

53 lessons for
Cell Group Leaders



Apostolic Assembly
of the Faith in Christ Jesus

Disciple
your *Disciplers*



the STRATEGY of *Jesus*
FRIENDSHIP groups
To day



DISCIPLE YOUR DISCIPLES

53 Lessons for Cell Group Leaders

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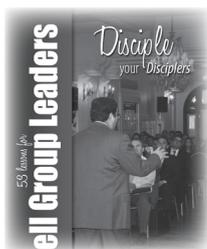
Disciple your **Disciplers**

53 Lessons
for Cell Group Leaders



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of the Faith in Christ Jesus

P r e s e n t a t i o n



I present to the pastors of the Apostolic Assembly, the first manual for weekly meetings of leaders (gear 6), **“Disciple your Disciplers.”**

The Strategy of Jesus program is the result of the investigation of the most successful cellular ministries in the congregations of the Apostolic Assembly.

We found that an effective cell ministry consists of seven elements, which we call “gears” of the Strategy of Jesus:

- Gear 1: **Spiritual Strategy.**
- Gear 2: **Evangelistic Cycles.**
- Gear 3: **Friendship Groups.**
- Gear 4: **Evangelistic and Launching Retreats.**
- Gear 5: **The School of Discipleship.**
- Gear 6: **The Weekly Meeting of Leaders.**
- Gear 7: **Excellence in all Ministries.**

This manual **“Disciple your Disciplers”** has 52 lessons for leaders of cell groups, which the pastor can use from 2011 to 2012.

This manual is gear 6. For Friendship Groups to work successfully in every church, the pastor must have a meeting every week with the leaders of cell groups to receive reports, review the lesson to be taught and provide a motivating lesson to their leaders. This manual gives the pastor 52 lessons to be used to empower, encourage, challenge and equip cell leaders.

I thank pastors Andy Provencio, Arthur Ocegüera and Steve Moran for writing these lessons. I thank Pastor Joe Aguilar, coordinator of our committee, for the first review of these lessons.

May it be a blessing for Friendship Groups leaders.

Bishop Ismael Martín del Campo,
President, Strategy of Jesus Committee

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LESSON

1

Why Churches Fail **In Developing Successful** Friendship Groups

By Andy Provencio

Key Scripture: Hosea 4:6

Introduction

There are many reasons why churches fail to develop successful Friendship Groups. In today's lesson we have selected 10 reasons that are very noticeable and important to consider in our leadership accountability sessions.

1. *Because the Pastor Has Not Been Able to Catch the Vision.*

A. It is imperative that the Pastor take an active part in the transition that helps a traditional church become a Friendship Groups church.

B. If the pastor is not involved, many members may lose interest in participating.

2. *Lack of Discipleship and Leadership Training.*

A. The insufficient development of leaders and lack of instruction will cause the stagnation of our Friendship Groups.

B. If a position or responsibility is given to a person without sufficient training, several things may happen. For example: The group will not develop as it should and it could disintegrate.

3. *Lack of Staying Within a Designed Structure.*

A. Groups deviating from the tested structure are forced to depend on the individual skills of the leader.

B. Friendship Groups should not work without having trained leaders.

C. Be well informed of structures and materials that other churches have been using.

D. Trying to improvise can get expensive, and it can result in a bad experience.

4. *Not Being Able To Develop Good Communication.*

A. Members of a Friendship Group who do not feel loved or integrated into the group's operation can become inconsistent or even quit attending, never wanting to return.

B. The area of good communication is essential – members will get involved if they feel a sense of belonging.

5. *Lack Of growth.*

A. Small groups that do not produce new members often become stagnant.

B. As in a home/family, new members will bring newness of life to the meetings.

6. *Failure to Deal with the Antagonist.*

A. Destructive behavior by any “antagonist” member of the group will destroy its purpose very quickly.

B. Remember, other attitudes can harm the group, but antagonism is the worst of all.

7. *Lack of Accountability (Reports) By the Leader.*

A. People do not do what you expect, rather they will do what you inspect or supervise.

B. Written reports system and other forms is the best way to guarantee accountability.

8. *Failure to Have Proper Oversight of Groups.*

A. Someone must intervene in the groups to help them deal with the issues that leaders cannot handle.

B. We must have a good structure so that each Leader only has a small group of no more than 15 adults under his charge and supervision.

C. The principle established by Jethro and given to Moses is a good example of how we could structure Friendship Groups to be most effective (there were 10 people).

9. *Receiving Offerings*

A. Receiving offerings in a small group setting can leave a bad impression.

B. Some churches do receive offerings, and it works for them. Some would rather not, and that is also fine.

C. If offerings are recommended, it is important to explain the purpose.

10. *Failure to Allow God's Presence to Move in Any Given Session*

A. Christ is the center of our attention. He needs to be involved in each of our meetings.

B. Without the move of God within the meeting, the challenges are impossible to meet.

C. Another very important point is that we must not allow comments which will discredit the life and character of others.

D. Neither should we make any negative comments about other religious groups. In addressing them, we must do it in a positive way.

Conclusion

In order to have successful Friendship Groups, we should consider and check upon the 10 reasons listed in this lesson and apply them to our weekly sessions.

LESSON

2

The Move of the Spirit In Small Groups

By Andy Provencio

Key Scripture: Zechariah 4:6

Introduction

Being an imperative and not an option, the Holy Spirit is essential for ministry in our Friendship Groups. It is God who does the work and the great difference in transforming lives. “Unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it. Unless the LORD guards the city, The watchman stays awake in vain” (Psalm 127:1).

1. *The Operation of the Holy Spirit*

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor, He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty the oppressed ...” (Luke 4:18-19).

A. The anointing comes with a cause or purpose. God's anointing will not come upon us by chance, nor will it manifest itself without reason. He has called us to preach the "acceptable year of the Lord" (parallel of God's timing).

B. A "successful" ministry is always the result of the Spirit of God operating in our lives.

C. When group members experience God's anointing, they will reach others in need of salvation. The Holy Spirit will not leave us without power, knowledge, or resources needed. Our strength and ability lies in Jesus Christ's presence and his favor upon us.

2. *The Spiritual Gifts*

A. Every Friendship Group should learn to depend upon the Spirit of God! The group should depend on the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit to succeed in meeting the needs of the members of the body.

B. God has given us spiritual gifts that operate only by the Holy Spirit to serve one another. "Each according to the gift he has received, give to others, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (I Peter 4:10). The reason that God gives his gifts is to serve and supply the needs of others.

C. Each of us is gifted in ministry and able to be used in the body as God wills. "But all these worketh one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one as He wills" (I Corinthians 12:11). Spiritual gifts work ideally (best) in a small, intimate group because each member can be used by God to minister to the body.

D. The spiritual gifts need to be exercised. If a member of our physical body is not exercised, that body member will lose its ability to function because of the lack of exercise. So is it necessary for us to use the gifts if we are to learn to operate confidently

and effectively. Today, it is somewhat rare to see the spiritual gifts manifested in our churches, with the possible exception of the gifts of tongues and interpretation and prophecy. The reasons are varied, but mainly because we do not exercise them regularly, and because in times past there has been abuse of some of them.

3. *The Gifts Most Used In a Friendship Group Atmosphere*

A. Consider first the “Service Gifts” in Romans 12:6-8. These are 9 gifts: Prophecy, Teaching, Serving, Exhortation, Giving, Leadership, Management, Helps and Mercy.

B. The “Power or Spiritual Gifts” found in I Corinthians 12 and 14. These 9 gifts are: Word of Wisdom, Word of Knowledge, Discernment of Spirits, Faith, Gifts of Healings, Working of Miracles, Gift of Prophecy, Gift of Divers Tongues and Interpretation of Tongues.

4. *Love is the Factor That Moves the Gifts*

A. The love of God that is displayed among and between the members of a Friendship Group is the fertile ground for the operation of the Holy Spirit. Without love, the gifts will not function “And if I have prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountain and have not charity, I am nothing” (I Corinthians 13:2).

B. We can either “use or abuse” the gifts God gives us. However, abuse can be avoided when the following conditions accompany the use of the gifts.

- God alone is worthy of honor.
- The gifts should not rely on sensationalism.
- Some people learn to use some gifts and begin to go from church to church with that gift, and often start to get fans, but based on just excessive sensationalism.

- The gifts edify, not divide.
- Members who are spiritually mature recognize the gifts. They give validity when used correctly.
- Each gift must be operated in accordance with Scripture.
- God does not contradict, for His Word will always be in harmony with spiritual gifts.

5. *The Jesus Factor - Holy Spirit*

A. How can we determine the success of a “Friendship Group?”

- Is it by how dynamic its leadership is?
- Is it because of the praise and worship that is present?
- Is it because the topics are very appropriate and well presented?
- Is it because the Bible Study supplied people’s needs?
- Is it because the fellowship and companionship is very noticeable?
- Is it because of the transparency and honesty of the group?

Note: These factors all contribute to the success of a Friendship Group, but they alone are not the reason for making a group successful.

B. The main factor is feeling the presence of the Holy Ghost in a tangible way; this is what makes a Small Group successful. Certainly the list above plays an important role, but the latter is indispensable.

C. The group members often have very different expectations for what makes a “perfect group.” For many, a perfect group is: the fellowship, prayer, discipleship, Bible study, evangelism, praise. These expectations, if not satisfied, cause some members to leave the meeting disappointed ... unless they experience the “Jesus factor - Holy Spirit.” That is, if they came look-

ing for a deep study, or fellowship, and do not find it, but find Jesus, they will leave the meeting very content. No one will leave disappointed.

Conclusion

An encounter with Christ's anointing is the spiritual element that gives meaning to each meeting. Jesus himself is the essential factor in the life of the body. He needs to be present at every meeting of our Friendship Groups! If the presence of God isn't the main attraction in our meetings, we are missing the real reason for gathering together. Acts 2:42-43 "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles."

LESSON

3

Resolving Problems and Making Decisions

By Andy Provencio

Key Scriptures: Proverbs 3:5-6 and II Chronicles 15:4

Introduction

- Problems are Inevitable

As Job's friend told him, "Man is born unto trouble." Problems are everywhere - as well as in the lives of the brethren and the lives of sinners. But even though problems are inevitable in life, defeat because of problems is not! At times, a negative situation can actually be the result of something very positive.

Problems arise from other sources. For example, in the church, the root of many problems is immature, self-seeking, or offended people carrying much baggage from their past. Leaders will find that it takes faith and perseverance to constantly resolve these difficult problems.

Problems should not be automatically viewed as negative but rather as positive challenges that can be overcome in God's will and by His strength. God has a solution.

I. Solutions More Easily Found

There are several ways we can make the job of finding solutions to problems easier:

1. *Deal with the problem while it is fresh.*

Denying that a problem exists is usually what delays the start of the solution finding process. Lack of communication among leaders also delays the recognition of problems.

2. *Find a solution that requires as minor a change as is necessary to effectively resolve the problem.*

Solutions to problems, however, require change; therefore, to use as little change as possible is one way of making the solution easier to find and implement.

3. *Break the problem down into "solvable pieces."*

Just like eating a piece of meat that must be cut into bite-size pieces for easy chewing and digesting, some problems need to be broken down into more manageable pieces.

4. *Get help from influential people.*

Knowing even before changes are made that the leader has the support of key people will remove much of the fear of problem-solving. Leaders are often concerned about the results

of solving a problem. To know that others are standing with us turns an uneasy situation into one that will have support.

5. *Focus on the benefits of getting the problem solved.*

The “pain of the solution” will be better than the “pain of the problem” as it presently exists. This requires painting a clear picture of how the problem will be solved and how those currently involved in the problem will ultimately be benefited. Continuing in the problem will only be to the detriment of all. You should find a solution quickly.

6. *Meet the problem with resolute faith.*

Leaders involved in problem-solving must have a firm resolve that they are in partnership with God and that He is able, especially when we are not. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God, and therefore, we should have a strong conviction that God is revealing the problem and will stand behind the solution.

II. The Problem-Solving Process

Before a leader can begin to process of solving a problem, he or she must remember that God has a solution for every problem! As defined in these steps:

1. *Clearly identify the problem.*

A leader must be willing to wait long enough in prayer to see exactly what the problem really is. At times, what appears to be a very large problem is actually a set of smaller problems which must be sorted out and individually identified to be solved.

2. *Clearly identify the real cause of the problem.*

Leaders should look for the present cause of a problem rather than something so old that it can't be changed. Present problem needs a present solution.

3. *Take personal responsibility for solving the problem.*

A real leader takes the initiative. A good question to ask is, "Am I part of the problem or part of the solution?" Every level of leadership should be training those under them to become part of the solution. Initiative is the quality in a leader that doesn't wait around to be told but takes action in time of need. The best problem-solvers are those who are able to say, "This is my problem and I will find a solution."

4. *Choose the best solution available.*

Perhaps the alternatives and options have been outlined by a committee that has met to suggest various solutions, or the leader has heard what he believes to be the voice of God, or he has thought carefully and come up with several possible solutions. The next step is to choose the best one and put it into action.

5. *Follow-up with necessary adjustments for modifications.*

Leaders need to have a way of evaluating the progress being made once a solution has been put in place. Again, this is not the time to be intimidated or fearful. If a solution needs adjustment or modification, the leader should do so without delay.

6. *Finally, introduce any necessary policies to ensure that the same problem does not return.*

Leaders are not only responsible for determining how a problem began and solving it, but they are also responsible for putting into place the necessary “fix” to avoid similar problems in the future or their recurrence.

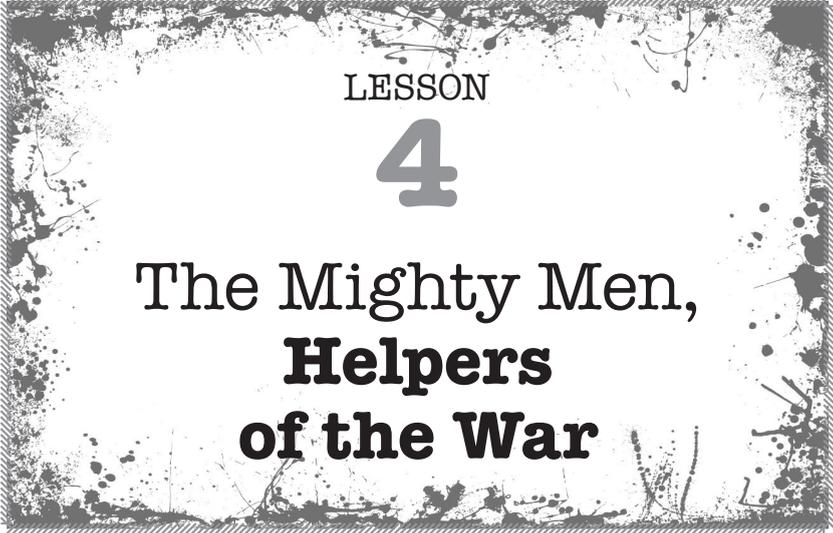
Conclusion

Decision Making Is Easier Than Some People Think

Following are 6 steps that will make decision-making easier:

- 1.** Define the objectives. What decision must be made and what does it affect?
- 2.** Gather all available information on the subject.
- 3.** Consider all the alternatives. Think about all of the available options.
- 4.** Weigh the risks involved with each of the alternatives.
- 5.** Make the decision based on the above, not just what feels right.
- 6.** Follow up the decision with the necessary evaluation and analysis of progress and make changes as necessary.

Leaders should always strive to hear the voice of God and do whatever He says. The Bible says, “*In the multitude of counselors there is safety*” (**Proverbs 11:14**). It is His will that we proceed carefully and do our best to do the right thing always because our decisions will always have an impact on His precious children.



LESSON

4

The Mighty Men, **Helpers of the War**

By Andy Provencio

Key Scriptures:

I Chronicles 12:1; I Timothy 1:18 and II Corinthians 10:3-4

Introduction

I Chronicles chapters 11 and 12 mention the names of the men who either supported David while he was running from Saul or who came to crown him at Hebron as their new leader after the death of Saul. Chapter 12 speaks about the great qualities of these men as they stand out as examples for us today. Ours is a great war in the spirit realm. The weapons of this war are spiritual weapons, and guarantee that the strongholds of the devil and his kingdom will be brought down! (*Ephesians 6:10-17*).

The qualities described in *I Chronicles 12* concerning the brave men that helped David become king are essential today in the church. Studying these spiritual characteristics will help our small group leaders long for revival and become stronger soldiers in the army of God.

Verse 2 – *“They were armed with bows, and could use both the right hand and the left in hurling stones and shooting arrows...”*

A. These men were trained and highly skilled in using their weapons of warfare. Leaders of today’s church must be just as highly skilled and anointed in the use of spiritual weapons.

B. God has made available to us the “whole armor of God.” This includes our loins girt with truth, the breastplate of righteousness, our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit (the word of God). We have also been given the weapons of prayer, fasting and the gifts of the Spirit.

C. It takes practice and discipline to become skillful in the use of spiritual weapons. We can become so practiced that we will be able to use either hand like the men in David’s day.

Verse 8 – *“Men of war fit for the battle that could handle shield and buckler, whose faces were like the faces of lions, and were as swift as the roes upon the mountains...”*

A. Teaching without practical experience is incomplete. These men were experienced in battle. The Bible tells us that their faces were like the faces of lions – fierce and courageous – and they were as swift on their feet as the antelopes on the hills of Judea.

B. Today’s leaders will only be effective and fruitful as they are proven in the battlefield. They may be scarred with wounds, but are survivors of war and who serve as veterans.

C. Being “fit for battle” also means they were well suited for the specific job they had to do. The small group leaders in our churches must be those who realize that today’s experiences are the preparations for tomorrow’s usefulness.

Verse 15 – *“These are they that went over Jordan in the first month, when it had overflowed all his banks.”*

A. There was no way to cross a river like the Jordan except by wading across. In fact, at the time of verse 15, the river was at flood stage. It had flowed over its banks and certainly appeared impossible to cross! But they did cross over!

B. They had a mission, a purpose, and nothing would stop them from accomplishing it – nothing! Today the church needs men and women of real spiritual courage, leaders who do not consider the human impossibility of a God-given responsibility, but who look with the eyes of the Spirit to see how with God, all things are possible (*Luke 1:37*).

Verse 23 – *“To turn the kingdom of Saul to him (David), according to the word of the Lord.”*

A. These great warriors came to Hebron to transfer the kingdom of Israel from Saul to David, whom they recognized as God’s anointed. The will of God had made it clear that David was the true king. Our leaders must have this same strong conviction to turn the world’s kingdom from the devil to Jesus Christ!

B. *Revelation 11:15* tells us, *“The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.”* It has been written, and we must act as though we really believe it! We must work together as one with Jesus to shine the light of His glorious gospel into the darkness of our world. The mighty men of *I Chronicles 12* were united in one purpose, *“according to the word of the Lord.”*

Verse 32 – *“Men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do.”*

A. Leaders must not only understand the mission of the Church, but they must also comprehend the needs of the times in which they live. The gospel and the plan of salvation remain the same. But, methods do change. We must be careful to analyze our present methods of evangelism and be sure we are being effective in our outreach.

B. The mighty men in David's day had an understanding of the times. In other words, they based their actions on their perception and discernment of the times in which they lived, and they were certain of what steps Israel had to take in order to walk in the will of God.

C. Our small group leaders should be "thinkers" who are able to formulate plans of action based on the present situation.

Verse 38 – *"These men of war that could keep rank, came with a perfect heart to Hebron, to make David king over all Israel."*

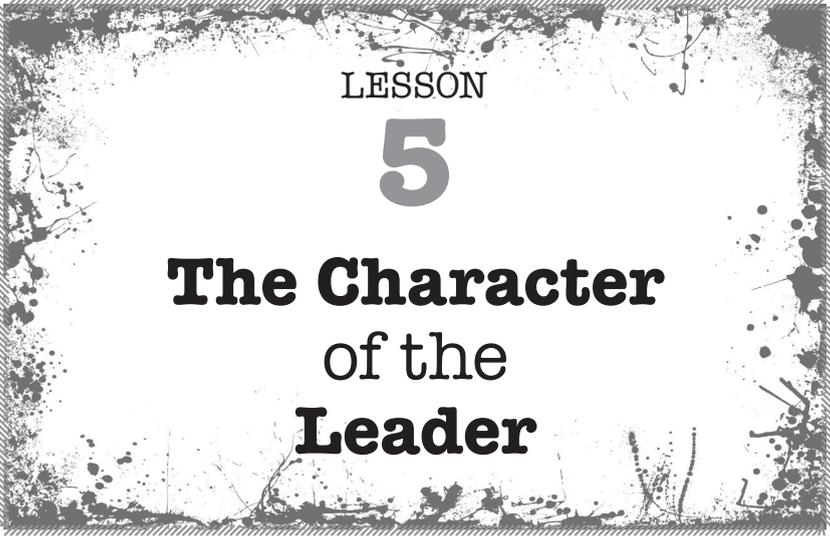
A. In the original Hebrew, to "keep rank" means to "arrange, to put in order, and to put the battle in array." This means that each soldier knew his place in the army; each one knew his individual responsibilities. There was no fighting for position or importance.

B. They came with a "perfect heart." They were fulfilled by their participation in the will of God for their lives. These men were not position seekers, not self-promoters, but instead, they were men looking to carry out the mission coming from the throne of God.

C. What gives us a perfect heart and places us as warriors in the battle being waged by the body of Christ is, more than anything, our desire to see Jesus Christ recognized as King of Kings.

Conclusion

In *Hebrews 11* (heroes of the faith), we read of the great men and women of faith and all that they endured and accomplished by the hand of God working in them and through them. Notice, however, what the writer says at the conclusion of the chapter: *“And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.”* The battle continues today. It is the same battle these great saints fought, and we are united with them through our faith. The Church today needs soldiers, mighty men of valor, helpers of the war...**The Church needs real leaders!**



LESSON

5

The Character of the Leader

By Andy Provencio

Key Scriptures: Ephesians 4:1-3 and 3 John 9

Introduction

What a difference in spirit is shown by these two verses. The first, written by Paul, is his wish that the Ephesians continue in the love of God while fulfilling the will of God for their lives. He exhorts them to walk worthy of their calling while serving in all humility. Paul prefaces his remark by stating that he himself is the prisoner of the Lord. He had been taken captive, yet his desire was to be in God's perfect will and see the kingdom of God advance. By contrast, when we read the 3rd Epistle of John, we see that a man named Diotrephes is marked by the apostle as one who loves to be recognized by everyone else as especially important. He loves the "preeminence," or in other words, he loves being thought of as "number one." But this man's desire to be first in all things caused him to reject the authority of John and the other apostolic church leaders.

Everyone who is chosen for a position of leadership in the church must be a person who can lay aside his/her personal ambitions and take up the cross of Jesus Christ. Someone once said that the highest positions among men are held by those who qualified for them in secret. This speaks of the desire of a true disciple to be more concerned with pleasing the Lord than himself, with receiving praise from God than the applause of men. In John 12:43, Jesus sternly rebuked the Pharisees by saying, "For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." In this lesson, we will look at the character necessary for a leader of a small group in today's revival church. There are some essential qualities that must be present if a leader is to be successful.

1. Integrity

The word "integrity" actually means "wholeness." It denotes being complete or completely sound. The word is usually used in reference to someone who has proven to be complete in honesty and morality, someone who is upright, sincere, and of strong principles and convictions. It is not associated with what could be called "part-time" Christianity. A person of integrity is someone who is a full-time Christian, 24/7, honest at all times in all situations, and realizes that God is in us and therefore with us at all times and in all places. It does not describe a person who only wants to convince other people of his dedication rather than serving God in spirit and truth. In the *Song of Solomon 2:15*, it is the little foxes that spoiled the vine, and it is the small acts of dishonesty that will eventually spoil our temple for the Lord.

We are told in *Ephesians 5:15-16*, "*See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.*" The word "circumspectly" means to look around and be careful that we consider all circumstances and the potential results of our intended actions. Having integrity means being honest at all times, and being honest means being able to be trusted by others.

2. Humility

In the marvelous passage about the humility of Christ in *Philippians 2:5-9*, Paul writes that though Jesus was God, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the death of the cross, that He might fulfill His mission to save lost mankind. In the same context he admonishes all believers to have this same mind of Christ in us. Even before His death at Calvary, Jesus demonstrated the humility that was the hallmark of His kingdom by washing the feet of His disciples. He was the greatest among them, yet He humbly served their needs. He then told them, *"If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you"* (**John 13:16-17**).

In **1 Peter 5:5**, Peter writes, *"And be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble."* Since pride brought about the fall of man, humility is the only thing that can restore man to God. Proud people in places of leadership will force their own ideas and ways on those who follow them. Humble servants of God will simply lead others as they are being led by the gracious Spirit of the Lord. As Paul wrote: *"And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves"* (2 Timothy 2:24-25). Being a spiritual leader is not always easy. One must be both powerful, to set a proper example, and humble, to maintain a right spirit. The only way to maintain this balance is by being a leader and a servant, a king and a priest – or to put it a better way, to be a servant who leads.

3. Vision

A leader must be able to see the mission before him. The quality of a leader's vision is a direct result of the quality of his connection with the Lord. His vision is actually nothing more

than a glimpse of what God wants to do through the leader and in the lives of those he is leading. *Ecclesiastes 11:4* says, “*He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap*” It is not circumstances or personal ambition that places a leader in a position of authority in a local church; therefore, it should not be adversity or personal sacrifice that pulls a leader away from His God-given responsibility!

Part of a leader’s vision is based on his or her previous experience. Our vision should increase learning what God wants us to do day-by-day and growing in grace and in Him. Another part of the vision is inherited from our spiritual leaders. A third part of the vision comes by training. Leaders must be shown the vision the church is striving for, then be equipped and sent out into the harvest.

4. Faith

Faith comes when leaders know what God has ordained. Faith is knowing who we are and what we are called to do. Faith is knowing that God is working with us and through us to fulfill the mission. Faith brings courage. It is this kind of faith, along with their vision, that will bind pastors and leaders together into a strong unity. These men and women of faith will also be powerful examples to the rest of the congregation and will set the standard for the growth and overall development of the local church.

5. Discipline

The word we use for a follower of Jesus in the Bible is “disciple,” which literally means a “disciplined one.” To be disciplined simply means that a leader has so yielded himself to the leading of the Holy Spirit that he is submitting his every action to the will of God. A leader is careful to allow only what God really wants to influence his life. In fact, discipline is what per-

mits the other four qualities to be truly useful. To have integrity, humility, vision, and faith yet be in the work of God in an undisciplined manner would accomplish little. Discipline brings the other qualities into a governing force that “leads the leader.” It is saying that because of integrity, humility, vision and faith the result will be a disciplined obedience to what God wants for the leader’s life. Part of a leader’s ministry is helping others to discover the advantages of a disciplined Christian commitment. Our leaders in the church must be disciplined themselves!

Conclusion

Later on, as the ministry of a leader progresses, he will add more of the necessary attributes and skills that will enable him to effectively lead and serve others. He will add patience, decision making skills, problem-solving abilities, management skills, and wisdom from the Lord. The five characteristics we have studied, however, are needful simply to be called into leadership.

LESSON

6

The Reach of a Goal Setter

By Andy Provencio

Key Scriptures:

Philippians 3:14 and I Corinthians 9:24

Introduction

The English poet, Robert Browning once said, "Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp, or what's heaven for?" So I ask today, "What are you and I reaching for today? Plan "A" has always got to be "set the goal!" God wants us to have a "bullseye" approach to our endeavors in Small Group Ministry.

Terry Fox, 18 years of age from British Columbia, Canada received the horrendous news, "You have bone cancer - 50% odds of living!" Terry's leg would be amputated. That was 30 years ago and Terry Fox lost the odds - he is dead. But that's not the end of the story. Against all logic he set himself a goal! From his hospital bed he determined to run across the nation of Canada, 3,000 miles with one leg and prosthesis on the other to raise money for cancer research. He collapsed outside the city of Thunder

Bay about 2/3 through his journey. Three decades later, \$200 million has been raised worldwide. One million participants run annually at 5,000 sites in 55 countries around the world. What a powerful testimony of a Canadian hero and his goal! In today's lesson we want to consider six (6) important points for successful leadership in or Small Group Ministry.

1. Goal Setting

Is a Planned Living

A. A man without a goal is like a ship without a rudder, both will drift. Each will end up on the beaches of despair, defeat and despondency.

B. Not having a plan kills. Most churches don't grow because they don't plan to grow. Someone said, "The trouble with planning nothing is that you don't know when you're through."

C. Note this: A goal is worthless without a plan to get there. 50% of all doctors choose to be doctors before the age of twelve. Twelve plus plan equals "a medical doctor."

2. Goal Setting

Is Focusing on Your Objectives

A. To Elisha it was a "Double Portion." To Blind Bartimaeus it was "Sight." To Jacob it was a "Blessing." To Caleb it was the "Mountain." To Paul it was a "Knowledge of Jesus." So, what goal are you and I aiming at? Let's consider some scriptures to start us on our journey today.

B. GOAL: Let my home be a haven of peace (2 Thessalonians 3:16). GOAL: Let my tongue be harnessed by the power of the Holy Ghost (James 3:2). GOAL: Let my life be filled with praise in my house, at my work place and while driving my car

(Ephesians 5:20). GOAL: Let me bring order and schedule to my work (1 Timothy 5:8). GOAL: Let me put discipline and budgetary planning into my financial spending (Luke 12:15). GOAL: Let me be a successful Small Group Leader in my church.

C. If you could talk to someone who had scaled Mt. Everest and ask them how they got there, their answer would be, "I was just out walking around and found myself on the top of Mt. Everest." Brothers, you and I know better – never will a person reach Mt. Everest without setting some goals!

3. Goal Setting

Involves Putting Goals on Paper

A. NOTE: Only 3% of North Americans commit their goals to paper. How can we hit that which you cannot see?

B. Howard Hill was probably the greatest archer of our times. So accurate was he that he could hit the target's "bull's eye" and then literally split the first arrow with the second. How many "bull's eyes" could Howard Hill hit if you blindfolded him? Our answer would be "O" because he could not see the goal!

C. We must focus, clarify, write down, and finally, "prioritize our goals."

4. Goal Setting

Must Throw Away the No Risk Approach

A. Peter shows us how it's done! Get your foot over the boat! Leave the rest of the boys behind! And begin to walk on water!

B. "What if" I don't hit my goals? That's a no risk approach – we must be willing to take risks. It's a deadly dangerous approach if you are going to maximize your life for God! Yes ...

there is a danger in setting goals, but there is a far greater danger when goals are not set.

C. Man was created for a purpose and a destiny! “We have come to the Kingdom for such a time as this!” There is no doubt that you and I are here for a purpose.

D. Is a ship safer in the harbor? Is a plane safer on the ground? Is a house more durable being empty? Absolutely not!

5. In Goal Setting, *it Is Important to Harness Our Power*

One day, a plan (a goal) was set on the uncontrolled, unchecked, and unharnessed 180 foot drop at Niagara Falls. The water was harnessed and the power it created was measured in billions of kilowatt hours of useful electricity. This is exactly what the Lord wants to do in our life: to harness our power. The Apostle Paul wrote, “I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:” (1 Corinthians 9:26).

6. Goal Setting *Should Affect All Areas of Our Lives*

A. As we set the goals for all these areas, here are some hints to help you start the journey:

- Divide your goal in pieces.
- Prioritize the pieces.
- Keep the written list of goals where you can see them often.
- Make a list of what you’re willing to “give up” in order to reach the goal.
- Give yourself “margin” to make a few learning mistakes along the journey.
- Set your own goals – it’s you that must reach them.

B. Sydney Howard said, "Half of knowing what you want is knowing what you have to give up to get it."

Conclusion

Let me close this lesson by quoting from Terry Fox himself. He was cut down before finishing this run – but he certainly reached his desire and goal with his "step and hop, step and hop!" Let's read what he personally said on his last run. "I loved it ... People thought I was going through hell. Maybe I was, partly, but still I was doing what I wanted ... there was not another thing in the world I would rather have been doing.

LESSON

7

The Price of Growth through Small Groups

By Andy Provencio

Key Scripture: Luke 14:28

Introduction

Church growth does not come free of charge! It has a price. Growing a church is labor, and there is no substitute for plain hard work. How hard are we willing to work to achieve a guaranteed harvest? Pastors and leaders must assume the responsibility of church growth in the local assembly. They cannot leave it to someone else, merely hoping it will happen.

I. The Price for Pastors

One of the greatest challenges facing every revival-minded pastor is sharing the pastoral ministry with other reliable people.

One of the first confessions every pastor must make is that he cannot do the entire pastoral ministry himself. This is why Paul

made it so clear in Ephesians 4:11-12 that pastors (along with the other ministries) should “equip the saints” so that they can carry out the work of the ministry, which is evangelism and edification. Some of the reasons why pastors fail to delegate authority and share their responsibilities are as follows:

1. *They think that those under them are unable to do the job.*

There are only two reasons why people would be unable to do what God has called them to do. First, they are not adequately trained. Second, they do not have sufficient ministry experience. In both cases, the pastor must look at himself. How can a person get experience if his pastor won't let him do anything? Pastors need to realize that God has a job to do for each one He is saving. Therefore, pastors of revival churches provide both training and opportunity to those that have demonstrated potential for ministry.

2. *They think they don't have enough time to train leaders.*

This is one of the greatest misconceptions pastors have. In reality, pastors don't have enough time “to NOT train leaders!” By providing proper training for those who can serve in leadership positions, shepherds are multiplying their effectiveness in the church, thereby giving themselves “more time” for expanding their own ministries.

3. *They are afraid of losing recognition, of having to “share the spotlight.”*

Sharing pastoral ministry means sharing a portion of the “attention” a solo pastor is used to receiving, and this is not an attractive idea for many. Everyone in the congregation knows who the boss is, and pastors frequently don't want to share this position of undisputed authority. When a pastor does all the preaching,

teaching, visitation, etc., it's easy for him to maintain his distinction as the "super spiritual" one in the church, thereby gaining the undivided attention and appreciation of the saints. He rests secure in knowing two things: (1) that he will remain as the "chief in the village of the church," and (2) that his church will never experience the kind of sustained growth the Bible ordains.

4. *They are afraid of competition with their ministry.*

This is similar to the last reason. In this case, a pastor is concerned about someone else's talents, gifts, and ministry surpassing his own. In the eyes of a carnal man, this means that he becomes less important as the leaders under him excel. In truth, however, one of the surest signs of a truly spiritual pastor ministry is that of leaders being raised up under the pastor.

As we have seen before, one of the basic responsibilities of a pastor is to pass on the vision God has given him to others who can accomplish the tasks set before them. The more leaders a pastor trains, qualifies, and releases into ministry, the more he is seen as an able pastor who is dedicated to the work of God and the growth of the church.

5. *They are afraid that their personal weaknesses will be exposed.*

Avoiding people is guaranteeing they will never discover our faults. But it also means we will never be able to influence them! Leadership means influence. There are two basic "styles" of leading people: (1) from a distance and (2) working closely with them. By keeping a wide space between a pastor and his leaders, some men think they can prevent the leaders and others from discovering their personal weaknesses. There is some truth to this, but the influence such a man has is based only on what people think he is, not what he is, which means that his personal impact on others is greatly reduced.

The most effective way of leading others is to work closely with them. The problem here is that by spending more time with the leaders, the pastor definitely will reveal more of his personal weaknesses and shortcomings. Allowing people to see the pastor as he really is actually is not a negative, but a very positive thing. People need to know that they don't have to develop a glossy façade of pseudo-spirituality to be an effective minister.

II. The Price for Leaders

In God's way of doing things, to be truly free, a person must be in total submission! Our true identity is not found wielding power, but in Jesus Christ. Paul said in Romans 6:7, "For he that is dead is freed from sin." Freedom for a sinner is only found in total surrender to God. In verse 22 of the same chapter, Paul goes on to say that we are made free and have become servants to God. Leaders must be good followers.

Everyone is under submission to some kind of authority. In the local church, leaders operate under pastoral authority. To be used in leadership means, first of all, being a good example of submission to this authority. The carnal mind would suggest that leaders are separate from the crowd and therefore out from under authority, but the opposite is true in God's Kingdom. Pastors should be confident that their leaders are the members who are the most submitted to authority.

Another price to pay is that of being sacrificial. Sacrificing time, money and hard work will be necessary to ensure a great spiritual harvest in the local church. Jesus said in John 12:24, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Though he was certainly speaking of Himself and His death at Calvary, He was also speaking to us that would follow in His steps.

Leaders, like pastors, are responsible for passing their ministry on to others. Sharing ministry is not just for pastors, but for all levels of leadership in a local church.

Conclusion – Price or Privilege?

In this lesson, we have talked about the “price” of church growth and the “costs” involved to those called to labor in the harvest. But are these so-called costs really worthy to be compared with the immeasurable value of the results? Being part of a leadership team, whether as a pastor or a leader, is to be part of the greatest enterprise on earth. The little that God expects us to contribute should not be judged as difficult or unjust when we see the glorious results of church growth! The great Apostle Paul put it this way: *“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” Romans 8:18.*

LESSON

8

The Leader's Role in Small Groups

By Andy Provencio

Key Scripture: Proverbs 11:14

Introduction

It is important that we establish our plans and goals for the work that we must undertake in the Friendship Group Ministry of our church. Someone said, "Everything falls or rises with leadership." Without doubt, the friendship group leader is the key for the success of the group. Therefore, it is indispensable that we evaluate and determine how we must accept the challenge of being a leader in our group.

I. The Function of the Leader

A. The function of the leader is to conduct the meeting in such a way that everyone in the group will benefit from it. In order to accomplish this we must have:

1. Anointing that only comes through a life filled with the Holy Spirit.

2. A good attitude at all times because a successful leader is the product of an attitude subject to God's direction.

B. The leader of the group will be responsible to work with an assistant that will someday become a leader as the group multiplies. The host of the group also plays a vital part in its success.

II. The Principal Cause

Of Failure in a Friendship Group

A. There are different reasons why a friendship group would not have success, but the main reason is because of a lack of direction that the leader provides.

B. It is important to have this in mind and also very important for the leader to stay within the structure and guidelines given for the direction of the session.

C. No leader should attempt to change the structure, nor should he use his proper method. The instructions have already been proven and we know they work, if followed correctly.

D. It is important for us to allow the Holy Spirit to operate in our sessions, but once He has finished, we must return to the structure we have established.

III. Five Important Responsibilities

Of the Leader

Before we discuss these five responsibilities, we must mention an important point: More than being leaders, we are "servants" who lead a group whose lifestyle is focused on love, good

works, and encouragement. The most effective direction we can offer is a life of example. The leader must demonstrate a code of conduct the he wishes for others to have.

A. The leader must be prepared to facilitate every aspect of the session. He will only accomplish this through prayer, fasting, and personal preparation, making it a successful meeting. The members of a friendship group can easily detect when the leader is not well prepared. Preparation will help the leader feel confident of what he is doing at all times.

B. The leader must follow the plan of the lesson because it has been carefully prepared by the pastor (reflecting his vision and direction from God for the church). Consistency by the leader will give all the members of the group a sense of comfort and trust in the group. This helps the small group to have a good, comfortable atmosphere.

C. The leader must facilitate the lesson in such a way that members of the group are not caught in embarrassing situations by the discussions. The leader is similar to a policeman who is in the middle of an intersection directing cars that are approaching from one direction, allowing them to pass while the ones coming from the side must wait their turn, so that accidents can be avoided. The officer's responsibility is to protect everyone from everyone allowing traffic to flow in harmony.

D. At all times, the leader must minister to the needs of those present in the session. And we must remember that any change of structure must be led by the Holy Spirit.

1. The needs of the regular members of the group are basically different from the needs of the visitors.

2. It is always great to cover the lesson, but it is also important to understand the needs of those present and attempt to supply them with much love and wisdom

E. The leader should attempt to involve all the members of the group in every part of the lesson. Remember, more than a “teacher,” the leader is a facilitator that endeavors to involve all present, even the visitors. Some visitors feel great at being able to participate - while others are slower at wanting to get involved.

Conclusion

1. As leaders, we must always exercise unconditional acceptance with all those who attend our friendship group sessions. We should never allow anyone in our group to get out of control with bad behavior; neither should we ever show rejection towards anyone.

2. For this reason it is necessary that the leader take some kind of training. Not knowing how to solve a complicated situation can cause the leader to have serious problems and perhaps even cause a division among the group.

3. For many people, a bad experience in a friendship group setting will be sufficient for them not to return again.

4. One more thing - the leader should stress to his group that everything that is mentioned among the people attending the group should remain strictly confidential.

5. Members of every group should be able to find in their leader a point of support and trust.

6. When there are situations that merit the attention of the coordinator or the pastor, they should be taken to them. But whenever possible, all situations should be solved within the group.



LESSON

9

Dealing With Difficult Members in the Small Group

By Andy Provencio

Key Scripture: I Thessalonians 5:14-17

Introduction

With the idea of being personally attended, some members of a small group will make it very difficult to pay attention to others. This type of members should be appropriately dealt with so that the purpose of the group may be accomplished.

We should understand that not all conflicts are destructive. Sometimes, conflicts reveal certain areas in a person's life that need help. Dealing with a difficult member can help us understand situations and can help the group want to be more like Christ.

I. Some Types of Difficult Situations

In the Friendship Groups

1. The Quiet Person, One that doesn't participate

A. One or several brethren with this characteristic can cause an atmosphere lacking good communication. The needs of the group might not be accomplished.

B. How can we best handle this type of situation?

i. We should gently include them with questions that are not threatening.

ii. Don't ask questions that can be answered with "Yes" or "No".

iii. Encourage the person to explain the reason why they don't participate.

iv. Perhaps a personal conversation with that person may help.

v. Realize that a person will not want to participate because of a bad experience he or she has had, not wanting to go through it again.

2. The Talker

A. This person wants to do the talking for the entire meeting; others might not have a chance to participate, holding back the purpose of the group to edify one another.

B. How can we best handle this type of situation?

i. We must guide the behavior of that person towards a significant conversation.

ii. Explain that all the members of the group need an opportunity to contribute.

It is not only about one person unloading his or her feelings and thoughts.

3. The Spiritual Person

A. This person can disrupt the spirit of unity, thus becoming a stumbling block to the less mature members of the group by forcing them to “be more spiritual”.

B. How can we best handle this type of situation?

i. It is very important for the leader to have wisdom and direction and to involve the rest in answering questions and making comments.

ii. It must also be explained that we should recognize the level of maturity of each member of the group and never make anyone feel bad.

4. The Negative Person

A. This person can become a hindrance to the joy and faith of the members of the group. This type of person sees everything wrong with the group. They are even against the suggested ideas given to better produce its growth and atmosphere.

B. How can we best handle this type of situation?

i. We should be loving and patient but never accept pessimism.

ii. Challenge the group to have a positive attitude at all times.

iii. Must not fall into the trap of those that play the “yes.... but” game. Our thinking and actions must always be yes or no, avoiding the “buts”.

5. The Criticizer

A. This person can develop a spirit of division which will eliminate the edification of the group to the point where the Holy Spirit is quenched (saddened).

B. How can we best handle this type of situation?

i. Immediately stop the person with such attitude in a loving and firm manner.

ii. Explain to the group that the session is not the place to criticize.

iii. We must teach the bible way to settle differences. Invite everyone to speak kindly of others such as the bible teaches.

6. The Antagonist

A. He can dangerously sow discord and poison the relationship between the members of the group to the extent that all peace and trust is ruined.

B. An “Antagonist” is a person that is against the protagonist (the leader) of the small group. In every group, as in every church, sooner or later the enemy will place an antagonist to attempt to disrupt the success of the group.

C. How can we best handle this type of situation?

i. The leader and the members must be people of prayer.

ii. We need to make this person be responsible and submissive to authority.

iii. This person must immediately be intervened with in love (but with firmness).

II. A Detailed Analysis

Of the Antagonist

1. He is the most dangerous member of the group – Because it is the responsibility of the leader to love every member, it is important to identify and deal accordingly and effectively with the antagonist.

2. The goals of the “antagonist” – Desires to be the center of attention; will always want to win his or her arguments because he cannot accept to lose arguing until he wins. His aim is to change the thinking of the rest. If he finds out someone will side with him, he will do all he can to win that person over. His desire is to control and manipulate people. All he wants is to take the place of the leader.

3. The methods the antagonist uses – Tries to weaken the authority, attacking the leader of the group and trying to make him look ridiculous. He tries hard to establish sides, producing division within the group. His obsession is to dominate the discussion and make unreasonable demands of others. He does not cease to attack authority.

Conclusion

We have felt that this lesson is very important because it will help us understand the opposition that we have in this great Small Group Ministry of our church. However, in spite of any and all opposition, if we commit ourselves into the hands of God, we will have great victory in our groups and an impressive growth in our congregation.

LESSON

10

The Ministry of Teaching Part I

By Andy Provencio

Key Scripture: II Timothy 2:24

Introduction

In these next two lessons we will focus on some of the techniques of the teaching ministry in our “Small Groups.” First, we will examine the biblical concept of teaching and the important position that the teacher (facilitator) has in this ministry.

I. The Teacher

It is through teaching that God conveys His character to those attending our “Friendship Groups.” We must understand that teaching is about transmitting “eternal life” to them. Peter reminds us that Jesus spoke words of eternal life. The Lord Himself said, “... the words that I speak unto you are spirit and life.” Teaching through the anointing of the Holy Spirit, will touch people’s lives as if the Lord himself was present doing the work.

The goal of each leader (teacher/facilitator) in his teaching is not so much that the group members acquire knowledge, but to produce in them “faith” in the reality and power of Jesus Christ. This is achieved when the Word being taught is backed up by the life of the small group leader. Other thoughts about the importance of teaching are:

A. Since teaching was one of the key ministries of the Lord, we should consider this ministry as one of the most important ministries of the New Testament Church.

B. His command to the apostles was to teach, baptize and again to teach (*Matthew 28:19-20*). Teach them how to receive salvation, baptize them for salvation, and continue to teach for them to stay saved.

C. All successful teachers are a gift from the Lord to his Church for the “perfecting of the saints.” Paul was considered a preacher, apostle and a teacher. (*II Timothy 1:11*).

D. In his role as a teacher, the leader of the small group contributes greatly to the process of transforming the lives of every member of his group.

II. Preparing Our Hearts to Teach

Before anyone is able to teach the Word of God, he must learn to “*love the Word of God.*” Paul told Timothy (*II Timothy 2:15*), “*Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*”

As teachers, it is important that we learn to read the Word of God consistently every day. It is understood that not all group leaders have the same capacity (depth) in teaching, but all must strive to improve their knowledge of God and His Word.

As we grow in our knowledge of the Bible, our reason for teaching should be *“love for the brethren.”* Paul said, *“... Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know. But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him” (I Corinthians 8:1-3).*

III. Preparing The Lesson

A weekly lesson is usually prepared by the Pastor for the small group sessions. By taking the lesson and applying it to the lives of the group members, the leader has the opportunity to minister the Word of God to his group. Although each session consists of several activities (worship, testimonies, prayer, fellowship, etc...), teaching should always take priority. Therefore, “preparation” for presentation of the lesson should be done with great care and dedication to God, taking at least three hours of study before the meeting that week. We suggest some ideas for lesson preparation:

A. Identify the main point of the lesson – Read the lesson (or outline) immediately so as to thoroughly understand the main parts of the lesson. Ask the Lord to reveal what He wants you to teach the group. Summarize the main point of the lesson.

B. Take notes – The second time around, take more notes as you begin to put together some thoughts that God is impressing upon you. Keep simple anointed notes.

C. Knowing the content – Read the lesson several times. The more times we read, the less we need to rely on reading during the session in a very monotonous manner.

D. Do not forget your prayer time – If the lesson is 30 minutes long, that evening before going to the small group session, you should take time to pray at least 30 minutes.

There is no right or wrong way to present the lesson. God wants to use each of us in different ways because in every group there are different needs.

IV. Teaching the Lesson

It is very important to keep these points in mind when presenting the lesson:

Start with Prayer and Basic Rules – After the initial prayer, announce that the children present should keep their place. If there is a session prepared for them, then they should proceed with their teacher to the designated area. If there are infants, make parents responsible. If you know that there are brothers who tend to dominate the class, reserve questions for the end of lesson or address them if it is no problem for you.

Involve the Entire Group by Giving Each One a Chance to Read – It is good that the leader read the introduction. From then on, you can delegate to the class to help. If everyone knows they will have a chance to read, it will make them pay more attention.

Please do not try to “preach” your way through the lesson – It is not supposed to be a sermon, but a lesson where we try to have everyone in the group participate.

Stay on the subject – Do not allow yourself or someone else to distract you from the main subject. You can use examples or personal experiences. Avoid repetition.

Do not Talk Just to Kill Time – It is better to end before you reach your 30 minutes, than to bore the class by having nothing to say.

Be aware of time – Ideal time is 30-35 minutes. While there is anointing. Remember that *“the spirits of prophets are subject to the prophets” (I Corinthians 14:32)*.

Teach with humility – Never forget that you are serving those whom you are teaching. Never scold them. Speak with love and wisdom. If they do not understand, it may be necessary to repeat some things again.

Conclusion

Always keep a positive attitude no matter the attendance number. Lessons must always be presented with the purpose of encouraging and ministering to your people (brethren and visitors). Preaching, admonishing and correcting are the responsibilities of the pastor and not of the small group leader.

Remember that success takes time. Do not be discouraged if the first few times you feel too nervous. This is going to get better every time you teach. After a while, you will be able to identify your style of teaching – the one that God is willing to give you impacting the lives of others.

LESSON

11

The Ministry of Teaching Part II

By Andy Provencio

Key Scripture: II Timothy 2:24

Introduction

One of several definitions of the Greek word “koinonia” is “to have group participation”. Since the purpose of the ministry of “friendship groups” is to have koinonia, one of the things that should occur in all friendship group meetings is “participation of the group,” not only at the time of worship, but at the time of teaching. We will focus on some important guidelines for establishing effective participation in the small group.

I. Leading the Group Discussion

A. Jesus used this technique when he was teaching his disciples. He taught and invited the disciples to participate in questions and answers. For example, after having taught the Parable of the Sower, the disciples asked, “*Why do you speak in parables?*”

He not only explained why he spoke in parables, but also explained the content of the parable (*Matthew 13:1-23*).

B. Sometimes the only way to determine if teaching is being absorbed is through questions. Jesus wanted to know if Peter had been paying attention and asked, “Who do men say that the son of man is?” (*Matthew 16:13*).

C. The reason that some leaders do not encourage group discussion might be because they fear that they might not have the answers to the questions, or for fear of losing control of the session. These fears will most certainly stop the flow of the Holy Spirit during the lesson. The solution is to give the leader confidence through training and preparation.

D. The most important thing for the teacher is his time of study and self-preparation. He must plan in advance which questions he can ask and how he will lead the discussion. There will be some difficult questions that the group will ask, and each leader must be humble and honest enough to admit when he does not know the answer to a question.

E. Sometimes some questions are prepared at the end of the lesson, but if this is not the case, than the leader himself should prepare some questions (2-4) to discuss at the end of the lesson.

II. Some important rules

For group discussion

A. Besides the leader, each group member should also know that there are rules in order to have a successful session. Consider the following:

1. It is important that the lesson is given in a timely, consistent manner. The teacher should not be interrupted, unless absolutely necessary. Group members are encouraged to take note of any questions they might have.

2. At the end of the lesson, the teacher should allow time for questions concerning the lesson. In the absence of such, he might ask the group some questions.

3. The leader should ask the question and let everyone think about a possible answer. Then ask any member of the group for an answer. If anyone wishes to comment or answer, he or she should raise his or her hand.

4. No one should interrupt or quiet anyone. Everyone should respect the opinion of others without making negative or offensive comments.

5. The teacher has the right to halt any member's participation, provided it is done in a proper way.

B. The objective is not to carry out a strict and tense participation. However, there are individuals who tend to control asking a lot of questions and making a lot of comments, while others do not dare say anything. It is the responsibility of the leader to supervise the members' participation.

C. This does not mean that every week there should be participation (discussion). There are times when the leader feels he must minister to the group through the lesson. However, experience tells us that the best sessions have been those where there is a good turnout and the members have learned the lesson through God's anointing.

III. The Benefits of Discussion

A. For the Leader:

1. He will immediately see how well (or poorly) a member has understood the lesson.

2. He will minister to more members in the group.

3. There is personal growth.

B. For Members:

1. It is easier to learn what is being taught when a member can freely ask a question.

2. They gain confidence in being able to comment before a group.

3. Friendship and fellowship comes by identifying with others.

4. Positive comments and questions inspire the group to have a positive attitude.

IV. Common Mistakes that are made

By inexperienced teachers

Effective teaching in Small Groups comes with experience and time. The teacher's goal is to teach successfully. Some points that need to be taken care of:

1. Not taking enough time to study and prepare lessons well. Skimming the lesson without reading the biblical verses and being unable to identify the main point will result in an inadequate presentation.

2. When the teacher is "over-prepared" with notes and relies on them to give the lesson deprives the flow of the Holy Spirit.

3. Feeling the need to cover every point of the lesson causes distraction from the main point.

4. Remember, appropriate length of time per lesson is 30-35 minutes.
5. The teacher must be confident when teaching. Members feel better listening to someone who is self-confident.
6. Avoid giving the class in a monotonous way. Let God's anointing guide you in your teaching.

Conclusion

Leaders can benefit from group discussion, if supervised properly and if the guidelines depicted in this lesson are followed. Most importantly, allow God's anointing to be the guiding voice over the lessons we are to impart in the Small Group sessions.

LESSON

12

The Small Group Leader and Prayer

By Andy Provencio

Key Scriptures: II Timothy 2:21-22 and Psalm 53:2

Introduction

Leaders must be directed by the Spirit of God in order to accomplish any spiritual work. Since prayer is our connection to God through the Spirit, it is the means by which we receive a continuous flow of anointing for leadership. We must know Jesus through prayer if we are to teach and preach Jesus to others. James 5:16 puts it this way, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much". The purpose of this lesson is not to teach leaders how to pray. Leaders should understand the necessity of praying since part of their qualification (spiritual demonstration) for leadership is that they pray. In this lesson, we will look specifically at the prayer of leaders. Leaders are born in prayer, chosen through prayer, and will minister through prayer as well.

The Two Main Purposes of Prayer

Although many things are accomplished when we pray sincerely, there are two main purposes of prayer. First, we seek the will of the Lord for our lives through prayer. Second, we are empowered by the Holy Spirit to carry out that will through prayer. We are led by the Spirit through prayer and we find the necessary power to carry out what the Spirit is leading us to do, becoming both sensitive and responsive to His Spirit.

Another perspective is that through prayer we hear the Word of the Lord, which brings faith. Through the strength found in prayer, we act according to that faith. Faith without works (or actions) is dead. Prayer is where we find faith and the power to act on that faith. So the three main purposes of a leader's prayer are:

- *We are led by the Spirit and empowered by the Spirit, or...*
- *We become sensitive to the Spirit and responsive to the Spirit, or...*
- *We hear from God and are strengthened to act upon what we hear.*

All of the above describe the same basic thing: being brought into an understanding by seeking God and His will. This is why a prayerless church is always a "powerless" church. In every powerless and prayerless church, it is the leadership that must take responsibility. If leaders do not teach and demonstrate the absolute necessity of prayer, then they are teaching their people that they can get by living a powerless life in Christ.

Pastors and leaders must stand before the congregation as examples of prayer in the church. Not only is prayer the connection to God for the believer, but it is also the connection to the Lord for a congregation. It is the channel through which the church receives direction and power. Leaders must be united with the pastor in this principle. Leaders are appointed for ministry, and ministries can only function properly by the anointing

of the Spirit which comes through humble and genuine prayer. This example must be maintained before the saints by the leaders of the local church. All the members of our congregation must feel the assurance that leaders of every Small Group are operating by the power of the Spirit and not in the wisdom of the flesh. By demonstrating the fruit of the Spirit through the anointing that comes through prayer, leaders will be setting a goal for every member – that of a Spirit-led life of effectual and fervent prayer.

Prayer Is Never Easy

Prayer can never be based on convenience. In fact, leaders must realize that they will have to “make time” to pray. Time is seldom readily available for prayer. True prayer is not desirable to the flesh, and the devil will attempt to steal our prayer by stealing our time and distracting us from the most important part of or communion with the Lord. But though it is not easy, it is nevertheless vital to the life of a leader. Paul said in Ephesians 6:18 that we should be “praying always with all prayer and supplication for all saints”. The Greek word translated “perseverance” means “to continue steadfastly in something and to give unremitting care to that thing.” Prayer can never be neglected in leadership.

A Leader’s Prayer

A leader’s prayer should be different. His ministry is different, and therefore the power and reason behind that ministry will be different. When we consider the prayer life of a leader, we must realize that there are certain qualities of a leader’s prayer that will “stand out.” A leader’s prayer must be: (1) earnest; (2) strong; (3) consistent; (4) real and sincere; (5) full of faith; (6) with a great intercessory burden for those whom he is praying; (7) humble and follow a biblical basis for the prayers.

Three Levels of Prayer

Nearly everyone has prayed at some point in his or her life. A recent survey published in TIME magazine showed that even 25% of atheists claim to pray on a regular basis. Not all prayer is equal, however. There is prayer by people who are not really serious about the work of God. There is prayer by those who are trying to negotiate a compromise with God. There is hypocritical prayer, and so on. A leader's prayer, however, must rise above these immature levels to seek God at His level.

Prayer can originate from three main sources of desire. First, it can come from our own heart. This refers to the requests we make of God that are based on our personal needs and desires. This is biblical and it is necessary. Jesus instructed His disciples to pray for their daily bread, or in other words, to ask for their daily personal needs. Paul referred to this kind of praying by using the word "supplications" in I Timothy 2:1.

Second, there is prayer that comes from the "heart of others." This is praying that is founded upon the needs of others. This includes interceding for the lost, carrying the burdens of the weak and troubled, praying for others empathically. There is, however, another level of prayer that leaders will find in their experience of walking with God.

At the third level of prayer, we begin to pray from the "heart of God." There will be times in a leader's life when he or she will not know how to pray about something. The Holy Spirit does know, however. Paul says in Romans 8:26-27, "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

Conclusion

Leaders are made from among the saints who give themselves to a life of prayer where they find the direction and empowerment necessary to become useful ministers in the kingdom of God. There is no higher call, and there is no higher privilege. God will walk with us if we walk with Him in prayer and obedience.

LESSON

13

Evaluating the Condition of the Church

By Andy Provencio

Key Scriptures: Matthew 16:18 and Mark 16:20

Introduction

Clearly, it is the will of God that local churches grow! Healthy plants grow. Healthy animals grow. Healthy children grow. When a child is not growing, parents have been known to go to great lengths to discover why. Perhaps the child is sick or malnourished or a thorough investigation is necessary to determine what is wrong. When problems are found, they are carefully treated and rectified. So it must be with pastors and their congregations. If there is no growth (or very slow growth) after a certain period of time, it is a pastoral responsibility to search out the reasons for the lack of progress and make sure that a remedy is found and implemented.

Over the long haul, if a church is not growing, it is dying. When pastors provide the spiritual necessities of life to their congregations, they will grow into strong assemblies.

1. A Healthy Church Thinks “BIG”.

Thinking “Big” means having a vision that is as large as God has provided. The Lord knows what a local congregation is capable of doing and the magnitude of revival it can handle. If we do not see as God sees, we will never think big enough to become dynamic leaders of growing churches. One of the primary ongoing tasks of a pastor is to convey his vision to the people who can work with him in carrying out that vision and the burden that goes with it. We must be directed and empowered by the Holy Spirit to be effective in building the Kingdom of God.

Receiving and implementing the vision God has provided also means having a plan for the growth of the church. This plan must focus on the needs of the congregation and the community. There should be a comprehensive program that will take the church forward in spiritual development and growth. The plan must include ministries based on recognized needs, the availability of potential leaders to fulfill those ministries, and training for those leaders. The plan should include both short-range and long-range strategies for the growth of the local assembly.

2. A Healthy Church

Equips Members to Fulfill Their Responsibilities

Ephesians 2:20-22 says, “Having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit”.

The thought that is being expressed here is that of each piece of the building being perfectly joined to the others to complete the house of God. Each member is chosen and equipped by the Lord to perform his or her function in the body of Christ. Pas-

tors play the most important role of all in the training and development of the saints so that they can become exactly what God wants them to be. As a general rule, people will not grow beyond the level of those who are leading them. This means that pastors must always be striving for their own personal growth; otherwise, their lack of growth will become a barrier to the growth of the church.

3. A Healthy Church

Uses the Gifts and Talents of Every Member

Once their potential has been recognized, people must be given the opportunity to become useful in the revival of the church. As they grow in the Spirit, responsibilities and authority must be given them so they can see their personal effectiveness in the Kingdom begin to blossom. Becoming useful in “hands-on” ministry involves a learning process. Experience is perhaps the greatest teacher, but even as members are released into leadership positions, careful guidance must be provided by those in oversight positions. Once these members become actively involved in the ministerial team of the local congregation, they will be excellent examples to those who have not yet made a commitment to personal ministry.

4. A Healthy Church

Has a Structure That Accommodates the Needs of Everyone

Present and future leaders have something in common: they are always looking ahead and considering the next move, the next battle, and the next part of the plan. By definition, this is an essential characteristic of leadership. Members of local congregations who have leadership potential will always be looking ahead to advancing in their walk with the Lord. They will be searching for personal usefulness, and will therefore be looking forward to whatever places of responsibility and au-

thority they may occupy in the future. If there are no opportunities available to them, they will become frustrated and their progress will be halted.

Pastors must ensure that the organizational structure of the church provides for expansion, development, and sufficient leadership opportunities for those who accept the challenge of spiritual ministry. Saints must be able to see that there will always be room for growth, not only for the church as a whole, but for them personally.

5. A Healthy Church *Has Balanced Ministry*

Balanced ministry includes:

- Vibrant, exciting, energetic, spiritual worship.
- Direct, powerful, compassionate, Bible-based preaching.
- Thoughtful, detailed, scripturally-sound teaching.
- Ongoing leadership training.
- Home fellowship groups meeting on a regular basis for ministry and edification.
- Ongoing, organized outreach to the community.
- Specific ministries designed to meet specific needs of the congregation.

6. A Healthy Church

Exhibits the "signs" of a Quality Congregation

Healthy congregations are easy to identify. They exhibit the following signs:

- The people have a good general knowledge of the Bible.
- The people are committed to their own personal devotions.
- The people are enthusiastic in their praise, creating a spiritual atmosphere that blesses everyone in their meetings.

- The people are active in witnessing to the community.
- The people are sensitive and diligent in ministering to others.
- The people give sacrificially.
- The people manifest outwardly their personal commitments to holiness.
- The people demonstrate genuine love and care among themselves.
- The church services are such that people leave knowing they have been touched by God.
- The people are active participants in the altar services and seekers are regularly filled with the Holy Ghost.

Conclusion

Leaders, let's be constantly looking for these signs in our congregation. Let's unite and regularly check the spiritual "pulse" of the church to determine its health. Let's make whatever changes are necessary to guarantee the continuing development and mentoring of members individually and the congregation as a whole.



LESSON

14

Casting and Communicating the Vision

Part I

By Andy Provencio

Introduction

The Lord is the source of our vision for it was He who said, *“Upon this rock I will build my church.”* However, too often the fact is that much of what is done in the name of church ministry may not be based on a real vision received from the Lord. To attempt, knowingly or even unknowingly, to participate with God in building His church without proper vision is unacceptable. Therefore, it is of great importance that in ministering to the body of Christ through Small Group Ministry and all other ministries in the church, we examine carefully what His will is as we cast and communicate God’s real vision to the church. In this two-part lesson, we will examine seven aspects of having, casting, and communicating a “true” vision to the church.

1. It Is Possible To Have The Wrong Vision

A. The ability to “see” will never be enough. What is it that we are seeing? It could be the wrong vision completely. King Solomon said in *Ecclesiastes 11:4-5*, “Whoever watches the wind will not plant; whoever looks at the clouds will not reap. As you do not know the path of the wind, or how the body is formed in a mother’s womb, so you cannot understand the work of God, the Maker of all things” (NIV). Sometimes when everything looks impossible, it is then that the Lord wants us to act. We need His direction and we are desperately in need of His way of seeing things. He knows the end from the beginning! Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.

B. While we dedicate ourselves to the will of God in building the church and seeing revival, let us be first dedicated to the vision that is defined by the Lord. Look at the difference of “seeing” as mentioned in the passage from *II Kings 6:15-17*: “When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. “Oh no, my lord! What shall we do?” the servant asked. “Don’t be afraid,” the prophet answered. “Those who are with us are more than those who are with them.” And Elisha prayed, “Open his eyes, LORD, so that he may see.” Then the LORD opened the servant’s eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.” The Apostle Paul put it this way in *Romans 11:33-34*: Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! “For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His counselor?”

C. Another potential danger lies in not using what we have already received from the Lord, and instead, substituting our own vision for His. The truth is that we must use the real thing or lose it. Jesus said in Luke 8:18, “Therefore take heed how you

hear. For whoever has, to him more will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him." The word "seems" here means "think" or "suppose". Sometimes we think that we have some great gift of God, and we reflect on how anointed we are! We will often talk about the "move of God" in our midst. Yet, are we part of what God is really doing? Are we joined together with Him in His vision? We can use what God has placed in us for His purpose, or we can lose even what we simply think we have. The choice is ours.

2. Real Vision Is Defined

By the Scriptures

A. When we read *Ephesians 1:15-23*, we see the desire and prayer of the Apostle Paul concerning the saints of the Ephesian Church. Verse 18 opens with the words, "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened." This is spiritual vision and it is what every church needs. As we read about the power of God working through the Church in the Book of Acts, we must be careful to realize that we are part of the same Church, moved by the same Spirit, and dedicated to the same task of revival and harvest. This helps to define our own vision for the mission ahead.

B. Another passage that can be helpful to us is *2 Corinthians 4:1-7*: "Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart. 2 But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. 3 But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. 5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. 6 For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the

light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.⁷ But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.” Paul tells us what our source of vision is, and what it is not. He tells us that it starts with the revelation that we have a true ministry and that vision comes by way of a commitment to the revelation of truth. Our vision must be God inspired and based upon scripture.

3. We Must Become Joined

To the Vision

A. *Proverbs 29:18-19* says “Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but happy is he who keeps the law. 19 A servant will not be corrected by mere words; for though he understands, he will not respond.” Everyone seems to know the beginning of verse 18, but how many follow it up with the insight gained in verse 19? Here we find a “servant” (in Hebrew, ebed) that may say he is sorry when he fails to do what is commanded, but who never genuinely changes in his attitude and actions. He is simply a servant that is never really joined with his master in the same vision. He that keeps the law, however, is happy because he knows why he is doing what he is doing!

B. Perhaps this is why Jesus used the well-known words in *John 15:15*: “No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.” There is a huge difference in the words *doulos* (servant) and *philos* (friend). One tries to do what he is told. The other understands the “why” behind the commandment.

C. At some point, the vision that the Lord wants to give us for leading our church into revival must become “our vision.” It will give us purpose and direction. It will become a foundation on which we can build the work that we do in the Kingdom. As it becomes our vision, it will encompass our goals, our hopes,

our faith and our dedication. It is a vision that is built upon truth, holiness and the will of God for our individual lives. Paul put it this way in Philippians 2:13, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

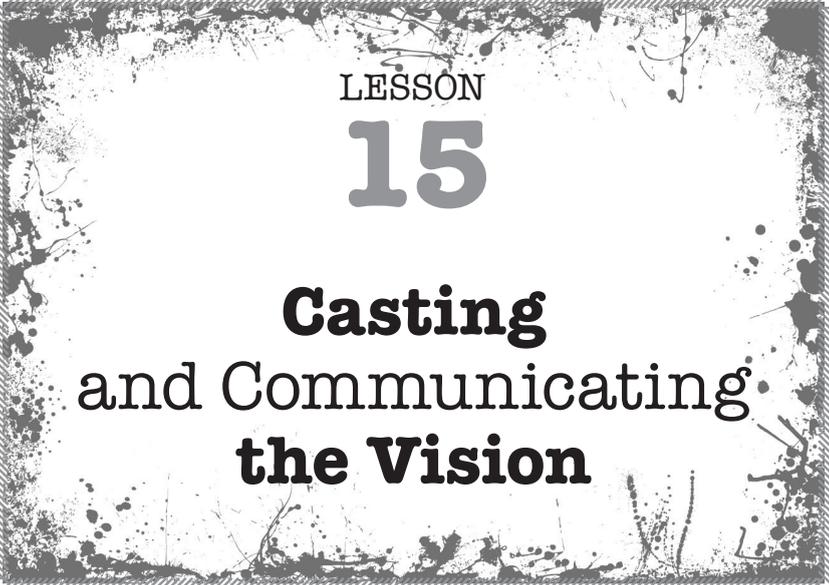
Conclusion

Burden, Vision, and Reality

Perhaps a good way of summing up part I of this lesson is in understanding the three terms above: burden, vision, and reality. Someone asked concerning the difference between burden and reality. Are they the same? Truth is that a real vision starts with a real burden. People really must care before they can become committed to a vision.

These three words (burden, vision, reality) speak of a process that carries us through the fulfillment of the will of God in our church mission. With a burden, we can find a God-given vision for revival. After receiving a burden and a vision, we can move on in the Spirit to the actual accomplishment of God's objective - building His church.

Sadly, many good men and women have been left at the point of burden without ever arriving at the reality. The missing link is a "real vision" that bridges the gap. Having a strong "desire" to do is a good beginning, but knowing the "why" and the "how" of seeing it done is the catalyst in actually bringing it all to reality.



LESSON

15

Casting and Communicating the Vision

Part II

By Andy Provencio

Introduction

Though it might seem a little redundant, nevertheless, we remind ourselves that the Lord is the source of our vision for it was He who said, “Upon this rock I will build my church.” However, too often the fact is that much of what is done in the name of church ministry may not be based on a real vision received from the Lord. We cannot take part with God in building His church without proper vision. In this second part lesson, we will consider the last four of the seven aspects of having, casting, and communicating a “true” vision to the church.

4. We Must Clearly Communicate the Vision

A. First of all, leaders are the ones responsible for casting the vision. Normally, vision comes from the top and is communicated downward. Sometimes it is another person that is shown something new, something that may or may not add to the present vision. From this point on, it is the pastor and his pastoral staff that must be responsible for what we do with what has been received. In other words, though it might not be the leader that “initially” receives the vision, it is always the leader that is responsible for the vision. Leadership will always be obligated to reject or put vision into practice.

B. The Pastor and his staff must do all that is within their abilities to cast the vision to the church and the Small Group Leaders. So it becomes necessary to ask ourselves some pertinent questions concerning the vision: “How often is it cast? To whom is it being cast? Are we holding everyone accountable to the vision?”

1) How often is it being cast? The vision is more than just someone’s idea. It is the direction we feel God wants us to go. It is about who we are, what we are going to do and how it is going to get done. It is a constant reminder to us that despite all of the difficulties and seemingly impossible impediments, we are indeed going to arrive by the will of God. Therefore, it can hardly be cast too often. It must be by all means cast constantly.

2) To whom is it cast? It is important to understand that not everyone will immediately receive the vision that we are attempting to communicate. Therefore, we should not grow discouraged when certain church members do not immediately become a part of it. Others, however, are the key players in and around the vision. We must cast the vision to the people who will be the nucleus upon which we build.

3) Are the Small Group Leaders being accountable to the vision? Every one of our leaders should feel tightly held by the vision and answer to it. They are responsible to make regular assessments as to whether or not they are leading the work according to the vision. This is yet another reason for “constant casting” of the vision.

5. The Vision Must Transition

From “Mine” to “Ours.”

A. This is a tremendously important step because now the entire church begins to become a part of the vision also. It is no longer just a “dream” being expressed from the pastor to the group leaders. We now consider it a “global vision” as well. Now the membership begins to feel a prompting of the Spirit. And when this begins to take place, the members stop asking, “What is the vision?” and start declaring, “This is the vision!” They have now seen it, they believe it, and they are now a part of it.

B. If this does not take place, there are likely two possible reasons: First - it could be the case of a good leader trying to cast the vision to people that simply will not receive it. In other words, he is trying to work with the wrong people! Second - it is possible that good people find themselves under the authority of a leader who simply does not have the vision at all, and therefore is unable to communicate it to them. We must strive to ensure that neither be the case in our congregation.

6. We Must Maintain the Vision

A. The vision is worth holding onto! And, sometimes, it just won't be an easy thing to do. But we are responsible as pastors and group leaders to maintain the vision and the spiritual momentum that it generates. The vision will grow and expand and we must be ready to move with it.

B. We must also be discerning as to potential compromises concerning the vision for our work with the Lord. We must be watchmen and stand guard over the truth and the vision that springs from it. It is time for Apostolic Revival and nothing should impair the Church from seeing it become a reality on the local all the way to the national level.

C. Another aspect of maintenance is with regards to knowing where to go based upon where we are now. This means making an honest assessment of our real successes and a sincere look at our failures. It certainly also demands a comparison between where we are and where we should be according to the vision. The difference between where we are now and where we should present us with two essential needs:

1) The need for real repentance – We should be ready to admit that we are not where we should be, and be ready for the changes necessary to get us there. This is part of maintaining the proper vision.

2) The need to agree (according to the vision) that the difference noted between where we are and where we should be represents that which is waiting to be fulfilled by real ministry. This we have already seen in Ephesians 1. In other words, now we should be able to see where we need to go and how, once more, to get there.

7. We Must Ensure That the Vision Is Being Received

A. The last aspect in this first principle of revival is in regards to whether or not the vision is getting to the “target.” The vision, after all, is not just for the leadership, it is for the church as a whole.

B. There is an effective way of knowing whether or not this is happening. At any stage in the six revival principles, we can

use the principles that follow it to make this determination. In other words, to know whether or not the vision is indeed being cast and received we can look at the next principle which will be covered, "Equipping the Saints". As the membership begins to see the necessity of being equipped for the work of their ministry and starts to receive the tools given them, then we can feel assured that we are effectively broadcasting the vision to our people.

C. Another way of knowing that the vision is being properly communicated and received is in seeing whether or not those that have already received it are passing it on to others.

D. A final way of determining that the vision cast is hitting the target is seen when those other than leaders begin to share their own experiences in the vision.

Conclusion

Our goal, in church and the body of Christ, is to focus and work on a God-given vision. The pastor must clearly cast and communicate the vision to a committed leadership and congregation, thus accomplishing God's purpose: the reality of building His church.

LESSON

16

Common Teaching Mistakes Leaders Make

By Andy Provencio

Introduction

Very few people are expert leaders the first time they teach a lesson. Effective teaching requires experience. There are a number of mistakes that are commonly made by inexperienced leaders which need to be recognized and corrected early. The goal of a leader should be to teach effectively, and the mistakes that follow inhibit effective teaching. In this lesson we will name a few of such mistakes with the sole purpose of setting the bar a little higher and allowing the Lord to be glorified in our endeavors to reach everyone in our small group setting.

Common Mistakes in Teaching

1. Not adequately studying. Reading through the lesson once or twice and trying to “wing it” results in shallowness with

no anointing. God cannot anoint something that is not there. We must put the Word within us.

2. Over preparing with too many notes. This practice is due to a lack of confidence both in God and in one's own ability to be used by God. The result is that the leader reads his notes, which is quite boring. There is no power to transform the life of a new convert or to motivate the rest of the group in dry, uninviting teaching.

3. Feeling a compulsion to cover every point in the lesson outline in great detail, thereby missing the real thrust of the lesson. This results in the lesson going far longer than necessary, which causes it to lose its power and effectiveness.

4. The teacher tearing himself down before starting to teach. This comes from the fear of failure. The irony is that the very thing the leader fears ultimately causes the failure. Nobody wants to be taught by someone who believes he has no ability or anointing. People like to learn from people with confidence. The underlying reason why leaders do this is really a matter of "pride." Because the teacher is too proud to take a chance that his teaching may be criticized, he announces in advance how inadequate it is going to be. God does not work through pride - He works through humility and faith.

5. Talking in a dull monotone. The Spirit of God is vibrant and demonstrative; teachers should let God move freely in their teaching. They should show enthusiasm for their teaching ministry and for God's message.

6. Writing out notes in an illegible manner. Any leader struggling to read will disrupt the flow of their own teaching and make themselves look foolish when they squint, trying to decipher their notes, and make some obnoxious remark about not being able to read their own handwriting. What they are

actually communicating to their group is I didn't think you were worth taking the time to write my notes neatly.

7. Failing to pray sufficiently as part of preparation. This is equivalent to saying, *"God, I don't think I really need you. I can teach this lesson just fine all on my own. My wisdom and ability is all these people really need in order to be saved and go to heaven."* What fleshly arrogance! Yet, how many times have our actions said just that by our failure to pray? Paul put "no confidence in the flesh" (*Philippians 3:3*). Should we do any differently? No! We can only serve God in the important ministry of teaching when the anointing of His Spirit is upon us.

Other Points to Remember

1. Our lessons usually carry a conclusion at the end where the main point of the lesson is summarized one final time. The purpose of this is to make certain that everyone understood the lesson and to set the stage for a time of discussion.

2. Following the conclusion, three or four prepared discussion questions may prove very effective in getting the discussion started. The leader may use these questions to promote discussion, or he may come up with other questions spontaneously.

3. It is not necessary to use every statement and every scripture included in a lesson. The idea is to communicate the main point of the lesson to the group, and the package that the lesson is wrapped in is subject to vary. The leader who is teaching is the one in the position to know best what his students need and are able to receive. It is, however, important that he stick with the main thought presented in the lesson outline. If it has been provided by the pastor, he should not consider himself free to teach whatever he wants to.

Conclusion

Teaching in a small group setting provides a weekly opportunity for the Lord to speak to his saints (and visitors) in a unique and intimate way. The message is from the Lord, but it is being transmitted to the members through other members. The message being sent ought to be transmitted clearly, meaningfully and with the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.

LESSON

17

How to Confront Effectively

By Andy Provencio

Introduction

The word “confront” may appear very strong, but avoiding the confrontation always aggravates the situation. There are many situations that occur within the church and in our small groups, and many end up being terrible situations because we are often scared to confront people and their problems.

I. What Does Confrontation Mean?

It has to do with leading a person or people to see the truth of their situation until they recognize their need to make the necessary changes. Jesus Christ compared the “truth of the Word” with a two edged sword that cuts and heals the wound.

II. What Is The Purpose Of Confrontation?

A. Love – When you confront a person with a problem, it is because “you love them.” The reason why we confront people should be because of love to avoid contributing to the fall of that person.

B. Correcting what is wrong – Nobody can correct what one can’t confront. If we desire to correct something bad in our personal lives, or in our personal relationships in the church, we must learn how to confront.

III. Why Is It That Some People Can’t Confront?

A. Fear of losing our friends – There are times when we are afraid of losing the love of the people or their friendship. Remember that when we don’t confront the people it’s because we don’t love them sufficiently to warn of the danger ahead.

B. Fear of rejection – One reason why we don’t confront is because of the fear of rejection, due to wanting to feel that we belong to something and hence there is fear of being kicked out of the group not wanting to pass through all the associated pain.

C. A biblical example of confrontation – A personal problem that Peter and Paul had is an excellent example on how to confront a person. The problem was that there was “a spirit of hypocrisy.” *Galatians 2:11-14* says, “*But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. 12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. 13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas*

also was carried away with their dissimulation. 14 But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" The Apostle Peter had a problem with hypocrisy, because he ate and lived like the gentiles that lived under the grace, trying to convert them to Judaism, but he feared being seen by the Jews, that lived under the law of circumcision. In the end, Peter repented of his attitude and corrected the problem.

IV. Steps to Confront Effectively

We shall use the steps that the Lord used to confront the churches in the book of Revelations. Amongst the churches there were several problems and the Lord confronted it with wisdom and efficiency.

A. Begin with an affirmation – When doing it in this manner it will remove the tension and bring peace to both parties. Let's take a look at the next biblical example in **Revelation 2:2-3**. *"I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: 3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted."* We see here how the Lord confronted the church of Ephesus. The Lord commences with an affirmation of their work, patience, holiness, suffering, and how they did not faint. Brethren, the best way to confront effectively is to affirm the person utilizing sincere phrases.

B. Express your feelings – We must tell the person specifically what's worrying us, and what they're doing incorrect. **Revelation 2:4** says, *"Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love."* We should be clear and specific, but

we must make a distinction between the person and the bad act. It is not saying to accept the bad action committed, but accept the person's error because we love them.

C. Remind the person when and where they have failed – The key consists in telling the person when and where the problem started. It is important that they know.

D. Provide a solution to the problem – “Repent and do the first works.” The Lord gives the solution to correct the problem of leaving its first love. What is the solution? Repent and do the first works. There are a lot of people who speak of the problem all the time, but they don't give the solution to the problem. There are different solutions that can be given and suggestions to the person that is being confronted.

E. Confront immediately – The longer we wait to confront, the desire will lessen. Don't wait too long! Do it as quickly as possible so that the enemy gains no advantage over us! Jesus gave an ultimatum to the church of Ephesus to change the situation.

F. Before confronting, don't be angry – On the contrary, hurting the other person will aggravate the situation. Be wise, wait and let the person cool down.

G. Talk about the consequences – When the person is confronted, they must know that there is a solution to the situation, but if there is no disposition on behalf of the party, there will be consequences to pay. Let it be known that there is no need to pay the consequences if you resolve the problem in that very moment.

H. Finish with affirmations and with a reward: “He that conquers shall be given to eat from the tree of life.” When Jesus confronted the church of Ephesus, he started and ended with an affirmation, telling them to repent and if they would resolve the problem, they would receive a reward.

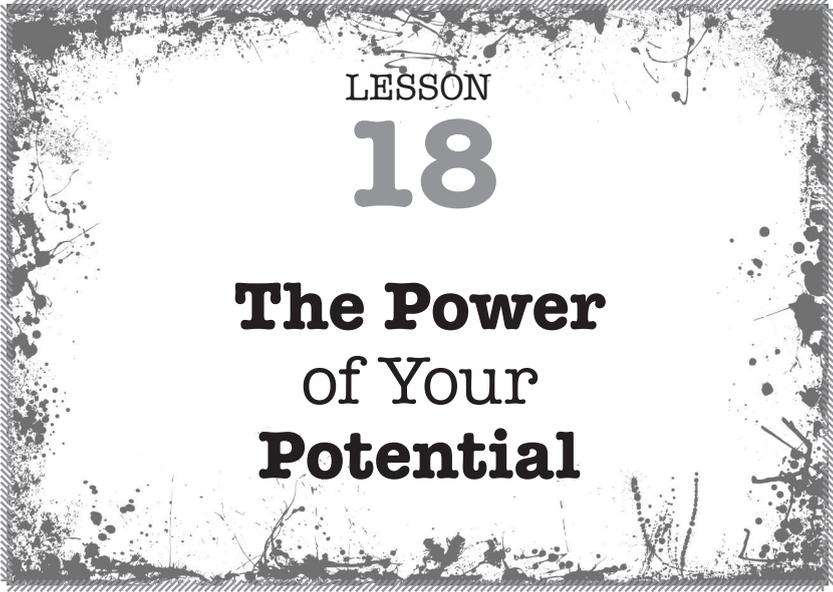
Conclusion

Some Words and Attitudes to Avoid

Avoid sarcasm – Sarcasm is counterproductive and very offensive, and furthermore, it will ignite the anger of the other person. It is also an indication that you're angry with the person rather than with their actions.

Confront in privacy and not in public – Do the utmost possible to do it privately, because you're trying to avoid embarrassing the other person.

Don't apologize for the confrontation – If you apologize then you come across as not knowing what you're doing. An effective leader should learn how to confront difficult situations, no matter what the storm or trial we should encounter it with a positive attitude.



LESSON

18

The Power of Your Potential

By Andy Provencio

Key Scripture: John 12:24

Introduction

God created all human beings with the potential to fulfill His purpose, but unfortunately, many people go to their graves with undeveloped potential. Many of them were just followers their entire lives who never developed the potential that God placed within them. However, there were others who did leave a legacy here on earth. These people were men and women, rich and poor, from different cultures, colors and languages of the world, simple and normal people who made the decision not to be just like other people. They are those that have impacted the world in so many different ways.

These who have made the difference in the world are really ordinary people placed in extraordinary circumstances, and which have allowed their potential to develop. Every person in this world has God-given potential in them to impact their world, but not all have been able to develop that potential. In our lesson today we will define the meaning of potential and how it can be developed.

I. What Does the Word

Potential Mean?

A. “Potential” is something powerful that is dormant within, something that has power, but has not yet come into existence or life. It can also be described as something existing in possibility, but not in reality.

B. Some synonyms of potential are: purpose, destiny, will of God, calling. Potential is: un-exposed ability, reserved power, untapped strength, undiscovered skills, unused success, dormant gifts and talents, hidden or latent power. Potential is what you can do, but have not done; where you can go, but still haven't gone; what you might become someday, but have not yet become; how far can you go, but not yet gone there, and what you can carry out, but you have not already done so. In essence, potential is what you are, but has not yet been revealed or made manifest in your life.

C. There are two kinds of potential: the natural and spiritual. What is natural potential? It is potential with which a person is born. Sometimes this potential has been inherited from certain family members. Natural potential is not given by the Holy Spirit, but perhaps can somehow be guided by Him. What is spiritual potential? This is potential obtained at the time of spiritual birth or conversion. This really is given by the Holy Spirit, also known as: purpose, grace, talent, ministry, function and gifting. Every human being was created to develop their potential and fulfill God's call in his life.

II. Where Did Your Potential Originate?

A. It is the birth of a seed. *“Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof” (Matthew 13:31-32).*

B. In each seed, there is a potential tree. For example, when I hold a mango seed in my hand, what I am really holding is a tree in power within the seed. **Genesis 1:12** says, *“And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And God saw that it was good.”* Every living thing created by God was blessed with potential, and likewise God created man with great potential within himself

C. Likewise, God placed in each of us the ability to be much more than we currently are. Just as the mustard seed, we have hidden resources and capabilities that have not been explored. God has given them to us, and are still in us. However, they have not been given the right conditions to develop.

III. What Is the Process

For the Seed to Develop Its Potential?

A. The process for the seed to reach its full potential is as follows: (1) birth, (2) death, (3) development. Each of us must go through this same process to develop our full potential in the Lord. This order mentioned above was placed by God, who is the sower of the seed. Once God gives the seed, the next step is to “die” to self and then develop our potential. There can be no development if there is no death first.

B. Birth of the seed – In the natural, this first stage is where God, by His reproductive power, gives birth to a seed with potential to reproduce itself. In the spiritual aspect, it has to do with the “new birth.” It’s an experience where you can get to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior through repentance, baptism in His name (Jesus), and the infilling or baptism of the Holy Spirit according to *Acts 2:38*. If a person does not have a true encounter with Jesus, it is impossible for the potential with which it was created, to surface. Jesus said, “Without me you can do nothing.”

C. Dying of the seed – After the “new birth” season, there comes a time when the seed has to die. Immediately after our initial conversion, each of us must make the decision to pay the price and obey God’s call at any price and bear many temptations and distractions for our potential in Christ to be realized. This is the stage of our Christian life where we have to die to our personal ambitions so that the will of God may be accomplished.

D. Development of the seed – This third stage is when God brings mentors, teachers and friends to help us develop the potential that lies within us. God will always permit people to come our way that will believe in us and are able to see beyond what others can see.

Conclusion

The Bible says that God is omnipotent. This is a very interesting word that means: Omni, always full of: and powerful, power in reserve. It is here where we get the word “potential.” We are witnesses that our God is all powerful, for He is our God who is full of potential and power in reserve. The potential we have been given is not ours, but of God, for it is He who gives it to us. When God created the plants, He talked to the earth. When He created the fish of the sea, He spoke to the waters, because this was the substance which he planned to use in creating them.

When He created the stars, He spoke to the heavens. But when he created man, God spoke to Himself. You and I were created in His very image and after His likeness. Today, many people fail to discover the potential with which God created them. The reason they cannot find him is because they seek for him everywhere, but where they should. Within you and I lies the potential and ability to fulfill His purpose because we are a direct product of His nature and substance.

LESSON

19

The Importance of Being a Coach

By Arturo Ocegüera

Key Scripture: Matthew 9:37-38

“The harvest is abundant, but the workers are few. Therefore, pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest” (HCSB).

In the scriptures we read, Jesus indicated that there was a problem in obtaining workers to harvest the fields that were ripe. Applying this to our day, there are a great many people in need of salvation and are, in fact, ready to receive Christ if only there was someone to tell them of Christ or to work with them until they are converted. The lack of trained and motivated disciples to reach the lost in a loving and effective way has been a problem since the time of Christ. Christ is sending ordinary men and women to work the harvest, not angels; therefore prayer to God is needed so that He may fill the workers’ hearts with compassion and love for souls.

These workers or cell leaders need not only prayer but to be constantly motivated. They need the loving touch of the pastor to motivate their inner spirit because if you motivate the inner person, you touch the personality of that person. There are several ways to do this but here are three simple ways that this can be done:

1. Recognition

Leaders need to be recognized for the work they are doing. Recognition in the presence of the church congregation or leadership is important to help maintain their self-esteem.

2. Praise

Always find ways to praise the success of leaders and encourage the rest to strive to do as well.

3. Love

Must be felt when the coach speaks. This is the touch that most inspires and will give life to cell leadership.

As a coach, you must learn to touch your leaders. This means you must find ways to inspire, motivate and help the leaders under your care to reach their full potential as cell leaders. In the next lessons on coaching, you will learn to be an effective coach because you will come to understand coaching and its principles. You may ask yourself, what is coaching? A coach is a person who will come alongside of you to be a friend, who will inspire you and be an example. When needed, the coach will provide strategies to help you do the work better. As we continue our studies on coaching, the importance of coaching cell leaders will become more apparent.

Pastor Paul Yonggi Cho of Korea said that when a child is born into the world, it hungers for two primary satisfactions: food and a loving touch. If the parents do not supply both of these needs, the child is going to starve, one way or other. The parents may provide all the food a baby needs for physical nourishment, but if they do not touch the baby, caress him and hug him, then psychologically, the child is not going to grow properly. The baby may even die.

Grown-ups also have an emotional need to be touched, hugged, and kissed. Without some form of loving touch, grown-ups will starve psychologically. When working with cell leaders, there is a great need to keep them motivated and inspired to continue to do the work you ask them. This is very important and the key to successful cell work. Your leaders will be trained in various ways, but their most important need will always be that special touch that inspires and motivates them to sacrifice time, effort and even their money for the work of cell ministry.

Prayer for leaders and coach:

Lord, let me be an example to my leaders, so they, in turn may be an example to someone else. Let me become a coach that touches the lives of those I coach in such a way that will inspire them to reach their potential. Help me Lord to touch the hearts of men and women so they may achieve the goals of cell ministry and be successful.

LESSON

20

Passing Through the Minefields

By Arturo Ocegüera

Key Scripture: 2 Corinthians 4:8,

“We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair.” (KJV)

Paul said that in his ministry there were many troubles, yet he wasn't distressed. There are troubles in cell ministry that are unseen and unexpected but can cause great damage in cell work and it is the coach's job to help the cell leader pass through these minefields of troubles. A landmine is usually a weight-triggered explosive device that is intended to damage a target – either human or inanimate – by means of a blast and/or fragment impact. When coaching you will be required to lead the person being coached (coachee) through situations that, if not avoided, can destroy that leader's ability to lead a cell. Here are some examples of troubles that Joel Comiskey lists and that I will call landmines that need to be avoided through coaching:

Discouragement:

Satan comes loaded with his quiver to shoot darts of discouragement and doubt into the hearts of cell leaders. The role of the coach is to actively listen and then encourage cell leaders to press on.

Nutrient Deficiency:

Some cell leaders simply need to be reminded of key leadership skills such as listening, preparing questions, arranging the chairs in the house, silencing the over-talkative person, praying for others, etc. Again, the role of the coach is critical in helping the leader work through these issues.

Personal Problems:

A lot of cell problems have nothing to do with the cell. Rather, the leader is struggling in his or her personal life, e.g. family, finances or health. A coach is called to pastor leaders and minister to their needs.

Hidden Sin:

Satan longs for cell leaders to not only sin but also to hide their sins from others. At times a coach might notice that something is wrong with the leader but can't put his finger on it. There's dullness, avoidance and the coach must quickly confront the leader.

Absalom Spirit:

Absalom was King David's errant son who tried to take David's kingdom from him. In a church, this can result in a church

split. An Absalom spirit can be prevented when every leader is under the watchful eye of a coach. A good coach catches the symptoms of rebellion and points them out before they negatively affect others. In this sense, the coach fulfills the role of a shepherd, watching out for those under his care.

Troubling Ministry Needs:

Cell leaders will often encounter ministry needs that are very sensitive and troubling, beyond the ability of the leader to handle. A coach is needed for the leader to share these needs and to receive guidance and prayer.

Prayer for leaders:

Father, we may find trouble on every side but we will not be distressed. Though we may become perplexed and not understand why things happen like they do, we will not despair because we are your creation and you will help us pass through the minefields of troubles. Your Word and your voice in our hearts will guide us and lead us forever.

Author's note:

When giving this lesson, a group activity can be done to go along with the lesson in which objects such as chairs and tables can be used as landmines. Label the mines with the words Discouragement, Nutrient Deficiency and other types of troubles. Have one person be the coach and the other the coachee that is to be led through the minefield. The coachee is blindfolded and not allowed to talk, whereas the coach can speak but not enter the minefield. The challenge is for each blindfolded person to walk from one side of the field to the other, avoiding the mines by listening to the verbal instructions of their partners. The ideas processed are trust, security and communication skills.



LESSON

21

Dream-based Coaching

By Arturo Ocegüera

My vision for 2012 is to develop better leaders.

Key Scripture: Exodus 18:13-27

Each one of us has a God-given dream in our hearts of what we can become. God put it there to expand His kingdom in the world. We can use the discipline of coaching to provide the support, encouragement, and accountability that is needed to see the dream realized.

I. Know Yourself

a. Your style of coaching is a combination of your motivational and ministry mix.

b. Coaching is the dedication and discipline of one person coming along side of another person to help him or her become all that he or she can be.

c. The coach needs to assist them to stretch (Philippians 3:13) a little more in their leadership development potential.

II. Active Listening

a. One of the most important steps is to discipline ourselves to engage in active listening.

i. Often, when someone comes to you to share his or heart, we listen at the beginning of their message and unintentionally fill in the blanks with what we “think” the person is trying to say.

ii. When you practice active listening, you are actually trying to hear the complete message behind the introductory sentences to each subject at hand.

b. Active listening requires focus and energy.

III. Ask Powerful Questions

a. The best place to start is by asking “open questions” and then gradually progress towards asking “powerful questions.”

i. What is an open question? It is the opposite of a closed question.

ii. A closed question is a type of question that provides only a “yes” or “no” answer.

iii. An open question allows the hearer the opportunity to say whatever he or she thinks, feels, and believes concerning the question.

1. Example: What is the most important subject you would like to talk about today?

2. Example: If there were no barriers, what kind of church/sector/cell would you like to build?

b. Powerful questions are simply open questions only more profound, allowing the one answering to speak from his or her heart.

i. Example: What personal-growth change needs to happen in your life for you to move to the next level?

ii. Example: What will you do if you don't succeed as a leader?

IV. Positive Affirmation

a. Everyone needs positive affirmation, especially when it comes to a God-dream to do something different.

b. God-dreams are not fantasies.

i. Fantasies do not require faith.

ii. God-dreams require faith and heavenly wisdom to be realized.

LESSON

22

**Discover
Your
God Given Dream**

By Arturo Ocegüera

Key Scripture: Hebrews 11:24-27

The Bible does not say when Moses first began to dream of setting his people free but the time came for him to take the steps that would change the course of history, not just for his people but the world. God places a dream in our hearts; a vision that sets us on a course that changes our lives and the lives of those around us. A cell church is a dream God puts in pastors that may take years to finally materialize but even though there may be setbacks and even failure, the vision in the pastor's heart continues to push him until he realizes his dream.

In the same manner, God's desire is to use ordinary people to reach unsaved people, for His glory. Cell leaders have dreams to serve and to be used and it is the coach's responsibility to help them discover their leadership dream. We all know that when it comes to expanding the Kingdom, the enemy will do everything in his power to stop us. Serving in the role as a coach of other

leaders will provide the support, encouragement and accountability needed for those leaders to realize their dreams.

We have discussed knowing your style of coaching and active listening. Another way to help leaders fulfill their destiny is to ask questions. You begin by asking the leader “open questions” and progress toward asking “powerful questions.” An open question simply is one where the answer is not a simple yes or no, which are called closed questions. The open question allows the leader the opportunity to say whatever he or she thinks, feels, and believes concerning the question. An example of an open question is: “If there were no barriers, what kind of cell would you like to build?”

The next level to asking good coaching questions is asking powerful questions which are opens question but require more thought and more openness in the person being asked. Christian writer Sam Scaggs says that when you ask a powerful question, you will hear the coachee respond with words like, “No one has ever asked me that question before”, or “that’s a good question.” When you hear responses such as these the person you are coaching may need some time before they respond. This is where you combine active listening with open and powerful questions. A powerful question causes the cell leader or supervisor to stop and respond from their heart and leads to a deeper discovery. Some examples of powerful questions are: “What personal-growth change needs to happen in your life for you to move to the next level?” “What steps will you take to overcome this challenge?”

Establishing a relationship in which powerful questions can be discussed leads to the next thing a coach must do. He must provide positive affirmation, especially when it comes to a God-dream to do something different. The vision of establishing cells and transforming your church to a cell church requires asking people to work as cell leaders, something totally different from what they are used to. The vision or dream that God puts

in people may simply be the desire to serve and to be used and when you help that person discover his or her God-dream, apply it to cell work. When you affirm someone's God-dream to do something for God, it will take discipline and faith to affirm something not yet visible to the naked eye.

The Bible says of Moses, *"By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible."* Moses might have been able to return to the courts of Pharaoh if he would give up his dream of his people's deliverance. Instead of giving up his vision of helping his people, Moses fled and spent many years away. In Moses' heart was a vision established in the faith of a King greater than Pharaoh, though invisible, that helped him endure the wilderness and kept his hope alive. Pastors-coaches, your job is to help others find their God-dream that will bring great fulfillment to their lives. There will be many obstacles and even failures before a dream can be realized, but do not stop. By faith, believe in what God has called you to do. Know yourself, listen to your leaders, ask questions and give them plenty of positive affirmation and in this, you will fulfill the dream God has placed in your heart.

Prayer for Leaders:

Father, I believe in the vision, the dream you put in my heart. No matter the obstacles, I know you will help me to endure until the dream is established. Help me to be a blessing to those under my care by asking questions that will stir their hearts and to affirm them in their aspirations to obtain their dreams.

LESSON

23

The Most Common Pitfalls of Coaching

By Arturo Ocegueda

Key Scripture: Psalm 105:19

“The word of the Lord tried him.” Commentators are not sure what was the “word of the Lord” but more than likely, it was the promise that God made to Joseph, through dreams, of Joseph rising to an eminent rank above his brothers. Therefore, Joseph’s dreams were tested through pitfalls of problems, setbacks and the temptations of life.

But Joseph changed history because he permitted God to help him navigate around the pitfalls of his life and destiny. Pitfalls were used by God to give Joseph the opportunities to make decisions that would form his character.

As a coach, there is a real danger if you are ignorant about the most common pitfalls. A story in a newspaper tells the tragic story of a 28 year old man who was exploring an abandoned mine in Nevada. He did not see the pitfall and fell down a shaft. Though badly injured, the man survived the fall. Rescuers tried

to reach him but the mine was old and the walls were crumbling in the pit. A large rock fell on one rescuer and broke his hard hat. The rescue was called off because of the danger to the rescuers and the man died.

Because you know that pitfalls in life do exist, spend some time looking at what some pitfall experiences can be in coaching others. Christian writer Ben Wong describes the following as pitfalls of coaching:

Pitfall #1: Not Having the Heart of a Coach

In Matthew 23:1-3, Jesus spoke of the danger of having a religious heart, which is looking good on the outside but really being empty and having no power. If you do not truly believe the person can be transformed and used of God, you won't communicate a life-transforming faith. The heart of unbelief struggles with believing the potential of other people. Your attitude is negative and not positive. It is good if you receive training in coaching and for that reason a teachable heart is necessary.

Pitfall #2: Seeing the Person You Are Coaching with Limited Vision

Great coaches need eyes of faith. In Matthew 16:13-19, Jesus was not only prophetically revealing Peter's unique destiny, but he was speaking with faith over his life and believing in who and what Peter would become. A great coach once said, "A good coach will make his players see what they can be rather than what they are."

Pitfall #3: Being a Dream Killer Rather Than a Dream Releaser

Dreams, like relationships, can be attacked and destroyed very easily. A thoughtless word spoken at the wrong time by someone of influence can prove fatal to a dream. A parent, teacher, employer, pastor, supervisor or leader can be well meaning and yet work in opposition to what God wants. Read Matthew 16:21-23. Sometimes a leader might say something that kills another's dream because of envy and jealousy.

Pitfall #4: Not Listening but "Telling" the Coached What to Do

Great coaches listen, reflect, and ask questions, rather than doing all the talking. A seasoned leader is secure enough to listen and to resist the temptation to always tell the coached what to do. This sets the coach free from the pressure to pretend that you have all of the correct answers.

Pitfall #5: Trying to Do Something that Has Never Been Done for You

Great coaches need coaching. The way to learn how to coach is not just to read a book or a training manual, but to be coached

by a healthy leader. The results are a healthy and friendly relationship that transforms your life, your marriage and your role as a parent. Your ministry will be transformed. But you must be willing to be coached. The greatest coach of all is Jesus Christ but if you don't let him guide you, you will not experience true success in life.

Pitfall #6: Coaching for Fun, Fad or Fascination

You must coach for transformation. If coaching is a fad or it looks like fun, people get fascinated, but it will not last. It will pass quickly when something else that looks more fun or fascinating comes along. However, if you are being transformed by coaching and you then are used of God to coach someone else and by his grace they are transformed, then it will become a life-long discipline that will bring you joy and you will produce fruit your entire life.

Prayer for Leaders:

Father, help me see the pitfalls that are before me and before the men and women I coach. Let me coach with a heart that desires transformation in those I am coaching and they, in-turn will coach others to do the same. Let me see them the way you do, men and women with potential to do a great for you.

LESSON

24

From Losers to Winners, a Transformation

By Arturo Ocegueda

(Taken from an article written by Tim Talevich, Costco Connection, about the reality TV show, The Biggest Loser)

According to the producers of the show *The Biggest Loser*, the main idea of the program is transformation. They tell the stories of people who have somehow found themselves off the track in life, yet tapped an inner strength to change. I will present six principles taken from the show and I want to apply them to your personal life and to your work as a cell leader.

1: Check the picture

In your frame. You can change it.

One *Biggest Loser* contestant was a Vietnam vet who had injured his knees and over time had put on a lot of weight—a couple of hundred pounds. He told the producers that, even

though he desperately wanted to lose weight, “there were subtle, underlying forces not to.” A producer said, “Most people are like a picture in a frame, never changing. You get comfortable with that picture because it’s always the same.” He went on to say, “Failure becomes familiar and comfortable for them. It’s ‘I told you I couldn’t get that job,’ or ‘I told you I couldn’t be that guy.’ You teach them how to start punching back, and they realize it feels so much better to hit than to be hit. And that changes their lives.”

Romans 12:1-2, “be transformed”

As cell coaches we must convince the leader not to be comfortable with the picture of not having visitors to the cell or not having baptisms or whatever else is keeping them from being “winners.”

2: Passion is the key

To reaching your goals.

In interviewing potential contestants, the producers met an 18 year-old young man who weighed 450 pounds. The young man couldn’t close his hands all the way to make a fist because he was so fat. The producers were not going to give him a chance to be on the program but the young man pleaded with them to give him a chance. They challenged him to walk out the hotel room door, walk down 20 flights of stairs to the lobby and then turn around and come back up the stairs. After 15 minutes, they became concerned and went looking for him. They found him on the 9th floor coming back up. He was huffing and puffing, spitting and sweating but he made it all the way back to the 20th floor. They applauded him and selected him for the program. He went on to lose 250 pounds. “You could see the passion in his eyes” said a producer.

Philippians 3:14, "I press toward the mark."

Passion for your work as a cell leader is one of the most important qualities to being a successful leader. You must want to win more than anything and be willing to pay the price. Passion transforms a boring, lifeless cell into a vibrant and anointed place where people are saved and changed for the good.

3: The most powerful

Motivation comes from within.

One contestant injured his feet and couldn't do the exercises necessary to burn 8000 calories in a day. So he lay on his bed and punched the air for seven hours to reach his goal. That was quite an achievement in itself, but the contestant was more proud of the fact that it was the first time he had worked out when the cameras weren't on him. He realized that the drive to become the person he wanted to be had to come from within.

Jeremiah 20:9, "fire shut up in my bones"

You must be self-motivated. You won't achieve your goals as a cell leader just because you are put in the position of leadership but because there is something inside you that pushes you to do the extra work. The drive to become the leader you want to be has to come from within.

4: Go an extra step further

To reach your goals.

At the end of a season, one of the exercise bikes went missing. The bike was later found in the closet of a contestant. She confessed to taking the bike because she wanted to exercise more

in her room. The producers were impressed, seeing she had already worked out seven hours during the day. Her greatest fear was going home a failure.

Matthew 5:41 “go with him two.”

Jesus spoke of going the extra mile and in cell work, it will never be enough to just show up on cell group night to give a lesson. You must do that but also do the visiting, encouraging, praying, fasting, studying and spending your time and money to be a successful leader.

**5: A milestone can be
Good motivation to change.**

The producers wanted someone to lose enough weight in a summer where he or she could go to their first day of college with a clean slate, a whole new person, where nobody knew you as the “fat kid.” The show’s first contestant weighed 320 pounds. He ended up losing 87 pounds over the summer. The producers couldn’t believe his transformation. “You should have seen him at the end: Handsome, well dressed, we got him a haircut,” said one of the producers. He added, “He had a whole new sense of confidence that was life-changing.”

Philippians 3:14, “I press toward the mark”

In the Strategy of Jesus, the Evangelistic Cycle is meant to provide a time frame for soul winning, but it also works as good motivation to work hard to reach the goal of attaining new members for the cell and church. Success in cell ministry brings about “a new sense of confidence that is life-changing.” It’s important to be able to measure your success and celebrate it.

6: Breakthroughs are often

Painful, but necessary.

According to the producers, in *The Biggest Loser*, most contestants do well after they finish the program but not all. Some leave the show with the same problems they came with. That's reality. Failures and setbacks show just how painful and difficult change can be. And it usually requires a breakdown before it can start. One of the producers said, "You have to have an emotional breakthrough. Tears actually weigh more than fat that is on your body. After the tears fall, the fat falls off with them."

Psalm 126:5

"Those who sow in tears will reap with shouts of joy."

Every person that is used of God must be broken. Though painful, it is only then that Christ can use you in the work He was given you. God used Moses, not when he was a prince of Egypt, but when he was a shepherd in the desert. God used Peter, not when he was an outspoken disciple, but after the rooster crowed and Peter wept bitterly. God used Paul, not when he was a prideful and arrogant Pharisee, but when he was blind and surrendered to Christ.

As in the reality show *The Biggest Loser*, the main idea is transformation. If you follow these principles and apply them spiritually to your life and cell work, you will see and hear wonderful testimonies of God's great power in changing the lives of people. You will see in your own ministry success that brings confidence and joy to your life.



LESSON

25

**Your
Integrity
will be Tested**

By Arturo Ocegüera

Key Scripture: John 1:47

“Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!”

There is nothing like cell ministry or cell leadership to test your integrity. If you do not have integrity, sooner or later it will show. You will fail as a cell leader, commit sin or run away to another church and leave behind hurt people and destroyed hopes and dreams. If you are weak in the area of integrity, I advise you not to get involved in cell work. There is no other work, ever produced in the Apostolic Assembly – apart from being a pastor – that will test your faith and sincerity like cell leadership.

The definition of integrity is being complete or whole. What this means is that what you say matches what you do. Integrity is what you are, your systems of values that make up your character. In the scripture read, Jesus described Nathanael as a

man without guile—without self-deception, and no disposition to deceive others. There was no deceit in him. Nathanael was not sinless but honest and complete in his commitment to God.

In *Luke 18:10-13*, Jesus tells the story of the two men who went to the Temple complex to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector called a publican. The Pharisee was steeped in self-deception and guile when he said, “God, I thank thee that I am not as other men.” Whereas, the publican was without guile when he cried, “God be merciful to me a sinner!” Sincerity, openness, no wish to appear other than what you are before God and man, affirms guilelessness.

In the Old Testament, it was by throwing off this guile and finding in God his dependence that Jacob became Israel. The name Jacob means “supplanter,” that is, one who takes the place of someone usually by dishonorable means. Jacob had reached a point in his life that deceitfulness would no longer sustain him. He was desperate for a blessing from God so he threw off his guile and wrestled with an angel all night until God blessed him and changed his name to Israel which means, “God perseveres,” and in the case of Jacob, “He perseveres with God.”

In declaring Nathanael to be a guileless Israelite, Jesus declares him to be one who does not seek to win blessings by earthly means but by prayer and trust in God. In cell ministry, it is always prayer, the knowledge of God’s Word and trust in God that will develop the system of values that make up your character.

You will be put in the crucible of leadership that will test your integrity and the first things that will be tested are your faithfulness. The pastor will give you the responsibility to care for the cell group, to grow in numbers and to have baptisms. He will want you to develop a leader from within your group to take over as a new cell leader when your cell multiplies. When things are not going the way you would like, when there are no new visitors or baptisms, when you have not developed a “Timothy”

to take over a new cell, that is when your integrity kicks in and you begin to do whatever it takes to make your cell a healthy, growing cell. You will not become complacent, giving up on your goals. Your dependence will be totally on God and you will persevere until you have success in your cell group.

Your integrity will compel you to obey all commands, not with resentment but with joy because you know that cell leadership is your purpose and you will be true to your purpose. A positive attitude will keep you from becoming bitter and resentful, especially of others who are more successful than you. You will give of your time and money to make the cell work and when there is no one to encourage you, you will encourage yourself.

You will not take advantage of people. A cell supervisor over five groups became infatuated with a woman in one of his cells, whose husband was not coming to church. She ended up divorcing her husband and running off with the cell supervisor. The crucible of temptation was too much for the leader and he failed the test. He was without integrity.

There is nothing like cell leadership to prove if you have the love of God. People will disappoint you and fail you and they will commit sin, but you must not get discouraged. Your love must rise to the occasion and in spite of people's weaknesses, you will love and forgive them because in you there is the love of God.

Cell ministry will test your integrity but it will form you into the type of person Christ called you to be: A man or woman who is complete in God. Do not give in to deception but be honest and sincere. Seek help from other leaders when needed, but most of all, seek help from God and allow him to form your character. He is the only one that can make you into a cell leader of integrity.

LESSON

26

Spiritual Courage to Encourage Others

By Arturo Ocegüera

(Much of the material for this lesson is taken from the book Encouraging the Heart by James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner. All page references are to Encouraging the Heart.)

I Samuel 30:6, "And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God." (King James Version)

The dictionary definition for the word courage is "the quality of mind that enables one to meet danger without fear; bravery; fearlessness." It is interesting to know that the root word for courage is cor, which comes from Latin meaning heart. For someone to have courage he or she must have heart. To encourage someone is to provide with or give courage—literally, it means to give others heart (page xv).

Cell ministry requires great courage and the ability to encourage others. David had great courage when he faced Goliath, because in his heart he believed God would give him victory. You have to have heart to face the challenges that confront you in leadership. You must have heart to face great difficulties and to hope that things will work out when things seem impossible. You must have heart to get the strength to reach inside of yourself and draw out an ability you didn't know you had.

In the passage we read, David "*encouraged himself in the LORD his God.*" He received strength from God but it is a strength that penetrated David's heart and mind. In cell leadership you must be aware of your responsibilities to those you are entrusted to lead and to the pastor who entrusted you with the responsibilities. But it must be in your heart. The responsibilities are heartfelt, not just another assignment given or a position to hold.

Having heart also deals with your personal values. What you believe in your heart must go hand in hand with what your pastor is teaching concerning cell work. You must believe in cell ministry or it will not work for you. This is the same when applied to the Apostolic Assemblies' core values such as faith, holiness, oneness, the Name and many more. Your personal values must be in agreement with the Assemblies' or else you will not make it as a member.

Heart, or cor, has a double meaning for from its root also comes the word "cordial," which means to be friendly, sincere or warm. To have heart means being both tough and tender, having guts but being merciful, it is being passionate and compassionate. (pages xv, xvi).

The heart of leadership is caring. John Maxwell wrote, "People don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care." Without caring, leadership has no purpose. When the cell leader, supervisor, or pastor encourages the heart of someone, he demonstrates courage and cordiality (page xvi).

When leaders commend individuals for achieving the values or goals of the church, they give them courage and inspire them to do greater work. When you recognize men and women for good work, they become conscious of their value to the church and to the other members and a sense of being connected are established and strengthened (page xii).

Cell work requires great courage and the ability to encourage others. For this reason you must have heart to meet the challenges and sacrifices required for cell ministry. Let us pray for God to give us heart.

Prayer:

Father, there is no bravery or boldness without heart. At this time, we surrender our hearts to you to be filled with passion and with love. Let our heartbeat be your heartbeat and inspire us to serve in cell ministry with courage and boldness. Amen.

LESSON

27

First Essential: Set Clear Standards

By Arturo Ocegüera

Key Scripture: Philippians 3:14

"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

(Most information for this lesson comes from the book *Encouraging the Heart* by Kouzes and Posner.)

Standards, in this lesson, mean goals and values. A leader's commitment to the pastor's standards flows from the leader's personal values. Human beings just do not put their hearts into something they do not believe in. Values make a difference in how cell leaders behave inside their churches and how they feel about themselves, other members and leaders (*Encouraging the Heart*, pp. 49-50).

The first step towards a pastor's credibility in cell leadership is clarifying personal values in regards to cell ministry and

the church organization. If the pastor's values are in accordance with the goals and principles of cell ministry, such as the development and training of new leaders, then he will work at developing new cell leaders.

A cell leader will not reach the church's goals of conversions, baptisms or multiplying cells if his or her goals and values are not in accordance with the pastor's goals and values. The pastor or supervisor must set clear standards of cell work and the people must accept them as personal values. Clarity of personal values is the force that really makes the difference in an individual's level of commitment to an organization (p. 50).

If you are just doing the work of cell leader or supervisor because the pastor or some other leader put you there, it is virtually guaranteed that you will not be giving your all. It must be your personal desire and goal to develop other leaders, have baptisms and multiply your cell or you will not be working in a way that allows you to use your personal resources and abilities. You will be producing at less than your optimal level in your ministry because an important part of you is simply not engaged (p. 51).

Goals plus feedback keep you engaged as a leader. It's not enough simply to climb a mountain and know that you want to make it to the summit. You need to know if you are still climbing or if you are sliding downhill (p. 57).

Encouragement to keep goals and values is a form of feedback. It tells the leader that he or she is making progress. Encouragement to keep goals will help the leader stay on the right track and live-up to the standards. The best time for the pastor/supervisor to do this is during the weekly leaders' meeting.

The wonderful thing about encouragement to keep the standards and values of cell ministry is that it allows the pastor to show he cares about his cell leaders. The pastor is able to personally encourage his leaders and the cell leaders do the same

with their cell members. When leaders provide a clear sense of direction by setting clear standards and provide feedback along the way, they encourage people to reach inside themselves and do their best (pp. 58-59).

Prayer:

Help me to clarify my personal values and goals and let them be the goals of my church. Let my work as a leader come from my heart and let me reach deep inside of me and pull out abilities and talents that I didn't know I had.

LESSON

28

Expect the Best in People

By Arturo Ocegueda

Key Scripture: Luke 5:8

“When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.”

Matthew 16:18

“And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

(Much of the material for this lesson is taken from the book Encouraging the Heart, by Kouzes and Posner.)

In Luke 5, Jesus is calling Peter to follow him as a disciple but Simon Peter only sees himself as a sinner unworthy of being a disciple of Christ. Later, Peter had been following the Lord for some time when Jesus speaks those prophetic words to him in Matthew 16. Jesus saw the man Peter would become and

pressed that image into Peter's heart and mind. As time went on, Peter began to believe the image Jesus put in him of becoming a great leader.

The main idea of this lesson is before you can encourage the hearts of cell leaders, you have to believe in them. You have to see them as cell leaders fulfilling their ministry. Proverbs 13:2a says, "From the words of his mouth, a man will enjoy good things..." (HCSB). If you, as a pastor, believe they can become great cell leaders and speak it, it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

A self-fulfilling prophecy is a concept that says that if you expect others to succeed, they probably will. If you expect them to fail, they probably will. People tend to live up, or down, to your expectations of them (Encouraging the Heart, p. 62). If the cell leader or member has someone, such as the pastor who believes in them and is constantly reinforcing that belief through his interactions with them, the cell leader will be strongly influenced by that support (p. 62).

Jesus had high expectations of Peter which lead to Peter's great performance as an apostle, even though he failed Jesus greatly. In Mark 16:7, an angel tells the women, who had come to the tomb, to tell the disciples and Peter that Jesus had resurrected. Including Peter's name was one way of encouraging Peter's broken heart because he had denied the Lord three times. Jesus expected something more from him. With encouragement, Peter rose to overcome his failure and self-hate.

When a pastor speaks his faith in a person's ability to lead a cell, it must be more than a positive outlook (p. 64). It has to come from a sincere love for people. The same is true for a cell leader. He must believe in a member's ability to rise and become a great cell leader.

You must pray, fast and surrender totally to God's will to be able to sincerely speak words of encouragement to cell leaders,

members and even visitors. This is especially true when you see their weaknesses and failures. Prayer and consecration develops a love for people and you begin to see more clearly, with spiritual eyes, the things that Jesus sees in people.

When you believe in a leader's ability to accomplish and be successful, most of the time, that person wants to live up to your expectations. Sincere encouragement helps the leader believe they can solve the problems of cell leadership. Before you can encourage the heart, you have to believe in people. You must see the person they can become and the great leader he or she will be.

Prayer:

Lord, help me to believe in the purpose and calling you have given me. You see a leader in me doing your great work. Help me to see that leader. Even though I am weak and often fail, you are strong and able to give me the solutions and answers to the problems I face as a leader. Thank you for your love and faith in me. I will rise up to the challenge of leadership and be successful in the ministry of this church. Amen.



LESSON

29

Pay Attention

By Arturo Ocegüera

Key Scripture: Luke 11:9

“And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.”

(Most of the material for this lesson is taken from the book, Encouraging the Heart, by Kouzes and Posner.)

Christ’s teaching on prayer encourages you to keep asking, seeking and knocking and God will answer. It may seem that God isn’t interested because you don’t receive and answer quickly, but he is and you must continue to ask, seek and knock until He answers. In cell leadership, you must continue to seek for the best in people until you find it.

To pay attention is to show the leaders that you care; you are interested in what they are doing and to how they are feeling. If you are clear about the standards of behavior you are look-

ing for and you believe and expect that leaders will perform like winners, then you are going to notice lots of examples of leaders doing things right (*Encouraging the Heart*, p. 74).

As a leader-coach to the members, the work of encouraging the heart will come, not as a policeman looking for mistakes, but as a leader who the people can trust. You need to be able to correct the mistakes cell leaders or members make, but more importantly is the ability to pay attention to what is happening to members. "The manager who wanders around with an eye out for trouble is more likely to get just that: more trouble" (p. 76).

You must listen with your eyes and heart. A true story is told of a man who visited a third grade classroom and asked a young girl what she'd been learning. She answered sign language. The third grader explained that she had a friend since first grade that could neither speak nor hear. "So she asked her mom if she could learn sign language so she could communicate with her grade school friend. Her mom said yes and began to drive her daughter back and forth to lessons. 'Now,' the young girl said, 'I listen with my eyes and my heart, not just my ears and my brains'" (p. 80).

Listening with your eyes and heart requires a deeper level of paying attention. It requires the capacity to walk in their shoes and learning to understand and see things from another's perspective. This is crucial in building trusting relationships and for success in cell ministry (pp. 79-80). In our country, there are many different cultures and languages spoken and paying attention cannot be done from a distance but up close and personal.

You must spend time with your members. An excellent time to do this is during the fellowship time after or before the cell lesson. Finding time outside the cell to be together with cell members can become difficult because of time schedules but is highly recommended. If you want to develop friendships of trust, you must spend time together.

To become fully trusted, you must be open – to others, but also with others. An open door is a physical demonstration of a willingness to let others in. So is an open heart. This means disclosing things about you. This doesn't mean gossip and murmurings, but talking openly about your hopes and dreams, your family and friends, your interests and your pursuits (p. 85).

Jesus said *“seek and ye shall find.”* In cell leadership, you must continue to seek for the best until you find it. When people see you as a friend and they trust you, then they will open up. You will find something to honor and celebrate in people.

Prayer:

Lord, help me to seek the best in people. This is difficult when the results aren't there, but I want to listen with my eyes and heart. I will pay attention to the people under my care and become a friend that can be trusted. Amen.

LESSON

30

Personalize Recognition

By Arturo Ocegüera

Key Scripture: Matthew 19:27-30

(Most of the material for this lesson is taken from the book, *Encouraging the Heart*, by Kouzes and Posner.)

God knows the importance of recognizing and rewarding believers for their work and sacrifice. In the Bible there are more than 100 verses containing the noun “reward,” or the verb “to reward.” This shows how important recognition and rewards are to God. Properly recognizing cell leadership for their sacrifices and for obtaining their goals is very important too.

A manager in industry wrote, “*What I have discovered is that as I do the work of personalizing recognitions into the work of my team, I become a more empathic and involved leader in the process*” (*Encouraging the Heart*, p. 89). Empathic means to enter fully, through imagination, into another’s feelings or motives. In other words,

to truly recognize a leader so that he or she is encouraged by your efforts, you absolutely have to know something about who they are.

Recognition can hurt if it's not personalized. To say very little when recognizing leaders can often hurt the person you want to recognize. You should ask yourself, "How can I phrase this, to leave the person feeling honored, not diminished?" What can you do to make that person feel special? It's not enough to know, you also must communicate that you know (pp. 91-92).

To honor someone and not diminish a gift or moment of recognition requires that you know who the leader is, what he or she likes, what he or she has done (p. 92). A pastor said, "Once, the lady at my cleaners gave me, as a Christmas gift, a bottle of sake. She didn't know that I am an Apostolic minister and I don't believe in drinking alcoholic drinks. Her gift was wasted on me."

Recognizing leadership, whether in the weekly leaders' meeting or on special events, such as when new cell leaders are being launched, requires that you put some effort into the recognition to make it special and unique for the person. It should be something they will enjoy.

The passage you read in Matthew 19 reveals that there will be rewards here on earth and eternal life in heaven for the faithful believer. Each type of reward that Jesus mentioned will match up with the believer perfectly. You should also make the effort to know your leaders well enough to recognize them accordingly. You will become a better pastor-supervisor in the process of knowing them.

Mock recognition ceremony:

Leaders must pair up and find out enough information of each other that they will be able to recognize the leader in a

brief, make-believe recognition ceremony. The pretend event will be to celebrate a leader obtaining his goals.

Questions that can be asked:

What would honor you if you reached your goals and multiplied your cell group?

How do you feel about the work and sacrifices of cell leadership?

What motivates you?

Prayer:

Lord, thank you for the rewards you have for me. That you have promised me eternal life is reward enough, but you also have given me your Holy Spirit here on earth. Let me also recognize and reward the members of my cell in such a way that it will be special blessing to them. Amen.



LESSON
31

Tell
the Story

By Arturo Ocegüera

Key Scripture: Matthew 13:3-9

(Most of the material for this lesson is taken from the book, Encouraging the Heart, by Kouzes and Posner.)

When Jesus wanted to convey a truth about reality, he used stories. They are called parables. A story can tell some “truth” of people’s lives that are real and that others have experienced or observed (*Encouraging the Heart*, p. 100). The parable of the sower is a great example of God’s truth reaching the heart of the listeners in a way that they could relate to and remember. Likewise, it is essential that you tell a story when you recognize a leader for doing the right thing.

Storytelling is how you pass along lessons that will encourage your leaders to reach their goals. It is the basic form of communication—more prevalent and more powerful than facts and

figures. People believe stories more than they believe numbers that you present in your weekly leaders' meeting (p. 101).

When recognizing someone for reaching his or her goals, it is important that you say more than just the statistics of the accomplishment. A short story, that will enhance and make the recognition special, should be used. Depending on your time, you must decide how much you will tell of the person's accomplishments.

Stories not only teach the leaders but they motivate them. This is the main point in recognizing the success of leaders. For example, in a leaders' meeting you can mention the name of a cell leader who has multiplied his cell and leave it at that with a smile and handshake. But it is much better to tell of the predicament of the leader. Not only was it a problem but the values and principles of cell work are involved.

Then you describe the actions the leader took to overcome the difficulties and you relate the situation telling of the leader's determination and sacrifice. The other leaders have passed or are passing through the same problems and will understand the special effort of the leader being recognized. You weave all the elements together and finally tell how it ended.

"To climb to the top is arduous and steep, and we need encouragement to continue the ascent. Stories are essential means of conveying that we are making progress and that the actions people are taking are enabling us to get there" (p. 105). A well-told story will reach inside you and pull you along. Well-told stories motivate and mobilize a church to keep going on.

Recognition Celebration:

Recognize a leader or leaders who are meeting the standards of cell work and use a brief story to tell of his or her accomplish-

ments. The pastor will choose one or two leaders to be recognized and the other cell leaders can ask questions about their exploit. They will weave the answers into a recognition ceremony. Cell leaders will then stand and tell the story of how the leader accomplished his or her goals.

Prayer:

Lord, I want to recognize the members of my cell in such a way that will motivate and encourage them to go on and be successful in our church's ministry. Make me a story-teller that will bless our people and bring glory to you and our church. Amen.



LESSON

32

Celebrate **Together**

By Arturo Ocegüera

Key Scripture: Exodus 12:11, 14; John 2:7-12

(Most of the material for the lesson is taken from the book, Encouraging the Heart, by Kouzes and Posner.)

Celebrations are recorded all through the Bible. In the Old Testament the Israelites celebrated many different things and in the Exodus passage it was a memorial celebration of how God had delivered his people. Jesus himself, at a wedding celebration, performed his first miracle.

The Bible establishes a culture of celebrations and we should do the same in the ministry of small groups. As it has already been mentioned, recognition of cell leaders' accomplishments is a form of celebration. But there are many other opportunities to celebrate that will move your church into a culture of celebrations. Sector or zone fellowships, baptisms, returning from

a retreat and even Pastor's Day are celebrations that bring the people together.

Celebrations influence the performance of the cell groups because they bring a feeling of togetherness. In a business study, it was found that what distinguished high-performing groups from those performing less well was the wide variety and frequency of celebratory events – events where recognition and appreciations were expressed (*Encouraging the Heart*, p. 114). Promoting a culture of celebration fuels a sense of unity and mission that is essential for retaining and motivating the members and cell leaders (p. 117).

Studies have shown that “intimacy heals and loneliness hurts” (p. 119). As leaders, you must learn that there is something very valuable to give when you bring people together for social support: the gift of a healthier life (p. 120). Celebrating will bring more joy into people's lives and the leader will fulfill an important function of leadership: unity. For example, after a baptism, the cell group meets at a cell member's house to celebrate the new baptism with a “carne asada.” This type of celebration promotes unity and the good feeling of belonging, especially to the newly baptized member.

Celebrations are more than parties; “They're ceremonies and rituals that create meaning. When planning a celebration, every leader should ask, ‘What meaning am I trying to create?’ Public ceremonies crystallize personal commitments, binding people together and letting them know they're not alone” (p. 123).

The pastor can win souls, develop a cell group and multiply it but it will have much more meaning if a cell leader leads his small group to win souls and multiply his cell. What the cell leader does becomes a role model the rest can copy, much more than what the pastor does because the cell leader is one of them. When you celebrate the cell leader's achievement, the message is you can do it too (p. 124).

To celebrate achievements during the Sunday celebration service, the pastor must have the numbers from his groups that tell of how many attended the cells and other information that the pastor uses to determine recognition and promotion. Sometimes, you will not get the numbers in on time and you will become discouraged and stop trying to celebrate achievements.

Do not give up. Perfect the system until you get the numbers on time and make your church one that will have a culture of celebration. It will greatly improve performance and provide a sense of unity and purpose.

Prayer:

Lord, help me to celebrate your blessings. I want to be a leader that will bring joy and unity to my cell group, therefore help me do what is right in celebrating the victories of our small group. Amen.

LESSON

33

Walking Through the Coaching Stages

By Arturo Ocegüera

Key Scripture: Psalm 30:5b

"...weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."

(Most of the material for this lesson is taken from the book, How to be a Great Cell Group Coach, by Joel Comiskey.)

Joel Comiskey taught a seminar where one of the main points he made was how leaders go through a dark night of the soul as they develop cell groups (How to be a Great Cell Group Coach, p. 111). Comiskey teaches that there are five stages that a cell leader goes through before they can truly be successful and multiply his or her cell. It is the job of the pastor-coach to help the cell leader through each stage.

The Romance Stage comes in the beginning of the new cell leader's work where everything is new and exciting (p. 112). It's

a new adventure for the cell leader. The new leader should enjoy this period as much as possible and the coach should be preparing the leader to count the cost for soon things may change for the worst.

The Reality Stage is when the new cell leader “realizes several members of the cell group aren’t committed and don’t attend each week. The leader invites five new people and no one shows up. The leader didn’t think the results would be so sparse or that cell leadership would be so demanding (p. 113).” This is when the coach must love the leader and lend a listening ear. Remind the leader that this is a normal part of the process.

The Resistance Stage is when the cell leader is thinking of quitting. “Some have called this time period the dark night of the soul. This is where the coach will need to cry out to God for the life of the cell leader (p. 114).” It is a time when the problems of cell work will bring you to your knees and you will pray more fervently than ever before. You must encourage the leader to hang in there. *“Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.”*

The Resolve Stage is when persistence, God’s grace and prayer have kept the cell leader on course. He or she develops the resolve to not give up but to keep working until he or she sees results. “The leader has learned to trust in God. He has given more time to God and feels God’s presence in his life in a new, exciting way. He is planning for long-term involvement in cell ministry (p. 115).”

This is a good time to develop a deeper relationship with the leader and prepare the leader for when he or she will coach and disciple new cell leaders. You and the leader will become more of a team and “behave more like a battle proven army, rather than fresh recruits who have played simulator games. You’ve been in the battle and your camaraderie is enhanced by it (p. 115).”

The Reward Stage is seeing the fruits of your labor. “The gain comes after the pain. But it does come. The cell leader passed through the dark night of the soul. He or she weathered the storms and has a multiplication leader who has successfully given birth. You are now a coach with a grandchild and there is a sweet peace in your soul (p. 116).”

The success of the cell has much to do the work of the coach. Your patience and encouragement to the cell leader has brought victory to you, the leader and to the church. Most importantly, it has brought glory to God. Peter wrote, “*Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly...And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away (I Peter 5:2-4).*”

Prayer:

I thank you Lord for giving me the responsibility to lead a cell group. Though it may mean that I will pass through the dark night of the soul, I will not give up until you give me victory. All the glory is yours, my Lord, but I also await your coming to receive the crown of glory you have for me. Amen.



LESSON

34

Passion for the Lost

By Arturo Ocegüera.

Key Scripture: Mark 16:14-16

The word passion means to have a very strong feeling or emotion. An archaic meaning for passion is suffering. We describe the suffering and death of Jesus on the Cross as The Passion of Christ. In the scripture read, the disciples had quickly lost their passion to win the lost and the resurrected Christ upbraided them. Satan wants you to lose your passion for the things of God and especially winning the lost for Jesus.

How do you lose passion? You stop praying, fasting and getting into the Word. You lose passion when you get tired of fighting spiritually, become discouraged or angry. You lose passion when you are content with what you have.

How do you fire-up passion? You start praying, fasting and getting into the Word again. You get passion by using a second

effort and fighting on, declaring victory at the Cross. This combats discouragement. You ask God to make souls the main reason for cell work and you learn to love people.

Even the great ones of the Bible lost their passion at times. Sometimes it was simply because they became physically tired. Moses became tired when, after lifting his arms up so that Israel would prevail over the enemy Amalek, his arms became weary. He needed his friends to help him lift his arms (Ex. 17:12).

You need the help of “friends” such as the pastor and leaders to help you keep your “arms up.” There are times when you feel like giving up, but the prayer of men and women of God for you gives you the strength to keep going in cell ministry. It keeps your passion alive.

Elijah gave up his passion for doing God’s will when Jezebel threatened to kill him. He ran away from his work and calling and cried to God to kill him. He didn’t want to live any longer but an angel fed him and encouraged him to keep going (I Kings 19:4). Sometimes, even after things having been going well for you, things take a turn for the worst. You lose your job, your house, your health or there are relationship problems. This is when the enemy attacks you to steal your hope and to make you quit.

An elderly couple, who were destitute and sick, testifies they had given up on life and were contemplating suicide. A member of a church cell group met them and witnessed to them. They felt encouraged to go on and began to visit the cell group meeting. Soon, both were baptized in Jesus name and found a home in one of the cell member’s apartment.

Your passion for cell ministry is critical because cell work is evangelism. It requires your willingness to suffer so that the lost may be won. You must give of your time, your money and often your home to make room for the cell meeting. Your passion

must drive you, as a cell leader, to love the lost. You must feel mercy at the sight of their suffering.

Feelings of mercy come when you've spent time in prayer and in God's Word. This is how the fire of passion is built up and you feel the strong emotions needed to do cell work. Spending time with Jesus in prayer stirs up gifts within you that will provide you with the abilities to do the work Christ has given you.

Prayer:

Lord, help me stay passionate about the ministry you've given me. I am a cell leader with a purpose and that purpose is to win the lost. Passion may mean to suffer at times, but I am surrendered and willing to do your will. Amen.



LESSON

35

Keep the Vision before You

By Arturo Ocegüera

Key Scripture:

Philippians 3:12-14; II Corinthians 11:23-28; II Timothy 4:5-8

Sometimes, in cell work, the tide seems to be rolling the other way. Paul was given a vision by God to take the gospel to the gentiles. When he was imprisoned, whipped, shipwrecked, stoned, or told to leave a city, he must have thought, "There is no way this new movement is going to end well." But guided by the vision imparted to him by Jesus, Paul pressed on toward the mark.

Cell leader, you must continue to cast the vision of cell ministry, which is to win the lost, establish them, disciple them and to send them forth (launch) as cell leaders. You must remind everyone in the cell of their common goals.

Preserving the vision will sometimes depend entirely on faith for it is the hope of things not yet seen (Hebrews 11:1). At other times you may have some objective evidence such as visitors, baptisms, and another leader mentored and ready to take a new cell. It shows progress and keeps you moving forward.

Don't you or your cell group quit too soon from doing cell work. In II Kings 13:18-19, King Joash was instructed by the prophet Elisha to strike the ground with his arrows. He struck the ground three times and then paused, thinking he had done enough. The prophet reprimanded him for stopping. If he had hit the ground more times, he would totally vanquish his enemies. King Joash did not enter into the spirit of the symbolical act, which represented the striking and killing of enemies.

You cannot quit too early and lose heart in cell work just because you don't see results. Thank goodness Paul didn't quit when things were going so badly for him. Because he didn't quit, Paul became an integral part of God's vision to advance His Kingdom, and he did much to advance the gospel. You form part of God's vision for today in winning the lost. Be faithful and obedient to God and the pastor and you will see results.

Much of the New Testament was written by Paul and many of you read his writings and receive guidance, inspiration, and hope during your own times of shipwreck or failure. If Paul had quit, you might not have the guidance and inspiration you need in the hard times. Likewise, your cell work brings blessing and hope to others.

Paul wrote to Timothy, *"But as for you, keep a clear head about everything, endure hardship, do the work of evangelist, fulfill your ministry. For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time for my departure is close. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. In the future, there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge,*

will give me on that day, and not only to me, but to all those who have loved His appearing (II Timothy 4:5-8, HCSB)."

This beautiful passage describes Paul's attitude and great accomplishments. Words like "endure, work, fulfill, faith and fight" lets you know that he kept the vision before him. He was guided by that vision to take the gospel to the gentiles and now he is waiting for the perfect reward Christ is going to give him.

Cell leader, you too must fulfill your ministry. Keep the vision of cell work before you and you too will receive the reward.

Prayer:

Lord, help me to keep the vision of cells before me always. It is your purpose for me and I will not quit too early. I will receive the prize of your high calling and bring you honor and glory. Amen.



LESSON

36

The Laborers are Few

By Steve Moran

Key Scripture: John 4: 34-38

Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. 35 Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and then comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! 36 And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. 37 For in this the saying is true: ‘One sows and another reaps.’ 38 I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors.”

Introduction

We see here that Jesus received satisfaction from not a mere morsel of bread or meat but by fulfilling the mission of which he came to earth to fulfill. The disciples in the making did not un-

derstand what Jesus was talking about because they had not as of yet captured the heart of their master. The question we must make ourselves is whether we have captured the heart of our Master in respect to the Strategy of Jesus.

Lift your eyes

Here Jesus attempts to open the eyes or redirect their sight to the reality that surrounded them at that time. What a joy that the Lord is calling the Apostolic Assembly to lift up their eyes and see the potential of what is before our very eyes. As a Friendship group leader we must ask God to constantly check and correct our vision as to the need that is around us. In that he says that there is need to lift up our eyes signifies that those who were adjacent to these fields had their sight downward looking at what was at their feet rather than that which was before their eyes. When we look down we will only see the area that pertains to our lives and becomes oblivious to that which is around us. This leads to a life that is not Christ-centered but self-centered. If we do not lift up our eyes we will never see the despair, the need, the pain, the suffering and tears that are searching for an answer to the challenges of life.

As a Friendship Group leader we must not conform to the small circle around us for there are millions in need of what we have to share to them. At times the leader may become discouraged as there seems to be no one who wishes to hear what Christ has to offer. Jesus says don't be discouraged by that which is around you, just lift up eyes and see that truly the need is great.

Look at the fields

As a Friendship Group leader we encourage those within our group not to be so caught up with their own situation that

they are constantly looking down to only their needs. We take the lead and lift up our eyes to see the vastness of the work that is before us. The fields are white indicates that we don't have to wait for a better time but that now is the time to go forth into the fields. We need not look for signs from heaven but merely look at the lives of the people around us to know that the need is great and beyond the ability of any one man.

We must not forget that as a Friendship Group leader we have a responsibility before God to harvest the fields that are white. This indicates we need to place our focus, attention and efforts on those fields that are ripe before they die and decompose into oblivion. Seeing that the harvest is so great, we must forget that we need not just want to keep our group for our enjoyment and personal kingdom but we must make every effort to prepare others who have lifted up their eyes so they can work the fields as well for the harvest.

Laborers are few

One of the primary focuses of the Friendship Group is to develop new leaders who will be sent out as soon as they are equipped to join in the harvest. We must not only see the harvest that is ready to be harvested but those around us who can be developed into harvesters.

The disciples at this place and time were rather ignorant of what Jesus was talking about and definitely not ready to be put out to harvest. There are those in your groups who unknown to them are chosen by God to join in the harvest of those fields that are white. Jesus accepted the response of the disciples with grace and patience as his words went right over their heads. As a Friendship Group leader one must be patient and full of grace for those we work with. In due time, God will exalt those who humble down before him.

Conclusion

Luke 10:2, Then He said to them, “The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.”

Our task must be maintaining the eyes of those within our groups lifted up and focused on the needs of others. We have the power of the gospel unto salvation that we must share with the world. We are his laborers for this final hour of harvest. Behold the hour comes, Jesus says, the night is coming when no man can work. Today is the day to lift up our eyes and make even a greater effort in respect to the harvest before us. You are our answer to our prayer to the Lord of the harvest for laborers. Thank you for responding to call for the harvest. May the Lord give each a special anointing to harvest as much of the bountiful harvest as possible!

LESSON

37

Go Ye **into All the world**

By Steve Moran

Key Scripture: Matthew 28:19

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

The Great Commission

Before Jesus ascended to heaven he was burdened with the salvation of the whole world. He knew that to complete the plan of salvation for mankind it was necessary to charge the believers with the completion of the mission for which he had come into world. Many have heard these words but few have chosen to take these words to heart. We have a charge to take these words to heart and take action steps to accomplish this great mission.

When we consider the word “go”, this denotes a command to action. The command has been given; however, we are the ones who must take the initiative to take steps of action. We must

therefore take a step of faith. If he has commanded us to go it is because he will be there to support our every step. His promise to those that are his own are to never leave them or forsake them but be with them wherever they would go, even unto the end of time. What a comfort to know that we are not alone but are always accompanied by the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Obstacles

Although there a variety of obstacles that can paralyze a person from completing the task at hand, we shall consider just a few;

1. Fear

- This word is defined as a distressing emotion aroused by impending danger, evil, pain, etc., whether the threat is real or imagined, concern or anxiety

- *1 John 4:18, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love."*

- This, then, alludes that as believers we have been empowered with the love of God which will conquer every fear.

2. Doubt

- This word is defined as to be uncertain about; consider questionable or unlikely; hesitate to believe, to distrust, apprehensive

- *Hebrews 11:1, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."*

- We must be strong in faith believing that, that which is not done or seen or realized before our eyes are already done in the eyes of God, through our lives based on our commitment to him and him to us.

3. Insecurity

- Not confident or certain; uneasy, not assured.

- *Joshua 1:9, "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."*

- The Lord has provided us, through his Holy Spirit, the boldness we need to speak the word he has put forth in our hearts.

The time is now to go out into all the world. This is more than just a commandment to obey but a lifestyle to embrace and live on a daily basis. For too long we have succumbed to the idea that the need to go is merely for those occasions that are designated as days to go and witness. We cannot limit ourselves to citywide crusades or even our weekly Friendship Group gathering. This command must consume us and become integrated into the very fiber of our Christian existence. Wherever we go we must follow the lead of the Holy Spirit, as there is a world that is ripe for the harvest.

Conclusion

With Christ on our side we have nothing to lose but a world to gain for his kingdom's sake. He has destined us for victory. But our duty is go and make disciples. This means that disciples are not made by themselves or by a mere divine act, but requires our participation as instruments of God for the task at hand. We

need to roll up our sleeves and begin to work the clay mass put into our sphere of influence. His belief is that if we go, accepting the challenge, that disciples will be made and baptized in that name. There is no need to fear, doubt or be insecure as where our humanity lacks his divinity fills in the gap. Are you ready? Victory is ours! In the name of Jesus, ready, set, go!!!



LESSON

38

Chosen by God

By Steve Moran

Key Scripture: John 15:16

“You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.”

Introduction

Upon consideration of the Scriptures we receive from God the manner in which he contemplates us. For him, we are special in his eyes and have been chosen for the task at hand. We have not been called by luck or chance but by divine appointment.

Hand Chosen

Let us consider the times we have gone to our favorite stand or market place. One can observe the care people to take to se-

lect and choose the produce they wish to take home with them. First the produce is looked over to see if it has the desired color or appearance which is appealing. The shopper considers what plans have been made or the endless possibilities or combinations that can result from the selection. The next step is to put their hands on it, squeezing and touching, testing for ripeness. Once chosen, that produce will be integrated to produce the desired finished meal, much to the delight of all those who sit at the dinner table.

In a like manner we have been hand selected by God to perform a great service for humanity. There will be times when look at ourselves and believe that there is nothing useful within us for God to use. We must not succumb to such a thought process, for if we have been selected by God, we can have the confidence that he will see us through the work that has been commissioned to us. We can be assured that God is a specialist in taking a raw product and turning it into something amazing.

Genesis, The Creation of God

Hear we see where God takes that which is available and makes what is needed to fulfill his needs. If an observer had been present, it is highly unlikely he would have guessed that from the dust of the ground a living being would be formed. This is truly incredible to consider. Today we must see ourselves in the same light that we have been made and hand selected by God to fulfill his work here on the earth.

Ephesians 3:20, "Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,"

We must never underestimate the power of God to do the incredible, the impossible, the unthinkable or the unimaginable. He can, he wants and he is able to make our lives those who will

go and make disciples by teaching them the life of Jesus and his plan of salvation for all mankind.

Cultivation

Isaiah 61:3, "To console those who mourn in Zion, To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified."

As we yield ourselves to him he is determined to cultivate us into a tree of righteousness which bears fruit in due season. This constant development is through his Word, his Spirit and the life experience he allows us to go through. The fruit we are to bear, above all things, are souls for the kingdom of God.

The fruit tree holds tightly onto the fruit when it is green to assure that it continues to maturity. Once mature, the fruit is released by the tree and falls to the ground where eventually a seed will be received in the ground and in time a new tree will germinate, develop and grow to the point where it too will bear fruit. As God's chosen we must hold on to those who God has placed into our hands and not let them go until they are mature enough to be released to begin a new cycle.

Conclusion

God has chosen us to perpetuate the preaching, the teaching and the making of disciples here on earth. As we, through grace and the mentoring of some special chosen person of God invested and stood with us until it was time to be released, so we must now also be determined to fulfill the will of God in others so that his message will reach even the uttermost parts of the earth. You are God's hand chosen special agent. Go, make, teach and release!!!



LESSON

39

For I so Love the World

By Steve Moran

Key Scripture: John 3:16

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have eternal life.”

Introduction

We can observe from the following Scripture the basis for the great commission that Jesus delivered to those around him. There is nothing to compare to love of God for our lives. We had not known true love until the true love of God came into our lives. We are so thankful for his unconditional love that has become the source of our joy.

God’s Love

The love of God is so great that there are no words to fathom its depth nor width nor height. His perfect love was one of sac-

rifice. He sought not his own benefit but rather ours. He looked beyond our faults and saw our needs.

John 5:8, "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Philippians 2:5-8, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross."

The goal for us as believers is for us to grow in God so that we may take on the mind of Jesus. When we take on the mind of Jesus not only do we take on his mind but his heart. We are able to see that he took off his celestial garment of glory to take on the veil of humanity for our sake. He was able to experience our humanity as he became like us. He experienced hunger, fatigue, rejection, disappointment and pain. Why did he do he love us so? He simply chose to do so to provide us the opportunity for an abundant life. How can we ever repay him?

Our Love

John relates that God so loved the World that he gave of himself for the salvation of mankind. We need to ask ourselves a simply question: "for I so love the world that I am willing to give...? If we have the love of God within our hearts then that same spirit will dominate our lives. We should ask God to make us uncomfortable and not just be comfortable in our new lives as children of God.

This love will be demonstrated in many ways but foremost in our interaction with the lost. We will be driven to reach others, making them disciples as they are taught by us.

1. Self-sacrifice

- The leader must be willing to rearrange his priorities. No longer does he live but Christ lives in him to accomplish his perfect will.
- His focus must become God's focus and see everything through the eyes of Christ.

2. Investment of time and energy

- An allotment of time must be designated for the reading of the Word, fasting, prayer and consecration.
- A willingness to see others saved requires an investment of time in the lives of others, even beyond that of the Bible study group.

3. Empathy for others

- Willingness to listen, not just to the words of others, but the hearts of others as well. As the saying goes, the people do not want to know how much you know but how much you care. The love that Jesus imparted was of this gender.

We need to ask God to help us have a heart conformed to his heart. As we look upon the world that we may see the world through his eyes. As we listen to the sounds around us that our ears be refined to the cries of the people who seek for someone to care and love them. That as we touch those around us, that they feel the loving and healing touch of his hand upon their lives. The words that come forth from our mouths may be an extension of his love for mankind and his personal invitation for abundant life.

Conclusion

If we truly have taken on the mind and heart of Christ we can be assured that souls will be saved and disciples made for the kingdom of God. John declares that “no greater love has a man than to lay down his life for his friends.” You have been called to lay down your life for this world.

LESSON

40

But You Shall **Receive Power**

By Steve Moran

Key Scripture: Acts 1:8

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Introduction

As we take into consideration the promise made by Jesus we cannot deny that we are called for his special purpose. The beginning of the Apostolic movement was not void of the special anointing of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit was critical for the successful growth of the church.

Power

The Bible states that we have received power from a divine celestial source. The word for power comes from the Greek word that signifies the following:

Dunamis

- Ability to act
- Ability to produce an effect
- Extraordinary strength for athletic or Olympic competition
- Power to be a powerful witness of God
- Power to perform the miraculous
- Divine miraculous life changing power
- Power that changes the ordinary to the extraordinary
- Power that changes simple fishermen into Fishers of Men and World Changers
- Power of Resurrection
- Power of Pentecost
- Power of Renovation
- Power of Restoration
- Power of Transformation
- Power of Salvation

Jesus emphasized that this power was not optional on his part but a promise that he must fulfill. Therefore, as we go forth we must have an assurance that, not only will his Spirit lead us, but will empower us to accomplish his perfect and good will.

There are many aspects to the Holy Spirit, but we will consider the following;

Function of the Holy Spirit

• **John 16:13**, *However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.*

✓ To direct to all truth and righteousness

✓ We can be assured that as we allow ourselves to be guided by the Spirit, he will lead us as to what we need to do to expand the kingdom of God

• **John 14:26**, *But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.*

✓ To bring to remembrance all things Jesus taught

✓ The Holy Spirit is designed to function as a memory helper to bring into remembrance all the teachings we have heard and have been taught throughout the course of lives as well as what we have read in His Word.

✓ The implication is that we have been given an immense amount of knowledge, first to help us in our daily Christian walk, but of greater importance, that we need to share this with others.

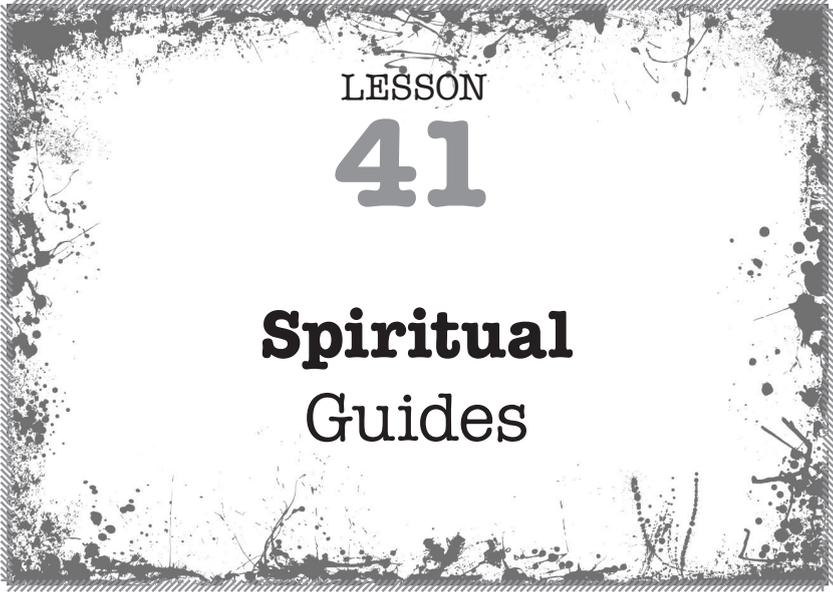
✓ When we share with others we have embarked on the process of making disciples, not based on our raw knowledge, but by the guidance of the Holy Spirit to minister to those in need accordingly.

✓ Truly we have been mandated to go out into the world but we can be assured that we will be duly equipped through him who told us to deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow him.

The focus of the Friendship Group leader is to encourage every member of his group to be not just acquainted with the concept of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues, but to teach them the indispensable need of the operation the Holy Spirit within our lives. We must take them through the steps which will assure them their own personal infilling, which are steps of repentance and confession. We take ownership of the task to keep the fire of his Holy Spirit alive and well, not only with the lives of those of our groups but in our lives as well. As the priests of the Old Testament, we have been given the task to maintain the flame from dwindling or going off.

Conclusion

We have been invested with power from above to work from within us and we extend without to those that are ripe for the harvest and are waiting to hear a Word from God. You are that vessel. Go, speak the Word, minister to the heart and reap the harvest.



LESSON

41

Spiritual Guides

By Steve Moran

Key Scripture: John 16:13

“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come”.

Introduction

The Spirit of truth has been bestowed upon us. What a privilege to be a recipient of his Spirit. Through his Spirit we are assured of a constant guidance and he has promised to never leave us or forsake us but be with us always, even unto the end of the world. His Spirit of guidance within us then has now become integrated within our own personal lives. As Friendship Group leaders we must take on this role.

Guides

Since the Spirit of God now dwells within our lives we must accept that we are called to not only make disciples but to serve as their guides and teachers, as they begin their Christian journey. In order for us to understand what that role encompasses we must further define the word “*guide*”:

Guide

- A person who advises or shows or indicates the way to others
- A professional mountain climber in charge of a group
- A thing that helps someone to form an opinion or make a decision or calculation
- A structure or marking that directs the motion or positioning of something
- A soldier, vehicle or ship whose position determines the movements of others
- Direct or have an influence on the course of action

Friendship Group Leader

As a Friendship Group leader you have been called to lead. The challenge is great, as a leader is one who leads one or others to a distinct location. As a leader we are also guides who advise, show and indicate the way to others. Those under our charge are depending upon each of us to guide and lead them to a better place than where they are at the present moment.

1 Peter 2:9, *“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10 who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.”*

The reference to a guide being a professional mountain climber brings many applications to mind. As we lead people, through the mountains across the landscape of human experience, we are considered by those who follow us to be professional guides. Truly we are special in the eyes of God, having been called out into this marvelous light. He has appointed us as royal priests. The priests of the Old Testament were the spiritual guides and leaders for the people of Israel. Even though the people knew of God they still needed someone to direct and guide them. We are God’s professional team to guide and lead others through the mountainous where there are forevermore impending dangers and hardships. We are people who have passed through these dangers and hazards upon which, having done so, are so able to lead others teaching them how to maneuver which paths to take and which equipment to utilize upon any given situation.

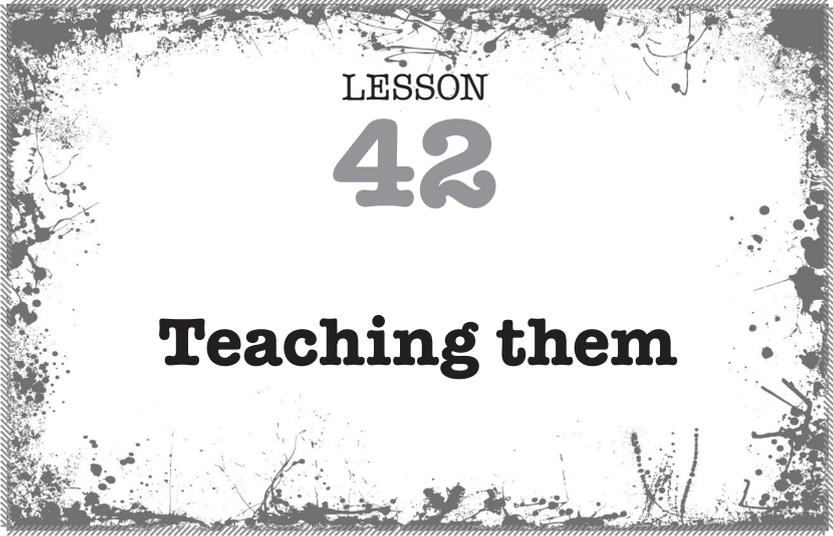
Psalms 119:105, *“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”*

Fortunately we are not left to our knowledge but we have a physical dynamic guide, which is God’s Word and direction for any terrain or situation in which we may encounter ourselves. This guide is never outdated nor needs updating, as it is pertinent to any time and anyplace. Jesus said that the heaven and the earth shall pass away be he that does God’s word will never perish. The Word of God is our perfect GPS to see us through any circumstance regardless if we feel we are lost and have no idea which will be our next move. As a leader we may question our next move but his desire for us is but a step away.

As soldiers of the cross we must be conscious that our every move is being observed and will be a source of inspiration for others to go forward. Our action will be followed by the action of others. That is why Paul declares, *“Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1).*

Conclusion

We must guide others forward in the walk that God has marked for their lives. We are God’s professional team assigned to lead others through the snares of life in victory and for ultimate triumph. Go, make disciples, teach and guide them on to victory!



LESSON

42

Teaching them

By Steve Moran

Key Scripture: Matthew 28:20

“Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.

Introduction

This portion of the great commission given by Jesus directly challenges us to a personal commitment to produce an end product namely, a disciple of Jesus Christ through our personal effort. As a Friendship Group Leader we must take ownership of the task at hand.

Teaching

A major component is that of teaching. What is this component that is universal to all in accomplishing the will of God for

mankind? To begin, let us define and understand the implications of teaching:

Teach

- Greek root; deiknunai means to show
- Latin root; dicere means to say
- To show or explain to someone how to do something
- To present or point out
- To give information about or instruction
- To give instruction professionally
- Encourage someone to accept as a fact or principle
- To learn or understand something by example or experience
- Make someone less inclined to do something

In essence, it is what Jesus established that disciples should be made through the means of teaching. Many become intimidated by just thinking about the word, “teacher”. The thoughts of being credentialed or perhaps to have a master’s or doctorate race through our minds. However, Jesus did not pick the professors of his time to be part of his hand and spirit selected team. We cannot allow ourselves to be intimidated by the standards of the world for we are part of a realm superior to any institution here on earth.

The definitions above make the whole concept well within the grasp of every believer and even more so, the leaders of Friendship Groups. The process is not as complicated as it seems. First we merely need to show and explain to those that God has put in our pathway the “how to” of being a disciple of Jesus Christ. This requires just a relay of what we have learned and accomplished in our own walk, up to that point.

Much as a business person, we only need to present what the salvation which we enjoy implies. We point out all the benefits of this so “great salvation”. We concentrate on pointing out how this plan has worked out for our lives. We share all the wonderful blessings that has come our way since becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ and the same call that is over their lives in that specific hour.

Hebrews 4:12, “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

As they lend their ear to hear what the Spirit has to say to their hearts, we just need to present the Word which will work through lives in ways we don’t understand but are very real. We don’t need to access infinite resources as we have the greatest resource in the Word of God. Any other resource is a mere frosting on the cake for what he has given mankind to search.

Although we may have no formal professional training we can lean on a training that supersedes anything man had to offer. In order for mankind to be reached Jesus could not rely on the mere knowledge of man to fulfill his desire for humanity so he has given us also access to his Holy Spirit. His Spirit is the power of God to go beyond our human limitations in ministering to others, especially the lost.

The definition denotes that teaching can be simplified even more without even saying a word. Learning does not necessarily need to be accomplished through volumes of information but can also be learned and understood by example or experience. Every instance, when we get together in our Friendship Group we are teaching by our example, as we lead them to experience, for themselves, who Jesus is and what he can do in the life of a humble and contrite heart. As a leader you need to ask God for his mirror to be evermore present before you so that every thought, action or reaction may be clearly seen for what it is; that everything we do be subject to the mind of Christ.

Conclusion

We all have been mandated to teach and to share what it is that the Lord wishes for us to observe and follow. This is accomplished both through our words and our deeds. Let us cast fear to the side and fulfill his mission so that mankind may be able to enjoy what we have been able to experience. Go; make disciples, teaching them...



LESSON

43

The Imparting Spirit

By Steve Moran

Key Scripture: Romans 12: 6-8

“Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; 7 or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; 8 he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.”

Introduction

These verses under consideration fall into the category of what are termed the motivational gifts. These are deemed to be important for the building of the church body. As we respond to the call to go and make disciples we can clearly see that the leader of the Friendship Group has been given one or more of these gifts for the building of lives within the kingdom of God.

Ministry

Being a Friendship Group Leader carries us into the dimension of ministry. Though the term transmits a process of initiation and ordination into ministry that is very much a part of our beliefs, it also brings to surface the need to be ministry minded. The term ministry has many definitions of which here are a few for our consideration:

Minister

- a member of the clergy
- the superior of some religious orders
- a head of a government department
- a diplomatic agent, usually ranking below an ambassador, representing a state or sovereign in a foreign country
- a person or thing used to achieve or convey something
- to attend to the needs of someone
- to provide something necessary or helpful
- Latin, *minister* "servant," from minus "less"

We understand from this explanation that to minister can be steered in different directions. Our purpose in the Strategy of Jesus is not to raise up a body of clergy or religious leaders. The purpose of the Friendship Groups is to provide the necessary elements and ambience to nurture the making of disciples through teachings.

As leaders of Friendship Groups we do not represent a government department or a country here on earth but do represent the heavenly kingdom of our Lord and Savior. We need to acknowledge that we are his representation here on earth. As ministers we reflect the love and ideals that Jesus embraces and need to convey these to those who are under our care.

The Friendship Group leader must take precaution not to be so focused on his presentation or administration of the structure of the group that he is deflected from what is the core concern of the group, the individual. As we impart the lesson before us, it is not to prove our preaching or teaching skills and abilities, but to attend the real needs of those who are listening to what is presented. The leader is there providing something necessary or helpful for the listener to take the next step or to walk the next mile.

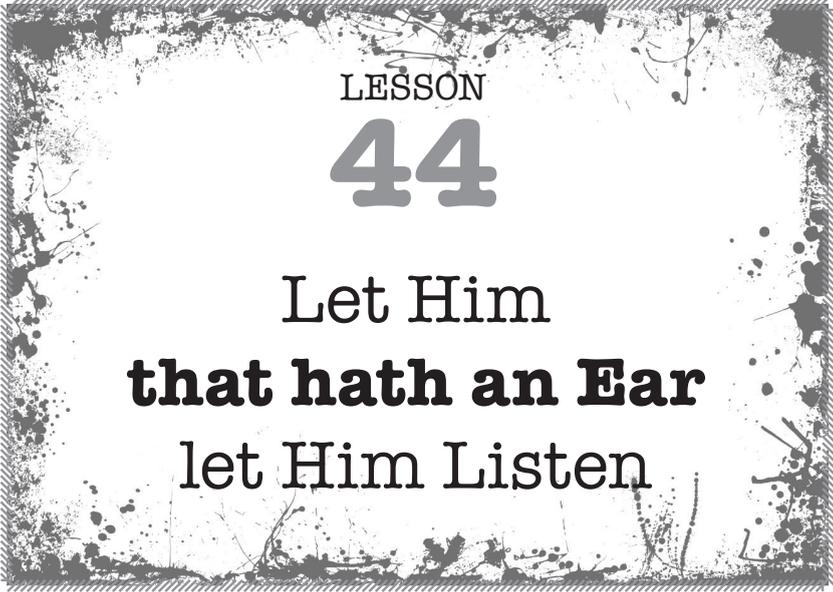
We must ask the Lord to make us sensitive to the needs of those present in each session so that the teaching will be targeted to the area that is lacking guidance and direction. Since the Spirit is our guide we must be flexible and sensitive to follow the lead of the Holy Spirit to what is of urgency in that session.

When one has been given the opportunity to lead a group it is to secure the believer on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief cornerstone. The privilege of leading the group allows us the opportunity to exhort those present. Of great importance here is to distinguish difference between exhorting and scolding. Jesus indicated that his purpose was not to condemn but to seek and save that which was lost. Our effort should be focused on saving the lost and not sending them to the pit of hell. To exhort can be best considered as words that will inspire motivation, encouragement and edification. We must take care not to take down what God has built up. Those that listen are for the most part neophytes that need to be nurtured and cared for so that they may attain a maturity of steadfastness and immovability.

The force that will facilitate such a state of stability is not achievable without the Spirit of God working within our lives to teach and exhort those under our leadership to those levels he desires for their lives. We need to humble down every time we have to minister to a Friendship Group so that he will make our teaching one of motivation, encouragement and inspiration. Jesus best said it, "...For without me you can do nothing" (John 15:5b). He is the only one who can equip and anoint us for this great task at hand.

Conclusion

We have been given an awesome opportunity to be used by God to enhance and expand the kingdom of God. The ability to impart a teaching requires that we remain connected to the source of all wisdom, knowledge and counsel. Let us speak, not just a word, but the words that reflect a message of God for those listening, encouraging and motivating their walk with Christ.



LESSON

44

Let Him
that hath an Ear
let Him Listen

By Steve Moran

Key Scripture: Revelation 3:22

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

Introduction

In the Friendship Group one area of vital importance is the need to use the five senses that God has given us for the success of each group. One of the most important senses has to do with our ability to hear and listen while our brain processes the information received. Here we see that the Lord longs for someone to listen and hear what is in his heart for each respective church and the lives they represent.

The Need to be Heard

A pastor several years ago had the need to travel a distance of 2 hours from his home to the church he was leading with all those of this family. 2 hours to get there and 2 hours to come back may lead you to feel sorry for the wife and family that had to endure this trip up to 7 days a week, depending on the activity or need of the church. However, on further scrutiny, when the wife was asked as to her take on this seemingly endless number of trips, her response was surprising. She declared that on looking back in retrospect to those trips, she regarded them as some of the most joyful of her life. How can that be, one may wonder? What she revealed was that those 4 hours was her opportunity to have the full attention of her husband where no one could disturb what she wished to divulge from her heart as they journeyed back and forth. This underlines the basic need in every man and woman to be heard.

Sympathy or Empathy

Those that attend Friendship Groups are those that wish to be heard and not just seen as an adornment of the group. These are real people with real needs and searching for answers. We must learn not only to be good orators but good listeners as well. For this, we must be able to know what it is to listen with sympathy versus empathy:

Sympathy

- Feelings of pity or sorrow for someone else's misfortunes.

Empathy

- The ability to understand and share the feelings of another.

Though having sympathy for someone's misfortunes is not wrong, there is a level that is superior to mere sympathy and that is that of empathy. Empathy goes beyond sympathy, making connection with the spirit and heart of another to the point that they really believe that you really care. The statement that the people don't care how much you know but how much you care cannot be over emphasized.

The following are recommendations in respect to steps that can be taken to connect with those within our groups, providing the basis for even more powerful intercessory prayer:

- 1.** Listen in a way that shows that you are genuinely interested.
- 2.** Take into account every expression of the one before you, whether verbal or non-verbal, as these are both means of communicating and reaching out for help.
- 3.** Don't be judgmental of what might proceed out of their mouths, as they may be merely frustrated because no one has stopped to truly listen to what they have to say.
- 4.** Listen with compassion and love for their souls.
- 5.** Validate their words with signs of acknowledgement.
- 6.** Attempt to walk in their shoes, which requires that we leave our feelings aside and identify with their feelings of pain, frustration, anger, sadness, desperation or whatever other feeling they may be experiencing.

The effort here is to go beyond a mere formality and actually enter into the world of the other individual and attempt to see life through their eyes. Jesus displayed this ability to make connection with people, as seen with his encounter with the Samaritan woman. He went beyond a mere acknowledgement of a woman fetching water from a well to a very deep and penetrating dialogue that impacted her in such a way that her life was forever changed.

God has given us this special ability to listen with empathy to those around us. A Friendship Group leader should make every effort to not just merely have their attendants as acquaintances but develop a relationship where their needs have been exposed and shared by the leader. There is a great sense of relief when one feels that they are not alone in their battle that is before them. That there is someone who feels their pain and sufferings, gives a great sense of hope as well as heals the wounds of their hearts as they are shared the love of God, through the leader's empathy.

Once we understand where they are coming from and identify which feelings they are experiencing, making them our own, the ability to intercede on their behalf will be more effective and powerful in bringing down the strongholds that bind them, stunting their relationship with God. We are God's agents to take them to his feet where they can experience the genuine love they have so longed and searched for.

Conclusion

There is world full of people who just want to be heard and understood. We have been chosen by God to be his ears here on earth and listen and connect with these individuals whose lives need to be transformed. If we are successful, the Samaritan women around us will bring whole cities of people to come and receive their healing and deliverance. Go out and listen!



LESSON

45

Do it Heartily as unto the Lord

By Steve Moran

Key Scripture: Colossians 3:23-24

“And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.”

Introduction

We are reminded by Scripture that our calling to be Friendship Group leaders should be received with fear and trembling. What a privilege to think that out of over 6 billion people here on earth that we have been chosen by God to perform a great service for mankind, that only a few are privy to.

Whatever you do...

A pastor was blessed years ago with a special family that was a tremendous blessing to that congregation. The Lord blessed that family with children that were also a blessing to the work of God. The youngest of the children was a young child who loved to worship God, though she was just a child. She had special distinction among all, as when she heard any comments coming her way she would simply say, "Whatever", not in a positive note but in her own little way disregarding the comments directed toward her.

The responsibility of leading a Friendship Group is one that puts our focus on the word "whatever". According to the verse we have considered here, this denotes that no matter what aspect of the Friendship Group is under consideration, we need to consider it as a vital element that is under the scrutiny of our principal leader, Jesus Christ. Jesus has our whole effort under careful observation, understanding that everything that is said or even not said during our group is subject to his eyes of love and concern.

On one side of the coin is the everlasting fact that his love for mankind has been eternal in nature. He has never stopped loving mankind. The epitome of his love was his death on the cross of Calvary and his resurrection for the salvation of our souls. When he gave his life for humanity he did it with all his heart. He did not seek the easy route but chose to take the most difficult and pain inflicting path to prove his love for us. He gave no consideration to the agony, shame or pain to be suffered on our behalf. He gave what was his best for us so that we may enjoy his best for our lives. He disregarded everything he would have to endure so that we might enjoy eternal life.

As we flip this coin over we realize that we fused into this same coin, however, with a different face but infused with the

same love. Therefore as we have opportunity to assist in kingdom building our motivation is material on the recognition of men. To mankind we say, "Whatever" disregarding whatever they interpret our effort to be. Within the heart of the true Friendship Group leader is a love that cannot be measured or fathomed. Our motivation is not the recognition of men or their accolades but is driven by the love of God that was extended into our lives and daily abounds more and more.

As a Friendship Group leader we prepare for the group. As we stand in front of the group and as we pray for the group it must be more than an act of lip service but one of heart service. Paul encourages the church members that whatever we do in this life we must keep our focus on who we are doing this for. We need to make sure that every step in the process of the Friendship group be done, not with a poor, unfocused half hearted spirit but as Paul relates, with all our heart.

This means our effort is driven by God's love within us, a heart full of gratitude, appreciation and awe of what God has done in and through our lives. As one who is, as the saying goes, "head over heels" in love, we seek to do the best to make the one we love the happiest they can possibly be. Our focus, therefore, is not inward but Christ-ward. Everything we are doing is as if he was physically in the room with us as a proud Father waiting to see an effort of excellence from his son or daughter.

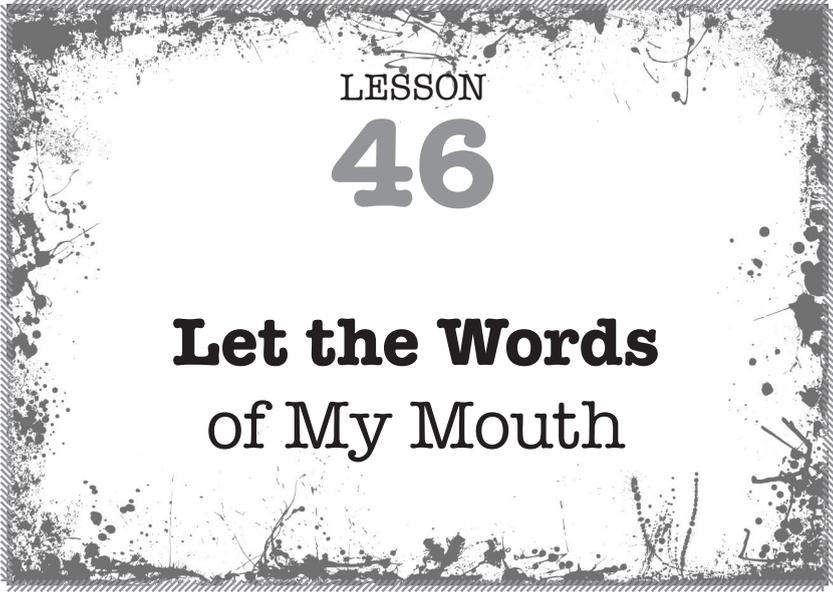
A Friendship Group leader can, so to speak, pull the wool over the eyes of those in his audience, but there is one who cannot be fooled or deceived. He hears not only the words from our lips but the intentions of our heart. Our audience is greater than the non-believer before us that may be ignorant to much of which is presented, but there is also present the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. This leaves no room for mediocrity but requires, on every instance, an excellence worthy of his Majesty.

Reward

When we are true to the call for which we have been chosen, we will be duly rewarded. His promise of a reward is true and faithful as in that day he calls us into the joy of his presence with the words of, “thou good and faithful servant...” This can be of discouragement when we confuse an effort of excellence with excellence itself. Of vital importance is that we understand that God does not expect from us perfection, for while we are here on earth we will never be perfect. We are human with flaws and defects, which the Lord constantly has to shore up in our lives. What he wants from us is our best effort that we can render him within the limitations of humanity. We should not be concerned if our effort does not measure up to other leaders around us, as their best will not be able to equate what is our best. God just wants our best effort and, where we come up short, he will be there to fill in the gaps.

Conclusion

We put forth our best effort for our Friendship Group, to the best of our abilities. Where we are short he will fill in the gaps to support our effort. Our reward will not only be heavenly but the success of our Friendship Group, however, is dependent on our effort. Let's give it our best effort and we will succeed beyond our wildest imagination in expanding the kingdom of God.



LESSON

46

Let the Words of My Mouth

By Steve Moran

Key Scripture: Psalms 19:14

“Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.”

Introduction

The psalmist here makes special reference to what proceeds forth from our mouths. No where is what we say so important as in the Friendship Group. There is a saying that goes, “sticks and stones may break my bones but names will never hurt me”, which we know from personal experience, that this is not true. We must ensure that what we express be parallel with words of Jesus for mankind.

Let the words of my mouth

The Bible is careful to make full reference to the dangers of the words that proceed from our mouths, day after day.

James 3:8-11, "But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. 9 With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. 10 Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so."

As alluded to by the Apostle James, the tongue has the ability to bless but at the same time, it is capable of cursing. The tongue has the need to be bridled in all that proceeds forth from our mouths. The leader must understand that the hearts which are before him are tender and vulnerable to what proceeds from his mouth.

In the book of James we have one of the greatest recommendations for leader. He states in James 1:9, "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath." Unfortunately, because of the enthusiasm of the leader, this may tend to be the opposite, where the leader is swift to speak and slow to listen. In one Friendship Group there arose a situation where a leader said some very harsh condemning words to those he was ministering to in his group and they were making personal life changes. He was being so possessive of their lives that as he spoke he was thinking more about himself than their well-being. The words totally devastated those within the group so that another leader had to come and pick up the injured and tend to their wounds. He later asked for forgiveness for what he said but damage was already done. The account ends well as this group rallied around their new leader, were taught forgiveness and marched forward in Jesus name. How many other incidents don't end this well with these lives, instead of being firmly rooted in Christ are uprooted, wither and die.

The words that we speak are of great impact on the lives of others. As a leader we must realize that these souls have put their faith and confidence in us to give them spiritual guidance through our example, be it by actions or words. One of the most important recommendations that can be followed is the old cliché, “think before you speak”. We see that this was probably derived from James’ inspired words, but is of utmost importance. Not only must the leader be slow to speak and thoughtful, he must be above all things, prayerful and even enter into fasting before he speaks the Word. One of the greatest disciplines that can be taught to the new hearers of the Word is to wait on the Lord. This, at times, for an answer in which the leader simply states, “that is an excellent question, which I choose not to answer at the moment as I want to seek God for the best answer possible to share with you.” By doing this, the new believer will be begin to follow a spiritually healthy protocol to avoid future disaster, which can be discouraging and harmful.

Another important factor to enhance the learning atmosphere of the group is the tone and attitude of the orator. The leader must try to create a positive, secure ambience where the guard can be let down and the hearts reached. The leader must start with remembering to express the good he desires for each individual life. He must be fully express how very important they are both to the leader and to God. The leader must express the desire to listen what each person has to say. When one expresses an acknowledgment of what another person is saying this is called validation. What they are expressing does not necessarily need to be correct but leader validating the expression of the person builds trust and confidence in the leader. Once a true confidence is placed in the leader, the participants of the group are one step closer to opening their hearts to receiving the fullness of the Word.

A leader must convey to the members of his group that he truly appreciates their effort of sacrifice and time allocation of their personal lives to attend the Friendship Group. All people,

whether here or somewhere else across the globe, love to be appreciated. A few words of appreciation go a long way to sustain a commitment to a Friendship Group. Words that let them know that they are loved and appreciated by the leader are the bridge for them to understand the love of God for their lives.

Conclusion

As the psalmist declared, we pray and fast as a Friendship group leader that every word that comes forth from our mouths may be acceptable unto the Lord. In the line of thinking of movement years, we must constantly ask ourselves if this is what Jesus would have said. We are accountable, no matter the platform in which we represent Jesus, to uphold the highest standard possible in the expression of our words. If done with prayer and reflection upon his word, lives will be impacted and many will be won for the kingdom of heaven.



LESSON

47

The
Friendship Group
Discussion

By Steve Moran

Key Scripture: Acts 17:16-17

“Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. 17 Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him.”

Introduction

The portion above alludes to Paul’s missionary journey. In his journey we note that Paul has occasion to go to Mars Hill where the Greek philosophers would routinely go to present what new understanding they had in respect to life and the different aspects related.

Discussion

During the Friendship Group, one of the dynamics that makes the group more enjoyable and exciting is that of allowing for discussion. We must understand the concept of discussion in order to optimize its utilization with the Friendship Group.

Discussion:

- The action or process of talking about something, typically in order to reach a decision or to exchange ideas.
- A conversation or debate about a certain topic.
- A detailed treatment of a particular topic in speech or writing.

Upon consideration of these definitions we can see the potential of this type of interaction. For the Friendship Group leader, this is a great tool to be able to better serve his group. When discussion is encouraged, participation of the individuals is opened up within the group, but more importantly this allows the leader to be able to view several windows of discovery.

First, as the participants are allowed to express themselves, it reveals to the leader if the concept taught was understood or interpreted properly. On many occasions the leader may believe that the lesson was clear to the hearer but when he receives his feedback he realizes that they did not capture the essence of lesson as believed or desired. This forces one to consider two possible solutions. One solution is that the wording delivered by the leader was not clear or expressed in a way that was understandable. This may be a blow to the ego of some leaders but we must remember, it is not about whether our ego is hurt or not, but if the message reached the hearts of those hearers. A good way to

monitor whether we are presenting the lesson well is to have someone of your team record the session so you can view your own presentation. Many a time, we may have experienced that we were thinking one thing but expressed something else. This is why it is recommendable to audit oneself.

The second value that discussion has is to allow the leader to hear and discern what is in the heart of the believer. On one occasion a leader had opportunity to engage in conversation with what seemed to be a normal young man who was seeking to gain knowledge and wisdom. On dialoguing with this young man, it surfaced quickly that he was an atheist. He presented his argument against divine creation utilizing the Bing Bang and Darwinian theories. As this discussion proceeded further down the road, it became very apparent that what this young man had done was due to life experiences and personal hardships. He had grown bitter towards God and his atheism was more of a retaliation and frustration with God because of all that he was going through. The night began with him just listening intently to the lesson in which he was respectful and did not challenge even one of the points which was presented. If the leader had not gone over to him and begun to converse and discuss the lesson, he would have left without anyone aware of his confusion or inclination. Discussion therefore opens the door to the heart and allows one to see what they are harboring within their being.

Guidelines

We see that discussion is very important for a more whole ministration to those of the group, but the leader must know how and when to use this tool. The following are suggestions for a proper edifying discussion.

- 1.** The leader must determine the appropriate time for discussion.

2. The ambience must be one where everybody feels safe to express their thoughts.
3. The leader must thank the individual for their participation regardless of their opinion as to what was said to encourage further expression.
4. Allow each person to be able to express their opinion without interruption by others unless what they are divulging is not appropriate for the discussion, whether in content or expression.
5. If there is a need for correction, use tact and grace so as to not offend.
6. Above all else, use the Word of God as your foundation for supporting whatever argument the leader presents.
7. The intent of the open discussion is to lead the group toward a greater understanding and knowledge of the truth.
8. There is a need to discern when to cut short the discussion or not allow the discussion to go off course of the material that is the focus of the lesson.
9. The leader must always maintain control of the content, the length and format of the discussion.

Conclusion

On Mars hill Paul followed the proper protocol and was able to present the gospel of Jesus Christ to those that were there to listen. Upon being allowed to speak, he spoke what was the truth to those around, which was all centered on Jesus, which to some was a novelty as they had never even heard of Jesus. Paul's approach, having discussed the matter in a respectful but forward manner and under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, resulted in some of the men following him to learn more while those that remained stated that they wished to hear him on this matter on another occasion.



LESSON

48

Increasing in Wisdom

By Steve Moran

Key Scripture: Luke 2:52

“And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.”

Introduction

Jesus, from the beginning of his life, set the perfect example for us to follow. We must remember Jesus was not only a great teacher but was also a leader. His invitation to men has been to follow him. Following him, we must take into consideration every aspect of his life. This portion is one of great importance.

Jesus' Early Life

On the journey to Jerusalem for the Passover, Jesus and his parents somehow parted ways to the point where, his parents distraught backtracked to try and find out what had happened to the child. When they found him he was in the temple in the midst of the doctors of the Law hearing and asking questions.

FAT

Dr. Hendricks uses an acronym which is vital for a Friendship Group Leader. He states that they have to be FAT:

- **F – faithful**
- **A – accessible**
- **T – teachable**

In being faithful, this means that the leader must be reliable, loyal, constant, trusted and believed. This furthers means to be steady in allegiance or affection. If the leader is to be listened to he must gain the confidence of the group by his loyalty and constancy. At all means possible, the leader must never abandon the group or leave them standing or sitting. There is nothing more discouraging than for the leader not to show up. In doing so, this relays a message that the person or persons of the group are not important or significant in the life of the leader. It will take considerable effort to regain the trust of the group after such a letdown. Jesus, in his interaction with the disciples, never abandoned them but kept them close, which developed an immense trust in him so that they were willing to follow him wherever he went.

Matthew 13:36

Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, "Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field."

The next important consideration is that of accessibility. A leader must not be a 9-5 clock out type leader. The leader arriving, giving the lesson and quickly departing does not allow time for one of the group participants to perhaps come close and ask a question or seek counsel. As Jesus taught and instructed his disciples he would always be accessible for a Q&A sessions. The Bible describes several instances where, when the multitude would leave, one or more of them would draw nigh to Jesus and basically let him know that they did not understand what he was talking about or the application regarding their lives.

Within the group there may be many questions in the minds of the people but they may give you a look as if they are totally aware of what has been presented but on the inside of their minds they are confused and not clear on what was presented. They may have that "deer in the headlights" look, which should not be ignored. Allow time and a safe setting to grant opportunity for them to ask. Many within the group will not want to ask while the group is in session as they embarrassed of what others will say or think. If the leader makes himself accessible to the group, this provides the perfect opportunity for them to ask, in a semi-private setting, their questions. Questions must be encouraged as we see that Jesus was not only a good hearer but a good question asker. After Jesus answered their questions he followed-up with a question of his own, asking them if they had understood.

The leader must also be teachable. This is where the leader needs to follow the lead of Jesus in that he must be willing to sit and listen. As a result of his sitting and listening, the Bible states

that he increased in wisdom. If there ever was a need for the leader it is the need for wisdom.

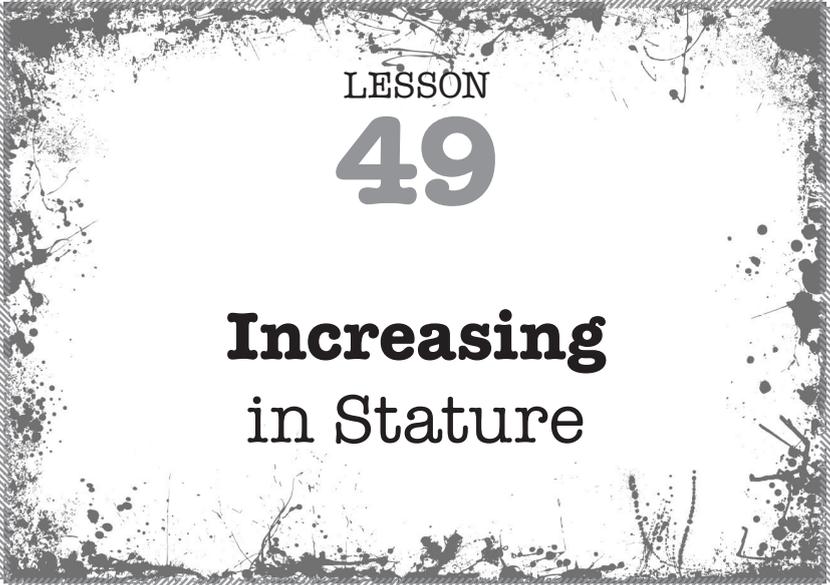
Wisdom

- The body of knowledge and principles that develops within a specified society or period.
- The quality of having experience, knowledge, and good judgment.

The first step to be achieved is that of acquiring a body of knowledge. Jesus again set the precedent as he was in the temple where the doctors of law discussed the Scriptures. The first source of knowledge and wisdom the leader should try to assimilate is that of the Scriptures. When presented the lesson, multiple related Biblical passages should be sought that relate to the lesson. The more you know as a leader the more confidence you will have in the delivery of the lesson. The more knowledge will also assure that the leader is prepared to answer most any question that may be asked. As an addendum to the Bible, other references and study guides can be used to gain good background information and supporting material for the lesson. The leader should never limit himself to what he thinks he knows but be open to learn from all other reliable sources, be it verbal or literary, to make his session more complete.

Conclusion

The leader must make every effort to grow in wisdom so that the Holy Spirit can help in accessing the information needed for the delivery of the session as well as answering any question that may arise. We must always seek to increase in wisdom, following the lead of our Master.



LESSON

49

Increasing in Stature

By Steve Moran

Key Scripture: Luke 2:52

“And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.”

Introduction

The portion of this Scripture where we'll focus our attention is that of the component of Jesus' ministry where it makes reference to his physical development and growth. In this segment we wish to consider the importance of the physical body when leading a Friendship Group.

Stature

The Greek word for stature here is *“helikia”*. The word is defined to be that which has to do with both height and age. The complete thought here is that Jesus not only grew physically and matured into a man but also speaks of his psychological, sociological and spiritual development. All these essential components are essential for a leader to be the most effective when directing his Friendship Group.

One of the aspects which are of utmost importance is the physical aspect of the work of leading a group. As a leader, there is a commitment to invest time, energy and sacrifice in order to be able to be effective. There must be a willingness to endure long hours when imparting spiritual guidance. There may be tears of joy but also tears of pain. There may be moments of rejoicing but also moments of remorse. There may be moments of celebration but also moments that are catastrophic. This wide spectrum of emotions gives the leader a roller coaster ride that can take one’s breath away.

As a consequence of the demands of leadership, the leader must make sure to take proper care of his body. Although there is little said about the life of Jesus, there are distinctive references where he took time out of his busy ministry to attend to his physical needs. What would Jesus do today? Although we live in a fast paced society, Jesus would still devote the same time and care of his physical body for he knew the path that he would have to endure.

Glorify God

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For

ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

Paul further drives home the point that we are the caretakers of the body God has designed to be his temple. No one else but we are responsible for the maintenance of our bodies. When Paul mentions here the body and the spirit, it leads us to understand that there is a definite correlation between the two. When the spirit of the leader is up and energetic, this is transmitted to the body where that upbeat spirit actually energizes the physical body to perform at an optimal level. This adrenaline flow actually helps for the body to overcome many limitations that might otherwise bog it down. The reciprocal of this is that if the spirit of the leader is down, this produces a negative effect on the body that can decrease the natural defenses of the body and make it more prone to sickness, disease or sluggishness.

You are What You Eat

On consideration of the phrase, "you are what you eat", we can spiritualize the concept and clearly admit that the more we consume the Word of God, the healthier and more vibrant spiritual life we will enjoy. We realize that Jesus declared himself to be the bread of life that nurtures one as we journey on the path of eternal life. Likewise, we must be diligent in our daily intake of physical food.

The leader must make a concerted effort to set the pace for those of his group by taking care of the temple God has given him the privilege to enjoy and use for his kingdom. This requires that the leader begin by making sure that what he is consuming is healthy and nourishing for the body. There are foods which, when consumed in proper proportions, will give the leader the energy needed to deliver a dynamic lesson. The recommended concept that is accepted today is that which is known as the rain-

bow diet. The food on the plate must be one that resembles a rainbow in that it contains multiple colors of food which make up the majority of the plate, with only a small portion dedicated to meat. Plenty of vegetables and salad with, preferably white meat would achieve this distribution.

Another consideration must be that of balancing the schedule of the day to proportion enough time for rest and renewal of alertness. An example that follows brings to mind a dynamic leader who had to be reprimanded as he would sleep erratically, while having a diet with multiple cups of coffee and sweets, such as donuts or sweet bread. Needless to say, he had a close encounter with death and would have left behind a wife and small children. A dead or unhealthy Friendship Group leader will be of no value to either his family or the group or the church. The leader must set a good example of being a good steward of his temple.

Though Paul states that exercise is of little value, he did suggest that a sedentary lifestyle was of choice. Those of the day, who were considered your “gym rats”, had their attention called. In that day, the common man would walk most everywhere he went so that they were very physically fit. As a Friendship Group leader, we must also make time to maintain a body that is physically fit with engagement in aerobic activity on a regular basis. The better the circulation, the more optimally the body will function in every aspect, especially in increasing in energy and brain function.

Conclusion

A healthy vibrant leader is needed to minister appropriately to the Friendship Group God has placed into his hands and for which he is responsible. Let us lead by example in this very important area for the welfare of those under our care.



LESSON

50

Favor with God and Man

By Steve Moran

Key Scripture: Luke 2:52

“And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.”

Introduction

The last portion of this verse refers to the favor that Jesus developed over the years of preparation, with both God and man. The details of what these areas imply will be considered.

Favor with God

1 Samuel 2:26, “And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favor both with the LORD, and also with men.”

Proverbs 3:4, "So shalt thou find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man."

In these verses we see that Jesus denoted to having the favor of God in respect to him being God man. This portion can be translated as one who makes God happy or pleases God. Having the favor of God is of vital importance for the Friendship Group leader. When the leader is pleasing to God there is no limit to the manner in which the Lord can support all that he declares or acts upon. The prophet Samuel, a man called by God, had a similar distinction of having found the favor of God. If we as leaders desire to have a powerful cell group ministry, we must search and seek out such a distinction.

This type of favor requires a life of the leader that is consistent in consecration to the Lord. This requires a personal devotional life that is complete and thorough. The "big three" must constantly be in operation in the life of the leader. These three are praying, fasting and the reading of the Word. If one is going to give a session of one hour in duration, a strong recommendation is that the leader applies himself with at least an hour sometime prior. As the saying goes, "much prayer, much power; little prayer, little power; no prayer, no power."

Favor with Man

We see a direct correlation between having favor with God and with man. The sequence is important to consider. In order for man to have favor with his fellow man, he must first have favor with God. As we look throughout Scripture, we see how the favor of God leads to having a special anointing where one is respected and elevated in the eyes of man. The Scripture states in the case of Joseph, "that God was with Joseph". In that Joseph had the favor of God, he rose from the oblivion of slavery to the right hand of Pharaoh, having a special divine favor that was

honored and respected by men both of prominence and even prisoners. Likewise, we have the account of Daniel and his three friends who, even though in a foreign environment with strange customs and beliefs, were able to impact all of those around them. They, as well, being men of principles and favor with God, were exalted to positions of authority and prominence. Being that the Lord is the same yesterday, today and forever, we must not discount the opportunity before us to find the favor of man, no matter the socioeconomic status they may have. The plan of God for salvation must reach every member of our society. Therefore, it is our responsibility to position ourselves before God in such a manner that God will exalt our ministry to impact even those of the upper echelon.

Another facet of increasing in favor with man relates to his development on the social level. A recommended book for social development would be Andrew Carnegie's book "How to Win Friends and Influence People". It is to be reiterated that the most important factor in influencing the social sector is very dependent on our relationship with God. However, there a practical helps, as found in the aforementioned book that will be of great value for the leader who wishes to grow in this area of his life. Not only will he grow socially but the trickle down effect will be transmitted to those of his group, creating future leaders who will be already developed in this very important area.

A statistic that highlights the need for social development regarding cell group ministry needs to be reviewed. In the Friendship Group, the three goals include to increase in relationship one with another. This is very important, especially for those that have lived solitary lives with support, or on the opposite spectrum those who have been surrounded with bad influences most of their lives, whether it be family or friends. The studies reveal an interesting finding in that those who do not have a network around them of at least eight acquaintances will not endure in their new walk of faith but regress to their former lives and influences. From this information, the leader

must assure that a circle of positive, spirit-filled influences are around each new believer to nurture their spiritual and social development. This is one of the holes we need to mend in our nets so that more of those that are brought on board may not slip back to their sinful sea of perdition.

Conclusion

If you take the development of Jesus to heart, there is no reason why we cannot achieve the same impactful ministry that he enjoyed. Envy, criticism and rejection will always hover around, but if we can apply these principles, the lives that will be transformed and won for the kingdom will be worth every tear shed, every ridicule endured and every derogatory comment sent our way. Let's assure that we create and nurture the family that they may grow healthy physically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually.



LESSON

51

Train the Child

By Steve Moran

Key Scripture: Proverbs 22:6

“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.”

Introduction

From this portion of Scripture we learn that every parent has a challenge before them which is of paramount proportions. If the parent takes on this responsibility, the reward is great, as the perpetuation of the proper way will be passed on to generations to come.

Training

Although this verse refers to young children of a blessed couple, there are applications that can be addressed here. Part

of the responsibility of the parents is to commit themselves to not only in respect to food on the table but also in facilitating the development of the child, through a process of education.

Another word for training is to educate. The definition of the word educate is the following:

- To give intellectual, moral and social instruction to someone.
- Give training in or information on a particular field.

As Friendship Group leaders, we too are in the business of educating and training to what the Bible refers to as babes in the Lord or new hearers of the Word. The leader must have a passion to duplicate oneself in another. For this to be realized, instruction in respect to the intellect, morality and social areas of the person need to be addressed on a consistent, frequent schedule.

The new members of the Friendship Group should be considered as babes in the Lord, incapable of digesting heavy meals. Just as each child has different likes and dislikes, the leader must determine what the preferences of the members of his group are in order to properly nourish and strengthen them to grow properly. They must be spoon fed only for a short period of time; thereafter, they must learn to feed themselves.

In order to properly train and teach the members of the group, the function of the leader, in respect to the educational process, must be defined. According to John Milton Gregory, "the true function of the teacher is to create the most favorable conditions for self learning. True teaching is not that which gives knowledge but that which stimulates pupils to gain it. One may say that, he who teaches best teaches least."

The leader must lead the student on a journey of discovery. In order for the students to discover for themselves new truths, the leader must be able to measure the level at which the learners are and how best to create an environment where they can

learn the best. In order to best serve the members of their group, the leader must have a clear understanding of who a learner is. A learner is one who is regarded as a discoverer, an investigator, and a doer.

“If you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures” (Proverbs 2:4).

“You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me” (John 5:39).

These verses are encouraging the leader to convey to his members a spirit of discovery. They are to be led on that greatest journey of discovery in their lives as they seek out, not only divine wisdom but search for eternal life through Jesus Christ. The leader must instill in his members the discipline of searching for new discoveries each and everyday as they travel down life's journey.

The end of the hunt is not just to discover a treasure that will enrich their lives by mere possession but what will be done with the treasure once obtained.

“But be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves” (James 1:22).

As leaders, we cannot be satisfied that our members have in their possession a wealth of knowledge and information. The goal is for them to not only cherish their new found treasure but to help them discover the life transforming power of applying the newly discovered wisdom to their personal lives.

There is nothing more exciting than seeing a new hearer of the Word apply it to his own personal life. The application of the Word, along with the powerful results produced, will not only transform their lives but will give them a hunger to continue to seek more of this new found treasure.

Conclusion

The leader must make a commitment to train his members to a level of maturity where they are self-sustaining. This training will pass on the greatest treasure for mankind, that is, eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord to future generations and expand the kingdom of God with the goal that no one should perish but have everlasting life.



LESSON

52

Learn to Do Well

By Steve Moran

Key Scripture: Isaiah 1:17

“Learn to do good; seek justice, rebuke the oppressor; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow.”

Introduction

Here we are reminded of one of the goals that must be maintained in the minds of members of the Friendship Group. They must be motivated to learn, not only that which is good but how to do that which is good for all those around them. They are, among other things, to be seekers of justice, those who rebuke the oppressor, defenders of the fatherless and those who plead for the widow.

Four Levels of Learning

The duty of the leader is to lead the members of his group through the process of learning the fullness of the gospel. This learning must first be understood for it to be implemented to those of the group. Educators have divided the process of learning into four different levels.

The first level is regarded as the level of *Unconscious Incompetence*. This first level is one where the student is in ignorance but does not realize that he/she dwells in ignorance. The new participants may fall into this category, as in today's world many are ignorant or have a very vague idea of what the Scriptures really say and how it applies to their lives.

The second level of learning is known as Conscious Incompetence. This is a level where the student begins to realize that he/she knows that he doesn't know. At this level one must pray that, on this self discovery or from listening to the leader, their hunger has been stirred in such a way that there will be an incessant desire for more and more.

The third level is deemed as "Conscious Competence". In this level the student has now been taught and trained to use a new found skill that was not previously learned. This is comparable to the skill of riding a bicycle. At the beginning of the learning curve, there is much fear and intimidation of a seemingly insurmountable skill. After several falls and scrapes and bruises, one finally becomes able to maintain one's balance and ride without falling. At the beginning of this stage, however, there is considerable attention to detail as to the steps needed to accomplish a successful use of the skill. One is thinking about all the "how to" steps involved each and every step of the way which describes this third level. As a new student of the Word, one has to constantly remind oneself of what the right actions are needed in order to portray Christ in a way that would represent

him well. Fortunately, the believer is not left alone but has been given the gift of the Holy Spirit to facilitate the proper behavior as a follower of Jesus.

The fourth level is referred to as “*Unconscious Competence*”. In this level one becomes so competent that one no longer even needs to think about what he/she is doing or about how to do it. When one reaches this level, one is able to mount a bike and take off and maintain one’s balance without even having to think about what he/she is doing. This ascends to the level where, as they are in a skill, they can be going through the motions unconsciously thinking about other things as they are performing it. How many times have we not been driving our vehicles and so concentrated on other things in our minds that we seem totally oblivious to where we are going or how we even got there. In the Christian life this is an ultimate goal where the power of the Holy Spirit is so dominant in our lives and the Word is so embedded that we are walking along life’s journey in such a manner where our Christianity is no longer something we have to dwell upon constantly but has become a lifestyle. We have become Christ-like in our every walk of life so that we act, speak and react in such a way that Christ is reflected through us.

The challenge for the Friendship leader is motivating the people to want to begin the journey through this cycle. This process is what marks a challenge for the teacher. He/she must be able to encourage the student to take those steps, to not only begin the cycle but continuing the cycle and also endure all the hardships associated with acquiring a new skill. They must be informed that the bumps and bruises are to be anticipated but the victory at the end is worth it all.

It must be emphasized that that there can’t be learning without some form of stress or tension. This stress is indispensable for learning to occur. When stress, anxiety, frustration and tension lead to an imbalance in one’s life, this is not to create a negative disturbance. In this ambience of seemingly negative feelings,

there is a golden opportunity for learning. This is similar to those who, desiring to learn to swim, just stand looking at the water with a desire to learn how to swim. But it isn't until someone pushes them in or they slip and fall in that there is a sudden urgency to learn how to swim or drown.

Conclusion

The Lord wishes for us to not only begin the cycle but run through the whole cycle, but with the promise that he will accompany us every step of the way. Paul clearly wanted to convey to the believer, *“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28)*. The hardships and challenges that come our way are but new opportunities to develop our skills. Both the leader and the student become more adept in their walk with Christ.

LESSON

53

Teach **Transgressors** Your Ways

By Steve Moran

Key Scripture: Psalm 51:13

“Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners shall be converted to You.”

Introduction

Here, David sets a special goal for himself. On the aftermath of his sinful way of life, David repents for all the transgressions he has committed before God. He realizes the devastating effects of his actions and seeks to not lose what is the most precious possession in his life. The possession is not the wealth and riches of the kingdom or the dominion over the territory under his rule. The greatest possession David had was his relationship with God. There was no way possible he would let this escape from his life.

Teaching Transgressors

After David's relationship with God was restored, he did not want just to enjoy what he describes as the joy of his salvation, he was determined, out of gratitude and love, to teach others who were transgressors as well, to teach them the way of the Lord. He obviously did not want them to go through his experience or even worse and be cut off from God. He realized that the most horrid and devastating state that men can experience is to be separated from the grace of God.

David's goal was to teach transgressors the ways of the Lord in such a manner that they would be converted to the Lord. To accomplish this for those of our Friendship Groups, we must pursue some basic teaching goals to achieve this success. There are three goals that we will take into consideration to realize the conversion of the sinners to the Lord. The first goal is to teach people to think. The goal, here, is to change the person's way of thinking. In the case of repentance, there must be more than sincere regret for what is done. One of the definitions is that there must be a change of attitude, a new way of thinking and a change of direction. This requires more than just a change of behavior. Many, new to Christ, will incorporate, for example, the standards of holiness in obedience to the new order presented them to become part of the family of God. This is excellent in that they do submit to the standards set in place but they must bet taken a step further. In order for there to be long lasting results and an adoption of holiness as a lifestyle, they must, together with the change of behavior, have a full understanding as to the why. This may require a stretching of their minds to a new more profound understanding. This understanding may make their head hurt but it could change the course of their life for the remainder of days here on earth. New believers have been known to express that their heads do actually hurt from all the new knowledge they are acquiring.

The next goal is to teach people how to learn. We live in a world where we are inundated with information but not taught how to learn. To be able to learn to the fullest extent, one must follow a certain procedure. When one studies the body, what one sees initially is the body as a whole, with all its functioning parts working together to enjoy optimal living experience. To be able to learn about and comprehend the full majesty of its function, one must proceed from the whole to identifying each individual part and understanding the function and how it plays into the overall scheme of life. The leader must not only break it down into bite size pieces but must also be able to go in reverse, where once all the distinctive parts of the equation have been understood, how they all come together to form a whole. Each aspect of our Christian walk must be explored from the smallest detail to the whole picture the plan of salvation has for all mankind. The fascination of breaking down our walk with Christ, from the body as a whole to each detail which he has created for us to enjoy, will hopefully create a learner, not for just a season, but for a lifetime.

The third goal to achieve is teaching people how to work. Learning is not something that just randomly appears or descends from heaven. The leader must be careful not to spoon feed his students so that if the leader is not around they will starve to death. In Paul's letter to Timothy, he recommends: "*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*" (2 *Timothy* 2:15). The word "study" has many definitions, but the one here emphasizes the need to work at our salvation, signifying a personal effort to gain knowledge. They, not just the leader, must make a personal effort to gain knowledge that will deepen their relationship with God. They are not to rely on anyone else but themselves and take ownership for their own walk with Christ. The leader must resist the temptation to make the learning only one sided.

A true learning process requires from the student to take on the elements necessary for complete learning that include reading, listening, writing and speaking. The student must be challenged with questions that he/she has to think about, talk about and find solutions for. The leader cannot be afraid to leave students scratching their heads after a study. This is good and healthy, when intentionally purposed. Another aspect not to fear is that of failure. If the student goes through an occasion of failure, the student must be advised, as part of the learning process, that it will require effort. The disciples were confronted with a great failure as they were unable to deliver a boy that was demon possessed. However, when they went to the master later to inquire as to why they had failed in their attempt, his allowance for their failure provided an opportunity to learn a great truth and provide them the key for a successful ministry as he taught them about the importance of fasting and prayer.

Conclusion

If the goals of teaching are met by the leader, this will produce a group that is healthy and flourishing. Not only will transgressors be taught but they will be converted and transformed. This transformation will be long lasting and perpetuated, as the truths learned will be internalized from mind to the heart. This will result in a bountiful harvest of new souls for the kingdom of God.

