major needs of the people. One of them was

the need for food. The leaders decided to challenge the people in their churches to help grow vegetables, which would then be distributed to those who needed food. They were able to obtain a vacant lot where they were able to begin their community vegetable garden. By the end of the “growing” season hundreds in **Mafalala had been helped because of the efforts of the church.**

At the outset of the garden project it was decided that there would not be a hard push to get people to accept Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. Instead, the only time they would talk about Christ was when those seeking help would initiate the conversation. God allowed many opportunities for the church members to share about Christ. Conversations about Christ were started in many different ways. Some seeking help would simply ask, “Why are you doing this for us?”

The Christians would then answer, “Because of Jesus Christ”. Others would directly say, “We hear you are Christians. That is why you are helping us. Please tell us more about Jesus Christ.”

Not every one who came for the vegetables became Christians. But some did.

Missionaries have used presence evangelism when they have worked in medical clinics, taught in primary and secondary schools, gotten involved in agricultural work, and participated in charity and social ministries.

Presence evangelism involves being willing to live close to those whom you are trying to reach with God’s love.

Wayne Gordon wanted people in the inner city of Chicago in the United States to become Christians. But he lived many miles away on a farm. After much prayer he moved to Chicago and began to live in the community that he was trying to reach with God’s message of salvation.

He was the only white person for miles. Many of his friends did not believe that he would stay in the inner city of Chicago, where there the crime rate was high and where there was great poverty. But stay, he did. For twenty-five years he has lived in the community where God called him to minister. He got married there. He raised his children there. Wayne chose to live among, and identify with, the people he wanted to reach with the Good News of Jesus.

Presence evangelism to reach the resistant: There are cultures in the world where sharing the gospel message is against the law. In these cultures one cannot just walk up to a person and begin sharing about Jesus Christ. Therefore the use of presence evangelism is very important. One person in Africa shared this with the Christian who led him to Christ, “The way you lived your life as a Christian caused me to want to know more about who Jesus Christ is and what it means to be a Christian.”

One criticism that has been raised against Christians is that they are often answering questions even before the questions have been asked.

? What do you think these critics mean when they say Christians are answering questions even before the questions have been asked?

Presence evangelism allows individuals who live in areas where people are resistant to the gospel to see what it means to be a Christian by observing the lifestyle of Christians who live near them. In some cases the Christian lifestyle has

caused the non-believer to begin to ask questions. This has then led to times of spiritual sharing. In this scenario, instead of answering questions before the questions have been asked, the questions are being asked first, allowing the Christian the opportunity to then give the answer.

Power encounters: Included in presence evangelism is the concept of *power encounter*. In certain cultures of the world people will emphasize the love of God over the power of God. This would be true for many people in America. Many Americans have accepted Christ as their own personal Savior once they recognized that He loved them so much that He was willing to die on a cross for them.

There are other cultures where the people need to see the power of God at work. Many peoples of the world may be referred to as being “power oriented”. They see the universe as being filled with spiritual beings, many which seek to harm them. Because of this they seek for spiritual power which will be able to help them to avoid or correct problems in their lives caused by evil spiritual powers. They are often very receptive to Bible stories that talk about the power of God. One national told me, “We need to see that the God of the Bible is stronger than the evil spirits that torment us.”

It is very important for leaders in the church to add the power encounter dimension to their presentation of Christianity. The demonstration of God’s power may be seen in various ways: the healing of sick bodies, the supplying of rain, miracles, etc.

Proclamation Evangelism

In proclamation evangelism the Good News of salvation as revealed in the Bible is made known to those who are not Christians. The apostle Paul makes it very clear that before people can be saved, they must hear the gospel and understand the message. He wrote,

How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?

Romans 10:14

Proclamation evangelism is simply making the Good News known to others, whether or not conversions result. In a way, it is like light which passes through windows to brighten the interior of the house.

John Stott claims that “when evangelists simply proclaim the Gospel with no obligation to measure results, they have obeyed God and fulfilled their duty.”

Reflection: I teach a course entitled “Evangelism and Global Ministries” at Indiana Wesleyan University. One day a student by the name of Jerome raised his hand and said, “I do not think that Christians need to go and tell others about God and His salvation. The best way for us to get people to become Christians is to live a

good life before them. Once they see the joy and peace we have they will want to surrender their lives and become believers!”

How would you respond to this student’s statements?

After Jerome got done speaking another student, David, raised his hand and stated, “I would like to respond.”

I gave him permission to continue.

“What you say is partially right, Jerome. We need to live lives that will attract others to want to know more about Jesus Christ and His salvation. But we must also be able to share with people what is required for them to become a Christian.

Romans 10:14 tells us that we need to not just live good lives for God, but we must also be able to share with people what it means to be a Christian.

I used to have a friend who would tell me about this neat store where he liked to go to buy candy. After listening to him talk I decided I wanted to go to this store myself. When I asked him how to get there he said, ‘I do not know how to tell you how to get there. Every time I have gone to that store my father drove me. Since it is a bit far away from my house I usually fall asleep as we are traveling. But even though I do not know how to get there it is a wonderful store. And I would encourage you to go and shop there.’”

? What is the problem with what David’s friend told him to do?

? How do you think the incident that David shared in class relates to presence and proclamation evangelism?

Persuasion Evangelism

The aim of persuasion evangelism is not only to share the salvation message but to also persuade or motivate individuals who are not Christians to make a response to accept Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord.

Those who advocate the use of persuasion evangelism look to Matthew 28:19 as their marching orders.

“Go therefore and make disciples....”

There were times that the apostle Paul pleaded with great emotion for people to turn to God. This can be seen in Romans 9:2 and Romans 10:1. Other times he sought to persuade people with the rational arguments of a trial lawyer as seen in Acts 13:43.

In other words, persuasion evangelism is concerned with results.

Reflection: Let us make believe that as I am walking one day I meet a poor man. I stop and we begin talking to one another. I discover that this poor man is very hungry because he has not eaten for days. I think to myself that I should invite this man to my house for a meal.

I begin to tell him about what a good cook my wife is. In fact, I also describe some of the dishes she is good at cooking. Just talking about food

makes me hungry. As I am talking I can see that the poor man is interested. But after talking to him about all the delicious foods my wife is able to cook I do not ask him if he would like to come to my house to eat. I just say “bye” and walk on.

? Do you see any problem with what I did?

? How does this incident relate to persuasion evangelism?

Persuasion evangelism is also helping those who make a positive response about Jesus Christ to become responsible church members.

Evangelism

Lesson Three

Lesson Three Objectives: This lesson will help the learner to...

1. Verbally share a plan of salvation.
2. Share his or her personal testimony.
3. Explain the importance of follow-up.

Knowing a Plan

It is very important for Christians to know a plan of salvation that they can share with someone who is not a believer. There are at least six reasons for this.

1. A plan quickly brings you to spiritual conversations with the person with whom you want to share.
2. A plan helps you to answer difficult questions quickly and effectively.
3. A plan keeps you and the person you are sharing with from becoming confused.
4. A plan explains salvation in the easiest possible way.
5. A plan aids you in bringing the non-believer to a clear decision to accept Christ into his or her life.
6. A plan gives you confidence, since you know where you are going.

A Plan of Salvation

Personal Testimony

One of the most important parts of a plan of salvation is one's personal testimony. If you have met God in Jesus Christ in your own life, you have found God working according to His promises. Your experience of God's faithfulness should be the substance of your testimony.

Dr. Jim Kennedy believes that giving a personal testimony is the first aspect of witnessing - simply telling what being a Christian has meant to you.

Three parts make up one's personal testimony: Three times in the Book of Acts, the apostle Paul gives his personal testimony. As one studies his testimonies we discover that he always included these three important elements:

1. A description of himself before he became a Christian
2. The way he became a Christian
3. The importance of Christ in his present life.

Your personal testimony should also include the above three important elements:

1. A description of your life before you became a Christian.

(Note: One of the biggest mistakes people make in giving a testimony is to spend too much time on this first point and to not highlight the third point. Just the opposite should be your method of sharing. Simply and concisely share what you were before you became a Christian.

Example from my personal testimony:

“Before I was a Christian I had no joy in my life. I had no purpose for living. For a while I wondered if it was worth it for me to even be alive.”

Include in this part of your testimony what caused you to begin to consider God/Jesus Christ as a solution to your needs.

2. The process that led you to become a Christian.
In this part of your testimony you should include the following:
 - a. What finally motivated you to receive Christ as your Savior?
 - b. Specifically, how did you receive Jesus Christ?
Example: “I prayed and asked Christ to forgive me for all the wrong things that I had done. Then I asked Him to come into my life to lead me and to give me the security that I had longed for.
3. A description of Jesus Christ’s importance in your life now.
This section of your testimony should include the following:
 - a. How did your life begin to change after you trusted Christ?
Example: “After accepting Jesus as my Savior I discovered that He had a purpose for me to be alive. No longer did I sense the futility of being alive. I now had a reason to live.”
 - b. What are some other benefits you have experienced since you have become a Christian?
Example: “God has placed joy in my heart. He has filled me with His love so that I can love other people. He has given me His power to help others in need.”

Application: Take some time to develop your personal testimony. Then go and share it with another Christian, asking for suggestions on how you can improve it.

Christians use many different plans to tell others about God’s great love and salvation. Below is a model plan. It will be helpful for you to use this plan as a guide. Do not feel that you need to memorize every word. Instead, personalize the plan. Make it your own. The key is to make sure that you always include the main points of the soul winning plan in your presentation.

Knowing God

Step One: God's Purpose - Peace and Life

God loves you very much. He wants you to experience peace and eternal life.

The Bible says:

"...we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"
Romans 5:1

"For God loved the world so much that he gave his only son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life."

John 3:16

? *God planned for us to have peace and the full life right now. Why do you think most people are not experiencing this peace and life?*

Step Two: Our Problem - Separation from God

God did not force us to love and obey Him. We were given a will and freedom of choice. The first man and woman, Adam and Eve, chose to disobey God and go their own willful way. We still make this choice today. This results in separation from God.

The Bible says:

"Everyone has sinned and is far away from God's saving presence." Romans 3:23

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 6:23

Practical hints to present this point:

Guide the person to whom you are witnessing to Romans 6:23.

Then ask, "How would you define the term *wages*?"
(Wages are what we receive for what we have done.)

Similarly, we earn wages from God for how we have lived our lives.

(Suggestion: On a sheet of paper, write the word *Wages* midway down the left side of the page.)

? Then ask, "*What do you think of when you hear the word **sin**?*"

Explain that sin is more of an attitude than an action. It can be a hostile or apathetic response to God. Another way of

putting this is that a person can either actively or passively keep God out of his or her life.

(Under the word *wages* write the word *sin*)

? Ask, “*Has God ever seemed really far away from you?*”
When he or she answers “yes”, draw in the lines of the cliff on both sides.

Explain that sin separates everyone from God. Sin creates distance between us and God.

On the other side write the name “*God*” and the word *holy* underneath.

Step Three: God’s Answer to our Separation - Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ is the only way for us to be able to bridge the separation between us and God.

He died on a cross and rose from the dead. By doing this He took the punishment for our sin and bridged the distance between God and man.

The Bible says:

“For there is one God, and there is one who brings God and mankind together, the man Christ Jesus.”

1 Timothy 2:5

“But God has shown us how much he loves us- it was while we were still sinners that Christ died for us!”

Romans 5:8

(At this point of your presentation draw a cross between the cliffs as a bridge. You may want to write the name *Jesus Christ* on the cross.)

Step Four: Our Response - Receive Jesus Christ

We must trust Jesus Christ and receive Him by personal surrender and invitation.

The Bible says:

(Jesus Christ is speaking) “Listen! I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into his house and eat with him, and he will eat with me.”

Revelation 3:20

“Some, however, did receive him and believed in him; so he gave them the right to become God’s children.”

John 1:12

How to become a Christian:

1. Admit that you are a sinner.
2. Repent. To repent is to turn away from what you have been doing that is not pleasing to God and to follow Him as He reveals His will to you in His Word.
3. Believe that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross and rose from the dead.
4. Through prayer, invite Jesus Christ to come in and control your life through the Holy Spirit. (Receive Jesus as Lord and Savior)

Romans 10:9 says...

“If you confess that Jesus is Lord and believe that God raised him for the dead, you will be saved.”

At this point you may want to ask the question,
“Would you like to become a Christian?”

or

“Would you like to receive the give of eternal life that God offers you through Jesus Christ?”

If a person is ready to admit his need for forgiveness, help the individual to say a prayer. Below is an example of what the person should pray, but he should be given the freedom to use his own words.

Remind him, though, that he is not forgiven because of how or what he prays. Instead, he is forgiven because he is willing to trust in Jesus Christ to be his Savior and Lord.

One way to help the person pray is to have him repeat a prayer after you, one phrase at a time.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need your forgiveness. I believe that You died for my sins. I want to turn from my sins. I now invite You to come in my life. I will trust You to come in my life. I will trust You as Savior and follow You as Lord.

*Thank you, Lord, for saving me.
Amen*

When people do not receive Jesus:

Not everyone will respond that they want to become a Christian. Though this decision may make us sad, we must remember that we cannot force anyone to accept God's salvation. A true gift cannot be forced on anyone.

There will be individuals who will say that they are not interested in becoming a Christian. What do you think your relationship with that person should become?

I have heard two different responses. One response is, "Since they do not want to be Christians we should have nothing to do with them."

I am not sure that this would be the response that Jesus Christ would make. As I read my Bible I am drawn to the realization that Jesus spent time with sinners. Though they had not committed themselves to Him, He still loved them and spent time with them. His desire was that His life of love would someday touch their lives in such a way that they would want to accept His salvation and lordship over their lives.

Even if a person responds negatively to becoming a Christian we should still seek to be that person's friend. The second response reflects this idea: "How can we help people become Christians if we are not willing to do things with them?"

Follow-up

What Follow-up Is

Take your Bible and read Matthew 28:16-20.

According to this passage the goal is for us to make disciples. Helping a person to accept Jesus Christ as his or her Savior is only the beginning. We must also help the new Christian to become a functionally mature, responsible and reproducing member of a local church. We call this discipleship.

Though these lessons on evangelism are not meant to focus on discipleship, it is important that you understand some important points about follow-up.

Allow me to try to explain follow up in the following manner.

You are friends with a couple who are ready to have a baby. After months of waiting the baby is born. What a beautiful baby it is. The parents are happy. They hold the baby with great love and care. With great pride they show the baby off to those who come and visit them. But after the first day the parents of the baby say, "We have done our part. Our baby is now born. He must now take care of himself. When hungry he must go and prepare food for himself. When his napkins/diapers need to be changed he will have to change himself."

? *What do you think will happen to this baby after a little while?*

We know that a baby cannot take care of himself. Someone must feed him, dress him, and protect him. In a similar way, new Christians also need a mature Christian to help them grow strong in their faith.

Birth brings life; then life must grow. Christians are to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Christians are to grow more like Jesus Christ. This does not automatically happen. Growth takes effort.

Five Means of Growth

Christian growth comes by using the means provided by God. The five means of growth provided by God are:

1. The Bible

- The Bible is God's Word.
- God has given us the Bible to feed our spirits.

2. Prayer

- Prayer has been provided as the means for us to communicate with God.

3. Worship

- God desires His people to worship Him.
- To worship God is to give Him the number one place in your life.
- An important way for us to worship God is to faithfully attend church.

4. Fellowship

- Fellowship is sharing our lives with others and them sharing their lives with us.
- Someone stated,
"Each member of God's family is important and valuable to God.
Christ died for each one. All must seek to grow together.
After all, we will be together for all eternity."

5. Witness

- Those who are Christians are responsible to share the good news of Jesus Christ with others.

Successful follow-up occurs when a mature Christian takes time to help the new Christian to

.... read the Bible and understand what is being read

- ? How can you help a new Christian want to read the Bible?
- ? How can you help a new Christian to understand the Bible?

.... understand what prayer is and how to pray

- ? How can you help a new Christian pray?

.... become consistent in attending church

- ? What are some things you can do to help a new Christian to become faithful in church attendance?

.... fellowship with other Christians

- ? What are some things you can do to help a new Christian to enjoy the fellowship of other Christians?
- ? What are some things you can do to fellowship with the new Christian?

.... become a witness for Christ to his or her family and friends.

- ? How can you help the new Christian to become a witness for Christ?

Recommended Books dealing with Evangelism

Bill Hybels and Mittelberg, **Becoming a Contagious Christian**

Paul Little, **How to Give Away Your Faith**

Paul Little, **Know What You Believe**

Robert Coleman, **The Master Plan of Evangelism**

Robert Coleman, **The Great Commission Lifestyle**

Recommended Books dealing with Evangelism and Culture:

Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden, **Sharing Jesus In the Two Thirds World**

Charles Kraft, **Anthropology for Christian Witness**

Marvin Mayers, **Christianity Confronts Culture**

Recommended books dealing with Evangelism and Social

ministries:

Robert Linthicum, **Empowering the Poor**

Charles DeSanta, ed. , **Christian Perspectives on Social Problems**

Ronald Sider, **One-Sided Christianity?**

Ronald Sider, **Cup of Water Bread of Life**

Recommended books dealing with Evangelism and other Religions:

J. Dudley Woodberry, ed., **Reaching the Resistant**

Gailyn Van Rheenen, **Communicating Christ in Animistic Contexts**

Fritz Ridenour, **So What's the Difference?**

Recommended books dealing with Evangelism, Mentoring and Equipping:

Winn Arn and Arn., **The Master's Plan for Making Disciples**

J. Robert Clinton, **The Mentor Handbook**

STARTING CHURCHES

Dr. Jim Lo

Lesson One

Lesson One Objectives: This lesson will help the learner to . . .

- 1. Describe two contrasting goals of churches.**
- 2. Explain how evangelism and church planting relate to each other.**

God's Church

Colossians 1:18 states, "He is the head of the body, the church." In other words, Jesus Christ is the head of the Church. He owns the Church. The Church is not confined to being just one congregation or one denomination. The Church is the whole body of Christ. As His body, the Church is to be God's instrument for reaching the world with His message of love and salvation. The Church does not exist for the pastor or the people in the church. The Church exists to fulfill the Great Commission.

There are two contrasting goals of churches:

1. Churches that exist to please themselves
2. Churches that exist to please God

Characteristics of Churches that Exist to Please Themselves

Church

Those who attend this church are not considered to be ministers. They believe that ministry should be left to those who have been trained to do ministry.

Since members of the church are not trained, they are not qualified to be involved in ministry.

Therefore, the members of the church are there to support the pastor who is doing the work of ministry. They support the pastor by:

*attending church services

Starting Churches

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*tithing their money

*agreeing with the pastor's decisions and actions.

The members believe that the church is there to take care of their needs. In other words, they are very self-centered. Their attitude is, "I come to this group to be enriched by it. I do not have any commitment to it, or to the people in it." It is the "What's in this group for ME" attitude.

The members do not believe that it is their responsibility to go and evangelize the lost. That is the responsibility of the pastor, since he or she gets paid to do that.

Pastor

The pastor is seen as a "professional".

The pastor, since he gets paid, is to do the ministry of the church.

In many cases where the pastor is considered to be the professional, he or she leads the worship services.

The ministry of the pastor is to take care of the members of the church. As an example, the pastor is expected to make frequent and regular visits to the members of the church.

Evangelism

When it comes to evangelism, the Pastor is responsible to witness to people who are outside the church, since he is paid.

Evangelism, though talked about in the church, is a low priority, since the pastor is too preoccupied doing all the other ministries of the church.

Characteristics of Churches that Exist to Please God

Church

The members of the church are trained by the leader(s) of the church to do ministries. Someone once stated,
“...a church with 100 members should expect to have 100 ministers.”

The members of the church are encouraged and even expected to use their spiritual gifts to minister to each other as well as to go and evangelize those who do not know Jesus Christ.

Reaching the world with the message of Jesus Christ is not just the work of the pastor. In fact, it should also be the responsibility of the members of the church.

Pastors

The pastor of the church takes seriously the words of Ephesians 4:11-16. He or she recognizes that the pastor’s responsibility is to equip the members of the church to do ministry in the world.

Pastors recognize that they must get to know the needs of those who attend their church and help them to discover their spiritual gifts so that they can be properly equipped to minister effectively.

World and Evangelism

The world is where the members of the church live. Therefore, the members should be reaching their neighbors and those who live close to them.

All levels of society,
-rich, poor
-uneducated, educated
-white, black, red, yellow
are to be reached with the Gospel.

One way to reach more people with the Gospel message of salvation is for more churches to be started whereby new Christians are gathered, trained and then sent out into their “world” to minister.

The Wesleyan denomination desires churches that exist to please God.

Churches that exist to please God are growing.

Churches that equip their members to be ministers out in their world are growing. An example of this would be churches in Latin America. They are seeing phenomenal growth. There are various, underlying reasons for this. However, one of the main reasons is that they have what is called a “church-centered evangelism” mentality. By church-centered I do not mean that they are ingrown and introverted, only caring about what happens within the four walls of their own church. Just the opposite is true. They recognize that God has called them to go and “make disciples”. They also understand that disciples will come from those who are out there in the world. Instead of expecting people to come to the Gospel, they are taking the Gospel to the people. Listen to the following account presented by C. Peter Wagner. During a crusade that was held in Ecuador 1,500 individuals indicated that they were ready for baptism.

What do you do with 1,500 baptized Christians? The [largest church in the city] couldn't hold a fraction of them. Furthermore, they came from all over Guayaquil, and travel would be a problem in getting them together regularly. The inescapable conclusion was that several different churches had to be started around the city.

[The leaders of the church then went to their Sunday school teachers, presented the challenge that faced them and said], “You people are going to be the pastors”.

Eyes widened and mouths dropped. It was one thing to teach Bible for an hour on Sunday morning to a small group of eighth graders. It was something far different to be responsible for a sizable church in the city of Guayaquil. But as they prayed together, their faith grew and they trusted God for whatever was necessary to care for the new believers and continue their efforts to win new believers and continue their efforts to win not only Guayaquil, but all of Ecuador, for Christ.

Seven new churches began immediately. The young believers not only received spiritual food and straightened out their lives, but they began to win other friends and neighbors. (In four years the number of new churches that had been formed reached 42.)

Spiritual Power and Church Growth, p. 56

From this many churches in Latin America have learned that “church growth is rapid where not only individuals are being won to Christ, but where simultaneously churches are being multiplied.” They have also recognized that starting new churches is done, not only by pastors who have gone to Bible school, but also by church members who have a desire to accomplish God’s Great Commission and have been equipped to do so.

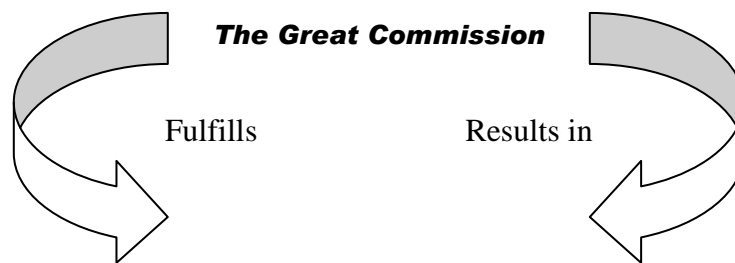
The Relationship between Evangelism and Church Planting

As we have already stated, Christians should start churches that seek to please God. They should be churches where people are being evangelized, which includes:

- a. training Christians how to share their faith in Jesus Christ,
- b. discipling new converts, and
- c. equipping believers to do God’s work of ministry.

Often Christians will talk about evangelism as though the goal is only to get people to say “yes” to becoming a Christian. This is a very important part of evangelism. All churches should be involved in doing evangelism. However, evangelism should also result in the start-up of new churches.

In other words, the Church should grow through evangelism and multiply itself by means of starting up new churches so that more and more people will become disciples of Jesus Christ.



The Church

Those involved in starting Churches with The Alliance for Saturation Church Planting contend that...

A new church plant fulfills the command to “make disciples” through evangelism that is followed by training of the new believers and ongoing discipleship. This will result in the raising up of new leaders for new churches. Churches which understand their purpose and reason for existence will start new churches...and in doing so will provide the means to eventually reach “all the nations” with the Gospel.

...church planting is the best method for fulfilling the Great Commission.

Essential Vision, p. 15

Though one can do evangelism without church planting, one cannot do church planting without evangelism. Evangelism that leads to church planting should incorporate the following principles:

Use networks of relationships.

New converts should not be isolated from those they should be reaching with the message of Christ. George Patterson writes,

The Holy Spirit flows readily through the bonds that exist between family members and close friends (Acts 10:24, 44). Keep new converts in a loving relationship with them (don't pull them out of their circle to put them in a safe Christian environment, or those very bonds which aid the spread of the gospel become barriers).

Jesus Christ realized that people have a networking of friends, relatives, co-workers and others who they know well and with whom they have regular contact. This network can be instrumental in spreading the Gospel message. Look at Matthew 9:9-10. Jesus called Matthew.

Soon afterwards Matthew invited many of his friends to his house to meet Jesus. Look at Andrew. After he began to follow Jesus he invited many of his fellow fishermen to do the same. The book of Acts is full of accounts of entire families (Acts 11:14; Acts 16:31) and whole villages (Acts 9:35) coming to Christ because of one person's conversion and willingness to share.

Illustration: Solomon Kalenge accepted Christ as his Savior. Before long he had a burden to reach the people in a village close to where he lived. He knew about the village because some of his friends lived there. The burden he had began to grow in intensity.

Solomon began to visit his friends. Faithfully, he prayed for their salvation. One day one of his friends accepted Jesus as his Savior. Before long others also became Christians. Those who were now Christians began to meet with Solomon to be taught and encouraged. To help disciple the new believers Solomon asked a more mature Christian to disciple him. He taught others what he was learning. Every week Solomon and those he had led to the Lord Jesus began to meet for worship: singing songs of praise and hearing the Word of God explained to them.

Application: You also have a network of people who you know. Take a few moments to figure out your network.

Who are some of your family members who are not Christians?

Who are some of your friends who are not Christians?

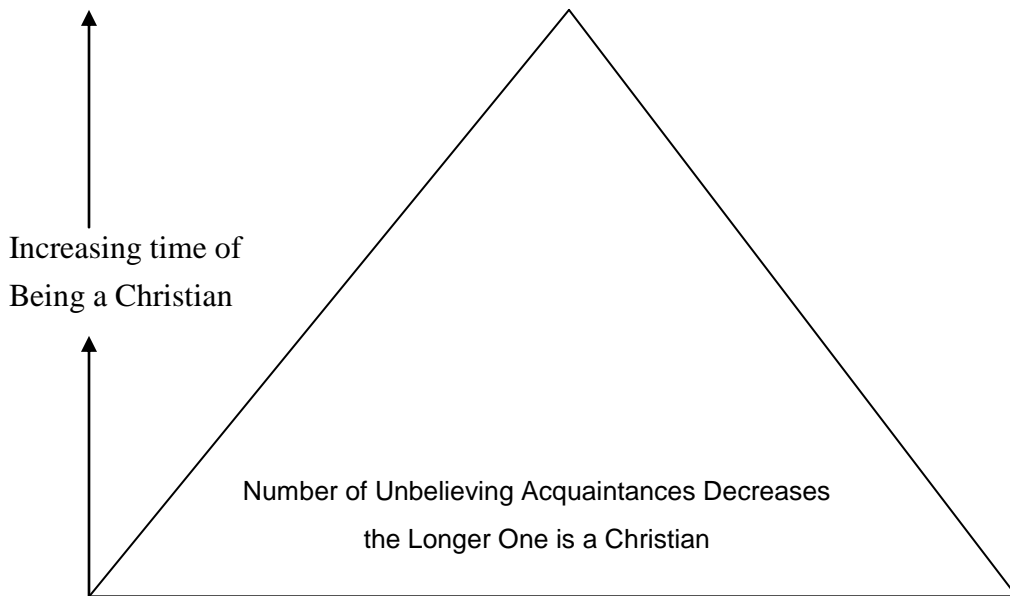
Who are some of your work mates who are not Christians?

Encourage new converts to witness right away.

Have new believers begin to witness immediately. Someone once stated that newly-found faith is contagious. Too often the thinking of many in the church is that a person should not begin to witness and do ministry until he or she has received theological training. It is important for us to realize that, even without deep theological training and understanding, a new convert can still enthusiastically give evidence of what God has done. A biblical example of this would be the Samaritan woman (John 4). When she met Jesus she immediately went and shared with those of her village the following words, “Come see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?” Granted, the Samaritan woman could not answer difficult theological questions, but she knew what had happened to her.

An observation: It is usually easier to see the change in a person right after he or she has accepted Christ than it is over the course of his or her growth as a Christian.

Another observation: The longer a person is a Christian the fewer people he or she will know who are not Christians. This is one reason why it is important for new believers to begin witnessing to their family and friends as soon as possible.



Starting Oikos-Group Churches

Lesson Two

Lesson Two Objectives: This lesson will help the learner to...

1. Biblically define what a church is.
2. Explain what a “Oikos-Group Church” is.

Goal for New Believers

As individuals become Christians, they should be disciplined and trained. When this is done, leaders will be raised who will be able to gather new believers into new churches.

Christians who seek to please God take seriously the words of Ephesians 4:11-12.

Take a few moments to read Ephesians 4:11-12.

Knowledge question: *What did God give to the Church?*

Knowledge question: *Why did God give these individuals to the church?*

(God gave the church apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers to prepare God’s people for works of service...)

Reflection question: *What are “works of service” that you are involved in presently?*

Knowledge question: *God’s people doing works of service should do what for the church?*

(...for the body of Christ to be built up...)

Reflection question: *What are some ways that the Church can be built up?*

(There are different answers that one can give for this question. Discipleship helps the church to be built up by producing strong Christians. Evangelism can help the church to be built up with the increase of new believers. Inviting people

to come to church is another way to bring more people into the church. There are other answers as well. However, we must never lose sight of the fact that starting new churches is another way of building up the church.)

Reflection question: Look back at the list you made regarding the works of service that you are involved in. Are your “works of service” helping to build up the Church by bringing people into a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and getting them incorporated into the church?

The Wesleyan Church seeks to be obedient in obeying the Great Commission. To accomplish this, Wesleyans must be concerned with evangelism that leads to church planting.

Defining the Church

? When you think of the church, what comes to your mind?

When I was asked this question years ago, I had just become a Christian, and the first thought that came to my mind was “a building”. However, with time I began to realize that a church is not a building but the gathering of Christians who come together to worship God. William Childs Robinson defined the church as,

...the spiritual family of God, the Christian fellowship created by the Holy Spirit through the testimony to the mighty acts of God in Christ Jesus. Whenever the Holy Spirit unites worshipping souls to Christ and to each other there is found the mystery of the Church.

“The Nature of the Church” *in Christian Faith and Modern Theology*, p. 389

The Church is a body with Jesus Christ as the Head.

The Bible presents many images of the Church. It has been described as a temple, flock, and family. However, the image that is most often used

to describe the Church in the New Testament is a body, with Jesus Christ as the head.

He (God) put all things in subjection under His (Christ's) feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Ephesians 1:22-23

He is also head of the body, the church...now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of this body (which is the church) in filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions.

Colossians 1:18, 24

There are many implications when we understand the Church as being a body. However, for our purposes, one important implication is that a church can exist without a church building.

Illustration: While working in Africa I sometimes met with Christians who had church services outside, under the open sky. The congregation sat on the ground, or large rocks, or patchy areas of grass.

When I worked in Cambodia I had opportunity to worship on the banks of the mighty Mekong River. There was no church structure for us to meet in. Many of those who attended sat on a large bed that someone had discarded. When the bed became full, the worshippers would stand.

For them it was not so much where they met but who they were worshipping that was important. As one man told me, "I have learned that worship does not occur just because there is a nice building to meet in. Worship occurs when we focus our hearts and our minds on God!"

The Oikos-Small Group Church

When one studies the early church, one begins to quickly observe that the people of God moved from one house to another house for their meetings. By

meeting in each other's homes, the participants became intimately acquainted with each person and their surroundings. The homes that the early Christian met in were small. They could accommodate only around ten to twelve individuals. The size of the group allowed for intimate fellowship and mutual encouragement.

In fact, Jesus Christ operated out of homes and not formal buildings. Many times we find Him teaching out of houses (Mark 2:1; 7:14-27; 9:33; 10:2-12; Matthew 13:36). Other times we see Jesus visiting inside the homes of people, such as Peter, Matthew, Simon, Levi, Jairus, Zacchaeus, and Martha. Even when He served the disciples their last supper together, it was done in a home setting.

The Impact of House-Oikos Churches:

The Bible often uses the word *oikos*. It was a word to describe the basic building block of a society. It can be translated as *house* or *household*. It can also be defined as the "personal community" in which a person exists.

The *oikos* that each of us lives in is usually not very large. Individually we may know several dozen or even several hundred people, but the amount of time we spend with all of them is rather limited. They would not be considered our *oikos* of influence. Only those to whom we devote quality time can be considered to be our *oikos*, our personal community of influence. *Oikos* includes our relatives and some of our friends to whom we intimately relate through work, recreation, hobbies, and being neighbors. In other words, *oikos* includes people we talk to, relate to, and share with on a fairly regular and consistent basis.

In the New Testament we see churches which were formed around *oikos*es; around "personal communities of influence". Because of *oikos*es (small house groups) the Church grew at a phenomenal rate.

The lifestyle of the first Christians meeting in house groups was so powerful that daily conversions took place. The total involvement of Christians in house groups overwhelmed outsiders. "But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an ungifted man enters, he is convicted by

all: he is called to account by all; the secrets of his heart are disclosed: and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you” (1 Corinthians 14:24-25).

The simple witness of the life of Jesus, observed as it flowed in His body with power and reality, caused the most hardened skeptics to confess Him as their Lord.

Ralph Neighbour, Jr., *Where Do We Go From Here?* p. 43.

The Purpose of Oikos-Small House Group Churches:

The ultimate purpose of *oikos* Churches was to glorify God (Ephesians 3:10; 1 Peter 2:9). However, the following purposes were also a part of the church in regards to its life in the world.

House-group churches should be gatherings where...

1. the Word of God is taught and preached.
2. worship takes place and sacraments are administered.
3. fellowship of believers is provided.
4. Christians spiritually grow and are able to minister because of the training and nurturing that are provided for them.
5. Christians can engage in the evangelism and the mission enterprise, extending the fellowship...whereby individuals are accepting Christ as their personal Savior and new churches are being started.
6. Christians engage in loving and helping service through social concern and involvement.
7. Christians exemplify, teach, and promote ethical righteousness.

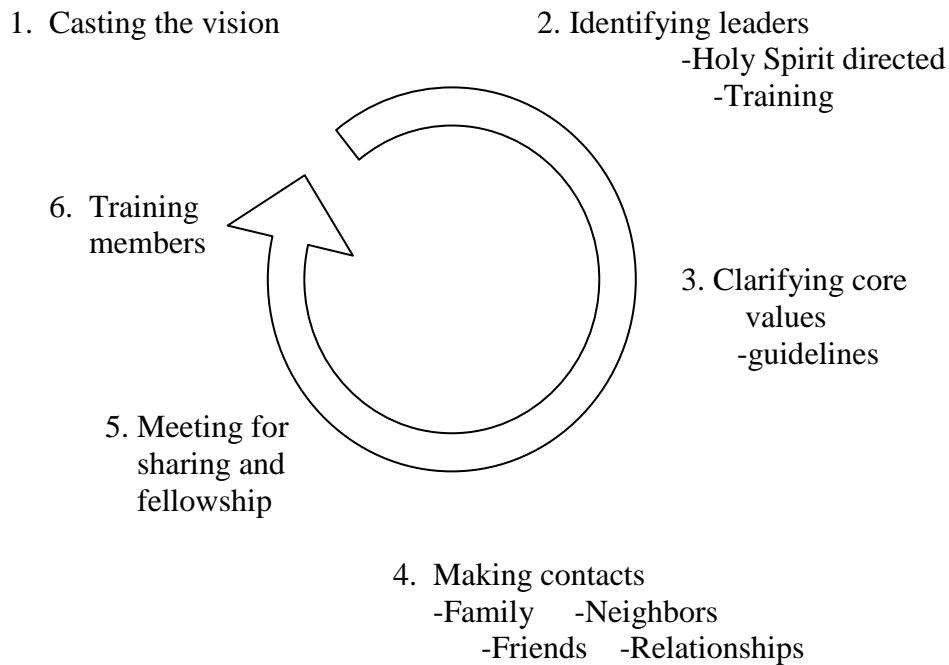
Starting Oikos-Small Group Churches

Lesson Three

Lesson Three Objective: This lesson seeks to help the learner to...

Identify six basic steps to start an oikos-house group church.

Basic Steps to Start an Oikos-Group Church



1. A vision for starting new house churches needs to be caught by Christians.

Existing churches should be fostering the kind of evangelistic spirit that encourages the people of the church to participate in the God-given task of starting house churches.

There are different ways of presenting this vision, such as through...

- a. the pastor's preaching
- b. teachings in Sunday school classes
- c. presentations to the local church board

d. Bible studies

The key is to keep the vision before the congregation and then to strategize to make it a reality.

2. Identify individuals who feel motivated to start oikos house churches.

The responsibility of existing churches is to respond to the Holy Spirit to see that individuals who have caught a vision to start house churches are recognized, prepared, and supported.

George Patterson, a missionary to Latin America, has said, “If you want new congregations started you must train God’s people.”

House church leaders can be trained in this way:

*The following five-step process can help someone
to develop a particular skill.*

Step 1: “I do it.” Model ministry before you require it of your trainee. Your own example is the beginning of training. Often training fails because there is no modeling of the skill. (Church leaders need to model what it means to be involved in oikos church ministries. Church leaders should not just tell believers that they should be involved in starting oikos churches. They need to also show them how.)

Step 2: “I do it; you watch.” While the trainee also “watches” in step one, it is a more passive, one-way activity. In this step, active, two-way interaction occurs between the leader and the trainee. The trainee knows he is being trained and is absorbing everything he can learn by observing your ministry. Explaining actions is very important. Tell the trainee what you do and why you do it that way.

Step 3: “We do it together.” This step is a bit like a child learning to ride a bike with the parent steadying it as needed. Your presence will give

the trainee confidence that you can help if he has a problem, but he will also be able to test out the things he is learning from you.

Step 4: “You do it; I watch.” Observe a trainee without interfering. Allow him to succeed or fail, and then, after the event and in private, objectively explain the strengths and weaknesses you have observed. It is important to explain both the positive and the negative, but whenever possible, emphasize the positive.

Step 5: “You do it.” As soon as you think a new leader is ready, turn the task over to him. Don’t rush it, but usually the tendency is to wait far too long and cripple the trainee by your continued presence. Encourage this co-laborer to begin training others in ministry skills.

Elements of Saturation Church Planting, p. 52

Reminder: Stress the importance of prayer throughout the entire process.

Jesus Christ stated, “Abide in me and you will bear much fruit...Then and only then...”

3. Core values need to be clarified.

Core values are the basic priorities from the Bible that govern the way the house church will operate to carry out its purpose. In other words, core values are guidelines the church will be able to go back to when making decisions about, and carrying out, ministry.

Example of Core Values from Skyline Wesleyan Church

Evangelism: Lost people matter to God; thus they ought to matter to our church.

Worship, learning: Worship and Scripture study comprise a lifestyle expressed with private consistency and corporate vibrancy.

Affirmation, restoration: The good news is that God accepts us as we are, but the great news is that He doesn't leave us that way.

Ministry: The purpose of the pastoral team is to equip all laity for their ministries which strengthen the church and impact the world.

Relationship: Life-change happens best in small groups and informal gatherings.

Discipleship: Who you are is more important than what you know or what you do.

Spiritual leadership: Throughout history, God has called some to be servant-based leaders in order to help the entire church family effectively exalt the name of Jesus.

4. Contacts are made.

House churches are based on relationships that a believer already has with family members, friends, neighbors, or work acquaintances.

Oikos-group churches should adhere to the following basic principles:

- a. Attendance should not grow larger than 15.
- b. The group can begin with 3 to 8 individuals.
- c. The group should always start another group once it reaches 15. The reason is that by doing this the group will continue to have an outward focus, reaching out to new people and not becoming ingrown.
- d. The group meets once a week.
 - Establish times and places for the assembling of the congregation which will be in line with Christian practice and local customs and circumstances.
 - Example: When I was in Africa we had churches which met in the afternoon because of the long distances that people had to travel to get to the meeting.

- e. The group should remember that it is...
 - under authority, whether it be a supervising pastor, district leader, or national leader.
 - part of a greater vision. The vision is not just for the growth of oikos church itself, but for the growth of God's Kingdom.

The believer who is desirous of starting an oikos church begins to form a congregation by inviting those who he or she already knows and has relationships with.

5. The leader of the house church begins to meet with those who show interest.

Meeting Place: House churches can meet almost anywhere. The issue is not that there has to be a building. David Hesselgrave once stated that the Church of Christ can advance even without a “generous supply of brick and mortar”.

Many house churches meet inside homes. One advantage of this is that it serves to keep the group small. Small group meetings tend to lend themselves to mutual recognition of those who participate in the meeting. It allows for intimate fellowship, interaction, and the building of close friendships. When a member is absent the others in the group will be aware of this.

Also, family and friends often find it easier to accept invitations to a house meeting than to a meeting place where there will be many people.

It is important for the members of the house church to remember the following: When the group outgrows the limitations of the house, or reaches 15 in attendance, the group should decide to start a new group in the home of another member. By doing this, the number of house churches increases, increasing the Church of God.

There are many ways to run a small group meeting. Below is a suggested format that you may want to consider.

Objectives of the house church meeting times: Each member of the group should...

- *be held accountable in regards to their spiritual growth
- *learn how to identify and exercise their spiritual gifts
- *be led to have a servant's heart
- *be equipped to minister to unbelievers
- *be equipped to evangelize
- *be equipped to start and lead an oikos church.

Length of meeting: Many house churches have meetings that last for about ninety minutes. Some go for as long as two hours.

Activities of the meeting: A small group meeting can be divided into at least five parts.

- a. Preparation: At the beginning of the meeting the leader should set aside time for the group members to shift their focus away from the worries and activities of the day and to begin to concentrate on those who are part of the group. Every person in the group should be required to participate, opening themselves up to the group. One way to do this is to ask each group member one of the following questions:

What is an important thing that happened to you this past week?

How would you rate your day? Briefly explain why you rated your day the way that you did.

How was your week?

There are other questions that you can ask. The aim is to help the group members to get their minds off of the things of this world in order to focus on what the group will be doing.

- b. Praise: After the group has initially shared with each other, time should be spent praising and worshiping God. The aim is for the members to focus on God. The leader of the group should start

this part of the meeting with prayer, asking for the presence of Christ to be in the meeting and for the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

A large portion of this part of the meeting can be spent in singing songs of praise to God.

- c. **The Word:** It will also be important for the leader of the small group to instruct and encourage the group members as they read from the Bible. During this part of the group meeting it will be important that each member be presented with the Gospel and encouraged to make a decision to accept Jesus Christ as their Savior.

- d. **Sharing:** A time where the members of the house church are able to share their concerns and prayer requests with each other is very important. As each concern is shared, allow opportunity for other members to empathize and give counsel or support as the Holy Spirit guides. Time should also be spent praying for the concerns and requests that have been presented.

However, sharing should not just focus on asking God for things. Time should also be spent talking about how God has been answering prayers.

I have also been part of home groups where each member was given a notebook to record the concerns and requests presented at the meetings.

- e. **Fellowship:** A time of informal fellowship should be scheduled. Refreshments may be served during this time, but it is important to not allow the refreshments to become the focus of the meeting. The refreshments should be light.

6. Members must be trained.

Jesus Christ trained His disciples to be men of God...the key to starting house churches. He trained them to carry the Gospel to other people who needed to know about God's love and offer of salvation. And they did it! As I look at Jesus' training program I observe that He taught His followers...

- how to grow spiritually.
- how to share their faith.
- to know and use the Scriptures.
- to have faith in God, the Father, for all needs.
- to minister in the power of the Holy Spirit.
- the importance of prayer.
- to work together as a well functioning body.
- what it means to love God and others.
- to organize churches and train others to be leaders in those churches.

It is also important during the house meetings to train. During this time the leader of the house church should lay a spiritual foundation for starting new house churches. This can be done by...

- a. sharing about the importance of starting new house churches.
Within the pages of the New Testament are accounts of churches being started. In fact, according to the New Testament evangelism is not complete until churches are started. In the preaching and teaching that takes place in house churches, the importance of starting new congregations needs to be instilled in the minds and hearts of those who attend.
- b. emphasizing the ministry of all believers.
The task of evangelism and starting new house churches is not just the work of pastors. Christians need to be informed that ministry is to be done by all the people of God. Both Christian men and women are called to meaningful spiritual ministry.
- c. teaching about the importance of the Holy Spirit.
The Spirit of God is the Spirit of outreach. It is the Holy Spirit who enables Christians to start new congregations. According to Charles

Chaney, an expert in the area of church planting, leaders of house churches need to be teaching the following:

- the necessity for all believers to be filled with and to work in the Spirit
 - the need for all Christians to be led by the Spirit in their daily lives and to surrender themselves to God as instruments of righteousness, and then to become productive members of the body of Christ
 - the responsibility of each believer to attempt to discover the particular gift given him or her by the Spirit so that the church can be built up and continue to grow
 - that the Holy Spirit empowers the most backward Christian for effective ministry and witness
- (Church Planting at the End of the Twentieth Century, p. 166)

After training, the members of the house church need to be encouraged to go and start a house church of their own, starting the house church cycle again.

Starting A Bible Study Cell Group

Dr. John Connor

Lesson One

Objectives

1. Discover what things need to be thought through before starting a cell group.
 2. Learn about the importance of a leader for the cell group.
 3. Explain the types and purposes for 4 different types of cell groups.
-

Considerations for Starting A Cell Group

There are some important things to remember when leading a Bible study. First, most Bible study cell groups are voluntary weekly associations. That means that people come together and keep coming because they want to. They will stop coming when the Bible study no longer meets their needs or becomes uncomfortable. Here are some other things to consider about starting a Bible study.

1. The first three times a group meets should be carefully chosen. If any of the first three meetings is cancelled (for a holiday, the leader has to be out of town, planting or harvest, etc.) the Bible study will probably never get going.
2. A Bible study should not be conducted like a traditional church service.
3. Be careful about making a Bible study into a snack session. Bible studies are more informal than some other types of church meetings. However, if snacks or drinks are always expected it can become a great burden to the host.
4. Hold the meeting times to a fairly strict limit. The total time of a cell group meeting should not go past 90 minutes. The formal part of a session (the actual Bible study, singing, and discussion time) should not be more than one hour.
5. Start on time, every time. Because Bible studies are more informal, if you allow a Bible study to go beyond time limits they will get longer and longer.
6. Bible study cell groups should have at least 6 people to begin, and should be split into two groups if attendance runs over 14 people.
7. Music can be an important part of a Bible study cell group, but do not allow music to take over more than about 25% of the time allocated for the formal part of the session. Music can be eliminated from a Bible study cell, generally without affect.

The Importance Of The Leader: Preparation

Everything within a Bible study is dependent on the leader. If the leader is on time, prepared, and confident the Bible study cell group will reflect those qualities too. A Bible study leader will probably spend two to three hours of personal study and preparation for every hour of the Bible study. The informal nature of Bible study cell groups gives opportunity for discussion among the members. A good leader will be able to anticipate the various directions that discussion might take and prepare for those possibilities. It is not necessary for a leader to get everything he or she has studied into the Bible study.

The Importance Of The Leader's Character

The cell leader's character is important. In the pastoral epistles (1 & 2 Timothy and Titus) the apostle Paul is very careful to point out that not only is the pastor to be a worthy example (1 Timothy 4:12; Titus 2:7) but also lay leaders (Overseers and Deacons) are to be proper examples. Some of the things the apostle Paul includes as requirements for leadership character are:

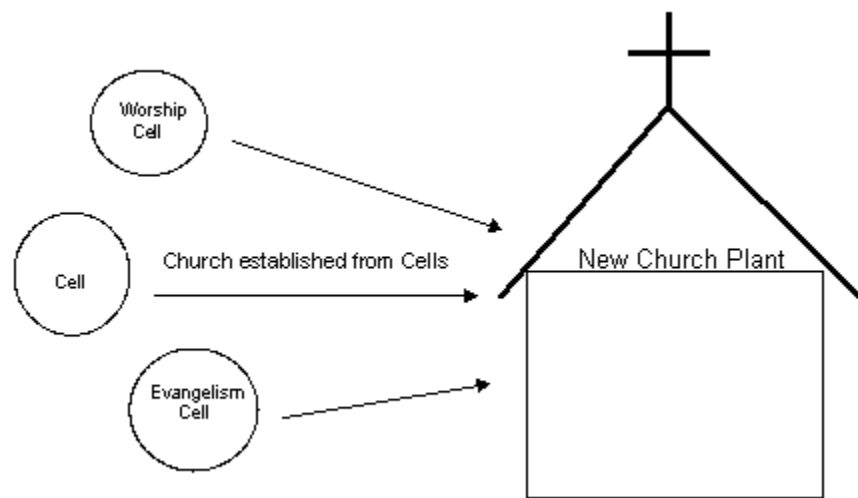
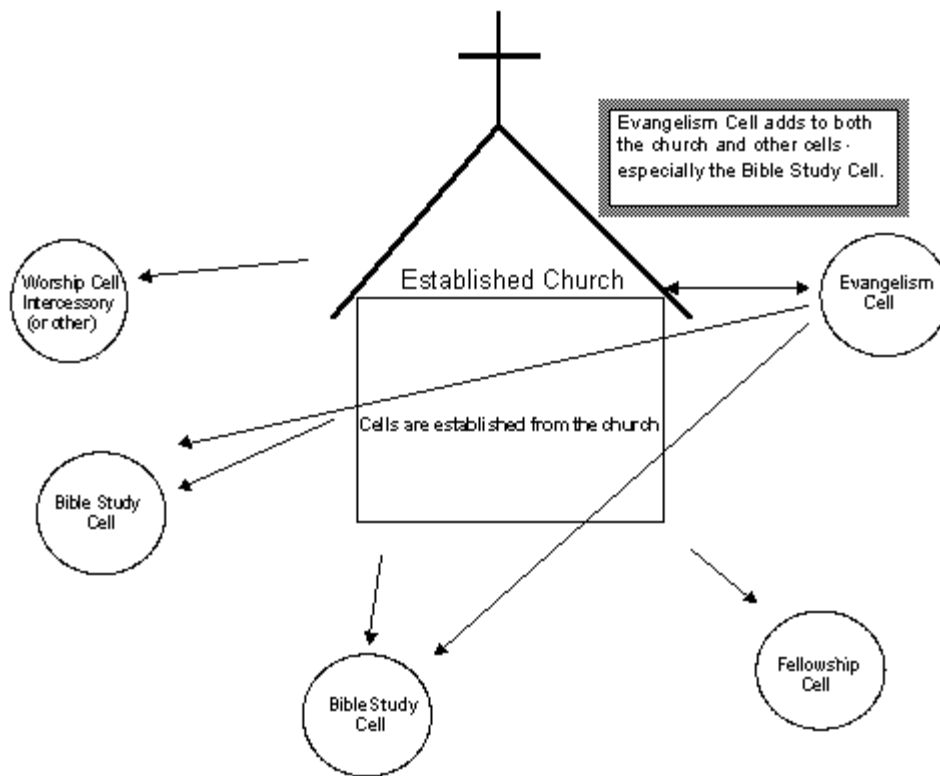
- Self-controlled 1 Timothy. 3:2; Titus 1:8
- Hospitable 1 Timothy. 3:2; Titus 1:8
- Able to teach 1 Timothy. 3:2; 5:15; Titus 1:9
- Gentle 1 Timothy. 3:3; Titus 1:9
- Not a lover of money 1 Timothy. 3:3, 8; Titus 1:7
- Not a recent convert 1 Timothy. 3:6
- Good Reputation 1 Timothy. 3:2, 7-9; Titus 1:6
- Not quick-tempered Titus 1:7
- Manages his own family well 1 Timothy. 3:4-5, 12; Titus 1:6
- Holy Titus 1:8
- Keeps hold of deep truths 1 Timothy. 3:9; Titus 1:9
- Tested 1 Timothy. 3:10

The Purposes of the Cell Group

Within this lesson we have presumed that the purpose of the cell group is Bible study or evangelism. However we should recognize that there are other reasons for cell groups to exist. The four basic reasons are listed.

1. Bible Study – primarily an inductive study to nurture growing Christians.
2. Evangelism – the purpose is to get new people in and to teach salvation at a very basic level. Adding to the church membership is one of the primary purposes of an evangelism cell. It may also add to the Bible study cells as well. An evangelism cell would generally be a topical study relating to the purpose of evangelism.
3. Fellowship Groups – In this type of cell group the Bible study is a short devotional while the primary time is given to fellowship and sharing.
4. Worship – Worship cells may be house church cells with the purpose of establishing a church at some future date. This type of cell could also be primarily an intercessory prayer (or other type of worship) cell made up of mature Christians from an established church.

Cells can be developed from an established church to fill a specific need or cells can be established in order to develop a church. Some graphic examples.



The Makeup of a Cell Group:

It is good to have some mature Christians in all cell groups, even in the evangelism cell where the topics will be covered on a revolving basis. One way this can be done is to have a primary leader and an assistant who may take turns in the leadership. In groups where there are many immature Christians it is a good idea to have at least two mature Christians who can stand together on important issues. This rule is especially important in societies which have a pagan worldview.

Suggested Table of Events for a Bible Study Or Evangelism Cell

1. Arrival, Greetings, Small Talk – 5 minutes
2. Sing a Chorus or Song – 4 minutes (optional)
3. Time for Testimonies, Sharing, and Prayer Requests – 10 minutes
4. Prayer time - 5 minutes
5. Bible Study – 35 minutes
6. Closing Challenge / Prayer / Informal Fellowship

Exercise

1. What important considerations are to be made about the first three meetings of a cell group?
2. Cell groups are not as formal as church services. What does this mean in regards to time and staying on schedule?
3. What are the four types of cell group which are considered in this lesson?
4. How are these cells different from each other.
5. If you were in the process of planting a church which of these types of cells would be most important to you. Explain your answer.
6. Why should mature Christians be included in each cell group?

A Simple Method For Leading a Bible Study

Lesson Two

Objectives

Explain a simple method of Bible Study for use in a Bible Study Cell.

A New Bible Study Tool: The Principle-Centered Bible Study

If the purpose of the Bible study is evangelism the studies should probably be deductive (refer to the lesson on Methods of Bible Study) - centering around a revolving group of topics such as the meaning of salvation, new birth, living the holy life, prayer, growing in God's grace, and other topics which are necessary to either the unsaved or new Christians. As Christians mature they can benefit more from an inductive Bible study.

Once the members of an evangelism cell have reached a degree of maturity, it may be possible to change the purpose of the cell and switch to format using more inductive Bible studies. A new evangelism cell could then be started.

It should be said that a Bible study leader may use any method with which he or she is comfortable (review the three lessons on Bible study methods for help on this topic).

However, there is a simple method which can be used and has been proven to be very effective. The following method is not covered in the lessons on Bible study but the methods found there will be helpful in developing this type of study.

This method focuses on the application of principles in the passages being studied, and falls under the category of inductive Bible studies.

The Importance of Inductive Bible Studies

Inductive studies of this nature are important to the life of any church and the maturity and growth of any Christian. When individuals are living in sin and are confronted with the gospel there is a natural tendency to be defensive. The same type of defensiveness has a tendency to happen when Christians are confronted with new light, especially if the Christian is new to the faith and they are actually guilty of the infraction which the light reveals. The same type of confrontation takes place when a pastor sees a particular need within his flock and confronts that existing need.

As the Christian studies the Bible in a relaxed atmosphere without particular emotional confrontation, the result is a more open acceptance of Biblical truth. Truth is presented and because there is no emotional resistance it is more easily added to faith.

The inductive Bible study simply follows through a passage and takes in the subjects and truths it offers. If the Bible study truly picks out the principles of a book, then the end result will accurately reflect the books content. This type of study also reflects the needs of the group which is studying it, because they will

focus on truths which touch their needs. This type of inductive study is simple and direct in adding truth to faith.

Methods For Preparing A Principle Centered Bible Study

- a. Read through the Book and mark passages of prominence and/or interest.
- b. Take each [two or three per chapter] of your selected verses and:
 - 1) Paraphrase the verse:

Example

1 Timothy 5:16 which says "Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourselves and your hearers."

There are a number of ways to think through the paraphrasing of a verse.

- If you can speak a second language, translate the verse and then turn it back into the first language.
- Make negative statements positive or positive statements negative without changing meaning. For instance the above what would happen if you were to change "if you do" to "if you don't".
- Reverse the first and second halves of a verse.
- Use synonyms for key words.

The purpose of this example is to help you really think about what you are reading. The verse above could be paraphrased as follows. "You and the people who follow you can be lost if you don't continue to live and teach truth."

Part of the discussion can be whether this paraphrase accurately reflects what is being said in the verse. Is there something missing? Does it say something or imply something that is not in the verse? The purpose is to find the truth and major principles in the verse.

Exercise

See if you can paraphrase Hebrews 10:36 by writing a concise statement, parabolic, or proverbial phrase that accurately expresses the concept of each verse.

Example

The passage from 1 Timothy 5:16 might be condensed to "Live it or lose it"; or "Persevere or perish"; or "Learners live like their leaders."

- 2) Apply the truth and principles of scripture to your life.

The question now is what does this verse mean? What did it mean at the time it was written? How can the truth and the principles of this scripture be applied to our lives today?

Using 1 Timothy 5:16 we might ask such questions as...

- 1) Is it true that learners live like their leaders?

- 2) Who are you teaching or who is your follower?
- 3) Who are you following?
- 4) What are the doctrines which are being taught
- 5) What doctrines are you teaching?

Exercise

What questions would you ask about Hebrews 10:36?

Using The Principle-Centered Method In A Study Group

- a. In the first lesson the leader will have to choose the scripture and the main principles he or she sees in order to produce the lesson. Before beginning the study the leader can let the members of the cell know what the next passage to be studied will be.

For example the leader might say "Next week we will be studying 1 John chapter 2:1-17. We will be looking particularly at the principles found in verses 2, 6, 9, &15." You can either give the references to the group, as in the previous example - if they already understand how to do this type of Bible study already, you can have them choose what they feel are the main principles of each chapter in a specified book.

- a. Have the Bible study group members paraphrase the verses and express them in writing before they get to the next cell meeting. The group can then discuss and refine their ideas in the Bible Study.
- b. Keep a record of the refined ideas for each chapter so that you can do a summary at the end.

Exercise

Prepare a Bible study of principles from 1 John 3

- What verses contain the major principles of this passage?
- Paraphrase each of the verses.
- State the principle ideas of the verse as precisely as you can
- Write out application questions for each verse.

Methods of Biblical Interpretation

Dr. John Connor

Lesson One

Objectives of this lesson: The student will be able to -

1. Explain the importance of Bible study.
 2. List the six rules of interpretation.
 3. Explain the three steps of interpretation.
 - 4) Define deductive and inductive methods of Bible study.
-

What is Bible Study?

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

- 2 Timothy 2:15

The most important book that any Christian can possess is the Bible. The Bible is God's written revelation to us. The constitution of The Wesleyan Church says this about the Bible:

"[the scriptures are] the inspired and infallibly written Word of God, fully inerrant in their original manuscripts and superior to all human authority, and have been transmitted to the present without corruption of any essential doctrine. We believe that they contain all things necessary to salvation; so that whatever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation" (Article V, The Wesleyan Discipline).

Exercise

Read through the quotation again and then list three important things that you find about the Bible in the this article of religion.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

Exercise

Look up each of the following scripture verses and then write two things from each verse that they tell us about the Bible.

- 1) 2 Peter 1:20-21:
 - 1.
 - 2.
- 2) 2 Timothy 3:16-17:
 - 1.
 - 2.
- 3) Revelations 22:18-19:
 - 1.
 - 2.

The Bible is God's word to us. It is important that we read it. This is consistent with God's principle of grace: He offers His grace to us, but we must respond in some way to receive it. God has provided us with His word, but we must read it and study it to receive the benefit of it.

2 Timothy 2:15 (quoted at the beginning of this lesson) says that we should do our best to be "a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth." That scripture implies that there are some who do not handle the word of truth correctly and are shameful in the way they interpret it. In these lessons we want to learn some principles and methods of interpreting the Bible correctly so that we can share it properly with others.

Seven Primary Rules of Interpretation

We will be looking at many different tools for interpretation. However, all the tools and methods are based on these seven rules.

1. The Bible is an inspired Book: This is the primary rule of interpretation. This means that the Bible came to us from God and that its truth can be trusted.
2. If we read the Bible and follow the same rules for understanding it that we use for any other type of writing, we will probably understand what it is saying. This is a simple rule, but often biblical interpreters forget it and try to find hidden meanings when meaning is obvious and plainly visible.
3. Every passage has one true meaning, not many. This usually means the ordinary, apparent, and literal sense. While there may be secondary meanings to some scriptures, there is always one true meaning which must be understood first - and that is the true meaning of the passage.
4. Ideas in scripture are usually best understood within the context of the concepts of the verses surrounding them. The meanings of individual words are affected by putting them with other words. Authors seldom use the same word in different ways in one passage.
5. Ideas in scripture took place in a cultural context and are best understood within that historical framework. The more we can understand about the time period, customs, thinking and culture of a passage under consideration, the easier it will be to understand.
6. Scripture interprets scripture: There is only one system of theology in the Bible and all doctrines agree with each other.
7. Christ is the center of all scripture.

("Seven Rules" above are adapted from A Contemporary Wesleyan Theology Vol. II, Wayne McCown, "Hermeneutics" chapter 17, Francis Asbury Press. Grand Rapids Mi. 1983, pp. 746-749.)

Exercise

Write each of the seven rules in one simple sentence. If it is possible paraphrase the rule in your own words or into another language.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)
- 6)
- 7)

Three Steps of Interpretation:

While there are seven primary rules of interpretation there are three steps to interpretation. They are

- Step 1: Observing - looking carefully at exactly what is said.
- Step 2: Thinking - understanding exactly what is said.
- Step 3: Telling - explaining exactly what is said.

The first step is the largest. The first step takes up about 80% of Bible Study time, thinking would be about 15%, with the other 5% left to telling. This means that 95% of biblical interpretation is taken up by the study itself, with only a small portion left to express what has been learned. We will be looking primarily at steps 1 & 2 in this lesson. Observing is looking at exactly what is said. We will learn some specific things to look for in lesson 3; however, there are some questions which will help us with both observation and thinking.

Questions which help with observation and thinking

- When was this said?
- Who is saying this?
- To whom is it being said?
- What are the exact words being used?
- What is the context in which it is being said?

Exercise

- 1) Open your Bible to Matthew 4 and read verse 6. Psalms 91:11-12 is being quoted there; who is quoting this scripture?
- 2) To whom is he quoting this scripture?
- 3) Look at the context (Matthew 4:1-11). At what time was this taking place?

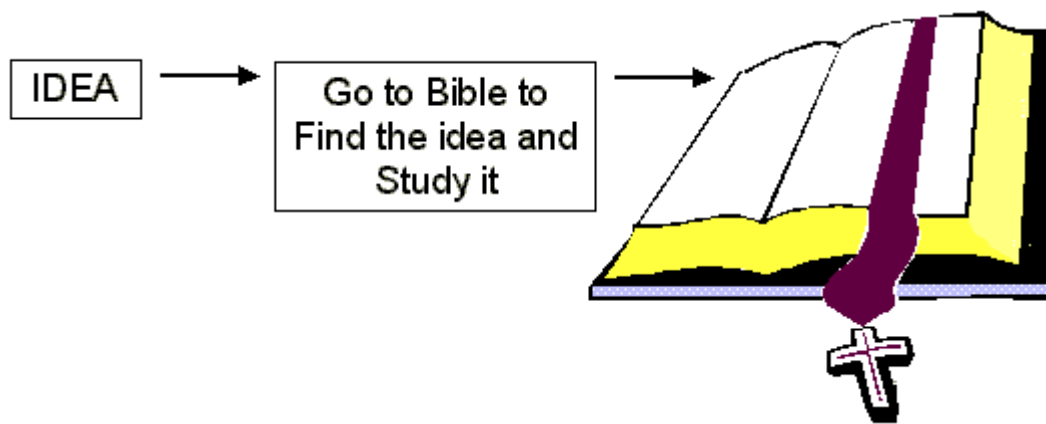
This is just a small exercise but it shows us the importance of observation and thinking. If you were going to explain Matthew 4:6, it is important for you to understand that it is the devil who is quoting scripture to Jesus during His temptation at the beginning of Christ's ministry. The devil is handling the scripture in the wrong way.

Two Ways To Study The Bible

There are two basic methods of studying the Bible. Neither is more important than the other. They are both useful for different needs.

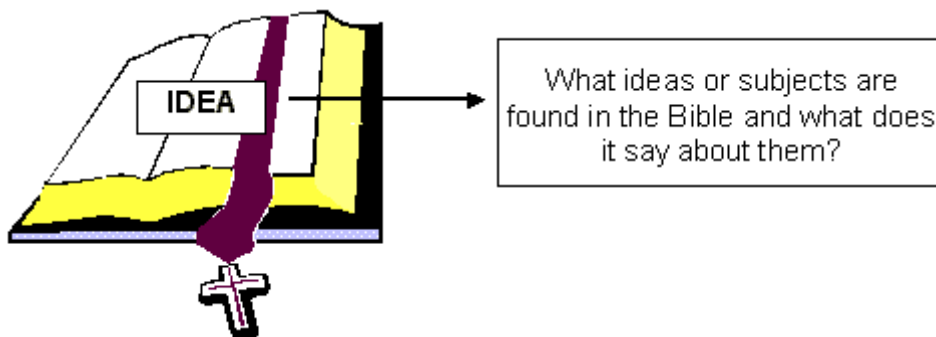
Method One: Out To In - The Deductive Method

The deductive method starts outside the Bible with an idea the student of the Bible wants to know about. Then the student goes into the Bible to see what the Bible has to say about that subject. As an example, suppose the student wants to know what the Bible has to say about “dogs.” After picking the subject the student then finds a way to discover every place in the Bible where dogs (or any other subject or topic) are mentioned. That is method one - the deductive method.



Method Two: In To Out - The Inductive Method

The inductive method starts inside the Bible with the study of a passage of scripture. This is usually the study of a whole book or a large portion of scripture. The student does not take his subject to the Bible to see what it says about that subject, but reads the Bible to see what subjects it talks about and what it says. This is method two - the inductive method.



Both of these methods are important. Often when a pastor wants to preach on a specific topic or subject he will use the deductive method. He may discover that gossiping is destroying the fellowship of his church. So he takes the idea of “gossip” and goes to the Bible to see what it says on that subject. This is a

deductive study; it starts outside with an idea and goes to the Bible to see what it says.

On the other hand, a pastor may decide that he wants to preach a series of sermons on the book of 1 John taking one chapter every week. For this he goes to the Bible and studies it. He can preach his sermons about what he has found in those chapters. This is the inductive method of Bible study, starting in the Bible and finding all of the subjects that are talked about in a particular part of the Bible.

Exercise

For the following descriptions write either “deductive” or “inductive” (or if it is easier “out to in” and “in to out”) to identify the types of Bible study that would be used. You may discuss this exercise in your study group.

- _____ A pastor wants to preach a message on the subject “the sins of youth.”
- _____ A Sunday school teacher teaches from Genesis.
- _____ A cell group studies the book of Luke
- _____ A Bible teacher wants to explain the use of music in the Bible.
- _____ A Pastor explains the meaning of 1 Corinthians chapter 13.
- _____ A pastor wants to show the need and use of the gifts of the Spirit.
- _____ A family, for family devotions, studies the stories of the Bible beginning in Genesis through Acts.

DEDUCTIVE STUDY METHODS

Lesson Two

Objectives: The student will be able to -

1. Explain the difference between translation, paraphrase, and version Bibles.
 2. Show the use of study Bible tools including chain reference, concordance, and maps.
 3. Show the use of Bible dictionaries and topical Bibles.
-

Bible Study Tools for the Deductive Study

The deductive study starts with an idea and then tries to find every place within scripture where the concept is found. In order to do this you need some tools that will help you. In the following lesson we will look at some common tools for conducting a deductive Bible Study.

About Bible Translations

There is a difference between Bibles which are a paraphrase, a version, and a translation. This applies to English text Bibles, for other languages some research will need to be done to know for sure how the translation was accomplished.

- 1) In English, a paraphrase does not need to be an accurate translation of an original Greek or Hebrew text. The person who paraphrases does not need to be fluent in the original languages in which the Bible is written and could do a paraphrase from English to English. They can put anything they wish in order to make the text better understood in their opinion. This includes concepts of doctrine.
- 2) A translation is done by one person and is dependent on that one person's expertise for accuracy. If that person does not understand or misjudges the meaning of a passage, there is no one to help him or her.
- 3) Versions are done by a committee of scholars. The people who are the strongest scholars in a certain area, for instance Greek, are assigned portions to translate to fit their expertise (for Greek it would be the New Testament rather than the Old Testament, which is in Hebrew). Then the work done by one scholar is checked by other scholars for accuracy. For theological studies in which deep understanding is important the version is the only true choice. Another thing to remember about study Bibles is that the notes will always have a theological bias of some type.

Summary

- Paraphrases do not need to be accurate translations and the person who does the paraphrase may put anything he or she likes into the paraphrase.
- Translations are done by one person and totally depend on that person's expertise.
- Versions are done by committees.

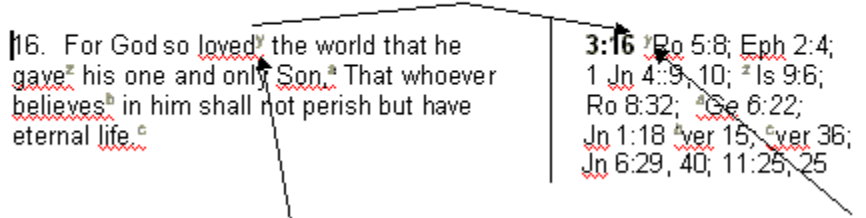
Bible Study Tools

A good Bible is the primary source for both deductive and inductive studies. However, for a deductive study there are some built-in tools in some Bibles that are of great value.

Tools: The Chain Reference

The chain reference follows topics or subjects. Chain references are made in different ways, but they all operate on the same principle. Some chain references are found down the middle column of the page or down a side column of a page and at the bottom of the page or column. In the NIV Study Bible, if the chain references overflow the middle column the overflow is sometimes completed at the bottom of the right column on the same page. Within the verse there will be a superscript letter which will match a superscript in the chain reference column. It will look something like the following example.

Chain Reference Example: From John 3:16



The subject at subscript "Y" is the love of God. The chain in the column refers to Romans 5:8, Ephesians 2:4 and 1 John 4:9-10. Each of those verses is about the love of God and each of those verses will also have a chain when they are looked up. The NIV study Bible adds John 15:13 and 1 Peter 3:18 to the chain at Romans 5:8. 1 John 4:10 adds Romans 5:10 to the chain. If a chain is followed all through the Bible it will lead you to all of the main scriptures on a subject and bring you back to the text with which you began.

Exercise

- 1) What is the subject of superscript C in the example above?
- 2) What are the references which are the chain to that subject?
- 3) Look up those references and see if additional chain references are added and write the references.

Optional Exercise

Find a verse and subject of your choosing and follow the references through a chain reference Bible writing down what you find.

Tools: Maps

There are probably some maps in the back of your Bible. Turn there and look at one of them.

Some things to Notice about Maps

- First notice that each map is of a certain time period. If you want to find something on a map from 2 Samuel or 1 Kings, you need a map from the time of King David or King Solomon. You will not find the same things on a map from the time of Jesus.
- Notice that the maps are of different sizes. Some are just Palestine or even just the city of Jerusalem while others are of the whole Mediterranean area of southern Europe, north Africa, and parts of Asia. In order to find things, you need to look at a map with the right area included.
- Notice that each map has a scale at the bottom of the map. It will probably be marked in both miles and kilometers. What the scale shows is that so many centimeters or inches on this particular map represent so many kilometers or miles.
- Down the side of your map you will see numbers or letters as well as along the bottom and top of the map's border. Either before the maps or directly after you will find an index to the maps. In the index you will find something like this "Tarsus 10 A1; 11 H3; 13 E3". The meaning is that on map #10 you can find Tarsus at the intersection of A and 1; on map 11 at the intersection of H and 3; and on map 13 at the intersection of E and 3.

Map Exercise

- 1) Read John 4:3-6. Find a map from the time of Jesus' ministry and discover how far it is from the Jordan river at the north (top) of Judah (across from Jericho) to the city of Sychar. This is how far Jesus walked before noon the day he met the woman at the well. How far did Jesus walk?
- 2) Find Thessalonica in the index to the maps and write the locations where it may be found and then find it.
- 3) How far did the children of Israel travel to return to Jerusalem from Babylon after the Babylonian captivity?

Tools: The Concordance

A concordance gives references for an exact word. A chain reference will follow a particular subject, but a concordance will give references for an exact word. Different translations and versions may translate different words for the same Greek or Hebrew word. For instance, the King James Version of the Bible uses the word "charity" in a number of places; however the NIV Bible never uses the word "charity." If you looked up the word "charity" in a NIV concordance, it could not be found. Concordances are specific to the words in a type of Bible.

Three Types of Concordances.

1. The Exhaustive Concordance: Contains every word - including articles and pronouns - found in a particular type of Bible and gives the references for these.
2. The Complete Concordance: Contains all of the main words found in a Bible, excluding insignificant words like articles and pronouns. This type of concordance may not give every reference where a particular word can be found, but will give the most important references for it.

3. Study Bible Concordance: The type found in the back of many study Bibles. This type will not have all the references for every one of the main words. It will include only those which seem to be the most important to the persons who published the concordance. Not all words will be included.

Concordance Exercise

1. Find the reference for "do all to the glory of God"
2. List the references in Paul's writings that use the term "mystery"
3. Find every reference in the New Testament where the term "born again" is used.

Tools: Bible Dictionaries

Bible dictionaries have explanations for people, places, and things (nouns) found in the Bible. Bible dictionaries will also give background information on people, places and things which it lists as well as historical notes. Bible dictionaries will also give references for the primary verses where the people, place, or thing is mentioned.

Bible Dictionary Exercise

- 1) Summarize what a Bible dictionary says about "denarii" (Matthew 20:2; Mark 12:15).
- 2) Isaiah 36:1 mentions a man named Sennacherib. Find who this man is from a Bible dictionary and briefly summarize your findings.

Tools: Topical Bibles

Topical Bibles are arranged much like concordances except that topical Bibles give references by a topic or subject rather than an exact word. Many study Bibles have a Subject Index which will do almost the same thing. Because topical Bibles are not tied to exact words they are also not tied to a specific type of Bible. To find all of the concepts related to a subject using a concordance, you may need to look up a number of exact words. For instance, if you are interested in the subject of divorce, in a topical Bible you would look up only the word "divorce." In a concordance you may need to look up "divorce," "marry," "wife," "husband," and "put away" as well as any other exact terms you can think of which may be related to divorce. Some study Bibles will have a subject index as well as a concordance.

Optional Exercise

If you have a study Bible, does it have an index to subjects? If not, does it have some other way in which subjects are listed or made known? Explain:

NOTE

Every Bible teacher/preacher at the very minimum should have a good chain reference Bible, a concordance, and a Bible dictionary . . . and if possible a good study Bible.

INDUCTIVE STUDY METHOD

Lesson Three

Objectives: The student will be able to -

1. Show the four parts of Biblical passages which need interpretation.
 2. Explain the meaning of structural observation.
 3. Show with exercise and explanation the most common clues for understanding scripture.
-

Finding Meaning Through Structure:

The main problem of Bible study is to answer the question "what does the Bible mean?" and then explain it. In order to do this we begin with some important secondary questions.

- 1) What does the Bible say? Here we are looking for exactly what is said. What are the facts? What words are used?
- 2) Why? What does it mean? Here is where definition is sought. We also look for reasons. We question with the purpose of discovering intent.
- 3) So What? What is the significance of what we've found? In this we are looking for present application of the truth which has been found.

There are four parts of any Bible passage (to which the above questions may be directed).

1. Words
2. The basic content in context
3. Literary form (letter, story, prophecy, history)
4. Atmosphere (feeling)

No one part will give <i>full</i> meaning

All four parts need to come together in the readers mind to get the full meaning of any passage. Context and atmosphere are as important as words. There are no concordances for context and atmosphere and they are often the greatest source of misinterpretation. We ask "what," "why," and "so what" to every passage, for each is different. Even words do not always mean exactly the same in every passage.

OBSERVATION

Structure: the first level of observation

1. The observation of structure begins with a general understanding of the type of literature in the passage. Is it -
 - Prose/Poetry
 - Historic
 - Prophetic (either in the sense of foretelling or preaching)
 - Teaching (which might be a parable, theological or practical),
 - Command or law
 - Literal/figurative

2. The next structural observation is the big subjects which are discussed. In the general layout of the material under consideration, what are the larger themes under discussion? Can the whole book be outlined into main subjects? The book of Hebrews will be used as an example in order to pick out the main subjects it discusses.

Example: Main Themes of Hebrews (Which primarily relate to Jesus):

God Spoke through His Son, Jesus	- Hebrews 1:1
Better than Angels	- Hebrews 1:4
Better than Moses	- Hebrews 3:3
Better Promises	- Hebrews 4:1
Better High priest	- Hebrews 4:14
Better than Melchizedek	- Hebrews 6:20
Better Covenant	- Hebrews 7:22
Better Priesthood through Christ	- Hebrews 7:26
Better Tabernacle	- Hebrews 9:11
Better sacrifice	- Hebrews 9:23
Eternal Work Completion	- Hebrews 10:2
Therefore let us be better People	- Hebrews 10:19
Warning	- Hebrews 10:26
Faith	- Hebrews 11:1
Endurance	- Hebrews 12:2
Love	- Hebrews 13:1

THINGS TO LOOK FOR

A hunter looks for clues of the animal that he is trying to find - animal tracks, droppings, certain types of food or evidence of an animal eating, sounds that animals make, and actual observation of the animal being hunted.

The hunter of truth and understanding also needs to search for clues. A number of specific things are helpful in encouraging us to think about what we are reading.

A. Look for Repeated Words & Phrases

Whenever a word or phrase is repeated a number of times, there is usually a reason. Look for main words, usually verbs or nouns, which are repeated for a purpose. As an example look at John 15:4-10. Notice how many times the word "remain" is repeated.

Exercise

Read John 15:9-26 and see if you can spot at least 2 more words which are repeated 5 or more times.

Phrases are also often repeated to emphasize an important point or to show a certain type of logic. In the book of Haggai 1:5 and 7; 2:15 and 18 you will find the repeated phrase "give careful thought." This is important to the overall message of Haggai, who was trying to get the people to build the temple following the return from the Babylonian captivity. The things he asks them to think about are important pieces of his logic.

Exercise

What phrase is repeated in Amos 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13 ; 2:1, 4, 6.

B. Look for Progression

You must really use your mind as well as your eyes in order to see and understand progression. The main themes found in a book, for example those discovered in the book of Hebrews, will often show progression. The exercise above from the book of Amos showed a very important progression.

He starts with the enemies of Israel and condemns them for the evil things they did to Israel and says they will be destroyed: Amos 1:3 Damascus (Syria), Amos 1:6 Gaza (the Philistines), Amos 1:9 Tyre (the Phoenicians). Then Amos begins to mention nations which are more closely related to Israel - Edom, Ammon, and Moab (Amos 1:11, and 13; Amos 2:1). Finally, he mentions Judah and condemns them for rejecting "the law of the Lord" (Amos 2:4). He has condemned all the nations surrounding Israel including the closest allies, friends and relatives. Who do you think will be next in Amos 2:6?

Exercise

Each of the miracles in the book of John progresses to a point of important teaching. In John 6:1-15, the feeding of the five thousand progresses to the point found in John 6:35 where Jesus declares "I am the bread of life." Look at John chapter 9 and explain the progression found there. Include both the miracle and the point being made.

Optional Exercise

Look at the example of the themes found in Hebrews above and explain the progression found there.

C. Look for Commands

Commands are always important, especially the commands of Jesus. Jesus said "You are my friends if you do what I command" (John 15:14). The apostle Paul often will give a whole string of commands. In Paul's writings specific commands are often in the last third of the book. About two-thirds of Romans chapter 12 contains specific commands.

Exercise

Read through John chapter 15 and find two direct commands from Jesus.

D. Look for Conditions

A condition is a statement which declares that a particular result, promise, or punishment is dependent on some other action. A key word which is often used in a conditional statement is the word "if." "If" does not always designate a condition, and all conditions do not include "if." You must look at the context, but "if" often indicates a condition. For instance in 1 Corinthians 15:2 it says:

"By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise you have believed in vain."

Salvation by the gospel rests on the condition of holding firmly to the word preached.

Exercise

- 1) Read through John chapter 15 and mark every place “if” is written. How many did you find? How many of these “ifs” are conditions?
- 2) Read Hebrews 10:26. What is the condition there?
- 3) A condition in Revelations. 3:5 does not include an “if.” Rewrite the condition using an “if.”

E. Look for Contrast and Comparison

Another common method of writing found in the Bible is the use of two different types of things. In the book of John the author often contrasts “light” and “darkness” (see John 1:5 as an example). In John 15:9-17 he contrasts “love” to “hate”, found in John 15:18-25. Contrasts and comparisons are important clues.

Exercise

What is being contrasted and compared in Romans chapter 8?

F. Look for Illustrations

Illustrations have one main message. They come in different forms and they are sometimes ignored or overlooked by people. In Acts chapter 7, much of what Steven says is illustration taken from the history of Israel.

The visions that the prophets have are illustrations given to them by God for the purpose of a particular message which God wants them to understand. The parables of Jesus are illustrations. A part of understanding illustrations is to ask the question “What is the main point which is being made?”

Exercise

In Ecclesiastes 9:13-16 there is an illustration. What is the point being made?

Some Other Things That May Be Observed: An Optional Exercise

The following are short explanations with scripture references which will help to illustrate the point.

- A. Cause and Effect: When one thing happens another will result. Proverbs 27:14, Proverbs chapter 11, and Proverbs 29:1
- B. Conversations between people and God : John chapter 3; Habakkuk
- C. Lists: Galatians 5:19-23
- D. Truisms or Proverbs: 1 Timothy 1:15 “This is a trustworthy saying” (1 Timothy 3:1; 4:9; 2 Timothy 2:11)
- E. Prophetic acts and actions: Jeremiah 18:1-4
- F. Prophetic foretelling: Matthew chapter 24
- G. Atmosphere Indicators: Galatians 1:6

DOCTRINE

Dr. John Connor
Lesson One

Objectives: The Student will be able to -

1. Show the importance of studying doctrine.
 2. Define the two types of sin – Sinful nature and Acquired sin.
 3. Explain the meaning of the grace that goes before salvation.
-

The Importance of Doctrine

A pastor once said that he didn't believe in doctrine. He said, "I just read the Bible." That is doctrine and that is a doctrinal statement. Doctrine is the things we believe about God and the relationship of man to God.

This pastor seemed to think that doctrine is not very important, but he should have read his Bible a little better - because the Bible has a lot to say about doctrine and the systematic teaching of truth. Part of the Great Commission, which was the last instruction of Jesus to the disciples, was "teach them" (Matthew 28:20).

In the early church teaching doctrine was one of the primary responsibilities of the disciples (Acts 2:42). In Ephesians 4:11-15 the apostle Paul first lists the people we often would call "the ministers" of the church; this list includes evangelists, pastors and teachers. He indicates that their primary job is to train the whole body of Christ to a mature faith. If doctrine is not taught the result is that the body becomes like "infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming" (Ephesians 4:14). We cannot have strong churches without teaching doctrine.

Exercise

1. What are the two reasons expressed in Titus 1:9 for holding firmly to truth?
2. Titus is instructed to teach what specific thing in Titus 2:1?
3. Who will be lost if they move away from true doctrine? (1 Timothy 4:16)

The Problem of the Sinful Nature

"For the wages of sin is death, . . . " Romans 6:23a

The big problem with sin is that God doesn't like it; if we want to have a relationship with God, then something has to be done about this. In this lesson we want to look at two aspects of sin. The first is the tendency to sin that we are born with and the second is the sins we commit by our own actions. This sinful nature creates two problems for us: ¹not only are we born with the tendency to sin, and ²we are unable to change this tendency by ourselves.

We Are Born With The Tendency To Sin

In Psalms 51:5 David writes, "Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me." In Romans 5 Paul tells us that this nature comes from

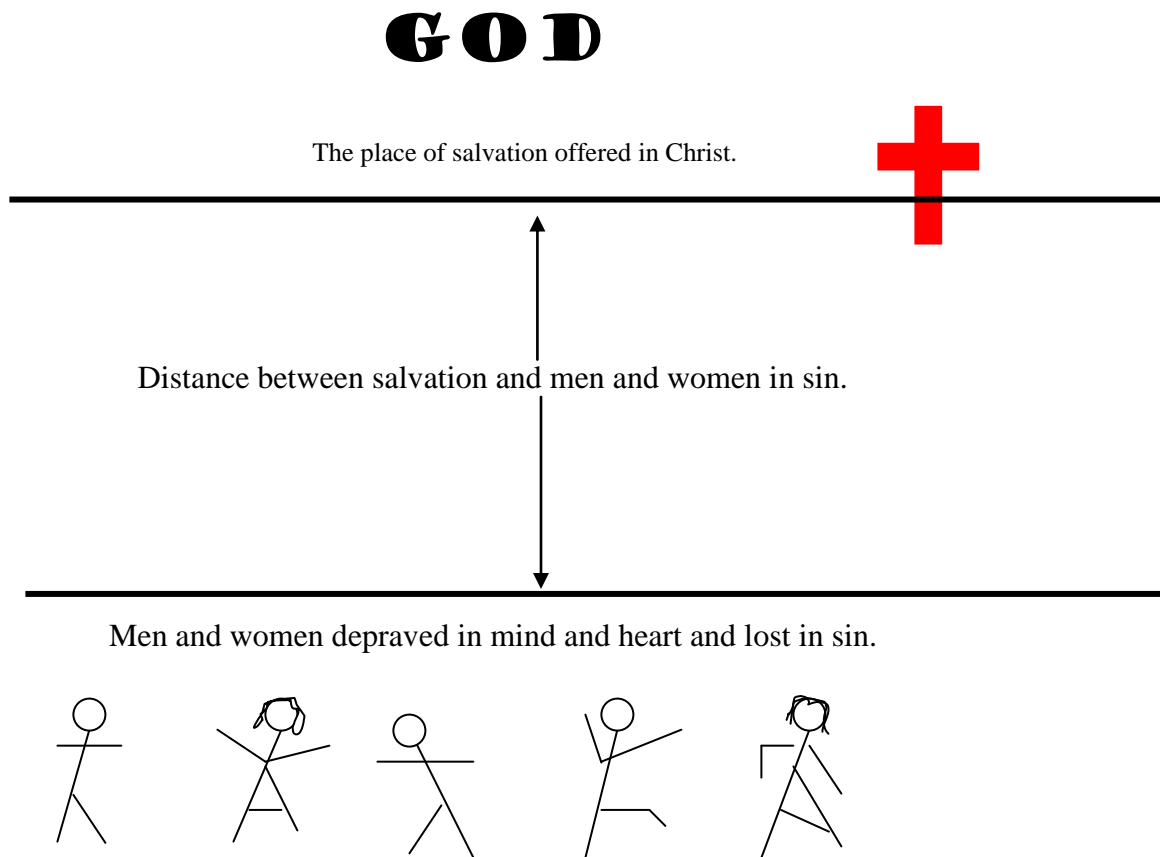
Adam. Sometimes this sinful nature of man has been called the “Adamic” nature - meaning that it came from Adam.

It is important for us to understand that everyone is born with this tendency to sin. Romans 3:23 declares “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” We do not need to teach our children to sin. The seed of sin is born within them when they are born and it will soon grow into action. *Everyone* born into the human race will sin.

We Cannot Save Ourselves From The Tendency To Sin

The mind of the sinful nature brings death and men can not save themselves from this. In Romans, chapter 8, the apostle Paul writes about the sinful nature. In Romans 8:5 he says, “Those who live according to their sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; . . .” In verse 6 he writes, “The mind of sinful man is death, . . .” In verse 8 he says that, “Those controlled by their sinful mind cannot please God.” Finally, in verse 13 he warns, “. . . if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die, . . .”

The following diagram will help us to understand the concept of mankind’s sin separating them from God.



Men and women who are living in sin and are depraved in heart and mind do not want to be saved. They love their sin and want to sin more. They only feel guilt when they are caught and their shameful actions are exposed to society. How can anyone move from being a sinner to the place where it is possible for him or her to feel the guilt of sin and by faith seek salvation through Christ's death on the cross?

The Grace Which Goes before Salvation

The truth is that no one can be saved unless God first begins to do something for them. God does two things.

1. He has sent Christ to be the sacrifice for sin.
2. He begins to work in the lives of individuals.

Christ Is The Sacrifice For All

1 John 4:19 says "We love because he first loved us." 1 John 2:2 says "He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world." God made a way for mankind to be saved from sin by the death of Christ on the cross. The offer of salvation is open to all. John 3:16 says "whoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life." 2 Timothy 2:3-4 says "God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth." God has made a way of salvation and has offered this salvation through Christ to all men by faith.

The Grace Which Goes Before

Men are in sin because of the sinful nature. Salvation is offered but men in the natural mind cannot respond. Therefore, again God acts. In John 6:44 Jesus says "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, . . ." In John 1:9 the Apostle John speaks of "The true light that gives light to every man . . ." In John 16:8 Jesus tells us about the work of the Holy Spirit, who will ". . . convict the world of guilt in regard to sin . . ." This is the second thing that God does in the lives of sinful men; he convicts them of their sin and draws them to himself, shining on them the light of Christ.

Faith Must Be Joined To Grace

Men and women cannot save themselves, but they can respond to God's offered grace and be saved. The offer that God gives is through the death of Christ on the cross. Ephesians 2:8-9 says, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast." Grace is an offer which is not deserved. But grace demands a response; in the case of salvation from sin the response must be faith in Christ. That is God's condition for salvation.

Review

Men are born with a sinful nature which pulls them toward sins which they commit. Sin cuts them off from fellowship with God, and in their sinful state they care only about their sin. Even if they felt guilty, they could not save themselves. But God offered Christ as the sacrifice for the sin of all men. This sacrifice is offered to all mankind. God Himself convicts sinful man of his sin, reveals His offer of grace and draws men to Himself, but they must respond to this grace by faith in the death of Christ for their sins.

For Discussion

1. Explain what “faith joined to grace” means to you.
2. Is there anyone for whom Christ did not die? (review 1 John 2:2)
3. What are the two problems produced by the sinful nature?
4. a. Explain the meaning of the graphic illustration above.
b. Explain how God answers the problem of separation of sinful man from salvation.

2. Acquired Sin

Acquired sin is sin which we actually commit. These could be called “the acts of the sinful nature.” This is exactly what the apostle Paul calls it in Galatians 5:19 and in verses 19-21 he gives a list of some of these acts. There are other lists of this type of sin found in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Revelation 21:8; 22:14-15. These are not all of the acts of sin; in fact Paul adds the phrase “and the like” at the end of Galatians 5:21, to indicate that there are other acts of sin. We can define this type of sin in a general way as being rebellion against God. John Wesley has given this definition for acquired sin [underlining added]:

Nothing is sin, strictly speaking, but a voluntary transgression of a known law of God. Therefore, every voluntary breach of the law of love is sin; and nothing else, if we speak properly. (The Works of John Wesley, third edition. Vol. XII, Hendrickson Publishers Inc. Peabody, Mass.: 1986. page 394)

The important part of this definition is underlined. In short we could say that ***sin is a choice to break the known law of God***. Two things are always involved in this type of rebellious sin against God:

- 1) There is **knowledge** of what God requires and...
- 2) There is a **choice** to act against God’s requirements.

There are two scripture verses which help us understand this truth.

“Sin is lawlessness.”

“⁴ Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.⁵ But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin.⁶ No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.”

- 1 John 3:4-6

The person described in this verse says in his heart “God, I don’t care what you have to say, I will fulfill my own desire.” This kind of sin either ignores God’s law or rejects God’s law. It says “Yes, I know you have something to say about this, but I reject you, God.” A big choice is involved here.

“Sin is disobedience”

¹⁷ Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.

- James 4:17

Here again is knowledge as well as choice. However, this sin of rebellion does not just relate to wicked actions. This individual knows the things God asks him or her to do (such as tithing or serving) and rebels against God. This is also sin. The attitude is the same, and the rebellion is the same. There is knowledge of God's requirements and there is a choice to rebel against God.

For Discussion

What two things are always involved in acts of sin which make them rebellion against God?

Salvation & Growth

Lesson Two

Objectives of this lesson: The student will be able to -

1. Show the serious nature of committed sin.
 2. Explain the connection of faith to salvation.
 3. Show the progressive nature of holiness.
-

Sin's Consequences:

Rebellion against God causes severe consequences. Romans 6:23 says, “the wages of sin is death.” In Galatians 5:21, after a list of sins, it says that for the people who live like this “I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.” Revelation 21:8, after a similar list of committed sins, adds a little detail to this picture. It says that “their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.”

This is a bad situation for us. Our nature is pulling us toward sin. We are committing sin. We can't save ourselves. We are completely at the mercy of God.

But God has made a way of salvation. Romans 5:8 has such a nice way of saying this:

⁸ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

God offers us both grace (undeserved favor) and mercy (withholds punishment which is deserved), on the basis of His love - if we accept it by faith.

Salvation Is Conditional: The Condition Is Faith.

Salvation is a free gift but it not of any help until it is accepted. This acceptance is by faith in the work of Christ who died as the sacrifice for our sins.

Hebrews 10:1 tells us “The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming - not the realities themselves.” Often the picture which is in the Old Testament helps us to understand the New Testament. In the Old Testament God required that his people bring a sacrifice to the temple for acts of sin. The sinner had to bring the sacrifice himself to the temple and put his hands on the head of his sacrifice (Leviticus 4:4). The sinner had to confess his sin (Leviticus 5:5). He also had to make restitution if he had wronged someone else in this sin (Leviticus 5:16. 6:5). This was the Old Testament law, but in the New Testament we have a better sacrifice (see Hebrews 9:26; 10:10, 12).

God presented him [Christ] as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus. - Romans 3:25-25

God still requires a sacrifice for sin, but He supplied the sacrifice himself.

“He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!”

Hebrews 9:12-14

God still requires personal belief. John 3:36 says, “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains in him.” God requires confession as a part of that faith. 1 John 1:9 says, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” True faith involves repentance, or a turning away from sin as well as confessing it. Acts 3:19 says, “Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord . . .”

This kind of faith also includes a change in the way of living as the apostle Paul says in Acts 26:20: “. . . I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds.” Both Jesus and the apostles preached a repentance which results in a holy lifestyle. In Matthew 3:8 John the Baptist tells the Jewish leaders, “Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.” Jesus declares, “I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” (Luke 5:32). True faith always produces confession of sin and repentance. The only condition for salvation is faith in Christ’s sacrificial death on the cross.

Questions For Discussion

1. Faith is the condition for salvation, what is the meaning of “condition?”
2. Explain how repentance and confession relate to true faith. Are they also conditions?
3. If a person wants to be saved what do they need to do? (see Acts 3:19 and Ephesians 2:8-9)
4. If a person wants to be saved, what does God say He will do? (see 1 John 1:9)
5. How do acts of good works relate to salvation? (Compare and discuss Ephesians 2:10 & James 2:17, 22).

Knowledge of Salvation

We can know that we have been saved. 1 John 5:10-13 is one scripture which emphasizes this truth:

¹⁰ Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. ¹¹ And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹² He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of

Exercise

1. What is the one condition for salvation?
2. What is the final consequence of sin if sin is not forgiven?
3. Give a verse which backs up your answer in question 2.
4. There are some people who say you cannot know you are saved. Explain why this is a false teaching which is not supported by the Bible.
5. At what time should the Christian begin to live a life of holiness?
6. Explain the meaning of the graphic of 2 Peter 1:5-8.

Living In Holiness

Lesson Three

Objectives for this lesson: The student will be able to -

1. Show the serious nature of backsliding.
 2. Explain how the nature of sin in the believer adds to the problem of temptation.
 3. Show the need and possibility of entire sanctification.
-

Faith For Living

We have seen that acquired sin is rebellion against God. It includes knowledge of what God requires and a choice to reject God's requirements. In Romans 14:23 we find the exact opposite of sin: ". . . and everything that does not come from faith is sin." Sin and faith are both based on what the individual believes to be true.

On the one side there is knowledge and choice which rejects God's requirements, that is sin and rebellion. The other side comes to know God's will and acts in a positive manner, that is faith and obedience. Sin and faith are absolute opposites. God actually expects His children to live by faith. Faith is the basis of righteousness as Paul explains in Romans 1:17 "For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: 'The righteous will live by faith.'"

An individual cannot live outside of faith and be righteous. If an individual does live outside of faith that individual is unrighteous and the principles which apply to the unrighteous apply to that person.

"But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him." But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved. Hebrews 10:38-39

Adam and Eve lived in a perfect place and had been created perfect beings. There was one thing which God required of them ". . . you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die" (Genesis 2:17). They had both knowledge and choice. The devil told them that if they ate from this tree which God had put off limits "You will not surely die" (Genesis 3:4). This was the devil's first lie, but it is a lie he continues to tell. Adam and Eve listened to the devil and ate, that was sin, and they died just as God had said. God still requires faith and will punish sin with eternal death and the devil continues to tell his lie. Paul puts the truth this way in Colossians 1:21-23:

"²¹ Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. ²² But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation - ²³ if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel..."

The "if" has been circled to emphasize the point that our salvation is dependent on continuing to live by faith. The writer of Hebrews puts it this way in 10:26-27:

If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.

Exercise

1. Read Ezekiel chapter 18 and answer the following questions.
 - Describe the people who will "live."
 - Describe the people who will "die."
2. In John 15:6 what happens to the branch that does not remain in the vine?
3. In Hebrews 3:14 there is a condition placed on having a "share in Christ." What is that condition?
4. James 1:17 says that faith that does nothing is what kind of faith?

The Continuing Problem of the Nature of Sin

There is a big surprise in store for every new Christian, and this is not a good surprise. The surprise is that while at salvation our sins are forgiven, the nature of sin that got the whole thing started still remains and continues to pull them toward sin. The problem is that if we give into sin instead of living by faith we can lose our salvation. The presence of faith is the presence of salvation, the absence of faith is the absence of salvation.

The Bible is very clear that if we live in sin we will reap what we sow. Romans 8:13 says very clearly "For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live." Acts of sin must be abandoned if faith is to survive.

The new Christian is especially vulnerable to this nature of sin and false prophets and teachers, especially, prey on young Christians who are weakened by the sinful nature within. Peter expresses it in this way in 2 Peter 2:17-22:

¹⁷ These men are springs without water and mists driven by a storm. Blackest darkness is reserved for them. ¹⁸ For they mouth empty, boastful words and, by appealing to the lustful desires of sinful human nature, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error. ¹⁹ They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity--for a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him. ²⁰ If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. ²¹ It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them. ²² Of them the proverbs are true: "A dog returns to its vomit," and, "A sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud."

The danger of backsliding for a person in this position is very real. In fact their Christian experience can become very unstable. In Romans chapter 7, Paul gives a description which fits this type of Christian. In verses 15-24 he describes the confusion and mixture of desires.

¹⁵ I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. ¹⁶ And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. ¹⁷ As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. ¹⁸ I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. ¹⁹ For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do--this I keep on doing. ²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

²¹ So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. ²² For in my inner being I delight in God's law; ²³ but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. ²⁴ What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?"

The apostle James calls this being "double-minded" (see James 1:8; 4:8). This person wants to serve God but finds himself continually pulled toward sin and the things of the world so his Christian experience is up and down. This is a serious condition.

In 1 Thessalonians 4:3-6 the apostle Paul gives a list of sinful actions and then he concludes "The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you." The reason he gives them this warning is to also give them the good news. "It is God's will that you should be sanctified:.." (verse 3) "For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit" (verses 7-8).

The good news is that for this too, Christ died. Hebrews 13:12 says "And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood."

Living the Sanctified Life

Paul's wrenching heartfelt question in Romans 7:24 is "Who will rescue me from this body of death?" In verse 25 he goes on with the answer "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord." In Romans chapter 8 he compares the life struggling with the sinful nature and the life lived in the mind of the Spirit. James says that double-minded men need to "purify your hearts" (James 4:8). We call this "entire sanctification."

Set Apart and Purified

The word "sanctify" has two meanings in scripture. One meaning is to "set apart [for God]." Things that are common can be set apart for the Lord and may then be called "holy". For example in the Old Testament all of these things are called "holy" because they are set apart; money (Leviticus 27:30); animals (Leviticus 27:9); formula for incense (Exodus 30:37); God's people (Exodus 22:31; Deuteronomy 7:6).

We can find the same idea in the New Testament as well. In 1 Corinthians we have the description of a very immature church which Paul calls “worldly – mere infants in Christ” (1 Corinthians 3:1). Yet in 1 Corinthians 1:2 he calls them “sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy.” They were set apart to God but not sanctified according to the second use of the term, which means purified. They are “called to be holy” even though they are already set apart to God.

The second sense in which the term “sanctify” is used is to cleanse or purify. We call this “entire sanctification.” This is the way Paul is using the term in 1 Thessalonians 4:7. This was the proof that was given to the council in Jerusalem that the Gentiles could also be Christians because God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them - just as he did for us. He made no distinction between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith” Acts 15:8-9). This need for sanctification which cleanses the nature of sin was also Paul’s concern for the Thessalonians. He was sure of their salvation but he was afraid that the tempter would use the weakness of their maturity in Christ to backslide. He wanted to “supply what is lacking in your faith” (1 Thessalonians 3:10). His prayer in 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 is:

“²³ May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.”

God provides through Christ, not only forgiveness for the sins we have committed, He also provides a way to cleanse the nature of sin. This does not exclude the need to live by faith or diminish the need to continue to grow in God’s grace and walk in God’s light. It just makes it easier to do.

Exercise

1. What are the two meanings of the word “sanctify?”
2. Salvation is the forgiveness for sin. Sanctification is the cleansing of sin. Explain the meaning of sin in each of these statements.
3. Once we have received entire sanctification does this mean that we no longer grow in grace?
4. Explain the meaning of the graphic in lesson 2 regarding 2 Peter 1:5-8, and tell how it relates to salvation and to sanctification.
5. Have you been saved by faith?
6. Have you received this grace of entire sanctification? (see Luke 11:13)

SERMON PREPARATION

Dr. John Connor

Lesson One

Objectives: The student will be able to -

1. Show the importance of preaching from the Bible.
 2. Name the three parts of a sermon.
 3. Show the use of outlines for sermon construction.
-

Give me one hundred preachers who fear nothing but sin and desire nothing but God, and I care not a straw whether they be clergymen or laymen, such alone will shake the gates of hell and set up the kingdom of God upon the earth.

- John Wesley

The Importance of Preaching:

¹In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: **²Preach the Word;** be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. ³For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.

⁴They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. ⁵But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

- 2 Timothy 4:1-5

Preaching is sharing the good news of Jesus Christ and his love in a way that common people can understand. In the Greek language, the words for “gospel”, “preach”, and “preaching” all come from the same root word and actually sound similar. So in Galatians 1:6-9 Paul is making a double use of words. Verse 8 could be translated “. . . if we or an angel from heaven should gospel a gospel other than the one we gospelled to you, let him be eternally condemned.” God spoke to Habakkuk and said “Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it” (Habakkuk 2:2). Preaching is putting the good news in a form in which common people can understand.

Preaching the gospel has been a primary strength of the church since the time of Jesus. When we proclaim the gospel through preaching we are standing side by side with Peter at Pentecost (Acts 2) or Paul before the crowds in Athens (Acts 17).

Exercise

Write the answers for the following:

1. In 2 Timothy 4 (quoted above) who is the final judge of preaching?
2. Read 2 Timothy 4:3-4 very carefully and then answer this question: What is it about preaching that will be judged?
3. In Mathew 23:3 Jesus points out a particular problem that some preachers seem to have. What is that problem?

4. Read each of the following passages and write beside them what is being preached.
- 2 Timothy 2:2 –
 - Mathew 24:14 –
 - Mark 6:12 –
 - Mark 16:15 –
 - 1 Corinthians 1:23 –
 - 2 Corinthians 11:4 –
 - Ephesians 2:17 –
 - Philippians 1:18 –

THE PARTS OF A SERMON

There are generally three parts of a sermon: the Introduction, the Body, and the Conclusion.

A. Introduction

The introduction should state the Scripture, the text, the theme, including an explanation of the text and theme and why they are important. There should be an overview of the points that will be covered in the body of the sermon. The introduction should be a small part of the whole sermon, probably less than 15% or about 5 minutes in a 30 minute sermon. The following is an example of the outline of a sermon introduction.

Example Outline For An Introduction To A Sermon

Title of Sermon

Scripture:

Text:

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Theme: (statement written out).
- B. Explanation of the Text: (Explains the text and connect the theme to the text)
- C. Summary of the Points of the Sermon: (The points are stated but not expanded)
 - I. Point 1
 - II. Point 2
 - III. Point 3

Although the scripture and the text are a part of the introduction, they are most often written into the outline before the introduction. The scripture is written in as a reference, for example – “John 1:1-17”. The text of the verse is actually written out in the outline.

The theme should also be written out as a statement. A theme is the subject of a sermon expressed in one statement. Sometimes the theme is expressed in the title, but it doesn't have to be.

While one purpose of a title is to catch attention, the theme actually tells what the sermon is about. Every point of a sermon should be reflected in the theme.

The scripture and text should also be reflected in the theme. The theme should be written out in one statement at the beginning of the sermon as a kind of measure for the sermon.

In the “explanation of the text,” short reminder notes should be written into the outline in order to remind the preacher of the things he wants to say. Although the introduction comes first, it is the last part of the sermon which is actually completed - and the last to be written.

B. The Body

The body is the largest part of the sermon and usually takes up about 70-80% of the time or about 20 minutes in a 30 minute sermon. The body will generally take up about 50% of the written space of a sermon outline. It is in the body that the theme and the points of the sermon are developed. Every point should be supported by scripture, both the scripture being focused upon and other scriptures which support the point. Every point should add some bit of information, explanation, or insight to the theme. Every point should also have an illustration which adds understanding to the point. The parables which Jesus used were illustrations which helped to make the points Jesus wanted to make.

The outline of the body of a sermon might look something like the following.

BODY:

- I. Point 1 – (explanation)
 - A. Scripture which supports the point
 - B. Illustration which helps explain the point
- II. Point 2 – (explanation)
 - A. Scripture which supports the point
 - B. Illustration which helps explain the point
- III. Point 3 - (explanation)
 - A. Scripture which supports the point
 - B. Illustration which helps explain the point

C. The Conclusion

The introduction and the body is the casting of the net. The conclusion pulls in the net. The conclusion starts with the text and a restatement of the theme. Then there is a restatement and summary of the points. This summary of points may be expanded enough to state conclusions but should not be expanded much. If expansion is needed that should be done in the body. The conclusion should be simply to remind what was already learned.

Finally a challenge should be made to the congregation to do something with the truth of the sermon. The most common challenge is the altar call, but it may be a challenge to live differently or look at the world in a different way or any number of things depending on the theme of the sermon.

A typical conclusion outline would look something like the following.

CONCLUSION:

- A. Statement of Text
- B. Statement of Theme
- C. Summary of the Points of the Body:
 - I. Point 1
 - II. Point 2
 - III. Point 3
- D. Challenge

Now that we have looked at the three parts of a sermon and shown the most common outline structure for each part we can put the whole outline example together.

Example Sermon Outline

TITLE OF SERMON

Scripture:

Text:

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Theme: (statement written out).
- B. Explanation of the Text: (explains the text and connect the theme to the text)
- C. Summary of the Points of the Sermon: (The points are stated but not expanded)
 - I. Point 1
 - II. Point 2
 - III. Point 3

BODY:

- I. Point 1 – (explanation)
 - A. Scripture which backs the point
 - B. Illustration which helps explain the point
- II. Point 2 – (explanation)
 - A. Scripture which backs the point
 - B. Illustration which helps explain the point
- III. Point 3 - (explanation)
 - A. Scripture which backs the point
 - B. Illustration which helps explain the point

CONCLUSION:

- A. Statement of Text
- B. Statement of Theme
- C. Summary of the Points of the Body:
 - I. Point 1
 - II. Point 2
 - III. Point 3
- D. Challenge

Questions for Review

1. List and explain the parts of a sermon.
2. What part is the last to be written?
3. Where should illustrations be used?
4. What are the things that should be included in each point?
5. Explain what a theme is and how points of the body of a sermon are connected to it.
6. Where are the two places where a summary of the main points of the body of a sermon is made?
7. Give an example of how the challenge and a theme go together.

Sermon Preparation Lesson Two

Objectives: The student will be able to -

1. List the three sermon types.
 2. Prepare a textural sermon.
-

Types of Sermons

In these lessons you will look at the preparation of three types of sermons. While there are other types of sermons besides these, these are the most common. The three types of sermon you will be learning about are ¹Textual, ²Topical, and ³Story sermons.

Preparing a Textual Sermon

The textual sermon is a sermon in which...

- 1) The outline of the body of the sermon is taken from one portion of scripture and
- 2) The sermon outline comes from exact words that are in the scripture chosen.
- 3) The theme should also fit the context of the scripture that is used.

As an example open your Bible to John 15 and read from verses 1 through 17.

From this scripture the following textual sermon outline could be made on the theme "The Rules of True Discipleship."

- Point 1: ". . . in me" verse 2 - (Discipleship starts with a relationship with Christ.)
- Point 2: ". . . bear fruit" verse 2 - (True disciples produce more than leaves.)
- Point 3: ". . . remain in me" verse 4 - (A backslider can not be a true disciple.)
- Point 4: ". . . obey my commands" verse 10 - (Rebellion against Christ and discipleship cannot co-exist together)
- Point 5: ". . . love each other" verse 17 - (True disciples love other disciples.)

This is a textual sermon outline that takes in a number of verses but they are all from the same place. Notice that the points of the outline in the example above are taken directly from words in the scripture. There is a parenthesis on each line to help explain the direction that each point would be taking. Although the parenthesis is helpful in this example, it would not be necessary in actual sermon notes. Look at John 16:5-14. This is a passage of scripture about the work of the Holy Spirit. Taking only verse 8 a message could be built on the theme "The World's Areas of Wrong Understanding."

Before looking at the following outline, read that verse and find the natural outline there yourself.

- I. Sin
- II. Righteousness
- III. Judgment

This outline is taken directly from the words of the text and the theme follows the meaning of the scripture directly. Try to work the following exercises in which you are given a text or a scripture and you find a theme and a textual outline from it. Remember that your textual outline may not be exactly the same as everyone else. Many different textual outlines and themes are possible from the same scripture.

When the preacher begins to seek the Lord's direction and look for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in sermon preparation, these differences in thought are one of the miracles that happen in sermon preparation. The Holy Spirit helps the preacher to find the outline and theme that is needed by the people to whom he will be speaking, but it may be different from another who is speaking to a different group and a different need even though it is from the same scripture.

Exercise 1

Using a single verse for Sermon Preparation

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Text: 1 Corinthians 13:13 (Use this to make your outline)

Theme:

Points:

After completing exercise 1 for textual sermon preparation from a single verse answer these questions about your outline:

1. Does your theme fit the meaning and context of the whole scripture?
2. Are the words of your points taken directly from the scripture?
3. Explain briefly what direction you would take with each point.

Exercise 2

Using a larger portion of scripture for Sermon Preparation

Scripture (from which to make an outline): Colossians 3:1-17

Theme:

Points:

After completing exercise 2 for textual sermon preparation from a larger portion of scripture answer these questions about it.

1. Does your theme fit the meaning and context of the whole scripture?
2. Are the words of your points taken directly from the scripture?
3. Explain briefly what direction you would take with each point.

Optional Exercise

If you would like to try preparing a textual sermon from a scripture you pick, that would be a good exercise. Share the sermon with the class. Discuss the development of the theme and the points.

SERMON PREPARATION

Lesson Three

Objectives: The student will be able to -

1. Prepare a topical sermon.
 2. Prepare a story sermon.
-

Preparing a Topical Sermon:

While a textual sermon is centered in one portion of scripture a topical sermon may go to many different scriptures to express its theme. A topical sermon usually begins with an idea of what the preacher wants to speak about. You will look at two ways to go about the process of building a Topical sermon outline.

Two Useful Tools For Sermon Preparation

The Concordance

A concordance is a tool for finding specific words in scripture. When a word is looked up in a concordance it will give a list of all the places where that word is found, with a short phrase to show how it is used.

The Chain Reference Bible.

A chain reference follows a topic through the Bible. It will usually start in a specific verse and then give references which says something about that same subject. If the chain is followed it will follow the subject you have chosen all through the Bible and eventually return you to your original scripture.

Every person who wants to develop good topical sermons should have a concordance and a chain reference as reference tools no matter which of the two methods are used.

Two Methods For Sermon Preparation

Method One

The first method is to pick a topic and then look at all of the scriptures one can find on the topic. Then develop an outline from the material you found.

This method requires either a good concordance or a good chain reference Bible. The following is an example of developing a topical sermon which first picks the topic and then looks at what scripture says about it before developing an outline. The topic which has been chosen is "gossip". First the concordance is consulted and these references to the word "gossip" are found:

- Proverbs 11:13 A ***gossip*** betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy man keeps a secret.
- Proverbs 16 28 A perverse man stirs up dissension, and a ***gossip*** separates close friends.

- Proverbs 18:8 The words of a ***gossip*** are like choice morsels; they go down to a man's inmost parts.
- Proverbs 20:19 A ***gossip*** betrays a confidence; so avoid a man who talks too much.
- Proverbs 26:20 Without wood a fire goes out; without ***gossip*** a quarrel dies down.
- Proverbs 26:22 The words of a ***gossip*** are like choice morsels; they go down to a man's inmost parts.

2 Corinthians. 12:20 For I am afraid that when I come I may not find you as I want you to be, and you may not find me as you want me to be. I fear that there may be quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, factions, slander, ***gossip***, arrogance and disorder.

From 2 Corinthians 12:20 there is a chain reference from the word gossip to Romans 1:29 (talking about people who reject God "They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, ³⁰slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; ³¹they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless.") which adds the following references:

1 Timothy 5:13 - speaking of backsliding widows - ("...they become idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying things they ought not to."); and... James 3:2 ("...If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check.")

Now, by looking at the scriptures on the topic of gossip both a theme and an outline regarding the topic of gossip can be developed. Other words that relate to gossip as well, such as "slander" or perhaps "lying" can also be looked up. For the purpose of this illustration what has been discovered under the word gossip will be sufficient. It is not necessary to use all of the scriptures found, The preacher can pick and choose those which best fit what he would like to say. From the above research the following theme and outline might be developed.

Text: James 3:2

Theme: God's People Do Not Gossip

I. Gossip is sin – Romans 1:29

- It is a sign of backsliding – 1 Timothy 5:13
- It is a temptation because it seems good – Proverbs 18:8

II. Gossip kills character –

- It kills other people's character - Proverbs 16:28
- It kills the character to the person who carries it - Proverbs 11:13

III. Good people don't gossip – James 3:2

- One person can stop gossip – Proverbs 26:20

Method Two

The second method is to develop an outline and then find scripture which will back up your points.

This method of topical sermon preparation begins with an outline and then finds scripture to back up the points of the outline. There are some easy ways to do this. The concordance and the chain reference can still be major tools in developing this method of topical sermon preparation. An easy method to outline a topical sermon is to ask:

1. What is the topic?
2. Why is the topic important?
3. What if the topic is not dealt with?

How would this work with the gossip topic?

- I. What is gossip? Romans 1:29
- II. Why is it important that I know about gossip? Proverbs 16:28
- III. What if I continue to gossip? Proverbs 11:13

The scriptures found above can be used to strengthen the points of this outline in order to define gossip and show the results of gossip. Once the basic questions are asked the answers can be transformed into the outline so that instead of the questions above the outline could be changed to give the answers as statements as follows.

Scripture: James 3:2

Theme: The Destructive Nature of Gossip

- I. Gossip is a Sin – Romans 1:29
- II. Gossip will bring dissension in the church - Proverbs 16:26
- III. Gossip brings personal destruction - Proverbs 11:13

Exercise

Using either of the two methods explained above develop a topical sermon outline on a topic of your choosing.

1. What is your topic?
2. Produce your theme and outline and be prepared to explain the direction you believe you will take with each point.
3. Explain the method you used.

Preparing a Story Sermon

The story sermon is sometimes called the “inferential sermon.” The story sermon takes one of the stories from the Bible and then retells the story and applies principles (inferences) which become the main points of the sermon. As an example look at the story of David and Goliath which is found in 1 Samuel 17. The method of preparing a story sermon is to first pick the story and read through it until you are able to tell the story comfortably. Next determine the parts of the story which have important principles for present application. Story sermons can usually use the story in chronological order the way it is told in the Bible and then

point out the application points as the story is told. David and Goliath might be told with the following outline.

Scripture: 1 Samuel 17:1-54

Text: "...the battle is the Lord's" - 1 Samuel 17:47

Theme: God's people are soldiers in a spiritual battle.

- I. 1 Sam. 17:1-11 Christians are in a battle and our enemies are real and big.
- II. 1 Sam. 17:12-31 Opposition to God's plan may be opposed even from inside His camp.
- III. 1 Sam. 17:32-40 The weapons of God are not the weapons of men.
- IV. 1 Sam. 17:41-54 When God gives victory the results are dramatic.

Story sermons are not difficult to prepare because many of the stories in the Bible are given in order to take from them spiritual lessons. Remember that not everyone will see the same things or feel the same points of application are important. This is a part of the miracle of preaching, that God directs the minds of His preachers in different ways according to His purpose.

As an exercise develop an outline using the story of Naaman found in 2 Kings 5:1-27. Read the story until you can tell it comfortably without reading. Then look at the main parts of the story and find the principles which can be used in your outline. When your group comes together there will be sharing on this assignment.

Exercise

Prepare a story sermon outline using 2 Kings 5:1-27 as your scripture

Text:

Theme:

Points:

Optional Exercise

If you would like to practice on this story method of sermon preparation, take one of your favorite stories in the Bible and develop a story sermon using the method described above to share with the group.