

DISCIPLE YOUR DISCIPLERS

Manual • 2014



the STRATEGY of *Jesus*
FRIENDSHIP GROUPS

53 LESSONS FOR *leaders, timothys and hosts*

Apostolic Assembly



of the Faith in Christ Jesus

Disciple *your* Disciplers 2014

53 Lessons for Cell Group Leaders

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53 Lessons
for Cell Group Leaders
MANUAL 2014



Apostolic Assembly
of the Faith in Christ Jesus

Presentation

THE KEY IS TO MAKE LEADERS



Through his example, our Lord Jesus Christ showed us the key to the growth of the Church: to make disciples. A good disciple will always be an effective leader in the Mission of the Church.

This is why the Strategy of Jesus Committee has prepared this 2014 manual **“Disciple your Disciplers”**, for apostolic pastors to have 53 excellent lessons to equip and motivate their leaders, hosts, timothys of Friendship Groups. This is the book that helps pastors during their Weekly Leaders Meeting.

These lessons are written by pastors with much experience and success in the Seven Gears of the Strategy of Jesus: Bishop Joe Aguilar, Bishop Francisco Quezada, Bishop Elias Paez, Bishop Arcadio Peña, Pastor Rogelio Razo, Pastor Misael Zaragoza, Pastor Andy Provencio, Pastor Pastor Arthur Ocegüera and Pastor Steve Moran.

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May God use these lessons in our churches in the United States and our entire sister churches in Mexico, Central America, South America, the Caribbean, Europe, Africa and Asia!

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

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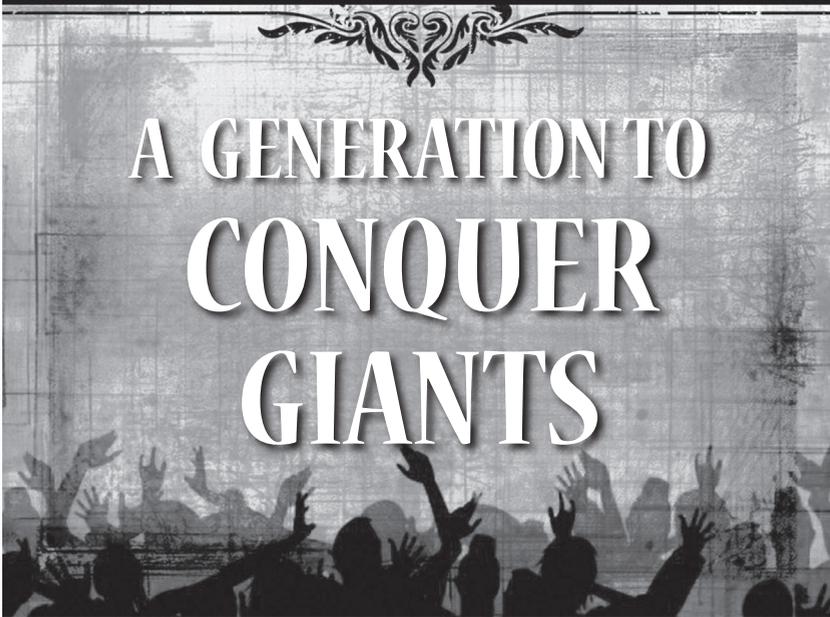
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LESSON 1



A GENERATION TO CONQUER GIANTS



BIBLE TEXT:

Genesis 6:4 *“There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.”*

INTRODUCTION:

There have always been giants in the history of humanity that hinder conquest. Ever since ancient days, man has struggled to be a conqueror and has found that in everything he undertakes, there are “giants” that one must fight.

No leader has accomplished anything by pleading and begging, but by determination to overcome the obstacles that get in the way. The history of Israel is a great legacy that helps us understand that in order to possess a vision or a territory, there are many giants to be defeated.

1) THAT WHICH HINDERS CONQUERING:

- The giants. **Numbers 13:32-33**, *“And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.”*

2) WHAT ARE THEY CALLED IN THE BIBLE?

- a) Emims. **Deuteronomy 2:10-11** *“The Emims dwelt therein in times past, a people great, and many, and tall, as the Anakims; which also were accounted giants, as the Anakims; but the Moabites call them Emims.”*
- b) Zamzummims. **Deuteronomy 2:20** *“(That also was accounted a land of giants: giants dwelt therein in old time; and the Ammonites call them Zamzummims)”*
- c) Rephaims. **Genesis 14:5** *“And in the fourteenth year came Chedorlaomer, and the kings that were with him, and smote the Rephaims in Ashteroth Karnaim, and the Zuzims in Ham, and the Emims in Shaveh Kiriathaim,”*
Joshua 13:12 *“All the kingdom of Og in Bashan, which*

reigned in Ashtaroth and in Edrei, who remained of the remnant of the giants: for these did Moses smite, and cast them out."

- d) Anakites. Numbers 13:33** *"And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight."*

3) JOSHUA AND CALEB DEFEATED THEM.

News that Joshua and Caleb were the leaders that stood against the giants had reached Jericho and fear had fallen upon the inhabitants of Jericho. If Joshua and Caleb did not fear the kings of the giants, Sihon and Og, much less would they fear the men of Jericho. The devil trembles when a leader is willing to confront his giants, since through the power of God, there is no giant that will remain standing.

- **Joshua 2:10-11** *"For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath."*
- **Joshua 14:12-15** *"Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims were there, and that the cities were great and fenced: if so be the LORD will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the LORD said. And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of*

Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance. Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite unto this day, because that he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel."

4) WHO WAS KING OG?

- **Deuteronomy 3:1-13** *"...And we took all his cities at that time, there was not a city which we took not from them, threescore cities, all the region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan. All these cities were fenced with high walls, gates, and bars; beside unwalled towns a great many. And we utterly destroyed them, as we did unto Sihon king of Heshbon, utterly destroying all the men, women, and children, of every city. But all the cattle, and the spoil of the cities, we took for a prey to ourselves. And we took at that time out of the hand of the two kings of the Amorites the land that was on this side Jordan, from the river of Arnon unto mount Hermon; (Which Hermon the Sidonians call Sirion; and the Amorites call it Shenir;) All the cities of the plain, and all Gilead, and all Bashan, unto Salchah and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan. For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of giants; behold, his bedstead was a bestead of iron; is it not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon? Nine cubits was the length thereof, and four cubits the breadth of it, after the cubit of a man. And this land, which we possessed at that time, from Aroer, which is by the river Arnon, and half mount Gilead, and the cities thereof, gave I unto the Reubenites and to the Gadites. And the rest of Gilead, and all Bashan, being the kingdom of Og, gave I unto the half tribe of Manasseh; all the region of Argob, with all Bashan, which was called the land of giants."*

5) KING SIHON

- **Deuteronomy 1:4** *“After he had slain Sihon the king of the Amorites, which dwelt in Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan, which dwelt at Astaroth in Edrei:”*

6) “TO HIM WHO SMOTE GIANTS”

God is looking for leaders who will trust in Him to destroy giants. Leaders who will not have faith in their own strength, but have faith in the power of God, the One who destroys giants through us. Today, the Lord is looking for a David, a Moses, a Joshua, a Caleb, etc.

- **Psalms 136:17-26** *“To him which smote great kings: for his mercy endureth for ever: And slew famous kings: for his mercy endureth for ever: Sihon king of the Amorites: for his mercy endureth for ever: And Og the king of Bashan: for his mercy endureth for ever: And gave their land for an heritage: for his mercy endureth for ever: Even an heritage unto Israel his servant: for his mercy endureth for ever: Who remembered us in our low estate: for his mercy endureth for ever: And hath redeemed us from our enemies: for his mercy endureth for ever: Who giveth food to all flesh: for his mercy endureth for ever: O give thanks unto the God of heaven: for his mercy endureth for ever.”*

7) THE EMIMS AND REPHAIMS (GIANTS) INHABITED THE PROMISED LAND.

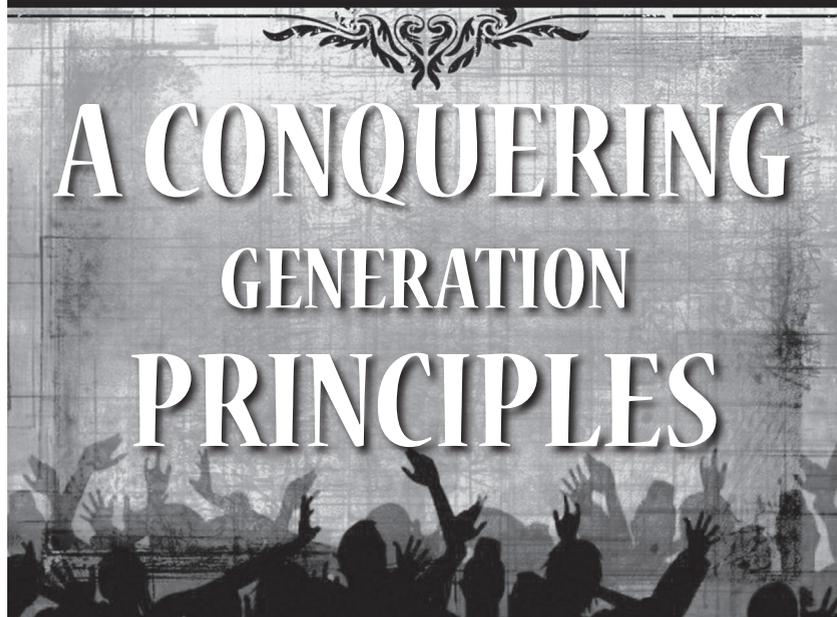
- **Deuteronomy 2:10-11** *“The Emims dwelt therein in times past, a people great, and many, and tall, as the Anakims; which also were accounted giants, as the Anakims; but the Moabites call them Emims.”*
- **Genesis 15:18-20** *“In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: The Kenites, the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims,”*

CONCLUSION:

You have to throw out your giants. **Joshua 17:14-18** *“... And Joshua spake unto the house of Joseph, even to Ephraim and Manasseh, saying, Thou art a great people, and hast great power: thou shalt not have one lot only: But the mountain shall be thine; for it is a wood, and thou shalt cut it down: and the outgoings of it shall be thine: for thou shalt drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots, and though they be strong.”*

In order to be victorious in Christ, you have to defeat your giants. They can be: pride, hypocrisy, greed, an addiction, character flaws, etc. When you decide to overcome them, you will face and destroy them in the name of Jesus Christ.

LESSON 2



BIBLE TEXT:

Joshua 1:10-11 *"Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying Pass through the host, and command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals; for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which the Lord your God giveth you to possess it."*

INTRODUCTION:

It is sad to read the history of the people of Israel in the desert, where out of approximately two million people, only two obtained the promise. And to think that it seemed like so

small a difference between how Joshua and Caleb thought as compared to the rest. But what a great difference it made at the end! Let us look at how each thought.

The Bible is filled with lessons from leaders who conquered, as much as leaders who failed. Their principles are what determined what each achieved.

1) THOSE WHO DID NOT CONQUER

Their principles: Moses did not enter the Promised Land because he thought of himself as someone who could not enter the Promised Land. It isn't strange, then, that he would believe the report of the ten spies rather than Joshua's and Caleb's.

- a) They did not believe in them (disbelief). **Exodus 4:1**
"And Moses answered and said, but, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee."
- b) They focused on their limitations. **Exodus 4:10** *"And Moses said unto the Lord, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue."*
- c) They compared themselves to others. **Numbers 13:31**
"But the men that went up with him said, we be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we."
- d) They exaggerate on why it cannot be done. **Numbers 13:32-33** *"And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it,*

is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of great stature. And there we saw giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight."

e) They had no knowledge of the Word.

If you want to be an overcoming leader, you will have to be constantly learning. That is to say, every successful leader remains teachable. The day that a leader thinks he or she has learned enough, that day the leader has begun his decline as a conqueror.

- **Isaiah 5:13** *"Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge: and their honourable men are famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst."*
- **Hosea 4:6** *"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children."*

2) THE CONQUERORS

Their principles:

a) Faith with works.

- **Joshua 1:10-11** *"Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying pass through the host, and command the people, saying, prepare you victuals; for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which the Lord your God giveth you to possess it."*

- **Joshua 3:5** *“And Joshua said unto the people, sanctify yourselves: for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you.”*

b) Integrity to GOD.

- **Psalms 15:1-5** *“Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbor, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor. In whose eyes a vile person is condemned; but he honoreth them that fear the Lord. He that sweareth to his own hurt, but changeth not. He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved.”*
- **Psalms 84:11** *“For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.”*
- **Proverbs 10:9** *“He that walketh uprightly walketh surely: but he that perverteth his ways shall be known.”*

c) Knowledge and Wisdom of GOD.

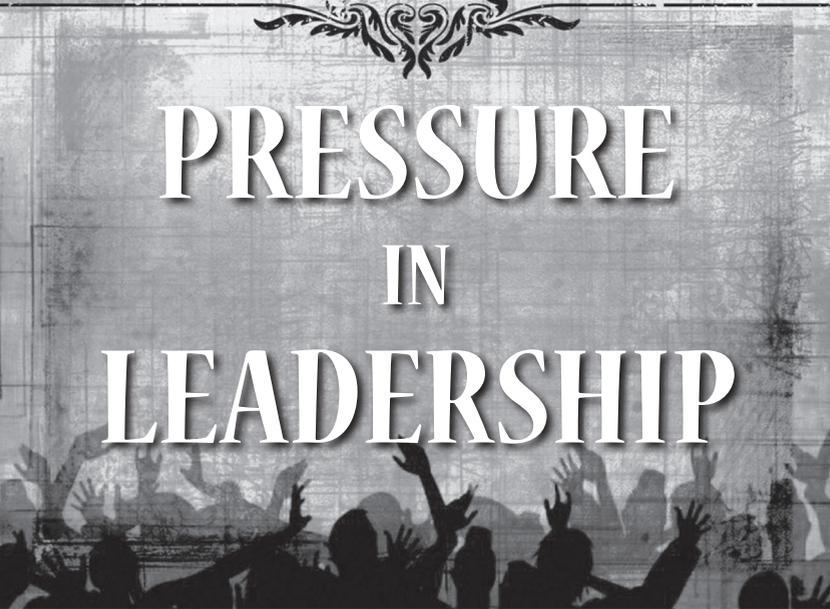
- **Deuteronomy 34:9** *“And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the Lord commanded Moses.”*
- **Ephesians 4:13** *“Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ:”*

- **2 Corinthians 10:5** *“Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;”*
- d) Strength and Courage.**
- Joshua 1:6 *“Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them.”*
- e) Obedience.**
- **Joshua 1:17-18** *“According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee: only the Lord thy God be with thee, as he was with Moses. Whosoever he be that doth rebel against thy command, and will not hearken unto thy words in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death: only be strong and of a good courage.”*

LESSON 3



PRESSURE IN LEADERSHIP



BIBLE TEXT:

James 1:1-4 *“James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting. My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”*

INTRODUCTION:

Are you a carrot that seems to be strong, but when adversity and pain touch you, you become weak and lose your strength?

Are you an egg that began with a flexible heart? Did you have a flexible spirit, but after a death, a separation, or a break up you have become hard and rigid? You look the same on the outside, but are you bitter and harsh, with a hardened spirit and heart? Or are you like a coffee bean? Coffee beans change boiling water, the very element that causes it pain. When water reaches its boiling point, coffee reaches its best taste. If you are like the coffee bean, when things get worse, you react better and cause things around you to improve.

Trials come to all people. Your attitude in those trials will reveal if your faith is strong, weak or nonexistent. As James said: you have a living faith or a dead one; your faith is genuine or not. God tells us in His Word that trials are normal in the lives of men: **Job 14:1** *“Man that is born of a woman (everyone) is of few days, and full of trouble.”* **Ecclesiastes 2:22-23** *“For what hath man of all his labour, and of the vexation of his heart, wherein he hath labored under the sun? For all his days are sorrows, and his travail grief; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night. This is also vanity.”*

1) NO ONE IS EXEMPT FROM PROBLEMS

Even Jesus Christ had problems.

John 12:27 *“Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.”*

The apostle Paul had problems in every aspect of his life.

2 Corinthians 4:8 *“We are pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not crushed. We are perplexed, but not driven to despair.”*

Likewise we need to know that problems will come to different areas of our LEADERSHIP: problems in our Friendship Group, in our church, with our friends in church, in school, in our finances, illnesses, persecution because of your faith in Christ, and even the deaths of loved ones. **James 1:2** *“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.”*

2) TRIALS HAVE A PURPOSE

There is something that has been misunderstood by many brethren: trials do not come due to sin, nor do they come to our lives as a temptation to sin, but rather to strengthen our faith. In tests we either pass or fail; we emerge victorious or defeated. When we are faced with diverse trials we need to carefully observe our response to those trials; what our attitude is.

The Bible compares true faith to gold, silver and precious stones; and false faith to wood, hay and stubble. The fire of the trial comes and the wood, hay and stubble will burn, reduced to ashes. But the gold, silver and precious stones increase in quality.

3) WE MUST NEVER LOSE OUR JOY

Why should we be joyful when we find ourselves in diverse problems? **James 1:12** *“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.”*

Blessed – a joyful and glad person, not because suffering and afflictions were taken from him, but because in the middle of trials, he fought the good fight and emerged victorious.

It is in problems that it is revealed whether you love the world or God. If you love God, you will persevere in the faith. The Apostle Peter speaks to us in a way similar as James did. **1 Peter 1:5-7** *“Though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness though manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, ye love.”*

Therefore, a Christian is not just someone who at a point in their life believed the truth regarding Jesus Christ. Instead, the Bible defines a Christian as a person who loves Christ, and that his or her love endures even while in problems.

John 15:9-10 *“As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love.”*

1 John 4:16 *“And we have known and believed the love that god hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.”*

Leaders will never abandon their vision and their love for Christ, regardless what trials come against them. In other words, your vision and your love for Christ are not for a moment, and then they disappear. No; it is a vision and a love that will persevere until the end.

Persevering in the work of Friendship Groups reveals our faith in the task that has been entrusted to us by the Lord when He said: *“Go and make disciples.”* This monumental task of making disciples of all nations requires a faith rooted in the Lord and that is excited about the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ.

4. OUR SECURITY DOES NOT DEPEND ON US

We have security, but this security does not depend on us, but rather in the power of God. **John 10:27-29** *“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto the eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand.”*

Secondly, we are secure because of the intercession that Jesus Christ continually makes for us. **John 6:39** *“And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.”* **Luke 22:31-32** *“And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not...”*

Thirdly, we are secure because the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives is a guarantee of our eternal and glorious inheritance. We were sealed as Christ’s property. **1 Thessalonians 5:23-24** *“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.”* **Psalms 37:28** *“For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever...”*

Our security in the calling to serve God is founded on these three things:

- 1) The power of God.
- 2) Christ’s intercession for us.
- 3) And, the presence of the Holy Spirit in our life.

Fellow leaders, are you going through trials? It doesn't matter what type of trials: in your family, job, friends, financial problems, illnesses, or enduring false testimony against you. Today, God has told us what to do in the middle of trials: resist, endure, and persevere in the faith.

The purpose of trials is so that the impurities of our faith are eliminated, and for our faith to be solid, radiant, and more precious than gold. God wants to give you the crown of life when you have passed through trials. God wants to give you the security of salvation when you see that no one and nothing was able to separate you from the love of God; that nothing and no one was able to snatch you from the hands of Christ.

CONCLUSION:

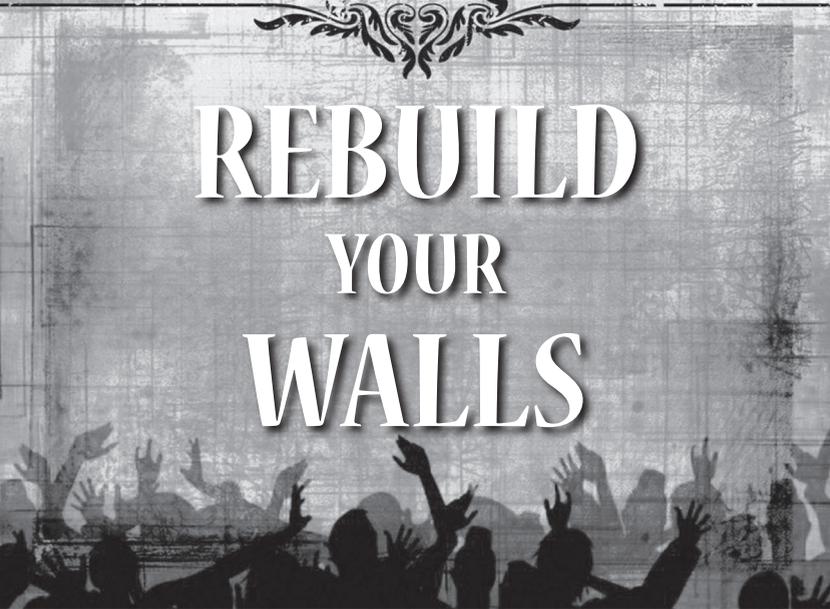
How do you resist and go through trials? If you are a leader and you love the Lord, hold on to that love. Cry out for the power of God so that it will help you persevere. Cry out for the manifestation of the Holy Ghost, which you received when you were baptized into Christ, by his Spirit. Remember that we have an advocate who intercedes in our favor. He is the only advocate that can say: *"by my suffering, by my wounds and by my blood that was shed, I know Father that You always hear me."*

Christ is telling you: *"I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not."*

LESSON 4



REBUILD YOUR WALLS



BIBLE TEXT:

Nehemiah 4:1-4 *“But it came to pass, that when Sanballat heard that we builded the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation, and mocked the Jews. And he spake before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, what do these feeble Jews? Will they fortify themselves? Will they sacrifice? Will they make an end in a day? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned? Now Tobiah the Ammonite was by him, and he said, even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall. Hear, O our God; for we are despised: and turn their reproach upon their own head, and give them for a prey in the land of captivity:”*

INTRODUCTION:

Nehemiah was a great servant of God who found out about the state that Jerusalem and the Jews found themselves in. They were *“in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down”* (**Nehemiah 1:3**).

The prophet narrates how he felt as he found out about the situation of God’s people. *“I sat down and wept...”* (**Nehemiah 1:4**).

1) WHAT YOU WILL FACE IF YOU REBUILD YOUR WALLS

Nehemiah 4:1 *“But it came to pass, that when Sanballat heard that we builded the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation, and mocked the Jews.”*

The first thing you need to prepare yourself for is the anger of those who became accustomed to seeing you defeated. *“... when Sanballat heard...”* The second thing will be that they will attempt to ridicule your decision to change your situation. *“...if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall.”*

Ridicule is the first tactic that the enemy of God’s work tends to choose to intimidate the leadership. The enemy will mock:

a) The Christians, **b)** The Church, **c)** Its Leaders, **d)** The Pastor

The devil uses mockery to:

- Attack self-esteem.
- To substitute your reasoning and faith for his logic.
- To laugh and belittle what God can do for you.

2) THE ENEMY'S SECOND ATTACK

Nehemiah 4:2 *“And he spake before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, what do these feeble Jews? Will they fortify themselves? Will they sacrifice? Will they make an end in a day? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned?”*

The enemy's second attack will consist of insulting you, so that you will desist in constructing your walls. *“What do these feeble Jews?”* That is to say, you are worthless, you cannot change, you are weak, etc... *“Will they make an end in a day?”* The exaggeration of accusations is a typical tactic in ridicule.

If a fox go up, he will tear it down. In other words, the enemy will always insult you in order to lower self-esteem. He will say: you are worthless, anything will knock you down, you will fail as a leader, etc. The devil will always send emissaries to insult you.

The enemy will insult your work. When a leader determines him or herself to do great things for God, the enemy will raise others to attack and halt the work, attacking the leader's emotions, since an offended leader will be rendered useless by Satan. This is why an overcoming leader learns to not be swayed by emotions but by the power of God.

3) LET US, THEREFORE, BUILD THE WALL

The more you advance in rebuilding your wall—your goals in leadership, the more the devil will attack you. As believers, we need to discern the work the devil is doing in our lives to hinder us from rebuilding our walls.

The enemy will want to steal your inspiration to continue in small groups, but we need to be wise. **Nehemiah 4:6** *“So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work.”*

4) THEY WERE INFURIATED

Nehemiah 4:7 *“But it came to pass, that when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashododites, heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up, and that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth.”*

If God is using you, your enemies will become angrier, and they will not only criticize you, but they will attack what you are doing to rebuild the walls. They will become infuriated and will attack you with criticism, taunts, etc. But every door that you close against the devil is a step closer to victory.

Working in the cell church model requires determination to not be moved by all the attacks that the enemy will send. He knows perfectly well that a church involved in the homes is an army that will conquer their streets, cities, states and whole nations for the glory of God.

CONCLUSION:

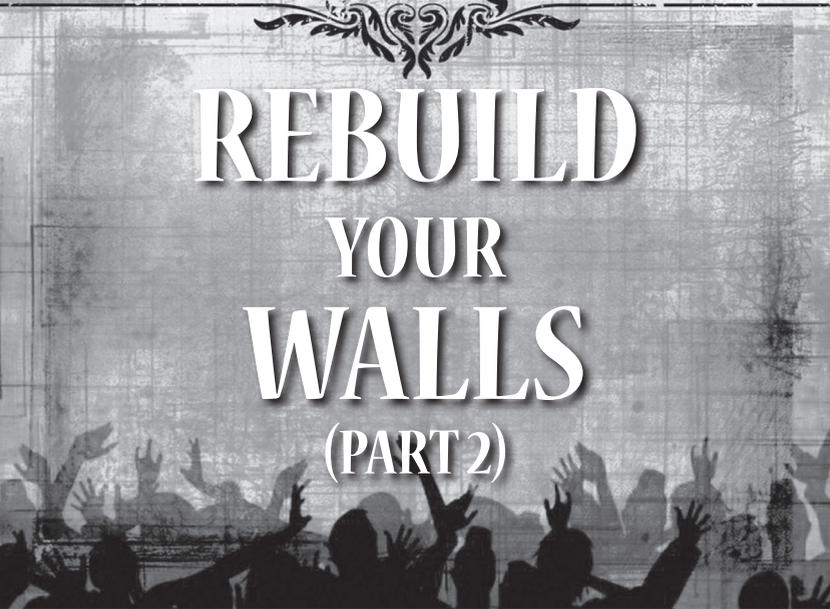
Perseverance in rebuilding the cell group model, despite the devil's opposition, is what will determine your victory in Christ.

LESSON 5



REBUILD YOUR WALLS

(PART 2)



BIBLE TEXT:

Nehemiah 4:6 *“So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work.”*

Man’s life is a heap of rubbish without the presence of God. The Bible says that “if the Lord does not build up the house...” It is vain to attempt to build a life upon a pile of debris. Attempting to win souls by our own strength is a great failure in each step towards winning over lives. We need to impregnate our efforts with prayer and energy, always seeking God’s approval.

The debris in man's life is the result of building a life without God. Where the foundation is merely sand, when life's problems come, lives collapse for lack of a solid foundation. **Matthew 7:26-27** *"And every one that heareth these saying of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it."*

1) EVERYONE CONSPIRED

Nehemiah 4:8 *"And conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it."*

Nehemiah was surprised greatly when he decided to rebuild the city walls. The enemy was not willing to yield so that the city would be built. Building up the Strategy of Jesus in our churches is not an easy thing to do. The enemy is using all kinds of discrediting, ridicule, and attack to block what the Lord is doing in our churches. As leaders, we should not be intimidated. Let us move forward and the victory will be ours.

- Attack
- Cause damage

2) WE MADE OUR PRAYER UNTO OUR GOD

Nehemiah 4:9 *"Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them."*

A Christian's most powerful weapon is prayer. It is so powerful that it will move the heavens in your favor. Prayer with faith

will move God's hand to help you. Everything that you ask for in prayer, if you believe, you can receive. The only obstacle in prayer is your own unbelief.

Mark 11:24 *"Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive the, and ye shall have them."*

It does not matter how greatly the devil attacks your leadership, you can use this weapon against him. Do not forget that "when you do the possible, God will do the impossible in your life."

James 1:6-7 *"But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord."*

Do not attempt to justify yourself before the attacks of your enemy. They won't believe your explanation. Better yet, pray to God and He will give you victory in your leadership.

3) LET US CAUSE THE WORK TO CEASE

Nehemiah 4:10-11 *"And Judah said, the strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is much rubbish; so that we are not able to build the wall. And our adversaries said, they shall not know, neither see, till we come in the midst among them, and slay them, and cause the work to cease."*

The armies of the darkness will try to weaken you when you are determined to get up. Be persistent, cast off the feelings that the devil will place on you regarding your leadership. Remember, the enemy can only attempt to make you believe that you cannot succeed, but it is up to you to believe him. He knows that he cannot hold you back, unless you believe him.

4) FEAR

Nehemiah 4:12 *“And it came to pass, that when the Jews which dwelt by them came, they said unto us ten times, from all places whence ye shall return unto us they will be upon you.”*

“From all places”. A tactic that the enemy uses to hold you back is to make you believe that from all places, everyone is plotting against you, to terrorize you and make you a victim of circumstances and thus be able to defeat you. Never allow the spirit of victimization in your leadership. Ask others to intercede for you and do not allow yourself to fear the threats of the devil.

Nehemiah 4:13 *“Therefore set I in the lower places behind the wall, and on the higher places, I even set the people after their families with their swords, their spears, and their bows.”*

CONCLUSION:

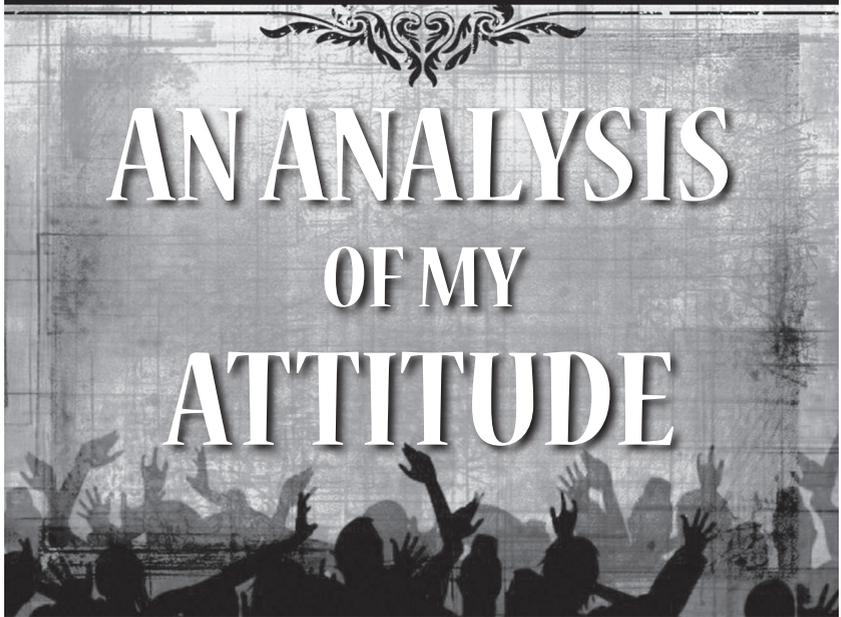
Fear is the devil’s favorite weapon to keep your life from being rebuilt upon the Rock, which is Christ.

Nehemiah 4:14-16 *“And I looked, and rose up, and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, Be not ye afraid of them: remember the Lord, which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses. And it came to pass, when our enemies heard that it was known unto us, and God had brought their counsel to nought, that we returned all of us to the wall, every one unto his work. And it came to pass from that time forth, that the half of my servants wrought in the work, and the other half of them held both the spears, the shields, and the bows, and the habergeons; and the rulers were behind all the house of Judah.”*

LESSON 6



AN ANALYSIS OF MY ATTITUDE



BIBLE TEXT:

Ephesians 4:22 *“That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;”*

INTRODUCTION:

Attitude has a great impact on our lives, because it affects us, but it can also, at times, unfavorably affect those who are around us and under our leadership. Our attitude will determine our reaction to problems in our Friendship Groups. We cannot avoid problems, but we are responsible for how we react when they arise.

Improving our attitude improves our self-esteem, and then we can observe changes in others and in our surroundings. **Luke 11:36** *"If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light."*

1) PRIDE

Pride is *"the tip of the iceberg"*. In order to fall into a state of brokenness in leadership, a leader must maintain humility. When the Lord begins to use a leader to reproduce, his or her attitude towards their authority and the people can change, and he or she can begin to harbor pride. When a leader's attitude is controlled by pride, he or she will fall repeatedly. **Proverbs 16:18** *"Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall."*

2) GREED

In the Greek *"pleonexia"* means having an unquenchable thirst for having more, which in turn causes suffering. Greed is one of the greatest causes of damage in the Lord's work. People begin to serve the Lord out of gratefulness and then, after some time, they cease to be moved by gratefulness towards God. This is when they begin to be moved by what they will receive for their labor. **Luke 12:15** *"And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."*

- Greed turns into idolatry. **Colossians 3:5** *"Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry."*

- Wealth should be a product of God's blessings, and not of greed. **Proverbs 10:22** *"The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it."*
- The love of money produces many evils. **1 Timothy 6:10** *"For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."*

3) OUR ATTITUDE IN OUR THOUGHTS

Our attitude is a reflection of how we think. In order to be able to change our attitude, we need to renew our thoughts.

Ephesians 4:23 *"And be renewed in the spirit of your mind."*

- What we speak and meditate upon. **Psalms 19:14** *"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer."*
- We act the way we think. **Proverbs 23:7** *"For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he..."*
- Guard your heart. **Matthew 15:19** *"For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies."*
- Submit your thoughts to God's way of thinking. **2 Corinthians 10:5** *"Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalthe itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."*

4) VANITY

Glamor, beauty, and the latest fashion trends are all elements that feed vanity. **Psalm 119:37** *“Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way.”*

- Reading fashion magazines and watching beauty shows incite vanity. **Psalm 101:3** *“I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me.”*
- Close your eyes to evil things. **Isaiah 33:15-16** *“He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppression, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; He shall dwell on high: his place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall sure.”*
- The lust of the eyes is of the world. **1 John 2:16** *“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.”*



CONCLUSION:

"But how many men build love upon that which is attractive,

When this fades away, they despise it without motive.

But if love would be founded on good qualities,

Love would endure throughout the ages."

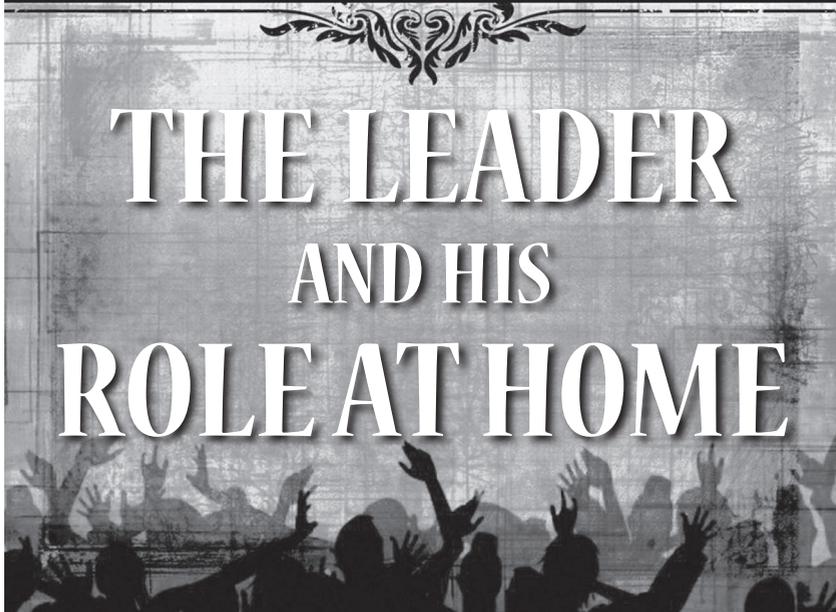
(Poem by Tranquilino Beltrán, Apostolic Pastor)

Change your attitude towards life! **Proverbs 15:13** *"A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken."*

LESSON 7



THE LEADER AND HIS ROLE AT HOME



“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth” (Genesis 1:27-28).

INTRODUCTION

God created man with various purposes. Some of them were such as to cultivate, subdue, and fill the land. Among these privileges, He also gave him the responsibility to be the head of the home. Therefore, if man does not meet his role as leader of

the home, then his family will be as ship on the high seas. The representation of man at home is very important because it carries the responsibility of developing the family nucleus, which is composed of his wife and children. God grants man the privilege of being the head of the home in order to exercise leadership in physical, emotional, and spiritual matters. Following, we will be studying about three characteristics of the leader: his diligence, his responsibility, and his urbanity.

1. THE DILIGENT LEADER

- A. Knows how to Lead:** Each family that forms a home starts with a couple. This is the beginning of the work of leadership within the home. The Apostle Peter advises about how the husband should treat his wife. *“In the same way, you husbands must give honor to your wives. Treat your wife with understanding as you live together. She may be weaker than you are, but she is your equal partner in God’s gift of new life. Treat her as you should so your prayers will not be hindered” (1 Peter 3:7 NLT).* The role of the leader in this case is to lead. It’s not about dictating, commanding, or solely giving orders; but rather it’s about leading with diligence.
- B. Is Creative:** The leader that has this quality of dynamism knows how to create and develop activities that benefit the family. Besides being creative, he knows how to delegate chores according to the abilities of each member of the family. The word of God exhorts all men who desire to serve in the work of God: *“One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)” (1 Timothy*

3:4-5). If the Friendship Group leader does not meet this requirement in his home, he won't be able to do so with the group he has been assigned. So, he should work on becoming creative, meaning that, he's looking for ways of how to take his family to another level, physically as well as spiritually. He needs to have a positive attitude, for whatever he sows is what he will reap: *"...for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap"* (**Galatians 6:7**).

2. THE RESPONSIBLE LEADER

- A. Supports:** The man, as a leader of the home, is responsible for what happens in his home. By virtue of being the head of the home, he needs to be willing to guide and protect his family. Having said this, it does not mean that he is the only who leads. But rather, along with his wife as his helpmate, he accomplishes the work of teaching them to face all difficulties and needs that the family faces. Once that the man, as well as the wife, have taken their proper places, then they will embrace the work, allowing the Lord to be the center of the home, so that they don't work in vain, as His word says in **Psalms 127:1**: *"Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it."*
- B. Profiles:** Today, more than ever, every father needs to carry out his role, instructing and guiding his children so they can live a life of respect and equity. The work of every father is to form every one of his children so that they can be ready as they discover life for themselves. It is here where it will be truly obvious what the leader as a father has deposited in the life of his children. If as

parents we deposit in them good principles, these will shine through their lives. Our children will be respectable people, full of honesty and integrity, just as the Word of God says in **Psalms 1:3**: *“And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.”*

3. THE COMMUNICATIVE LEADER

- A. Knows How to Listen:** Throughout my pastoral experience, the matter of knowing how to listen has been one of the big problems that men of excellence have faced. Not knowing how to listen has been one of the causes of frustration at home, mainly in the life of his wife. For that reason, it is important that the leader of the home learns how listen to those who God has placed under his care as a family. There are needs that need to be heard, such as: opinions, suggestions, desires, advice, fears, doubts, worries, etc. The writer of Proverbs was not mistaken when he wrote: *“A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels”* (**Proverbs 1:5**). It is important to listen, because in so doing one acquires knowledge to discern the emotional tone of the person who speaks. When the leader does not have this skill, it will be more difficult to lead his home and he will end up frustrating those around him.
- B. Is Affectionate:** The leader within the family nucleus is friendly and sweet, with his wife as well as with his children. The affectionate father maintains an intimate relationship with his family. He is not quick to punish

his children when they make a mistake, but rather, he shows mercy, correcting them based on the principles that are written in the Word of God: *“And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord”* (**Ephesians 6:4 NKJV**). The father of the home knows that his children have only been placed under his care and that one day he will have to give an account for each one of them: *“Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward”* (**Psalms 127:3**). For that reason, we need to guide our loved ones with deep paternal affection.

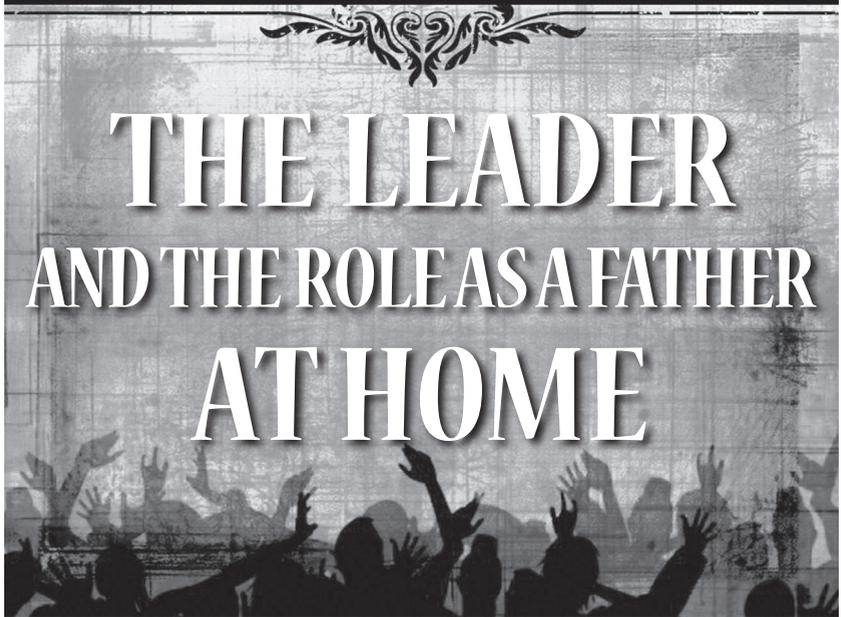
CONCLUSION

As we’ve seen in this lesson, God has given the leader the principal task of taking care of his home and meeting the needs of his family. It is necessary to say that to accomplish this, it is imperative to formulate a plan, which consists of establishing as a priority, a deep relationship with God. The Word of God gives us this guarantee: *“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you”* (**Matthew 6:33**). If we do this, it will be easier to lead our home, being diligent, responsible, and attentive to the multiple domestic needs. Let us continue seeking the face of the Lord, as Moses did; so much that God Himself said: *“I speak with him face to face...”* (**Numbers 12:6-8 NKJV**). We need God to direct us so that we can be able to fulfill this assignment of caring for our home.

LESSON 8



THE LEADER AND THE ROLE AS A FATHER AT HOME



“Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward” (Psalm 127:3).

INTRODUCTION

There is an urgent need to re-establish the role of the father in the home, since there is no one that can replace him. Even though the woman has the capacity to take care of the children, nevertheless, the responsibility falls on the father of the family. Thus, it is fitting for the father, with the help of his wife, to form their children in the different stages of their lives. In the following we will consider each of the stages, which will help as a guide for developing children.

1. THE INFANCY STAGE

- A. Development:** Studies conducted about the upbringing of children show that by the age of three they reach 50% of the development of character and personality; and when they reach the age of five, they reach 70%. Although children need love and affection during all their lives, nevertheless, in these first years, it is necessary to provide for them a good emotional atmosphere. They need to feel protected and cared for, while at the same time, learning by example: *“And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 3:15).*
- B. Formation:** At this age they start to explore and imitate what is in their surroundings. This is the moment to start with the formation of the child by talking to them about the love of God and about the special place that they have as an individual and member of the family. Also, they should be taught to value material things, such as toys and objects of the home. It is also important that at this age the child learns to respect others, such as their parents, their brothers and/or sisters, and other people.

2. THE CHILDHOOD STAGE

- A. Exploration:** This is one of the stages where the child starts to increase his/her contact with the physical world, at the same time that he/she starts to distinguish between good and evil. In this stage the child learns and retains everything he/she explores as he/she continues

to grow. It is here where the father, together with his wife, make the most of depositing moral values and biblical foundations into the lives of their children. Acquiring moral and spiritual principles, the children will be protected against the attacks that will begin to come to their lives as they continue to grow. This is why God tells the people of Israel to take the responsibility of protecting their children, teaching them the principles of His Word. *“And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up” (Deuteronomy 6:6-9 NKJV).*

- B. Instruction:** By this time the child will begin to develop at a scholastic level, a world that he/she had not explored before. In this atmosphere the child will begin to associate with other children. At the same time, he/she will be away from his/her parents, where he/she will learn educationally. Nevertheless, he/she will learn different manners and customs with classmates that surround him/her. This is why the Christian parent needs to start early educating his child in the things of God, so that he/she can be able to resist and separate themselves from bad influences. *“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6 NKJV).*

3. THE PRE-ADOLESCENCE STAGE

- A. Physical Changes:** The father needs to prepare his children beforehand regarding the physical changes and confusing emotions that will begin in this stage. The Free Encyclopedia describes this stage in the following

way: "Pre-adolescent children have a significantly different vision of the world than younger children. They have a broader developed sense of looking towards the future and looking at the effects of their actions (different from infancy, where many times children don't worry about the future). Often, they have more chores, such as helping out at home. They have a sense of self-identity, feelings of independence, and their own opinion in regards to morality, along with more mature thoughts and actions. They become responsible for their younger siblings and relatives, serving as babysitters. They can start to be concerned about their appearance and what they wear, and to experience mood swings."

- B. Preparation:** In this stage children should be helped to strengthen what they learned in their childhood. At this stage the father needs to impress upon them the need to believe and obey biblical teachings, especially the Gospel of Christ. They need to start to take responsibility for themselves in regards to the unmerited grace of God. Being firm in their convictions, they will be able to resist the pressures of their schoolmates and overcome bad habits that the world offers: fashions, music, addictions, etc. It is important to instil in them the Word of God for their defense: "*My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent*" (**Proverbs 1:10 NKJV**).

4. THE ADOLESCENCE STAGE

- A. Communication:** In a way, this stage is the conclusion of raising children. In this stage the father should maintain very intimate communication with each one of them. More than ever, the father will need to use of all his wis-

dom and patience. It is very important that the father helps the adolescent during this stage of formation and independence, following the advice of Apostle Paul: *"In all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility"* (**Titus 2:7 NKJV**).

- B. Independence:** At this stage of development, the father should guide his child towards total independence, without laying aside discipline, because he/she has not yet reached adulthood. The adolescent needs to understand the rules of behavior in and outside of the home. Also, he/she needs to be conscious of the consequences that can arise for disobeying that which has been established at home. *"A wise son heareth his father's instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke"* (**Proverbs 13:1**).

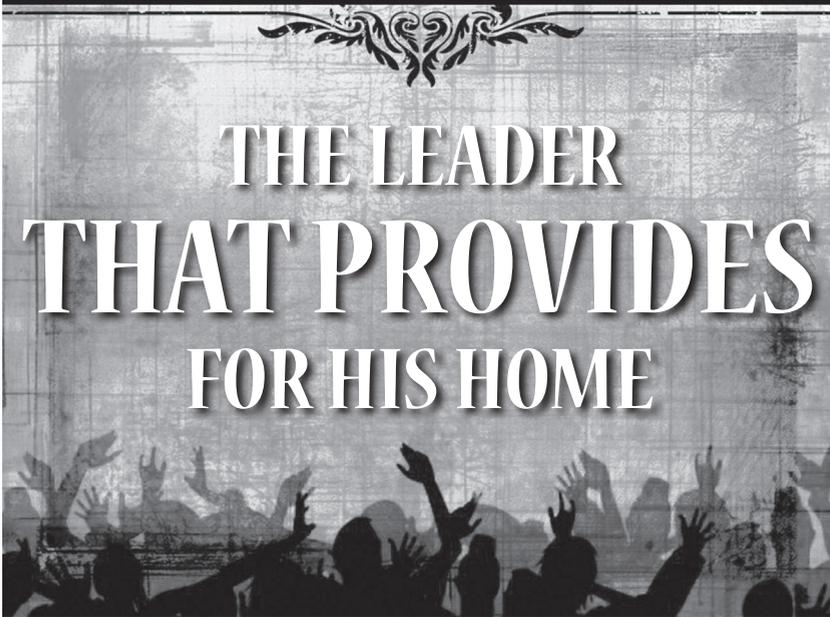
CONCLUSION

We have seen the importance of forming our children from childhood to adulthood. We also learned how to treat them at every stage of their lives. May God help us be the parents that we need to be! The world has distorted the image of the family, and the father figure (role) has been fading. Let us ask God to help us build our home and to guide us as we develop our role as fathers. Because *"Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it"* (**Psalms 127:1 NKJV**). I invite every Christian father to dedicate himself, with greater fervor and courage, to the formation of the children God has given us.

LESSON 9



THE LEADER THAT PROVIDES FOR HIS HOME



“Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord; that walketh in his ways. For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee. Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table” (Psalm 128:1-3).

INTRODUCTION

Providing for the subsistence of life is one of the basic priorities for the family. However, although it is vital, it is not the only reason why we exist. There are other needs that are also indispensable in daily life. Many parents will focus solely on providing material things and ignore the rest of the needs within the

family nucleus. The dictionary defines the word “provide” in the following manner: “supply, stock up on, facilitate, equip, adjust, deliver, fit, equip, sort, facilitate, enable, administrate, join, supply, cover, prepare, prevent.” With this in mind, let us consider some of these definitions.

I. MATERIAL PROVISION

A. Basic Provision:

Material things are those needs which families depend on, such as food, shelter, and clothing. The man of the home has this obligation to provide, not only for the present time, but also for the future of his family. *“A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children’s children: and the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just” (Proverbs 13:22).* It is the responsibility of the father to teach his children to cope and fend for themselves as they grow. Children need to be taught a trade or job (while they study) so that they can learn to develop themselves and accept responsibility.

B. Formative Provision:

Among material things is the academic education of children, as part of their structure. It is extremely important to prepare for the children’s future. The leader, as the providing father of the home, with the help of his wife, has the task of educating their children in different areas, according to their age level. The education of children involves those resources which help them grow as individuals. Education is a practical tool that challenges them, while at the same time, enables them

to make their way in life. It is the responsibility of the father to make sure that his children learn to read and write, as an initial part of their career, and as they continue to grow. At the same time, they also start forming their professional lives.

II. PERSONAL PROVISION

A. Personal Values:

Personal values are acquired through learning that the person obtains through the environment in which it operates. The home is the best place to apply said values. It is here where the father transmits respect towards others to his children; teaching them to be honest in their own uniqueness. It is in this atmosphere that they feel grateful and satisfied to belong to such a nucleus, where they enjoy a pleasant family atmosphere. The writer of the book of Proverbs gives us this example, *“Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith”* (**Proverbs 15:17**).

B. Structural Values:

Structural values are those that help children in their personal lives as they begin to interrelate with other individuals at school, work, and church, etc. This structure is necessary for laying the foundation of children as social beings. Therefore, they need a home atmosphere where they can be (and stay) healthy mentally, emotionally, and physically; overall, that they can feel blessed of God. *“The Lord shall increase you more and more, you and your children”* (**Psalms 115:14**).

III. FAMILY PROVISION

A. Family Convictions:

These values come from the beliefs that parents have, by which they educate their children, and are transmitted through paternal behavior. Once children have received said convictions, these will help them as the initial basis to develop as individuals. At the same time, they will serve as a defense against any other damaging influences that they face throughout the course of life: “...if sinners entice thee, consent thou not” (**Proverbs 1:10**).

B. Playful Learning:

Although there are different ways of teaching children, nevertheless, recreational activities are vital between parents and children. This type of relationship reinforces family ties. It also creates a harmonious atmosphere in the family core. Consequently, it is the father’s (with his wife’s help) responsibility to initiate and accompany his children in healthy entertainment such as parks, vacations, etc. This is a good way to transmit paternal affection to them. Although it appears to only be recreational time, the truth is that it is a very special learning time for the children, where other school activities are intertwined.

IV. MORAL PROVISION

A. Moral Ethics:

Moral values are actions and attitudes that are developed in the family and are considered inevitable so that order, cohabitation, and the well-being of everyone in the home can exist. The values can be described as an ensemble of standards that are established so that people can relate in the home, as well as in the community. *“Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil” (1 Timothy 3:7).*

B. Christian Ethics:

In the Word of God, we find moral values which all Christian leaders and parents should have. The Apostle Paul writes in his Epistles to Timothy and Titus about the Christian principles for all who desire leadership in the church. Such principles need to be applied in the leader, as well as in every member of his family: *“One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)” (1 Timothy 3:1-13 y Titus 1:5-9).*

V. SPIRITUAL PROVISION

A. Spiritual Foundation:

Man was originally placed in the Garden of Eden so that he would have communion and intimacy with the Lord: *“And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed” (Genesis 2:8).* God created man with latent potential and enabled him to carry out different functions. Besides

working the land, he was to be the providing leader of his home. In the same manner, every Christian who has taken the challenge to be a Friendship Group leader, has also been placed as a spiritual leader in his home, to teach his children to love God.

B. Solid Foundation:

God outlined specific guidelines for man. Thus, it is man's duty to build the life of his family on a solid foundation. The Lord Jesus clearly set forth the type of foundation that the wise leader (father) should choose: *"Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock" (Matthew 7:24)*. When children are rooted in the faith of Christ, it doesn't matter what may come; they will remain firm because they have been educated, taught, and established on biblical principles. *"Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons" (Deuteronomy 4:9)*.

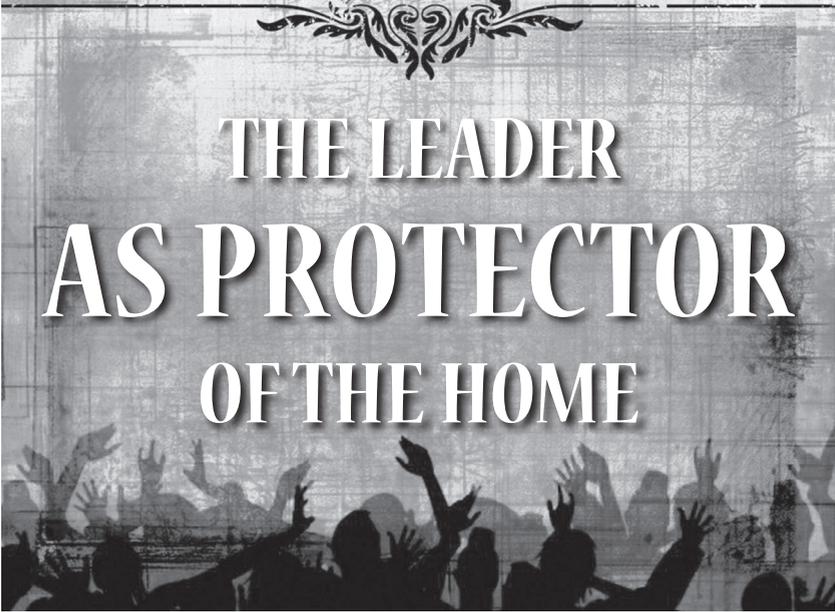
CONCLUSION

In this lesson we have seen the great responsibility that a leader has to provide for the needs of his family, wife, and children. God has placed men as head of the home so that they can provide for those priorities in each member of his family. We also learned that, besides material things, other areas exist that need to be met by every good father, provider of his home.

LESSON 10



THE LEADER AS PROTECTOR OF THE HOME



“One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity” (1 Timothy 3:4).

INTRODUCTION

The Christian father, once he has fully understood his role as head of the home, must draw out a defined plan to help him accomplish his mission as protector of the home. First of all, he must enrich his relationship with God, with his wife, and with his children. Without this plan, it will be difficult for him to carry out said responsibility. The word “protector” means: “defender, benefactor, benevolent, companion, helper, caretaker, guardian, tutor”, etc. In this series of lessons, we have focused more

with regard to the father and children relationship. In this lesson we will focus on how to protect both wife and children. We will study some basic suggestions that will help as a guide to improve our double role that we have as husbands and fathers, simultaneously.

1. THE LEADER, PROTECTOR OF HIS WIFE

In order for the leader to be able to maintain a strong and healthy relationship with his wife, he must first of all understand what the Bible says in **Genesis 2:24**: *“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.”* Secondly, he must be aware that marriage is for a lifetime. For that reason, he must cultivate a good relationship with his wife. This will pave the way to help his children. Also, as spouses, it is necessary to be friends and share experiences in all areas of life. It is essential to invest special time between both, which will make them stronger as a couple within the home. Below is a list that corresponds to a husband who protects.

- A. Is Supportive:** First of all, the husband loves his wife as his own body. *“For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church” (Ephesians 5:29).* Following Christ’s example, the husband needs to support his wife, just as Christ supports the Church.

- B. Is Prudent:** He lives wisely with his wife because he follows the counsel of the Word of God. *“Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered” (1 Peter 3:7).*

C. Is Kind: He looks for ways to promote his wife's happiness, tranquility, and contentment. Doing so, he produces the same happiness for himself and the rest of the family members.

D. Is Courteous: He knows how to express his love for her, not only because of what she does, but rather because of who she is. *"Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her"* (**Proverbs 31:28**).

E. Is Generous: The husband knows that every good gift comes from above. For that reason, he shares his blessings with his wife. *"...It is more blessed to give than to receive"* (**Acts 20:35 NKJV**).

F. Is Responsible: The husband knows that he is responsible for providing for his wife's needs. *"But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel"* (**1 Timothy 5:8**).

2. THE LEADER, PROTECTOR OF HIS CHILDREN

After seeing the first part pertaining to the care that the leader has in protecting his wife, in this second part, we will consider some characteristics of the father as protector of his children:

A. Gives Direction: The husband who protects, knows how to wisely lead the home. *"And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord"* (**Ephesians 6:4**). The husband is the shield of his family. To him has been given the responsibility of protecting them of the dangers that surround them. The family finds support in the fa-

ther when he takes his position with a balanced leadership, and not as a dictator.

- B. Is Vigilant:** The husband is the watchtower of the home. He sets the guidelines in order to prevent unnecessary painful moments, which are caused by bad influences, simply because his family is the most valuable thing in life. *“Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners” (1 Corinthians 15:33)*. The Bible tells of a sad story where a man by the name of Eli (high priest) neglected his role as father, as he permitted his children to sin. God said, *“For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not” (1 Samuel 3:13)*.
- C. Is an Intercessor:** It is the father’s responsibility to serve as a protective covering over his children. This protection, although spiritual, nevertheless, covers the natural as well. The Bible tells us that we don’t have a struggle against flesh and blood, but rather *“...against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12)*. When the father intercedes, he becomes a covering for his children.
- D. Is a Tutor:** Children are an inheritance that God has given to each father to care for, manage, and make something profitable out of it: *“Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward” (Psalm 127:3)*. Each father is responsible for what his children will be in the future. It is our job to take care of them and educate them so that they can have a good future, especially in that which pertains to God. *“As arrows are*

in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate” (Psalm 127:4-5).

- E. Is Consistent:** The father is responsible for establishing clear and firm rules, which will serve as a protection in the development of the children. It is essential that both parents (father and mother) use the same rules, so that the children grow up, as the saying says, “good and well.” The problem that has emerged in some homes is that the father, as well as the mother, lead their children in opposite directions. This causes imbalance and confusion in the lives of the children. It is important that both parents agree in order to wisely guide their children. There is a guarantee in the Bible for those who agree: *“Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 18:19).*

CONCLUSION

In order to be more effective in protecting our home, we need to take ownership of the Word of God as our only guide. In it we find all that we need to be better spouses and parents, simultaneously. Carrying out the responsibility of the family is a mandate. As we have seen, it is the leader’s responsibility to be his wife’s and children’s protector. The wife, however, is his suitable helpmate with regard to working with their children. Let us seek the direction of the Lord and fulfill the task that belongs to us as we await Christ’s return for His Church.

LESSON 11



THE LEADER AS MENTOR OF THE HOME



"...as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (**Joshua 24:15**).

INTRODUCTION

The mentor father leads his children in a productive trajectory in their lives. The Bible compares the father to an archer who carries the bow and quiver on his back, filled with arrows. *"As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth"* (**Psalms 127:4**). An arrow has a metal point on the front end and a rod on the back end, and it is shot with the bow. This arrow, in order to be useful, must be completely dependable

and straight. This picture illustrates the father as one who needs to mold his children correctly so that they can be useful in life. A father can satisfactorily achieve his desires when he transmits his values to his children. In this lesson we will consider some ideas that will help us become better mentoring fathers to our children.

1. THE TRAINING FATHER

- A. Instructs:** The father, besides being a mentor, is also an educating teacher who orients and trains his children to help them grow in the areas where they need help. In order to accomplish this task as a trainer, the father needs to have enough skills to help them grow. It is also important to prepare the ground, granting them trust as we challenge them to excel in their abilities for them to accomplish their own life projects. Just as the eagle removes the nest so that the eaglets learn to fly, in the same manner, we as parents need to prepare our children to fly at predominant heights. *“As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings” (Deuteronomy 32:11).*
- B. Advises:** Another of the responsibilities that the father has towards his children is to advise them, orient them, and help them resolve whatever problems they face in life. It is extremely important that each parent takes the time to tend to the different needs in each of their children. Children need paternal help at all times, mostly when they are going through serious problems. When the father shows interest in helping his children, they learn to see him not solely as a father, but they also

see him as a friend. The writer of Proverbs describes it in the following way: *“A man who has friends must himself be friendly, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother” (Proverbs 18:24 NKJV)*. This scripture inspires us parents to be friends to our children.

2. THE RELIABLE FATHER

- A. Exemplary:** To be a better mentor, the father needs to get involved in his children’s tasks, no matter how insignificant they might seem. For children, this is very important, because they will learn and repeat what they have learned through their father’s example. The problem that has emerged today is that some parents have neglected their responsibility in their role as mentors. Children will be influenced in one form or another. If the father does not influence them, they will be influenced by other friendships, and they will acquire their habits. It is important to know who our children’s friends are. In the decade of the 70’s, there was a radical announcement that said: “It is ten p.m. Dad, do you know who your children are with?” The question continues to be the same for today’s time: Apostolic Dad, do you know with whom your children hang out (associate with)? The Bible says: *“Do not be deceived: ‘Evil company corrupts good habits” (1 Corinthians 15:33)*. For this reason, it is urgent to include God’s Word in the lives of our children. *“Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding” (Proverbs 4:1)*.
- B. Contributor:** The father, besides being an example, is also a contributor, not only to his present generation, but he is also reaching his future generations, which

will come after him. The Word of God says in **Proverbs 20:27**: *“The just man walketh in his integrity: his children are blessed after him.”* We find another example in the Word of God of how our future descendants are also blessed. At the time that we contribute, they also are participating, so to speak. **Hebrews 7:9-10** shows us how Levi participated in the blessings even before being born: *“...he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him”* (Verse 10). Everything we do for our children, they will enjoy and share with their children’s children. The Bible says in **Galatians 6:7**: *“...for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”* Parents, let us sow good things in our children so that they will always be blessed, and let us develop a good relationship with them so that we can instruct them more effectively.

3. SUGGESTIONS FOR THE MENTOR FATHER

The following suggestions are recommended for the mentor father as a guide in his leadership role:

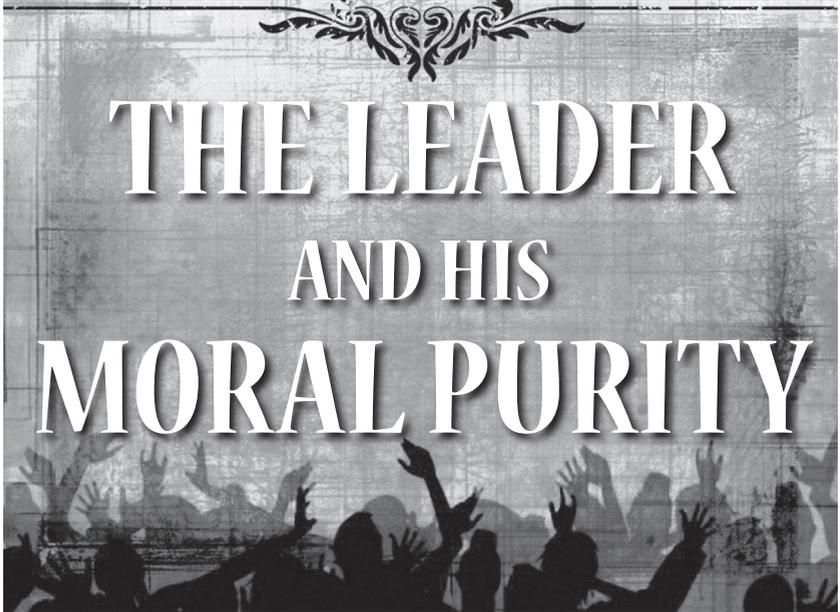
- Develop your children’s abilities. Teach them how to have healthy emotions, and above all, to keep moral and spiritual values, which will help lay the foundation for their lives and for those of future generations.
- Help them obtain a clear vision for their lives and to possess a good family criterion.
- Demonstrate love and appreciation to them. Make sure they know that they are of great value to you. This will help raise their self-esteem.

- Inspire security in them, giving them encouragement, even in times of failure. This will cheer them on to set out on their goals again.
- Listen to them whenever they need a listening ear. They often bring school, friends, and even personal pressures.
- Dedicate time to them and share the experiences that you have had in your life. Start by sharing your experiences since the time you were a child. Talk to them about your experiences during your adolescence, your courtship, your wedding, marriage life, etc. All these are useful and valuable tools for the lives of our children.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is our mission as parents to develop our children to be good people. It is our responsibility to influence them with our example so that they can have a better future, and above all, to God. It is important that we as parents live an upright life, where our children can base their lives. My desire is that each leader be a better mentor for each member of his family, while at the same time being a good example in his Friendship Group.

LESSON 12



"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God"
(Mathew 5:8).

INTRODUCTION

According to the Free Encyclopedia, purity is defined:

1. *"Moral conduct or morality (Latin "mores") are the rules or standards by which a human being's conduct or behavior are regulated in relationship to society, to oneself, or to everything that surrounds him."*

2. Christian purity is described as *“the quality or state of one who is pure. Free from corruption, chaste, without sin or sexual guilt. Internal moral purity is expressed through modesty and discretion.”*

The Lord Jesus spoke about the importance of having moral purity. *“...whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Matthew 5:27-28)*. The writer of Proverbs says it in the following manner: *“For as he thinks in his heart, so is he” (Proverbs 23:7 NKJV)*. In this lesson we will learn how to preserve moral purity so that we won't fall into sins of immorality, and how to build a wall of protection around us.

1. HOW TO MAINTAIN MORAL PURITY

A. Preserving Wholesome Speech (Healthy Vocabulary):

Moral (pure) conduct is one of the truths that is revealed by our speech. The Lord Jesus said it very clearly: *“For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things...” (Matthew 12:34-36)*. The book of Proverbs has a huge list regarding this. For example:

1. **Proverbs 18:4** – *“The words of a man’s mouth are as deep waters, and the wellspring of wisdom as a flowing brook.”*
2. **Proverbs 4:24** – *“Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee.”*
3. **Proverbs 10:11** – *“The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life: but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked.”*

4. **Proverbs 10:32** – *“The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable: but the mouth of the wicked speaketh forwardness.”*
5. **Proverbs 21:23** – *“Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles.”*

God demands a life of complete holiness in each believer (**1 Peter 1:16**). The leader of a Friendship Group needs to be an example in his manner of speech: *“neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks”* (**Ephesians 5:4**).

B. Preserving a Healthy Mind:

In **Ephesians 4:22-24** the Apostle Paul writes key words that help us understand the importance of ridding ourselves of the old nature in order to be transformed and renewed: *“... in the spirit of your mind...”* We, as children of God, need to keep our mind clean, because we possess the mind of Christ: *“But we have the mind of Christ”* (**1 Corinthians 2:16**). Therefore, as servants of the Lord, let us maintain a healthy, vigorous, and positive mind so that we can influence others as well.

2. MORAL IMPURITY AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

A. The Result of Immorality:

The Bible tells about a dark side in the life David, king of Israel, who suffered the consequences for giving into temptation and his immoral desires. Chapters 11 and 12 of the Second Book of Samuel record the tragedy that came to King David because of his carelessness:

1. Adultery with Bathsheba.
2. He tried to deceive Uriah in order to cover his sin. Finally, he had him killed to erase the trail and to have Bathsheba.
3. Also, the child that was a product of the adulterous affair, died.

And as if that wasn't enough, the tragedy continued throughout the rest of the family.

B. The Disintegration of His Family:

David's family suffered the effects of the sin of their father.

1. Ammon: Committed the sin of incest, raping his own sister (**2 Samuel 13:14**).
2. Absalom:
 - a. Committed fratricide, killing his brother, Ammon (**2 Samuel 13:28**).
 - b. He rebelled against his father, usurping the kingdom (**2 Samuel 15:6**).
 - c. He committed the sin of incest, taking his father's women, publicly exhibiting himself shamefully in the eyes of all Israel (**2 Samuel 16:22**).
 - d. He died thrust through with darts as he hung from an oak (**2 Samuel 18:14**).

These effects illustrate that there are consequences when the man of God lets himself go. The writer of Proverbs exhorts us to be alert as to the dangers that immorality carries. (**Proverbs**

6:27-29, 32) Hence, let us follow the advice that the Apostle Paul gives the Philippians: *“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things” (Philippians 4:8).*

3. HOW TO STRENGTHEN MORAL PURITY

A. Advice for Strengthening Moral Purity:

It is necessary for every leader to daily practice good habits in order to maintain a good balance and be able to perform his tasks, be it as group leader or the head of the home. Following is a list to help us strengthen our moral conduct:

- 1. Cultivate a devotional life:** Maintain your relationship with God daily through prayer and reading of the Word, etc. *“...praying always...” (Ephesians 6:18)* and *“...give attention to reading...” (1 Timothy 4:13).*
- 2. Avoid harmful literature:**
 - a.** Be conscious of the danger that such literature carries (harmful books, magazines, or videos) and can corrupt your purity.
 - b.** Follow the advice of the Word of God. *“I will set nothing wicked before my eyes” (Psalm 101:3).*
- 3. Place limits:** Set a dividing line with someone who is not your wife. Avoid verbal, phone, and electronic conversations (emails or text messages). Thus you will keep your distance and avoid the development of an inappropriate relationship.

4. **Avoid dangerous situations:** Do not be alone with someone of the opposite gender. Always try to be accompanied by your wife or another person: *"...and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life"* (**Proverbs 6:26**).
5. **Flee temptation:** Follow the example of Joseph in Egypt. He preferred running away rather than sinning against God. Thus, he kept himself pure in his moral conduct. *"...he fled, and he ran outside"* (**Genesis 39:12**).

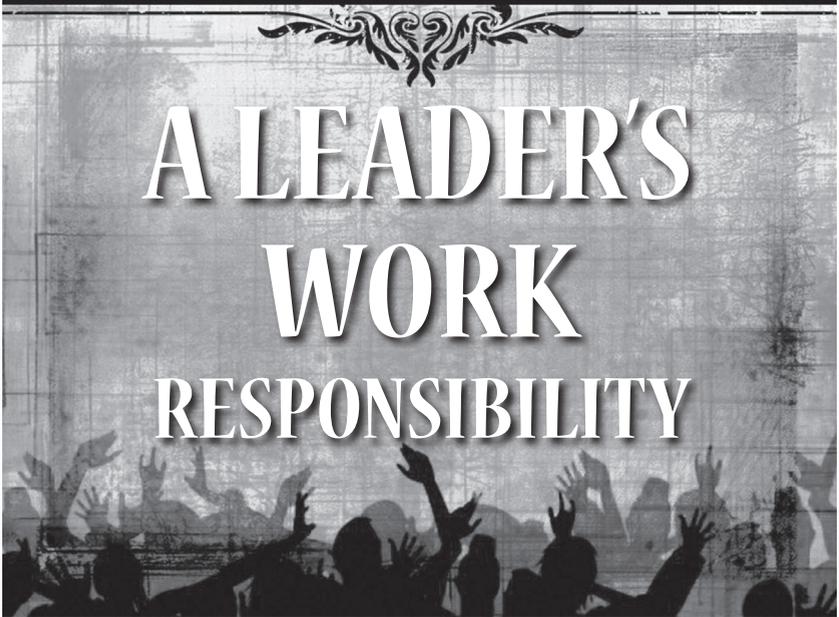
B. Benefits:

Although there is so much more to say in this regard, as we follow these guidelines we will not only please God, but we will also preserve our moral purity performing our double task as leader of our group and our home.

CONCLUSION

God has called us as leaders to carry out the task of announcing His message (Gospel) to the lost. Therefore, it is necessary for the leader to live an upright life in the eyes of those who are around him, regardless if it's his Friendship Group, his family, his co-worker, or his colleague. In conclusion, it is fitting to say that besides cultivating the areas mentioned, we also need to continually strengthen our relationship with God so that we won't slip carelessly and have to suffer the consequences. I invite every leader to take the advice of striving and overcoming each day to maintain his/her moral purity.

LESSON 13



SCRIPTURE TEXT:

Now they departed and came back to Moses and Aaron and all the congregation of the children of Israel in the Wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh; they brought back word to them and to all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land. Then they told him, and said: "We went to the land where you sent us. It truly flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. Nevertheless the people who dwell in the land are strong; the cities are fortified and very large; moreover we saw the descendants of Anak there. The Amalekites dwell in the land of the South; the Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the mountains; and the Canaanites dwell by the sea and along the banks of the Jordan. Then Caleb

quieted the people before Moses, and said, "Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it."

INTRODUCTION:

THE TEN SPIES AND JOSHUA AND CALEB

Those who cultivate a true spirit of conquest enjoy life. Those who feel defeated and only look at the negative of each life plan presented to them, never conquer anything. It is sad to say it, yet so true. If you want to see your dreams come true, you've got to BELIEVE it.

How determined you are to fulfill God's work will be reflected in your fruitfulness, so it is important to understand that the Lord has entrusted his work to us. Let's do it in a responsible manner.

1. MOSES, A LEADER FULL OF EXCUSES

Exodus 3:9-10 *"Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."*

When God appeared to Moses in the burning bush, he was given the task to lead the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage. Moses gave various excuses to God about why he believed he was not the right man for the job. We have also received from God a special task. We have been challenged to preach the gospel and to free the world from the bondage of sin. At times when God calls us, like Moses, we present a series of excuses to avoid the call.

2. EXCUSE # 1: WHO AM I?

Exodus 3:11 *“And Moses said unto God, Who am I to go to Pharaoh, and out of Egypt unto the children of Israel?”* Moses struggled with his identity. He did not feel qualified and thought that God had chosen the wrong leader.

Moses had been a member of the royal house of Egypt, but is now a humble shepherd. It had been 40 years since he had left Egypt. But now he is an old man of 80 years. Perhaps these were things that caused Moses to feel inadequate. God’s response to him was swift. **Exodus 3:12** *“And he said, certainly I will be with you...”*

3. EXCUSE #2: I HAVE NO CREDIBILITY.

Exodus 4:1 *“And Moses answered and said, Behold, they will not believe me...”* Now that he knows what to say, he is dealing with the idea that the Israelites will not believe him. This shows the fear of failure with which Moses struggled. Some have doubts in sharing the gospel for the same reason: “They will not believe me,” but God has also given us the evidence needed to convince people.

4. EXCUSE #3: I CANNOT SPEAK.

Exodus 4:10 *“And Moses said to the Lord: O Lord! I have never been eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.”* Moses was concerned about his disabilities. Who would listen if he could not even speak properly? Moses expressed that he is

not an eloquent spokesman. But God is not moved by the objection and excuse that Moses made. He knows the inability of those whom he has called, and He has the power to overcome any of our limitations. God's response: "Guess who made your mouth?"

2 Peter 1:21 *"For prophecy never came by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."*

5. EXCUSE #4: I KNOW YOU CAN FIND SOMEONE BETTER.

Exodus 4:13 But he said, *"O my Lord, please send by the hand of whomever else You may send."* Moses felt inferior: He was comparing himself to others, even his brother, and decided that everyone was better.

The real reason for all the excuses Moses was giving was that he just didn't want to go. The excuses were an attempt to hide this fact. The same happens to us today. We simply give many excuses for not doing what God expects of us. We are like Moses, wanting God to use someone else because we really don't want to do what God has commanded. God's response to Moses was: "Very well, Aaron will go with you, but I'm still calling you to go."

6. JOSHUA: A CONQUERER NOT WILLING TO ACCEPT EXCUSES.

Numbers 14:6-8 *"Then the children of Judah came to Joshua in Gilgal. And Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him:*

“You know the word which the LORD said to Moses the man of God concerning you and me in Kadesh Barnea. I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh Barnea to spy out the land, and I brought back word to him as it was in my heart. Nevertheless my brethren who went up with me made the heart of the people melt, but I wholly followed the LORD my God.”

Joshua’s heart was beating with excitement because there was a conquering spirit, which didn’t allow him to look for excuses to win. He only saw that God was with him, and that was enough to win.

7. WE NEED A DIFFERENT SPIRIT.

Numbers 14:24 *“But My servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit in him and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land where he went, and his descendants shall inherit it.”*

Both Joshua and Caleb, who were the only two spies that possessed a different spirit, came saying why it was possible to conquer.

- a. A land flowing with milk and honey.
- b. We are more powerful than they are.
- c. They tore their clothes (a sign of disapproval to those who made excuses).
- d. Jehovah will deliver the enemy to us.
- e. There must be no rebellion among us.
- f. Be not afraid.

8. THE CONQUERER MUST FIRST CONQUER HIMSELF.

Numbers 32:12 *“Except Kenezite Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun, for they have wholly followed the LORD.”*

The only way to influence others is by example.

9. DON'T REST UNTIL YOUR DREAMS HAVE BECOME A REALITY.

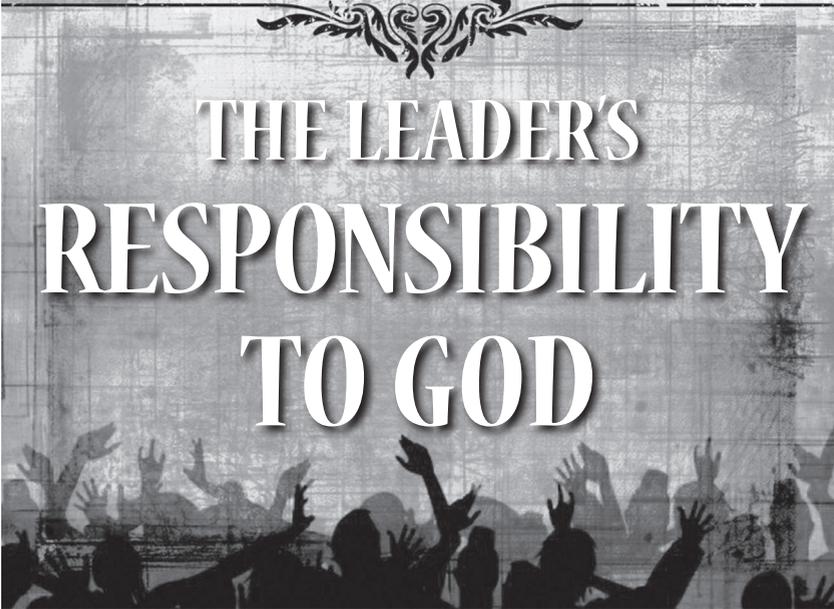
Joshua 19:49-50 *“When they had made an end of dividing the land as an inheritance according to their borders, the children of Israel gave an inheritance among them to Joshua the son of Nun. According to the word of the LORD they gave him the city which he asked for, Timnath Serah in the mountains of Ephraim; AND HE BUILT THE CITY AND DWELT IN IT.”*

This man did not rest until he conquered and sub-divided the Promised Land. Do not rest until you have satisfactorily answered the Lord with what has been delegated to you. Let us do our work and fulfill our responsibility in faith and He will give us victory.

LESSON 14



THE LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY TO GOD



Biblical Text:

“Every commandment which I command you today you must be careful to observe, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers. And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD” (Deuteronomy 8:1-3).

Introduction:

Everyone that will be used for any service must first be tested before using. For this reason companies and businesses have implemented quality controls on products, before release. In a very similar way, God will test us before being used to bring glory to the nations.

1. TESTS WILL PROVE THE QUALITY OF A PRODUCT.

Until you are proven, you do not really know your value. Tests are opportunities to prove our maturity and our potential.

You will go through tests at every stage of your growth. **1 Corinthians 10:13** *"No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."*

Your goal in each case should be to pass the test. Otherwise, you'll have to pass it again and again until you get it. **1 Timothy 3:10** *"But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless."*

A test always comes before a blessing. In fact, the test prepares you for it and shows that you're ready to handle it. If you cheat or try to copy someone's answers, it may seem at the moment that you have progressed, but eventually, time and circumstances will reveal who you are.

Self promotion can never replace divine promotion. Therefore, do not rush before the Lord. Wait, and allow Him to open the “door”.

A product can not be used safely and profitably until it has been thoroughly tested, and neither can you. GOD is not a hard-hearted father who enjoys seeing his children struggle through the trials of life. If He would visit you in person, he would probably say: “I hate to have you to go through this, but this is the only way to test if you are ready for what is coming to you in the future. Before I can use you greatly, I must prove you in depth”. In most cases, God’s testing is related to your character. And as is the case with any good actor in a play, this has nothing to do with the script. Your job should be to well represent your own character. Regardless of what others do, follow the “script” that God has for your life.

2. THE TEST OF SMALL THINGS.

This test comes when we are asked to do something less than our ability and potential. This will show us how faithful we are to commitments and will also reveal whether we are ready for greater responsibilities. Jesus said, *“He who is faithful in a very little can also be trusted with much...”* (**Luke 16:10**).

3. THE TEST OF MOTIVES.

This test comes to us when we do all the right things, but not necessarily for the right reasons. It is good to pray, however, Jesus warned: *“When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love...be seen by men”* (**Matthew 6:5**). Sometimes we don’t even know our own hearts. That’s why we need the “mirror” of

the Word of God: *"The Word of God...discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart"* (**Hebrews 4:12**). When you stand before Christ to be evaluated and rewarded, the question is not what did you do, but why you did it?

4. THE TEST OF STEWARDSHIP.

Jesus said, *"Give, and it shall be given..."* (**Luke 6:38**). Only when your hand is "open", can you receive more from the Lord. The practice of giving regularly stops you from being possessed by your possessions. Money is often called "tender" because it is assumed that "it flows" through you. When you hold it out of fear or greed, you limit what God wants to give you. Would you like Him to continue the "flow" of blessing in your life? So, let it be like a river, and not a pond!

5. TEST OF CREDIBILITY.

Nothing is more important than your confidence before God and your credibility with the people. When Lot tried to rescue his sons-in-law from the destruction of Sodom, they thought he was joking. "...his sons in law thought he was joking" (**Genesis 19:14**). Could the reason have been that they had seen his selfish treatment towards his uncle Abraham? They had also heard about suspicious business transactions (see Genesis 13:1-11), and as a result, he lost his credibility when it mattered most. Are you willing to let this happen to you also?

6. TEST OF AUTHORITY.

Before Paul carried the gospel to the Gentiles, he went first to Jerusalem and presented his plan to the apostles, asking for

their blessing. He did not have the attitude that *“nobody is going to tell me what to do.”* God put David under a leader named Saul. It’s horrible to know that your boss wants to kill you (see **1 Samuel 18:11**). But you can learn from both the mistakes of a failure as well as the achievements of a feat. Because David was subject to Saul, he qualified to sit on his throne. Want to be a leader? Learn to be a follower, and submit yourself!

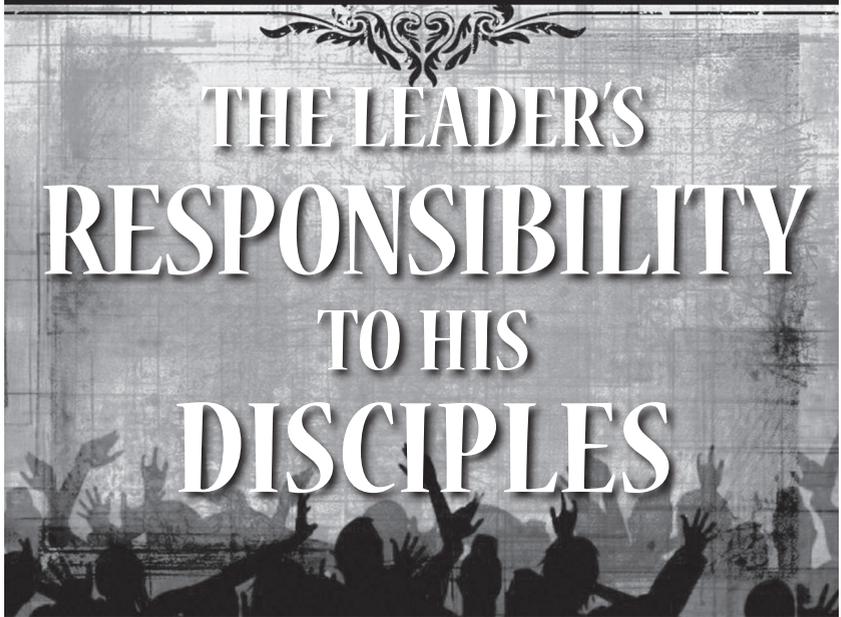
CONCLUSION:

How can we resist and pass the tests? Love GOD, lay hold of that love, decide today to love, obey and follow Christ and not the world and the lusts of the flesh. Cry out for God’s power to make you persevere. Cry out for the manifestation of the Holy Spirit. Remember that we have an advocate who intercedes on our behalf. He is the only intercessor who can say: *“For my sufferings, for my wounds and my shed blood, I know Father that you always hear me”*. Christ says, *“I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not.”*

LESSON 15



THE LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY TO HIS DISCIPLES



DISCIPLINE

BIBLICAL TEXT:

“He stores up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly” (Proverbs 2:7).

INTRODUCTION:

Discipline is the practice of every doctrine. If you cannot discipline yourself, you'll never live a doctrine, being that it is a set of teachings and instructions to be lived.

All organizations and agencies have discovered that they are able to function effectively only if there is discipline lived out by their members. It is therefore important in all leadership training to recognize the importance of exercising disciplines in the work of God. The discipline of leadership in small groups requires reports, attendance at leaders' meetings, participation in retreats, sending people from the different groups to the school of discipleship, motivating all groups during the evangelistic cycle for each to be praying for ten persons, etc.

1. PARENTS WITH SUCCESSFUL CHILDREN USED DISCIPLINE.

Hebrews 12:9 *"Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?"*

Marcos Witt, a well known Christian Psalmist, once said that "studying piano at home was not an option, it was a law." As a result, he became one of the greatest pianists and singers in the Christian music arena.

2. TO ACHIEVE A GOAL.

1 Corinthians 9:25-27 *"And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. 26 Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. 27 But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified."*

Paul makes mention in these verses that to achieve a goal you have to abstain from certain things (requires discipline). If this is necessary to achieve human goals, it is also necessary to achieve an “incorruptible crown”. And so much more should we discipline ourselves to fulfill the challenge of God’s work.

3. PLACING VALUE ON OUR SOUL.

Proverbs 15:32 *“He who disdains instruction despises his own soul, But he who heeds rebuke gets understanding.”*

If we truly love, we have to strive for discipline. Nothing in life is achieved without determination and discipline. Therefore, to serve God we must be determined to serve and discipline our lives to reach a successful Christian life and service to God’s kingdom.

Discipline conditions us for spiritual warfare. **Proverbs 3:12** *“For whom the LORD loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights.”*

Discipline also trains us for spiritual warfare. **Hebrews 12:4-6** *“You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin. And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: “My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; for whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.”*

4. A CHRISTIAN WITHOUT DISCIPLINE DIES IN THE BATTLE.

Proverbs 5:23 *“He shall die without instruction, and err on the greatness of his folly.”*

Christian discipline that the Lord has given us were not meant for us to grieve or because He wants something bad to happen to us. But on the contrary, it is given so that we do not fail in our walk with Him.

Proverbs 5:11-14

“And you mourn at last, when your flesh and your body are consumed, and say: “How I have hated instruction, and my heart despised correction! I have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined my ear to those who instructed me! I was on the verge of total ruin, in the midst of the assembly and congregation.”

CONCLUSION

The consequences of a life without discipline can be fatal. The writer of the book of Proverbs states:

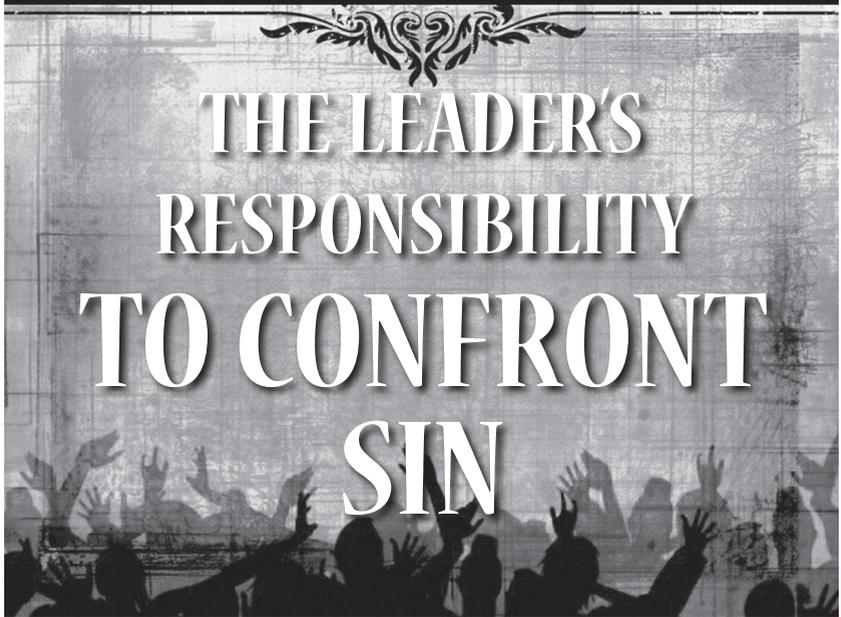
- a. That he will have poverty and shame. **Proverbs 13:18** *“Poverty and shame will come to him who disdains correction, but he who regards a rebuke will be honored.”*
- b. That there will be darkness in his life. **Proverbs 6:23** *“For the commandment is a lamp, and the law a light; Reproofs of instruction are the way of life.”*
- c. He will be ignorant. **Proverbs 12:1** *“Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge: but he that hateth reproof is brutish.”*

But those who decide to discipline their life unto the Lord will reap great blessings. **Hebrews 12:11** *“Now no chastening for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.”*

LESSON 16



THE LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY TO CONFRONT SIN



BIBLICAL TEXT:

"It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself" (2 Timothy 2:11-13).

INTRODUCTION:

One of the qualities and attributes of God is His "faithfulness". Even if we are unfaithful, He remains faithful, which means that God will continue to do what He has promised, although humanity be unfaithful to Him.

- He allows the sun to rise on the good and the evil
- He sends rain on the just and unjust

“It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself” (Matthew 5:45).

Today, in a world of so much treachery and rebellion, it is very difficult to find faithful people. The atmosphere of coldness, materialism, carnality, betrayal, gossip, and worldliness have created a shallow and empty human beings without any kind of fidelity.

1. FAITHFUL: (described as full of faith and fully committed).

“Faithful” also means to be firm and steadfast to one’s conviction. Being faithful to God as leaders is our highest responsibility. Being faithful to the service of others is a great thing, but our service to the people of God is of no benefit if we are not faithful to the God of the people.

2. FOUR REASONS TO BE FAITHFUL TO GOD.

A. The blood of Christ cleanses us.

- **1 John 1:7** *“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”*

B. Because of our hope.

- **2 Timothy 2:12** *“If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us.”*

C. Because the testimony of men that proved to be faithful.

- **2nd Corinthians 11:23-27** *“Are they ministers of Christ?—I speak as a fool—I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.”*

D. Because of the great reward of being faithful.

- **Matthew 25:21** *“His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’”*

3. THE UNFAITHFUL.

Infidelity has its serious consequences. Unfaithful people are people suffering unsatisfied lives, with insomnia, stress, colitis and ulcers. Humanly speaking, these are some of the things

we can be suffering, but the consequences of being unfaithful to God are much greater. **Luke 12:46** *“The master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.”*

CONCLUSION:

Perseverance in being faithful to God is a goal that we’ve got to determine to reach. The enemy will inject into our minds many reasons and arguments why we ought to depart from the Lord, but remember: *“But he who endures to the end shall be saved”* (**Matthew 24:13**).

LESSON 17



TITHING IN THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER



(Part One)

“Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.” (Proverbs 3:9-10).

Much has been written on the subject of tithing. Today we will study what the word of God teaches about tithing. The Lord told Israel that the tithe is sacred and that it belongs to Him. The wise man Solomon tells us to honor God with our substance or property.

In the doctrine of tithing practiced by the Apostolic Assembly, it is written in doctrinal article number 17 of our church:

“We believe that the system that the Bible teaches us to obtain the funds necessary to carry out the work of the Lord is that of tithes and offerings, and that this system must be practiced by ministers and believers alike.”

“Not grudgingly or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver” (1 Timothy 6:7 and 2 Corinthians 9:6-7).

FIVE REASONS WHY THE BELIEVER MUST TITHE:

1. The believer must honor God with his or her ASSETS:

Proverbs 3:9-10 *“Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.”*

2. Tithing is SACRED:

Leviticus 27:30-32 *“And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord’s: it is holy unto the Lord. And if a man will at all redeem ought of his tithes, he shall add thereto the fifth part thereof. And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the Lord.”*

3. What is the Tithe? THE TENTH:

Deuteronomy 14:22-23 *“Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year. And thou shalt eat before the Lord thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks; that thou mayest learn to fear the Lord thy God always.”*

4. Tithing is not part of the LAW:

Genesis 14:18-20 *“And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.*

Matthew 23:23 *“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.”*

5. The tithe should be given to the LOCAL CHURCH:

Deuteronomy 14:22-23 *“Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year. And thou shalt eat before the Lord thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine,*

and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks; that thou mayest learn to fear the Lord thy God always."

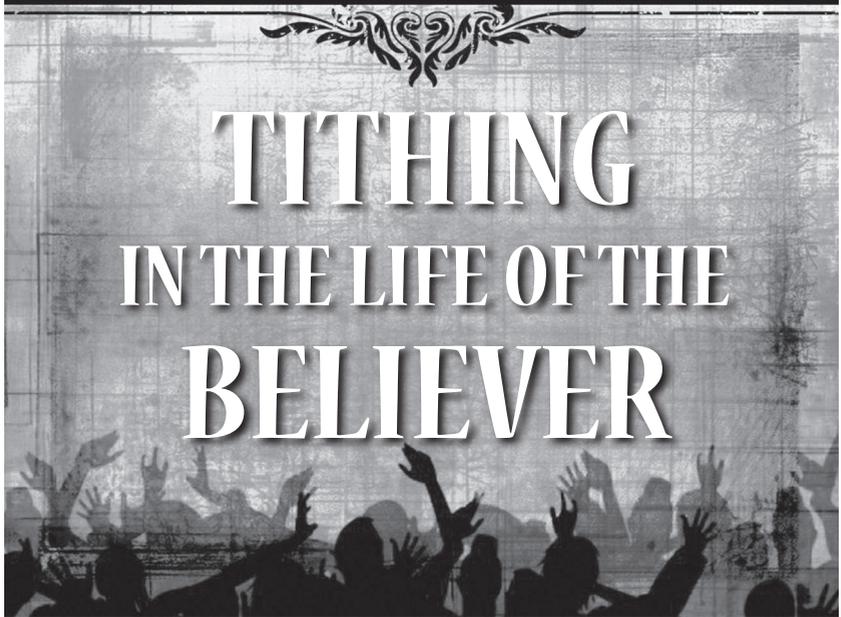
CONCLUSION

The moment that the believer accepts God's words, he or she places himself or herself in a position to be blessed, as it was said to the people of Israel: *"And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God. Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store. Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out"* (**Deuteronomy 28:1-6**).

LESSON 18



TITHING IN THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER



(Part Two)

“But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver”

(2 Corinthians 9:6-7).

The patriarchs of the Church, in its beginning, sought a biblical way to support the work of God. The main basis of the thought of the founders of the Church was: *“The Word of God is*

our rule of faith and the highest and final authority.” (Matthew 24:35) Every discipline of our Church flows from the Word of God, and any new proposal or amendment to our discipline or doctrine, must be forged under the light of the Scriptures.

OUR TITHES IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT WAYS OF HOW THE BELIEVER HONORS GOD.

The believer should tithe to honor the Creator. Christ said, *“Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s”*

(Matthew 22:21).

Proverbs 3:9-10 *“Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.”*

The English word “substance” means “matter”. In the beginning God commanded Adam to tithe of the substance that was given to him to support himself. God commanded Adam and Eve to support themselves from the trees in the garden. The specific commandment was to eat of every tree, except one.

The question is: how many trees are there in the earth? The answer is: there are only ten species of trees in the world. Some trees have double features, such as coconut palm. It bears strong fruit, but it is a palm tree. The papaya tree bears soft fruit, but its fruit is in its trunk.

THE TEN SPECIES OF TREES ARE:

1. The Palm Tree.
2. The Flower Tree; the Magnolia.
3. The Soft Fruit Tree: apples, pears, etc.
4. The Strong Fruit Tree: almonds, walnuts, etc.
5. The Pine Tree.
6. The Conifer is a tree that bears leaves, but loses them in the winter.
7. The Evergreen Tree (evergreen leaf) is a tree that has leaves, but does not lose them in the winter; such as the eucalyptus or magnolia tree.
8. The Leaf Tree. The banana tree has no trunk.
9. The Tree that yields its fruit in its trunk: the cinnamon tree, or Papaya, etc.
10. The Tree of God.

Ninety percent of the garden was for Adam and Eve. But one tree, which was the tithe of the garden, belonged to God. God commanded, from the very beginning, that man should give a part of their support, which meant to tithe to God.

CONCLUSION

The people of Israel were given great promises when they would honor God on the earth that He would give to them. **Deuteronomy 6:10-12** *“And it shall be, when the Lord thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not, and houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full; Then beware lest thou forget the Lord, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.”*

LESSON 19



BASIC STEWARDSHIP PRINCIPLES

“Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful” (1 Corinthians 4:1-2).

Principle # 1 – Eliminate all debt.

Proverbs 22:7 *“The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.”*

Principle # 2 – Secure financial maturity.

Proverbs 21:20 *“There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise; but a foolish man spendeth it up.”*

Principle # 3 – Live on a budget.

Luke 14:28-30 *“For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.”*

Principle # 4 – Know how to save and invest.

Malachi 3:10 *“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.”*

- First, you have to save for emergencies.
- Second, you have to save to buy things in cash.
- Third, the one who saves has to learn to invest.

Principle # 5 – Know how to give joyfully.

2 Corinthians 9:7 *“Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.”*

Principle # 6 – Learn to give for the spreading of the gospel and the support of our pastors, ministers, missionaries, and evangelists.

1 Corinthians 9:14 *“Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.” God commanded for humanity to be saved by the preaching of the gospel.*

Romans 10:14 *“How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?”*

Principle # 7 – Enjoy God’s blessings.

Luke 6:38 *“Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.”*

Malachi 3:10 *“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.”*

Principle # 8 – To avoid a curse.

Malachi 3:8-10 *“Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house.”*

How sad it is to see that some believers have a good financial management system but do not honor God with their tithe. Some believers place their assets in broken bags. **Haggai 1:6**

“Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.”

CONCLUSION

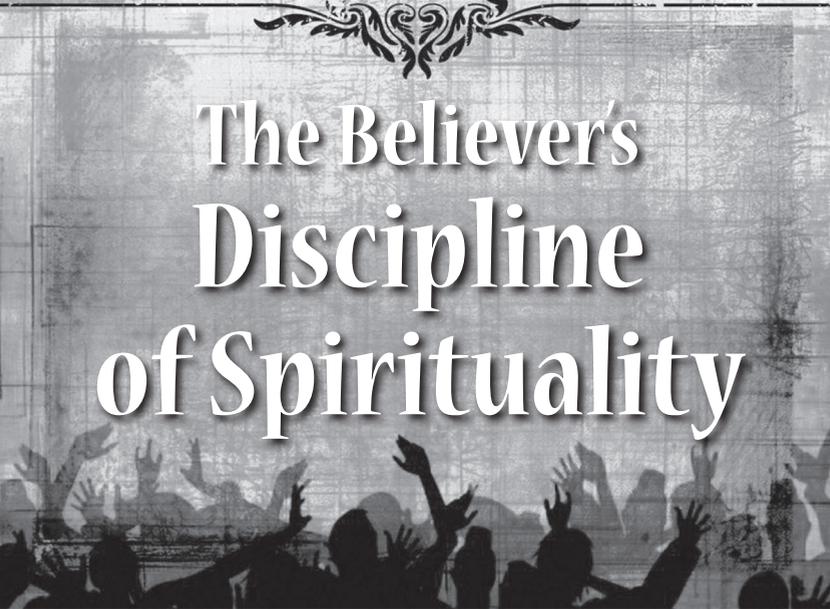
The believer must have a specific plan for his or her financial management to honor God and His family. Every man and his wife must agree on the family’s financial plan, for example: all of our income should be managed in the following manner:

- From 100 % of the income, 10% is first given to honor God, which belongs to Him.
- Take another 5% to give offerings or to give to our wife and children to be used for offerings.
- Finally, take another 10% and deposit it into a savings account at a bank. This must be a joint account between the husband and the wife. The savings account should be used for special occasions only if the husband and wife agree. For example: to buy a new home, or pay for the children’s higher education, or in some cases, to take a special vacation.
- Every believer should try to live on 75 % of the income.
AMEN!

LESSON 20



The Believer's Discipline of Spirituality



“Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me” (Psalm 51:10).

Much has been preached and taught about the subject of spirituality, but ask yourself, “What is spirituality?” A teacher named John Beck, during my Master’s studies, asked the students: “what is spirituality?” and then said: “It’s living or trying to live in right relationships. It has to do with the change of character in man, in right relations with his surroundings. It consists of four relationships:

- 1) with God
- 2) with oneself
- 3) with others
- 4) with nature

The beauty of how the Bible is written is demonstrated in two precious books. The book of Psalms speaks of praise, songs, psalms, dances, musical instruments, the inner desires to bless God, but the next book, Proverbs, tells us how to live the practical life of all the spiritual disciplines revealed in the book of Psalms. There are many believers who are so holy that, on this earth, they do not live as true believers of the Most High God.

Spirituality is Manifested in Three Disciplines:

1. Internal or Interior Disciplines
2. External or Exterior Disciplines
3. Community or Corporate Disciplines

There are Four Internal or Interior Spiritual Disciplines:

- Study
- Prayer
- Meditation
- Solitude

These four spiritual disciplines are vital to the spiritual growth of the believer. Let's consider these four disciplines in detail:

1. STUDY

Study has to do with the effort that understanding makes to know something. It deals with labor spent in learning and cultivating a science or an art. **John 5:39** *"You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me"* (NKJV).

2. PRAYER

Prayer is supplication, petition, (directing a fervent request or supplication), or a request made of God; the elevation of the mind towards God to praise or to ask for mercy. **1 Thessalonians 5:17** *“Pray without ceasing.”*

3. MEDITATION

To meditate means to apply, with rapt attention, your thoughts to consider something, or to discover (think, reflect) about the means of knowing or achieving it. **Psalm 1:2** *“And in His law he meditates day and night” (NKJV).*

4. SOLITUDE

Solitude means the lack of company; a deserted place. **Psalm 8:3-4** *“When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that thou visitest him?”*

CONCLUSION

In the daily practice of these four disciplines, the believer gives himself or herself to the task of disciplining oneself in the four areas that draws him or her to God, which are prayer, fasting, Bible reading, and worship. The psalmist said in the first Psalm: *“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his*

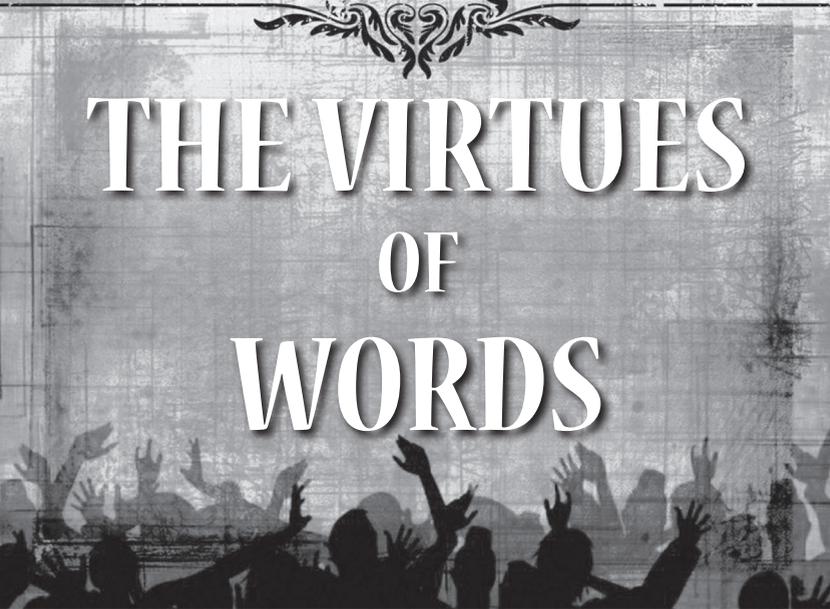
law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" (1:1-3).

Note that the words "rivers of water" are in the plural tense; more than one. What rivers? The four rivers are prayer, fasting, Bible reading, and worship. The believer who practices these disciplines will be like a tree that yields its fruit in its season, and everything he or she does shall prosper. AMEN!

LESSON 21



THE VIRTUES OF WORDS



“A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver. Like an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold is a wise rebuker to an obedient ear. Like the cold of snow in time of harvest is a faithful messenger to those who send him, for he refreshes the soul of his masters. Whoever falsely boasts of giving is like clouds and wind without rain” (Proverbs 25:11-14 NKJV).

Introduction

There was a man that was traveling on a train with three rowdy kids, and the father was not paying attention to their behavior. The passengers criticized the man for not control-

ling his children. After a moment one of the passengers approached the father and screamed to control his kids. The surprised father answered that his three kids were rowdy because they had just buried their mother, which had been killed in an automobile accident, and now they were going home. In a split second, the environment drastically changed. After a few words, the passenger totally changed and became helpful.

Words can give life or words can kill relationships among men. It all depends on how you communicate them. The following are by-laws regarding ethics in communication in Buddhist monks:

- A)** If you know something about someone that is not true and does not edify, don't say it.
- B)** If you know something about someone that is true but does not edify, don't say it.
- C)** If you know something about someone that is true and does not edify, don't say it.
- D)** If you know something about someone that is true and does edify, say it as soon as possible.

The bible, in the book of Psalms and Proverbs, gives excellent examples regarding our relationship with our fellow man, which demonstrate our spiritual maturity. The book of Psalms demonstrates our worship and the way to edify our spiritual walk with God. The book of Proverbs demonstrates how we should put into practice our spiritual virtues that we have received from our relationship with God, as it is explained in the book of Psalms.

First of all, what is the definition of spirituality? Spirituality means to live or try to live in correct relationships, which consists of four areas in the character of man: my relationship with God, with myself, with my fellow man, and with the environment. My spiritual maturity and relationship with God will be demonstrated in the way I speak to my fellow man as a result of my character.

Let us look at the words that Salomon recommends in the book of Proverbs:

- a) Words fitly spoken: These words that are appropriate and edifying are as royalty to the ear of the receiver.
- b) Words of a wise rebuker: These are words of correction, which admonish, are spoken to exhort, to urge someone not to give up, but which must be communicated to the individual that has an obedient ear.
- c) Words that are like the cold of snow: These words are words of encouragement during the time of harvest, when people are tired or worried.
- d) Words which boast falsely of giving: These are words that a spiritual person must avoid at all times. Our yes should be yes, and our no should be no.

CHAPTER 1
IN the beginning God created
heaven and the earth.
And the earth was without form
and darkness was upon the
Spirit of the water

Conclusion

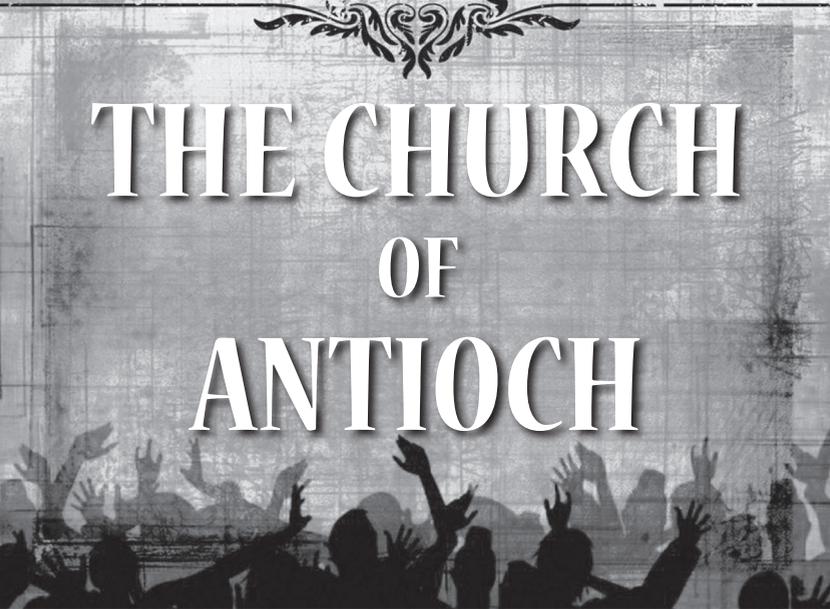
Let us speak as Paul spoke to the Colossians: “Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone” (4:6). Spiritual believers of Christ should always speak in a manner that would edify the individual.

1 Thessalonians 2:5-7 *“For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, God is our witness. Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children.”*

LESSON 22



THE CHURCH OF ANTIOCH



“And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ”

(Acts 5:42).

Trials and obstacles bring us discouragement in our Christian life to evangelize this lost world. Consider the six factors of the Church of Antioch in Acts chapters 11-13, which used their struggles, trials, and obstacles to spread the gospel. The first century Church exhibited a great miracle of church growth, even during the greatest persecution.

1. The church saw persecution as an advantage to evangelize the Greeks.

Acts 8:1 *“And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.”* **Acts 5:42** *“And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.”* **Acts 8:4** *“Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word.”*

2. A Church with great leaders developed their identity and developed leaders of excellence (Acts 11:22-26 and 13:1).

Acts 11:22-26 *“Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord. Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.”* **Acts 13:1** *“Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.”*

3. The Church had an evangelistic heart.

Acts 11:19-21 *“Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.”*

4. A Church with a generous spirit.

Acts 11:27-30 *“And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. “And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. “Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.”*

5. A Church with an emphasis on prayer.

Acts 13:1-3 *“Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.”*

6. A Church with a great vision.

Acts 13:2 *“As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, ‘Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.’”*

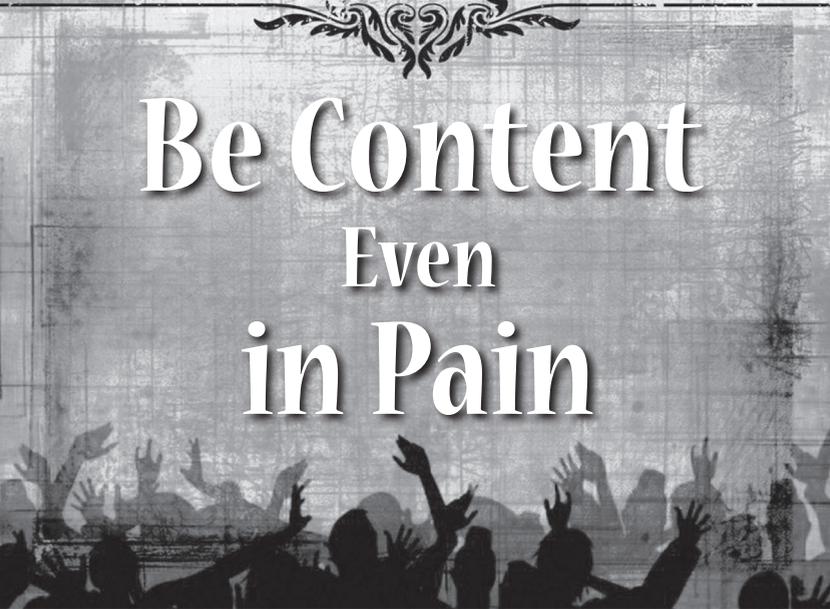
CONCLUSION

The believer should put his or her trust in Christ; that one sows, others water, but God is the One who brings growth. Everyone can contribute to the growth of the gospel in one way or another. Remember what the Apostle Paul tells us in his letter to the **Philippians**: *“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (4:13 NKJV)*

LESSON 23



Be Content Even in Pain



“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” **John 14:27**

Introduction:

I was suffering from sciatica pain down my right leg. It had become almost unbearable and I began to pray seeking God’s healing. In the Spirit, God spoke to me and said, “This is a test to see if you can be content even in pain.” I humbled myself before God and began to worship him. Soon after, the pain went away.

My experience with sciatica doesn't mean that everyone who has this is being tested by God. It was my personal test but everyone will be tested by God, in one way or another, to see if you can be "content even in pain." Your pain may be different. It may be in your cell leadership, your family or your finances. Your relationship with others may be suffering or sickness has crippled someone in your family. All cause emotional and mental pain. Can you find peace in these painful circumstances?

First Peace

In **John 14** the disciples were worried. They knew something bad was coming from the way Jesus was speaking, but they didn't understand what it was yet. In verse 27, Jesus says, *"Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Your heart must not be troubled or fearful."* It was Jesus saying goodbye to them, but He uses the word peace twice. The first peace would come through forgiveness of sin.

Peace is always the result of opposing forces held in check by one another. In the first peace, Christ leaves power to hold the wildest fear in pause. It is the peace to still a clamor or hush a cry, like a mother soothing a baby. It is faith to receive mercy when sin brings pain. The forgiveness of sin holds in check the fear of death.

The Sublime Secret

The second peace spoken by Jesus was harmony with God. Jesus, as a man, was under tremendous conflict in his own nature at that very moment when He spoke to his disciples. In a parallel passage Jesus says, *"My soul is swallowed up in sorrow—*

to the point of death. Remain here and stay awake with me...My Father! If it is possible, let this cup pass from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.” (Matthew 26:38, 39)

Jesus had a sublime secret—a high, noble and excellent secret—that brought him peace and harmony. The will of his human nature was brought, even in agony and death, into utter harmony with the will of God. You receive this peace when you surrender your will to God. It forms an alignment with you and God in your heart and mind. Peace is when you and He are one; when you are in His presence and at rest.

Peace guards your heart

Philippians 4:7 says, *“And the peace of God, which surpasses every thought, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”* Paul uses the word “guard” to describe the peace of God as a garrison of troops within your heart and mind. The help (troops) you need is within. You don’t have to search the “horizon for the cavalry” to come to your help. There are times when no one seems to be able to come to your rescue but there is a peace from God that protects you and heals the wounds of worry and fear that have invaded your life.

In **John 14:27**, Jesus says He gives peace, not as the world gives. His manner of giving peace is real and sincere. It is not formal nor hypocritical—like the world’s peace. The substance of his peace, which is the fruit of the Spirit, stretches out into eternity. The world can’t do this. Jesus gives us the power to live in peace in this lifetime and into eternity.

Because He gives us power to live in peace, Jesus says, “Your heart must not be troubled or fearful.” He saw the rising symptoms of the carnal weakness which would stop the disciples for

a while. His disciples were going to be tested but He tells them they must dismiss their trouble and fear. In John 14:2, Jesus tells them of the many mansions that He is going to prepare and in verse 6 He says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life..." They are doing the right thing and going in the right direction. Most importantly, Jesus promises the Holy Spirit (verses 16) to comfort them.

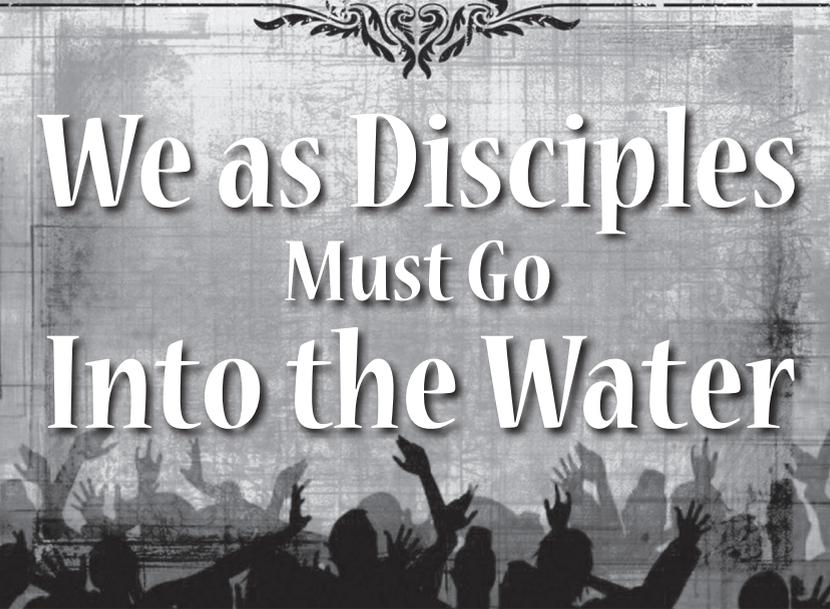
Conclusion

Cell leader, you are doing the right thing. You may be experiencing frustration, even defeat, but don't give up. With God's help you can find peace in painful circumstances. Believe in Christ's mercy and love and forgiveness of sin. Surrender to God's will. This is the sublime secret that will bring peace and rest to your heart and soul. This test of true contentment to your purpose and leadership, even in pain, will be rewarded. You will see victory in your ministry and it will bless your church and family.

LESSON 24



We as Disciples Must Go Into the Water



In this lesson I will use the word “disciple” synonymously with cell leader.

Mark 4:35-41

Introduction

Suddenly, a storm came upon the boat, with Jesus sleeping in the stern. The loud wind and the water overlapping the sides of the boat terrified the disciples, and they woke Jesus. He stands and stills the storm, but then reprimands the disciples saying, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?” Discipleship is putting into practice what the disciple has learned

from the master. What Jesus wanted in the boat incident was for the disciples to use their faith and for them to still the storm. Jesus did not want them to be afraid and do nothing.

A disciple cannot be a spectator. He must get involved to demonstrate his faith and service. A story on ABC Channel 7 News of a drowning at Crown Memorial Beach in Alameda, California says that Raymond Zack walked into the bay and for an hour stood in neck deep water before committing suicide by drowning. What makes this story more tragic is that while Zack was in the water, many bystanders were on the shore and did nothing to help. Amongst the bystanders were fire-fighters and police.

The Bystander Effect

In the Bystander Effect, A. Allen Martin writes of “a psychological phenomenon in which someone is less likely to intervene in an emergency situation when other people are present and able to help than when he or she is alone.” Martin’s article is a call for church leadership to act and to keep people from leaving the church, which he compares to someone drowning. Martin explains that there is a need for heroes that will help people stay in church. Cell leaders must be the heroes that act to win souls, help connect people to the church and practice what they have learned from Christ’s example.

Jesus saw the need for His disciples to practice what they had learned from Him and not just be bystanders. Likewise, cell leaders and cell members must feel the burden to win the lost and do whatever it takes to “keep them from drowning.” This requires commitment and great courage.

It Takes Courage to be a Leader.

The firefighters and police who stood on the beach and watched Zack drown were not without personal courage, but they lacked the courage to see the reality of the situation and to act. They feared a lawsuit. In the boat, the reality was that the disciples could still the storm by using the authority of the name of Jesus in faith. Pastor Bill Hybels, in his conference at the Global Leadership Summit 2013, said that leadership requires courage to define the current reality.

- Cell leader, what is the reality of your cell?
- Is there momentum and is it growing or is it stagnant?
- Is it going downward in membership—drowning?
- Are you putting into practice what you have learned from Jesus and the pastor?
- Are you developing new leaders?

Pastor Hybels said, “The church is the hope of the world—if it’s working right.” The church and the cell, when working right, can still the storm.

It is sin that causes the “storms” of pain and brokenness in the lives of people. The need of salvation means repentance from sins. This alone is not a welcomed message, yet His disciples must feel the burden the master feels for the lost also.

Disciples must go into the water; they must stand in the midst of the people’s storm and bring peace to their lives, through Jesus Christ. Although it can be dangerous to throw yourself into the water, cell leaders and church members cannot be bystanders and let the “people drown.” This is when the cell and the church becomes the hope of the world.

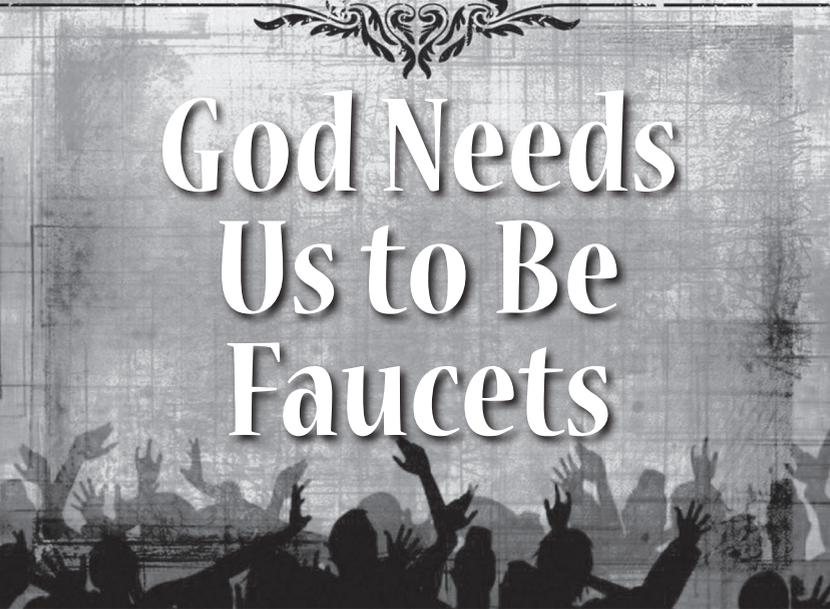
Conclusion

Jesus didn't want His disciples to be afraid and do nothing. He wanted his disciples to use their faith and for them to still the storm. Jesus wanted them to put into practice what He had taught them, but it takes great courage to be a disciple; to be a cell leader. Some people believe courage is overcoming fear to do what you're called to do. This is not true. Courage is not being afraid and doing what is necessary because you trust the One who is asking you to do the courageous. Jesus has given you authority, in his name, to be the hope of the world. Cell leader, there are people "drowning" and you must go into the water to save them.

LESSON 25



God Needs Us to Be Faucets



*(Taken from the sermon *The Magic Is Not in the Faucet*, by Rev. M. Phelps, Preachit.org and applied to cell leadership.)*

Matthew 17:14-21

Introduction:

T.E. Lawrence, known as Lawrence of Arabia, became famous for his exploits as British liaison to the Arab Revolt during the First World War. After the war, Lawrence brought some Arab friends to England. When they were about to leave, he asked them if there was anything he could give them to take back to their desert homes. They took him to the hotel bathroom and

pointed to the faucets in the bathtub and said that they wanted to take faucets with them that would provide running water in the desert. They didn't realize that the faucets were superficial. Behind the wall was plumbing, a hot water heater, a city main that supplied the water and from the city main went a line to an outside source of water.

The Magic Is Not in the Faucet

In the text we read, the disciples came to Jesus and asked why they couldn't cast out the demon? Jesus answered because of their unbelief. *"If ye have faith as a grain of mustard see, ye shall say to unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you."* (v.20)

Cell leaders must be vessels that Christ can use to win the lost and bring blessings to the church. He needs a faucet but remember, the magic is not in the faucet alone. It must be connected to a water source.

You must be connected to the source of power that brings living water to those in your cell. You must learn to pray, fast and seek God's guidance through His Word. He will provide the water needed by everyone in your cell. God needs faucets—men and women to do his will, to preach His Word and to win the lost. But it is what is behind the faucet that gives the water. The things that are not visible to the human eye, but are there nonetheless, is what brings the water.

If the plumbing or the reservoir is ever out of service, the faucet is useless. Make sure, cell leader, you are connected to the source or you will fail. The Bible lists many men and women that

God used but who were the most unlikely vessels: Moses stut-tered, David's armor didn't fit, John Mark was rejected by Paul, Timothy had ulcers and many more. You may feel inadequate to cell leadership but God needs you to be a vessel, a faucet.

God Needs Us to Be Faucets

John 7:38 says, *"He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."* God can have all the plumbing in place, have the pump hooked up, ready to pour out blessings on His people, on the world, but He needs us to be vessels. He needs a faucet. When Elisha was performing the miracle for the prophet's widow, and the oil was flowing freely, the only thing that stopped the oil was the lack of a ves-
sel (2 Kings 4:6).

God is always seeking for men and women through which to move. It doesn't make sense that this God who can do all things would choose to restrict himself to moving through im-
perfect, flawed, inconsistent humanity, but on the day of Pen-
tecost, God poured out his Spirit upon all "flesh." God was filling
vessels!

The Important Lesson

In our text, Jesus is teaching His disciples a very important lesson. They had most likely watched Him cast out devils many times before. They had heard him teach about going into the Strongman's house and taking his armor and they had prob-
ably watched as He sent the legion of demons into a herd of
swine. So, now they come across a situation that they feel very
confident that they can handle.

They have watched Jesus do this; they have observed His hand motions, listened to what He said, and how He said it. They have the words, actions, motions, and everything else down pat, but there is one thing missing. There is no power! There is nothing behind the faucet and they fail miserably at the task at hand. Jesus takes this opportunity to tell them that there is no magic in the faucet.

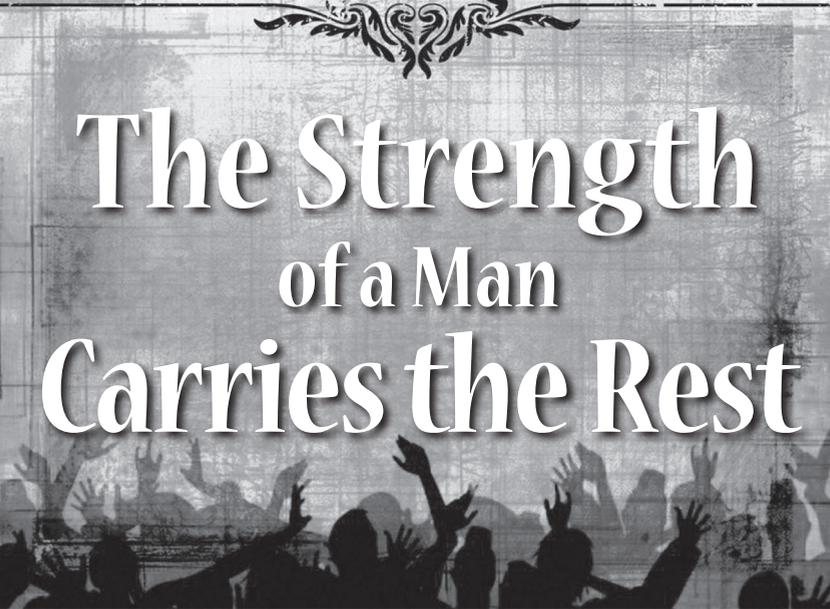
Conclusion

If there is no prayer and fasting, there will be no power. There is no magic in the faucet. It's what is behind the faucet that makes the difference. Cell leader, the danger you face is when you try to duplicate, through mere human effort, what can only be produced by God. You need Jesus. Make a commitment to pray, fast and seek God's guidance through His Word. Become the vessel He wants you to be.

LESSON 26



The Strength of a Man Carries the Rest



Ice Breaker:

Have you ever carried someone in your arms or on your back? Do you think you have the strength to carry more than one person and how far could you carry them?

Luke 5:1 -11

The great catch of fish brought amazement and fear into the hearts of the future disciples. They realized they were in the presence of someone great. In this passage, Jesus gave Peter and the other disciples a dream: You will be fishers of men. The Bible says they left everything and followed Jesus. They

were excited by the new life Jesus promised, but the personal strength needed to fulfill the dream would cost them.

The title of this lesson says “strength of a man”, but I am not referring to physical strength, but to character, attitude and human spirit. In the crucifixion of Jesus, He was too weak from the beating to carry His cross, so the soldiers forced a man named Simon of Cyrene to carry Jesus’ cross. Physically, Jesus didn’t have the strength to carry the cross, but His strength was in His commitment to His destiny. Once the right time had come, Jesus did what was necessary to fulfill His purpose: Death on the cross.

People are dependent on you.

Every head of family and church leader has a purpose given by God. With purpose in leadership comes dependence by others, such as family and cell members, for you to help them accomplish their role in life. But in fulfilling your purpose and having the pressure of helping others fulfill their purpose, there may be burnout. Burnout is a term that, in people, refers to loss of enthusiasm, interest and vision for the future and even depression. In cell leadership you can burnout when you continually have to replace members in the cell, visitors and leaders. In families, you have burnout when problems have reached a level you can’t seem to overcome.

You sometimes need time away from everyone with the Master to overcome burnout. In **Matthew 16**, some believe Jesus took time out from His ministry to go away with His disciples to be alone. It is in these moments with Jesus that your vision and purpose is re-ignited. The disciples are relaxed and

rested. The Teacher asks them the question, “*who do people say I am?*” Some answered a prophet, but Peter, their leader, cries out, “*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.*”

This leadership response was needed. The disciples were encouraged by the words of Peter, and Christ awarded Peter with a greater vision, the keys to the Kingdom. We as leaders need to spend time with Jesus, alone in prayer, and listen for His direction and words of encouragement to overcome burnout, fear and depression. Too many people are dependent on how we react to situations that can cause us problems.

People are looking to see what you will do.

Peter’s reaction in a crisis situation is an example of what it means to be with the Master. Jesus’ ministry took a downward turn and many people who had followed Him began to leave. Jesus asked the twelve disciples, “*You don’t want to go away too, do you?*” **(John 6:67).**

I think the disciples all looked at Peter. What will you do Peter? The others are looking at you for leadership. “*Simon Peter answered, ‘Lord, who will we go to? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that You are the Holy One of God!’*” **(John 6:68-69)**

It was the right answer. It encouraged the rest when encouragement was most needed. It took strength to speak up in a positive way but Peter’s words didn’t come simply from his lips but from his spirit.

Don't give up.

Proverbs 18:14 says

"A man's spirit can endure sickness, but who can survive a broken spirit?"

The human spirit is that part of us that is non-physical. It is "our thoughts, imaginations, plans, hopes, dreams, feelings, emotions, attitudes—and makes us each who and what we are." (Church at Home, *What is the Spirit of a Man?*)

It was from his spirit that Peter spoke words of strength and conviction. Peter had not forgotten his purpose or Christ's promises. God touched his spirit and it gave him strength to triumph. "It is the spirit in man that gives humans the potential to become sons and daughters of God." (Church at Home, *What is the Spirit of a Man?*) As cell leaders, we must let the Holy Spirit touch our spirit. It will bring passion and energy to do the work of God and to fulfill our purpose.

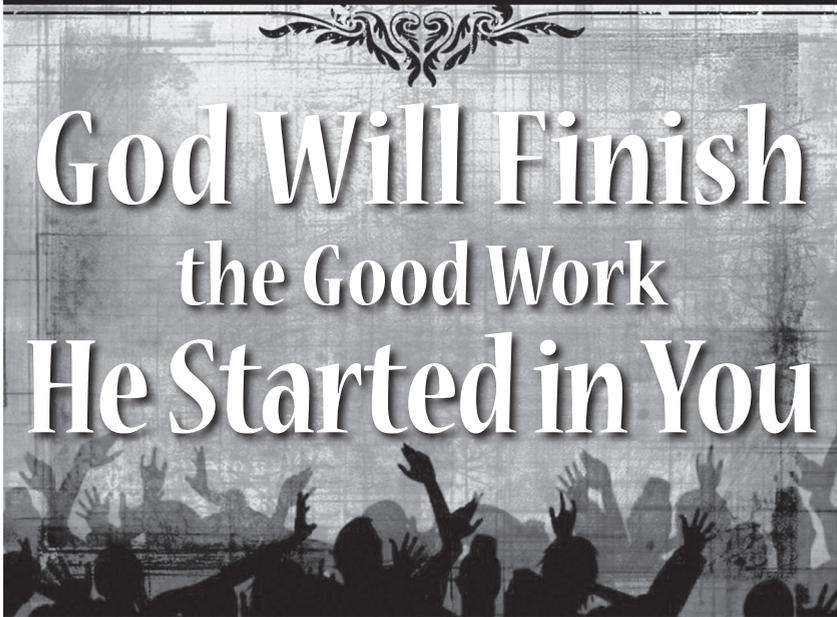
Conclusion

Though Peter failed Jesus at the crucifixion, after the resurrection Jesus spoke to him and told him to "feed my sheep." Because of his relationship and his love for Christ, Peter's strength was renewed and he was able to go on to do the great works God called him to do. He became a fisher of men and provided the church with the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven.

Cell leader, how is your "strength"? Re-ignite your passion and love for God's work through prayer and seeking Christ.

Many are dependent on your strength and are looking to see what you do in crisis situations. Seek God's presence and let the Holy Spirit touch you. When you are touched by God's Spirit, nothing is impossible.

LESSON 27



(By Pastor G. Newton, 1-17-01; SermonCentral.com; Certain changes made to apply to cell leadership)

Philippians 1:6

Introduction

How many of you here today have an unfinished project waiting for you at home? You haven't quite completed it yet? God is doing a work on you—you're a work in progress and He will finish what He has started. This truth applies itself to cell leadership too. In this lesson I want to convince you, through God's Word, and encourage you to see yourself

through God's eyes, to see how much God values you. If you receive God's Word today, you will begin to see yourselves in His light and you will then find it hard to be down on yourselves anymore.

First, remember God's great love for you, and how He rejoices over you even now.

Luke 15:8-9,

Jesus is telling a story that describes God's love for you. God spared nothing in His search for you. He gathered the greatest search party that has ever been formed in order to find you. He sent his Son, His Spirit, and His angels after you. As God and His angels searched, He had his people pray for you. You will never fully know how deep, how thorough, and how costly His search was. You do not belong to Him today because of chance, or accident, or a stroke of fate. You are His because He never gave up His search until He found you.

Romans 8:32 says,

"He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all—how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things?" Do you know that God rejoices because you're His? How many of you parents ever have walked into your children's bedrooms at night right before you go to bed, just to look at them, all quiet and peaceful. Do you remember your heart just jumping with joy...you could say rejoicing because they're so precious to you? Remember, God rejoices over you, not based on how good you are but He loves you for who you are.

The second important reminder is that God is working in you.

That work that God has started (**Philippians 1:6**) specifically, is God living in you, changing you, molding you, using you for His good pleasure. You are a work in progress. You are a project that God is working on and you will not be complete until Christ comes back.

Here is the key:

You must allow God to change you, to mold you, and to use you. Many times it's painful and many times it's hard but it's always rewarding and fulfilling. I always want to be open to God's work in my life because the truth is: I gave up my rights a long time ago. I must continue to allow him to chisel away, to sometimes convict me, discipline me and always to use me how he sees fit.

Cell leader, what changes has God done in your life this year? I will warn you on this point. This is where too many Christians begin to grow cold in their Christian experience. They don't surrender control of their lives and God is not allowed to work in them and this leads to disobedience, which leads to sin. Many Christians have lost out because of their unwillingness to grow beyond their salvation experience. If you don't keep climbing, then you will eventually fall away.

The third important thing to remember is that God doesn't see failure when He looks at you.

We like to keep score don't we? Our church cell ministry is based on a merit system. So because we use these types of things, does that mean God does too? Does God rate us as a failure or a success? If He does, what are the criteria? How many prayers do I say? How many fasts must I do?

When I look at my daughter Danielle, I don't judge her a success or failure based on material things or whether or not she made A's or D's. When it's all said and done, the only thing that really matters is: does she have a personal relationship with God? Does she love Jesus?

When Jesus sees you, he's not looking at your report cards or your work schedule or your paycheck stubs. He's not looking at how many people come to the cell. He's looking at your heart. Do you love Him? Do you love Him more than anything else that's put in front of you? Will you serve Him?

When He sees you, He sees a heart that has been covered by His own blood. He sees His Spirit living in you. Our responsibility is to keep growing; to never stop growing and to continue doing the best you can as a leader.

Conclusion

Part of the growing process is failure. In fact, if you don't embrace the fact that you're going to fail along the way, you

will never grow. The question is not will you have problems but how are you going to deal with your problems? *“People are training for success when they should be training for failure. Failure is far more common than success; poverty is more prevalent than wealth and disappointment more normal than arrival.”*

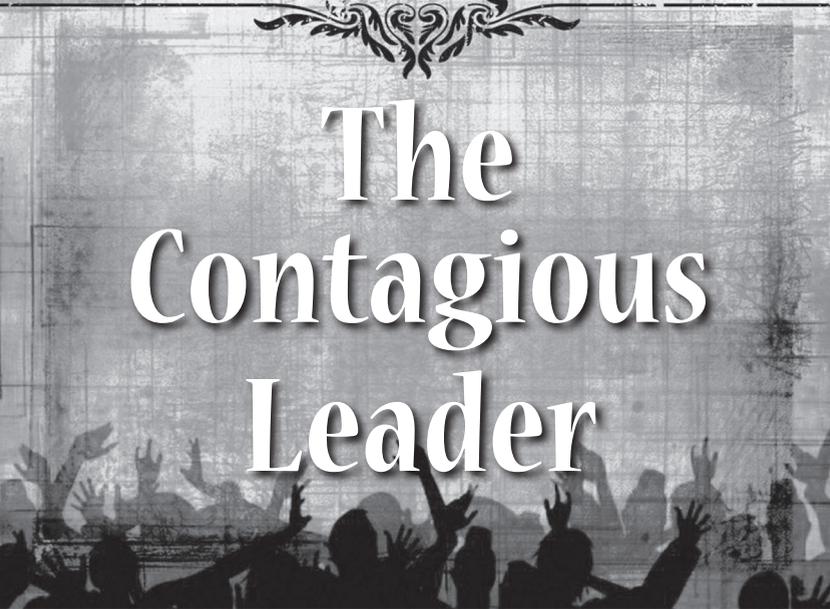
– **J. Wallace Hamilton**

The truth is: there is no achievement without failure. How many times do we work for results in cells and fail? How many different plans do we need to come up with to accomplish what we want? The answer is: not a number. The answer is: we don't stop. We don't give up. With every defeat, we're that much closer to victory.

LESSON 28



The Contagious Leader



(Juan 4:39-42)

“And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, “He told me all that I ever did.” So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. And many more believed because of His own word. Then they said to the woman, “Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.”

Introduction

After her encounter with Jesus, the Samaritan woman immediately became a powerful influence to all of those around her. Her newly transformed life became a source of inspiration for many others, even those who before had rejected her in the social circle she lived in.

Every leader is a transformed person through the power of the blood and name of Jesus. Just as the Samaritan woman created a great deal of enthusiasm for Christ, so should the leader generate a contagious atmosphere in respect to Christ and being involved in the Friendship Group, where the power of the Holy Spirit is present and moving in the lives of everyone. There should be a sense of excitement to be part of the Friendship Group, at the forefront of which is the leader.

Contagious Leadership Recommendations

1. The Bible tells us that in the multitude of advisors there is wise counsel. The leader should be open to hear everyone who wishes to express themselves and wishes to contribute to the success of the group. Hearing everyone gives them a sense of value and allows for creativity for the betterment of the group on a whole.

2. As the success of the Friendship Group comes into fruition, the credit to God should be celebrated as a team effort, with everyone having contributed in way or form to the success of the group.

3. Not every effort will be successful, and the leader must step up to the front to lead the group forward. The focus should be to learn from the mistakes, with the leader not seeking to blame anyone but accepting the blame; all will appreciate that.

4. The leader must be open to learning more effective ways to minister to those within the group to prevent a sense of monotony, overshadowing the group.

5. The leader must learn to be open in admitting his or her weaknesses, seeking to make up for those deficiencies with resources at their disposal. These resources include using the people around them, including those within the group. This elevates their self-worth and makes them excited about being in the group.

Contagious Participants

1. To get others excited about the goodness of the Lord, there needs to be a genuine relationship with the Lord Jesus. People can perceive those who truly have been transformed and whose cups are truly overflowing.

2. There is no specific or right way to evangelize, but it must be conveyed through the person. There is no need to be anyone else other than themselves. One's personality should be at the forefront in expressing the goodness of the Lord, as that will be more conducive to encouraging others to open up to Jesus.

3. The Samaritan woman used no other forms of communication, other than herself, to let the whole community know about the Lord. Her effectiveness was a result of hearing her testimony directly from her with all the emotion and excitement she experienced.

4. There should be no fear of verbalizing, not only the content of the lesson, but how the Word has made a personal impact upon the leaders. The more verbalization of what God has done in our lives the more motivated others will become.

5. At the same time the leader must restrain from being too pushy or trying to rush the visitor to accepting the plan of salvation. Everyone has their own timeline and must be given the opportunity to decide for themselves, and this will create a greater commitment when the steps of obedience are taken.

6. The goal is to create, throughout the whole group, a sense of teamwork. The salvation of our communities needs the personalities of all, as each within their own sphere of influence will be able to reach others that will be open to hear and accept what they have to share.

7. The leader must look for the benefit of others before himself. Putting others first creates a sense of trust in that the benefit is not for one's own glory or gain but for the betterment of the other person.

Conclusion

The world is drawn to where there is enthusiasm and excitement. We must be truly excited about our relationship with Christ Jesus. To have the opportunity to be in a relationship with the King of Kings and Lord and Lords, is not only an honor but something to be exhilarated about. Just to reflect that the King of Glory lives and abides within our hearts should create a shout of jubilation from the innermost sanctions of our soul.

This joy unspeakable and full of glory needs to be shared with the whole world, but it begins with the leader and the Friendship Group. Just as those in the city of the Samaritan opened their ears and hearts from the excitement of this transformed life, it is now our goal to reach our communities and even the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are God's elected and chosen vessels to propagate the gospel. We have been chosen to be on the winning team, with an assurance, of not only daily victory, but eternal victory.

LESSON 29



“Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.” (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

Introduction

One of the most important resources that is essential for a successful Friendship Group is, not only the spiritual welfare, but the physical and emotional welfare of all members of the group, but especially the leader. One of the most essentials for a leader is to learn to live a life that is balanced in every aspect so as to be able to give an effort of 100%.

Paul makes it clear that we are stewards and not owners of our own bodies. Our goal should be to glorify God in our bodies, which belong to Him. The same way that we take care to maintain the church building where we worship on a weekly basis, is the way we should take care of our bodies constantly, monitoring for any repair or upkeep that is needed.

In an effort to prevent burnout, one needs to be alert to possible signs that indicate that one may be nearing such a state. The following are indicators to be aware of.

Signs of Burnout

The first steps of burnout usually start with a life that is very stressful. A life that is stressful usually is exhibited by the person taking on more than he or she can handle. Their emotions are volatile, there is a sense of urgency followed by hyperactivity, a loss of energy, anxiety and physical ailments.

The person who is headed for burnout, instead of being in the middle of activity, distances him or herself. There is a sense of despondency and inability to help oneself. There is a lack of motivation, as well as depression and emotional dysfunction.

Physical symptoms can include feeling extremely tired and exhausted the majority of the time. The person has a depressed immune system, making him or her more susceptible to disease processes. The person may suffer from headaches, back and muscular pain.

Emotional symptoms include feeling a sense of failure. There is a tendency to doubt him or herself in respect to their capability to being able to handle the responsibility they have been given. Instead of feeling victorious in their efforts, there is

a sense of defeat, without escape from continuing in the same state. They are no longer motivated to go forward, feeling that all is lost and not worth pursuing further.

In respect to the actual work at hand, there is a tendency to withdraw from the responsibilities that need to be attended. Instead of wishing to be with others, there is a tendency for the person to want to avoid being with people, isolating themselves. They feel very alone, though surrounded by people. They tend to procrastinate, taking longer to complete tasks. They become very negative of a favorable outcome, criticizing in a derogatory and destructive manner. They tend to lose their sense of satisfaction or accomplishment. They may not show up to fulfill their obligations, showing up late and leaving early. In order to cope, they find refuge in food, drugs or other substances. Their frustrations are taken out on others.

Prevention recommendations

To begin your day, it is recommended that, instead of rising rapidly, that one allow him or herself at least fifteen minutes to reflect on the new day. This could include stretching, or as every good disciplined leader, an early devotional with prayer and reading of the Word.

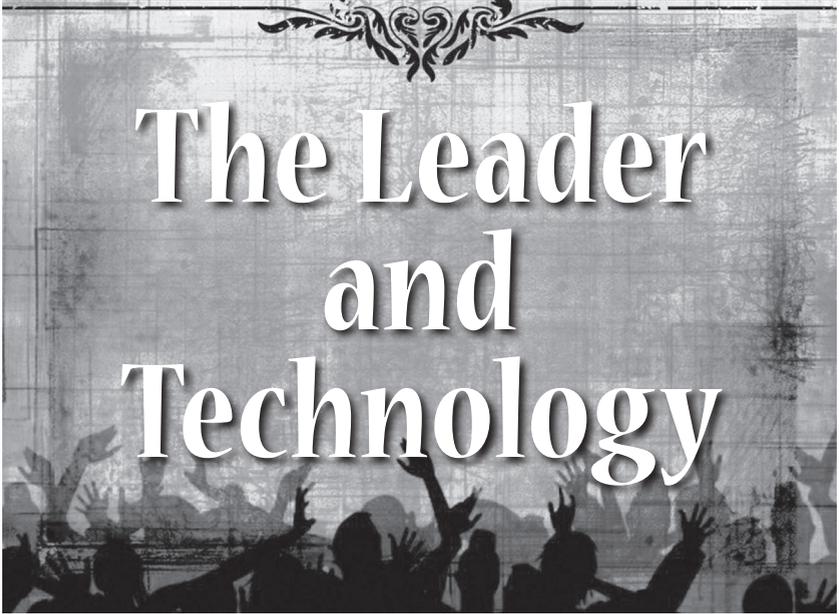
The body needs to be well nourished, with a diet that is properly balanced and planned during the day, in proper intervals. Together with eating properly, there should be allotted a specific time for some form of regular exercise, even if it is just a half hour to one hour walk. Proper rest should be enjoyed with an average of 7.5 to 9 hours of sleep for adults. A vacation is not sinful, but necessary to give the body and mind a much deserved rest, such as fasting for the body. There is no need to burn the candle at both ends, as this results in a dysfunctional body.

One of the most difficult restraints for overachievers is the inability to establish boundaries that limit their activity. One has to learn how to say no, being selective on those activities that need your full attention and effort.

Conclusion

The good Lord desires for us to take into account that our bodies are His and should be administered in a way that is pleasing to Him. He has only given us one life and body. As a car or other vehicles require maintenance and proper care, so should we as well pay more attention to the proper upkeep of our bodies. The Lord wishes us to reap the full potential of our bodies, not only in the spiritual sense, but in the emotional and physical as well. Let us strive to glorify God in our bodies, which are His, and thus be a greater blessing to those within our sphere of influence.

LESSON 30



"But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase." (Daniel 12:4)

Introduction

In the book of Daniel, we see a prophecy of the increase of knowledge in every aspect of our lives. Today we live in a flurry of movement and activity. There are over 87,000 flights per day. Over 1 billion people per year get on a plane for some destination. There are over 128 million commuters each day that spend at least 26 minutes in their vehicles. How many miles do people

all over the world not travel each day, by foot or by transportation of some sort? We live in a very mobile society, which is in continual motion. The pending question is how do we keep up with these people and deliver the gospel of Jesus Christ to their lives. The following are a few ideas for the leader to implement to maintain that connection with those of his or her group.

One of the great instruments to spread the gospel during the period of the Reformation was the invention of the printing press. Right away the Christians of that era seized the opportunity to spread the Word by beginning a massive effort to print the Bible, making it available to the common person. They were right on the cutting edge of technology, using the increase of knowledge to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Technological Options

As leaders in this day and age, we must take advantage of the social media that is on the cutting edge before us. Precaution must be taken to assure the integrity of these instruments, but their potential is definitely worth considering. Facebook, for instance, according to the latest statistics, now reports over 1.1 billion users each month. If you ask those within your group who has a Facebook account, surely the majority will admit to be having such an account.

The leader can use this network to remain in contact with those of their group, not just on a weekly basis, but on a daily basis, providing Scripture and words of inspiration for those of their group. Not only this, but many not only read the words of inspiration for themselves but pass it on to others within their sphere of influence. There may be someone within your group who could be given the task to establish this communication.

Another media that has come to the forefront is that of Twitter. Over 50 million messages are sent via this media per day. That amounts to 600 messages per second. This is another form to send again Scriptures and words of encouragement to those within your group. There are numerous testimonies of how a message was sent at a moment that was critical in the life of a person and served to see them through the situation.

On a greater scale, encourage your pastor to explore in establishing a website that can be easily accessed. More people than ever are searching for different services through the Internet. Many churches are reporting people showing up in their congregations because of having found them through the Internet. This can also be a source of inspiration and resource. Those within your Friendship Group can be directed to the site for teachings, preaching, general church information and activities.

One of the easiest and most accessible to most people, even those without computers or access to the Internet, is the cell phone. On a missionary trip to Africa, an older man approached me from some tribe out in some remote part of the country. He was dressed in his tribal attire that amounted to a piece of material draped over his body. As I began looking for a pen and paper, to my surprise, he whipped out a cell phone. The point is that virtually everyone has a cell phone and uses texting to communicate to others. In the US the amount of texting has increased from 14 billion in 2000 to 188 billion in 2010. In the 18-29-age bracket, approximately 88 messages per day are sent. This statistic should awaken us to the fact that we need to use this form of communication to stay in touch with those of our group, especially those of the younger age group. There are many Bible applications that can be downloaded for free that will allow you to forward a Scripture per day to those of your group, with some words of encouragement.

For those of prior generations, there are still the options of sharing words of inspiration and encouragement through CDs and DVDs regarding certain teachings or preachers. With the advent of UTube, there is a sea of songs, services and teachings at the disposal of all. Caution should be given to those within the group with the reading of different literature; to retain the good and leave behind the bad.

Conclusion

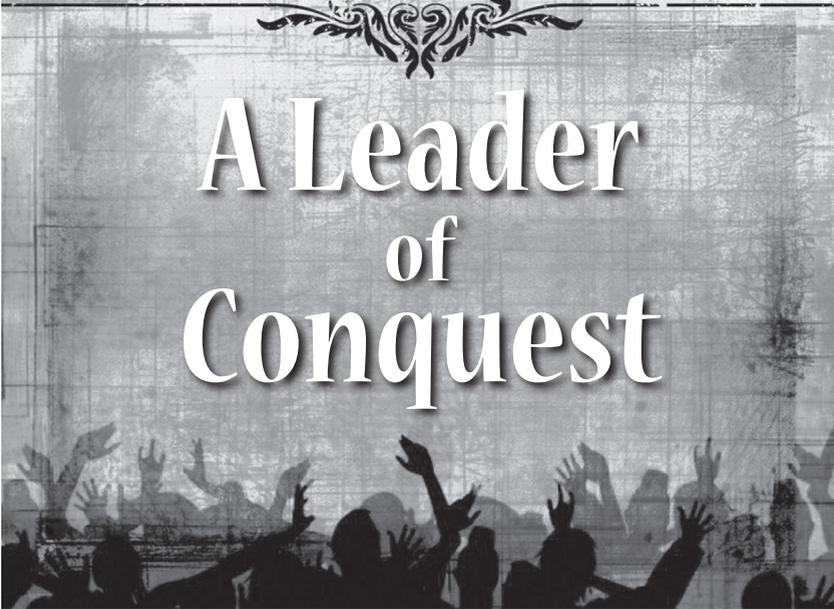
“And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ” (Acts 5:42).

We must follow the example of the early church and meet the challenge in this day and age, to not cease from teaching and preaching Jesus wherever the people may be. With anointing and precaution, we must use the new instruments of communication to reach those, not just within our Friendship Groups, but those in our churches, communities and even the four corners of the earth, so that none would perish but have everlasting life.

LESSON 31



A Leader of Conquest



Now the Angel of the Lord came and sat under the terebinth tree which was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon threshed wheat in the winepress, in order to hide it from the Midianites. And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him, and said to him, *“The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor!”* (**Judges 6:11-12**)

Introduction

If today we were called to serve on a special commission for the president of the country, we would surely consider it of the highest honor and privilege to be able to serve in that position.

Of even greater privilege and honor it is for us to be able to be used by God in a special manner. You that are here today are here as a result of God having seen something in you that He has not seen in everyone else. To be a leader within a Friendship Group is not only a privilege but also an honor to be able to serve the King of Kings and Lord of Lords in that capacity.

Essentials for Success

Hard work

When the Lord found Gideon He found a hard worker who was undaunted by the task before as he knew that he had to take responsibility for his family to survive.

There is a saying from our early Apostolic church fathers that says “el que no sirve, no sirve,” or the longer version that states, “He that does not live to serve, does not serve to live.” God, in this hour, is hungry for laborers that are willing to work and get the job done, no matter what the cost may be. You are that person!

The success of any Friendship Group hinges on the hard work that is adamant, tenacious and determined. The leader must stick with the group to, if need be, the bitter end. You must make every effort possible to keep the ship afloat and if it goes down you, will still be making a go of it as it goes down.

There will be a temptation to bail ship at times, but a true leader use all his or her physical, mental, emotional and spiritual resources to make a go of their group.

Courage

The war for the salvation of the lost is not one for cowards or those who have talk but no walk. Clearly, the call for the leader of today is, "...Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." Once again, our strength and courage is centered, not on our own God-given abilities and capacity, but on the assurance that God is with us, regardless of the enemy or the situation that presents itself before us. This God-given courage will propel us towards victory, as it is totally dependent on Him.

G-Factor

In the Story of Gideon, we see that the factor that would give him ultimate victory was not his ability or capacity as a warrior but the fact that the best item he had going for him was simply that God was with him. As a leader destined for not only victory, but battle as well, the factor of greatest need is the G-factor. The God factor throughout the Bible makes the difference between failure and success and between victory and defeat.

The Bible plainly reports that what will give us the ultimate victory over any adversity or foe is that God be with us. In Romans 8:31 the apostle states, "If God be for us who can be against us?" Such a simple formula for success but ignored by so many. As a leader we must take our eyes off of our abilities, skills and talents and make sure that God is truly with and for us. As a leader we must take the time to make sure, before we enter into battle that the Lord is with us. His focus was not the enemy but to make sure that God was there to respond and back up his every move.

The leader can be so caught up in skill and technique development that one may forget the indispensable for success, and that is that God be with you.

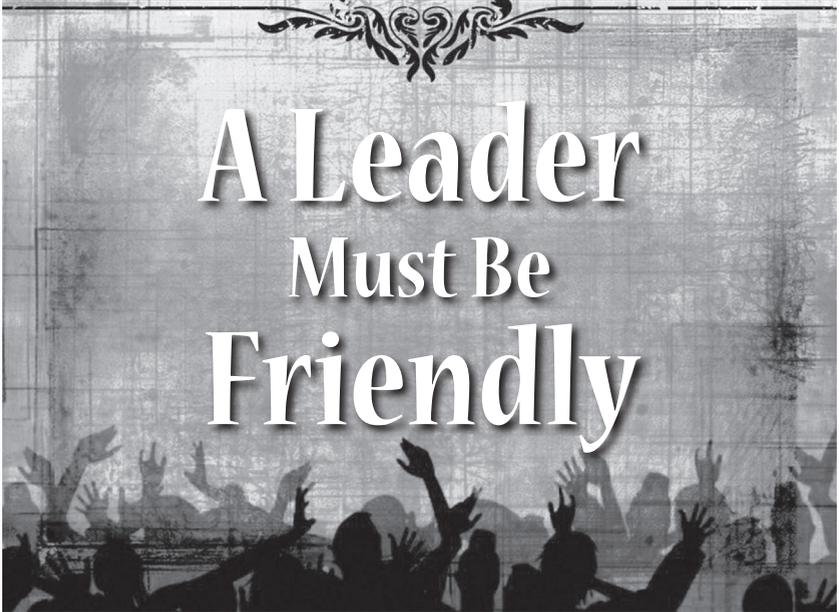
A vital step before battle is the preparation. We must not only assess our enemy but have a strategy to take him down from all angles. Just as a warrior would not leave for battle without his sword and shield, we must not leave to lead our friendship group unless we are sure that God is with us. He is Omniscient, Omnipresent and Omnipotent, factors that in the end guarantee us ultimate victory. Let us not be so occupied with the work of the Lord that we forget about our relationship with the Lord of the work.

Gideon, accompanied by the Lord, was given the victory in very a God-manner way. God has great victory in store for our Friendship Groups, using ways that are not always orthodox but successful, as long as He leads and we just follow his direction and orders. The Lord's is the battle, and He will fight for us, and in end, victory is ultimate.

Conclusion

If we enter into Friendship Groups with hard work and determination to get the job done, with a God-centered and based courage, as well as an assurance of God being with us, then our goal will be delivered into our hands, that being souls, not for our kingdom but for the kingdom of God.

LESSON 32



“A man who has friends must himself be friendly, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother”

(Proverbs 18:24).

Introduction

One of the goals of the Friendship Group is to create an ambience that is friendly and welcoming. The person who must lead the way for this dynamic to be present is the leader. The leader must take on the task of developing not only his or her own inner qualities but those of the group so that a spirit of friendship prevails.

How to be Friendly

The Word clearly states that to create a pool of friends one must take on the initiative to be friendly. This is not an automatic function for some leaders, while for others it may come naturally. The following are some recommendations of how to develop a leadership that is truly friendship oriented.

People, even though not bestowed with the gift of discernment, are able to distinguish the sincerity of those with whom they are interacting. A leader must first show that they are truly interested in the life of the people within their group. This means that not only should there be a genuine interest in the visitors who come to group, but also a genuine interest in those who form the core team of the group. People can tell when you are truly interested in what they are saying by just plainly looking into their eyes. You can easily perceive when one is truly interested or if they are just there by obligation, as their mind and focus is on someone or something else.

In conjunction with the showing a true interest in others, is the skill of listening. One of the most important needs of people is to be heard or listened to. Most people in search of God have some heavy burdens they are carrying and are seeking someone, not necessarily to tell them what to do, but to just listen. Many have bottled up emotions and feelings that are creating so much pressure that they feel like they are ready to explode. When you as a leader take the time to truly listen to a person, you may not even have to say a word as all the person needs is to vent out all the feelings that are built up within. After they have vented their feelings to you and feel better, all that is needed is to redirect them to the One who, not only will

listen, but has the power to transform any situation into something extraordinary.

“Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you”

(1 Peter 5:7).

Jesus is the true friend who never gets tired of hearing us or gives up on our situation or circumstance. Through Jesus there is always a solution. One of the important goals in the relationship with Christ is not to just have visitors know him as Savior but as the friend of friends.

The leader must learn how to show friendliness in the body language they convey. The greeting of the leader should be gushing with the love of God. The face of the leader should display the love of God that is reflected in the smile. Some of the leaders need to go to a mirror and practice smiling in a genuine and loving manner. Do you scare people as you approach them or is there a warm, inviting, accepting smile? The handshake should be one of love and of acceptance, no matter how the physical appearance of the person may be, ranging from the homeless to those higher in social circles.

One of the special ways to make someone feel good is to remember his or her name. Names give a sense of identity and self worth. When the leaders of the group remember the names of those visitors week after week, it sends a clear message to the visitor that they are important to you and to God.

On the contrary when the leader keeps on forgetting the name of the visitor or mispronounces the name, it sends a message that the person is hardly noticed or thought of. When you have them participate, call them by name. That will convey to them a positive sense of value, while at the same time, helping

you remember their name, as the more you say it the better you will remember it.

“Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name” (Psalm 91:14).

Just like good things come from the knowing the name of the Lord on our behalf, likewise good things will come from those we minister to, as we remember their names. This will create a dynamic where they will not only receive but begin to give as well.

Another important point is to consider how is it that people conceive that we conceive them. In the interaction of the leader with those within his group, he can create a high sense of worth and value that is a natural attractant to people. One of the goals of a good leader is to make those of his group feel special and important, not only to God, but to you as a fellow human being. Some people who come to group have never been treated in a positive manner and will be overwhelmed as you make them feel good about themselves, both in the sight of God and in your eyes.

Conclusion

“A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. A man devoid of understanding shakes hands in a pledge, and becomes surety for his friend” (Proverbs 17:17).

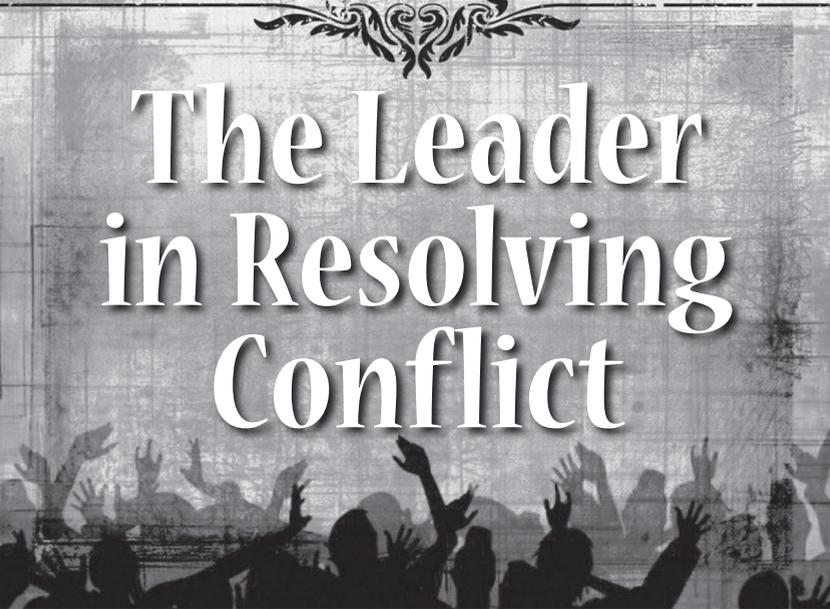
A friendly leader will show a friendship that may be foreign to those within the group. The friendship that is Christ-based is one that sticks closer than a brother and will never abandon.

Just as Jesus promises to be with us always, even unto the end of the world, we must show this same manner of friendship. The leader must try to reflect this God-oriented friendship in the lives of those around them. If the leader is able to accomplish this, the group will prosper, grow and abound in not only number, but truly in the love of God.

LESSON 33



The Leader in Resolving Conflict



“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.” (Matthew 5:9)

“Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed. Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defile.” (Hebrews 12:12-15)

“The beginning of strife is like releasing water; therefore stop contention before a quarrel starts.” (Proverbs 17:14)

Introduction

An inevitable occurrence within every Friendship Group is the emergence of some manner of conflict, whether it be within the group or outside of the group, in the personal lives of those in attendance.

The Word encourages to not allow these issues to get out of hand but to quench them as soon as possible. If left alone or ignored, these conflicts can become as a raging forest fire, destroying everything in its way. Usually those engaged in conflict are in a relationship that they wish to maintain but can't find the manner in which to resolve said conflict. Here are some recommendations to resolve conflicts.

Steps to Resolve Conflicts

1. At the beginning of any immediate conflict, the best step is to take some time out and physically distance themselves from the situation. This allows for a regrouping of the emotions that may have stirred up and a chance to reflect upon the real issues surrounding the situation.

2. The focus of the attention should not be directed toward the individuals involved but on the problem itself. The natural response is to be aggressive towards the person without focusing on the issue that leads to a war of words and emotions that later, one would wish they could take back.

3. The people involved should first express the good traits of the other person and their positive contributions to the relationship. The other person needs to feel, not attacked but

appreciated, for their effort to contribute to the success of the relationship.

4. The next step is to allow expression of all the parties involved as to how they have been made to feel because of the issue at hand, so that it is clear to the one what the other has been experiencing as a consequence of the conflict. The emphasis here is to imagine what the other party is feeling, but at the same time expressing their own feelings. Care must be taken to not point fingers or to blame each other, but again, focus on the core issue.

5. The effort should be one of a team. There are no sides to be defended or anchored on. The important step here is that all parties involved should be accepted and respected as they are expressing their opinions from their point of view or perspective, which will probably vary from one another.

6. Based on all the input from all the parties involved, there should be steps taken to come to some common ground of agreement. The solution should be such where both parties are working toward an agreement where the needs of both parties will be met. If only one side has their needs met, the conflict will not be resolved but will continue. The focus must be on areas of common interest instead of disagreement and opposition.

7. One must never jump to conclusions or assume what the other party is thinking. When listening, each party should be allowed the opportunity to express themselves without interruption. The issues, as well as the agreement, should be clear to all the parties so that there is no confusion as to what the contribution of each one needs to be.

8. There needs to be the effort to forget or lay aside the past and stay in the present, assuring that the solution agreed to by both parties are conformed to, as agreed upon. This necessitates that there be periodic re-evaluations to maintain the course of a better relationship.

Conclusion

The steps suggested are practical in nature, but there needs to be included the intervention of the Holy Spirit and the need for its fruit to abound in the hearts of the individuals. A relationship with Jesus Christ is the source of love that is needed for mercy and forgiveness. As a person grows in their relationship with Jesus, their love for others should also take another dimension that previously was not experienced.

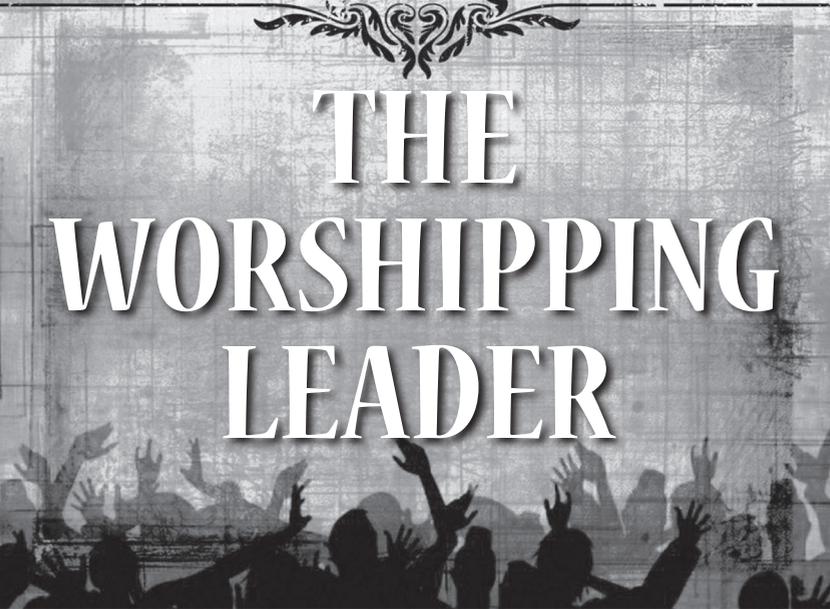
Through the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit, as well as utilizing practical strategies, there should be resolution to conflicts that present themselves, so that situations that seemed doomed for destruction, may be turned into victory with the honor and glory being given to the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ.

“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you...” (John 14:27)

LESSON 34



THE WORSHIPPING LEADER



“Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:22-24).

One of the most important responsibilities of a Friendship Group is to maintain a spirit of worship. It does not begin with the guests that show up to your groups, but with the leaders of the group. The main goal of the group’s leader is to guide those in his or her group, not in a Sunday to Sunday or session to session type of worship, but a daily life of worship.

In order to accomplish this goal, we need to define what worship is.

Proskuneo: “Kiss the hand of”, show courtesy, show reverence, the act of rendering homage. Fall on one’s knees and touching the floor with one’s forehead as an act of profound reverence and respect. (**John 4:24**)

Sebonai: Reverence with strong emotions of fear and reverence. (**Mathew 15:9**)

Latreuo: Serve, render religious service, homage. (**Philippians 3:3**)

Eusebeo: Act piously towards someone. (**Acts 17:23**)

Above all, worship is an expressive action toward God where the human being directs him or herself to God. It is not based on what he or she will receive from God, but on what he or she is going to give Him. There can be no genuine external worship if there is no inner worship first. Worship is an expression of the intimate relationship you have with God. It is connected to the fear of God. The fear of God is simply knowing that He sees every thought, imagination, and action and hears every spoken word and that one day we will have to answer to Him for everything.

By what is written in the book of John, we see that the Lord is seeking worshippers that will worship Him in spirit and in truth. This challenge to the leader takes different shapes and forms, and should be manifested in different areas of one’s personal life.

Worship in the Temple

The first place we see the worshipper is in church. Every leader, when in the temple, should purpose to model true worship, not lip service, but worship coming from the heart. There is saying that says, "The apple doesn't fall far from the tree." If a leader shows enthusiasm and spirit in worship and praise only when it is his turn to participate in the service, his disciples will do the same. We want to raise an army, not of religious worshippers only, but of true worshippers. Genuine worship is the foundation for genuine praise. We must teach them, not only with words, but by example, that whether they're alone or with thousands, their focus should be on offering God excellent worship and praise. If we can offer God genuine praise in Church, that attitude will be transferred over to the Friendship Group. Worship in church is the easiest phase of worship because everyone around us is of the same mind and disposition.

Worship and the Family

It is very important for Friendship Group leaders to take worship out of the church building and into their homes, to be seen of and in their families. A true worshipper knows how to build a family altar in his home. A family that worships God at home will maintain an intimate relationship with the rest of the family. A true worshipper knows how to treat his wife in a manner that pleases God, loving her as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for her. Likewise, the true worshipper treats his children with the knowledge that they are not his or her property, but rather, that they are God's heritage. However, raising them is our responsibility. All family interaction should be a demonstration of worship unto God. This is where you

find the greatest challenge, because nobody knows you better than your family. The leader that worships in his home will ensure that worship will be perpetuated in the coming generations.

Worship in Our Work Place

Worship can also be considered as obedience and service to God. Worship at our job site doesn't have to be demonstrated by praying, singing, or reading. Instead, the way one works is worship unto God, which is seen by others in one's testimony and example, be they believers or simply hearers. The Word exhorts us that whatever we do, we must do it with all of our heart, as unto the Lord. Leaders should be the best workers in their company because they are doing it out of reverence and respect, not only for the company, but for their God. Many of the Friendship Group guests are people we know at work. It is there where we model what it means to worship God at all times.

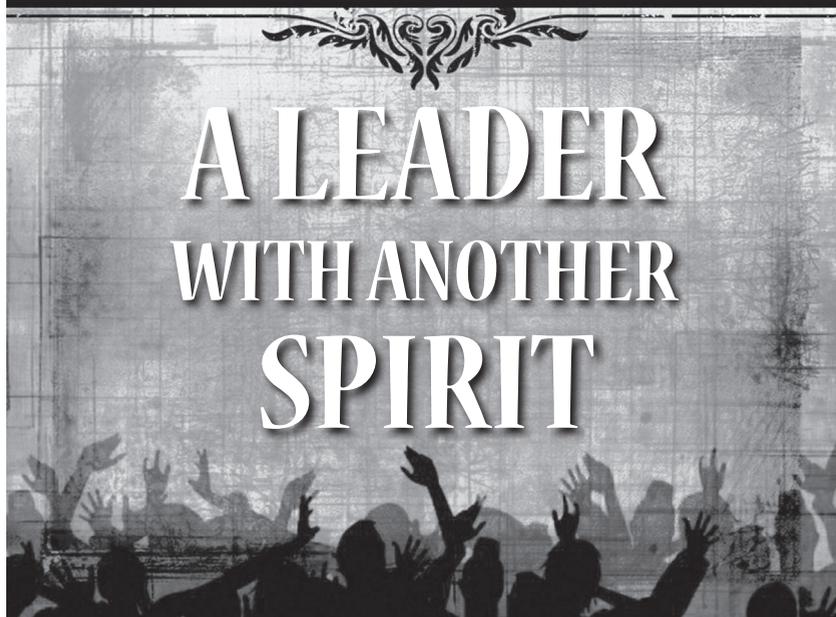
Worship unto God in the Community

Worship in the community is not only about having park services or street evangelism. Rather, it deals with honoring God wherever we might be. The way we treat human beings is very significant in our worship unto God. We worship God when we pursue peace with everyone, as the Scriptures say. Our speech, actions, reactions, and dealings with people, are very important in God's eyes. He is expecting us to acknowledge Him, not only in Church, but in the presence of every human being. The better we're able to demonstrate these Christ-like qualities in our daily life, the stronger our worship to Him becomes.

Conclusion

Leader, God has chosen you to be that true worshipper. When you purpose to be that 24/7 worshipper, regardless of where or with whom you may be, God will manifest Himself mightily, not only in your life, but also in the lives of those around you. This type of leader will raise an army of worshippers that will worship God in spirit and in truth.

LESSON 35



Numbers 13:30 *"And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it."*

Numbers 14:23-24 *"Surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it: But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it."*

We see here a very well-known story, worthy of being revisited once again with our Friendship Groups in mind. Caleb, along with the other spies, had been chosen to spy out the Promised Land. When he returns from the land flowing with

milk and honey, he is filled with excitement and ready to immediately lay hold of the Lord's promises. He had no doubt whatsoever that they possessed whatever was needed to achieve victory. He was so sure that God was going to give them victory that he didn't want to wait another second. He wanted to immediately go out to conquer.

One of the things that holds back God's work in Friendship Groups is the lack of faith that it is God's will for people to be saved by the power of his precious blood, with which he destroyed the power of sin over humanity. We need to have Caleb's faith and believe that the One who called us, is more than able to deliver victory into our hands. God wants to deliver the communities where we live into our hands, but we must believe it with all our heart.

The Fields Are White

Although having an Almighty God on our side, we have the tendency of setting our eyes on what's in directly front of us instead of setting them on things above, from whence comes our help. We need to believe that there is no time like the present to be excited about our Friendship Group or to continue with even greater excitement. Jesus said, *"Say not ye, there are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest"* (**John 4:35**). It is very clear that God wants to deliver multitudes of people into our hands, but we must first believe what the Lord says. We shouldn't doubt him, but rather accept the Lord's faithful Word, which is declaring a great truth to us. It is time to believe more in what Jesus says than what our mind, our friends, or even our own brothers say. The Lord has always been and will continue to be faithful to his words. It's up to us to believe.

If the people had believed Caleb's word, and had risen to the occasion that very hour to take the Promise Land, they would have entered that very same day. Because they didn't believing in God's power and promises, none of the adults enjoyed the land that flowed with milk and honey. For not believing they had to wait another forty years to enter God's Promise Land. So, it wasn't the first generation that left Egypt that enjoyed the privilege but a new generation, which was able to believe in God's promises.

Today, the Lord is calling a new generation to believe in Him and in His Word. God is seeking a group of Apostolic men and women with another spirit, that can ignore the voices of those who say that no one wants to hear the gospel, that people no longer have any time for God, or that evil is so horrible that they will not receive the gospel. The truth of the matter is that all you need today is to accept God's Word with all your heart, and the harvest will come. Hear the voice of Master saying: You can not only have, but you can maintain and multiply a Friendship Group!

The Spirit Is On and In Us

Don't focus on the people or on the powers of the enemy, but keep in mind that the Lord wants and is ready to not only go with us, but ahead of us, tearing down the enemy's strongholds in order to deliver the captive. The same Spirit that came upon Jesus, is the same one that is coming upon us, so that we can fulfill God's will. Jesus read clearly and authoritatively in **Luke 4:18-19**: *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."*

The Lord is the same yesterday, today, and forever. The goal of our Lord Jesus Christ is still the same. He doesn't want anyone to perish, but that everyone should move towards repentance. God has chosen us to continue this labor of love toward humanity. There are a multitude of homes that are awaiting healing, deliverance, restoration, renewal, and above all, salvation. This purpose beats so strongly in God's heart that He didn't choose celestial beings to achieve it. Rather, He chose us to fulfill this mission, human being to human being, because no one can reach another like someone similar to him or her.

The Word says that we shouldn't lean on our own understanding, but to be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. Victory will come; I just have to believe that I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. It is time, as Caleb said, to rise up and take our communities, because if God be for us, who can be against us? Doubt no longer. If you're hearing these words, it's because God has chosen you to go and bear much fruit, and that your fruit should remain. There is no time to lose; Jesus is coming soon to rapture those who have been redeemed by his precious blood.

Conclusion

Now is the time to take those steps of faith, in the name of the Lord. Don't listen to the voice of doubt. Hear the screams and the groans of those who are dying without God and without hope. We need to ask God to make our ears more sensitive to the cries of those who are behind prison walls, trapped by the enemy, desiring to be delivered and not knowing how or whom to go. There are many like Rahab that are just waiting for a chance to gain salvation for their fami-

lies. Even though we don't see them, they are there. We only need to become more visible and contact them. Doubt no longer. Go in the same spirit that Caleb had and do the work that God has called you to do.

LESSON 36



How to SUPPORT Small Group Leaders



“Therefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also you do.” (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

A. In some ways, relationships between pastors and small group leaders can be compared to the engine of an automobile. Just as autos cannot travel too far without gasoline, so our small group leaders will not be very effective if pastors do not support them. Our small group leaders will not go too far without emotional fuel. As it is in the physical, when tanks are full, relationships go well and advice, instruction and support is all well received. When moral tanks are low, all the support we want to offer will not make the work of a small group any more successful.

B. God knows the Pastor needs a loving group of people around him. It is through small groups that we can see the church family functioning in relationships of genuine love and practical care. In small groups we celebrate personal victories, we support each other through difficult times, we believe in each other's potential, and we show loyalty by keeping confidence.

C. Pastors care for and support small group leaders by assisting them in practical ways:

1. ACCOUNTABILITY – Pastors should not be afraid to ask tough questions. They must help leaders keep commitments. Accountability is always a tough discipline, but we cannot do it alone. We need each other. Hold your small group leaders accountable for being on time to meetings, then for disciplines such as personal prayer and Bible study. Later, as trust is built, initiate accountability for issues that deal with personal responsibilities in their lives.

2. AFFIRMATION – Pastors must continually offer words of encouragement and support in affirming their strengths. The difference between affirmation and appreciation is that we appreciate people for what they do, but we affirm people for who they are. Pastors should always go out of their way to build leaders' self-esteem.

3. ASSESSMENT – Evaluate the condition and production of each leader and their group objectively. The Pastor must make every effort to help each small group leader gain perspective concerning their individual group and the general objective of small group ministry in the local Church. Assess-

ments and evaluations should take place at least once a year, but if possible, twice a year.

4. ACCEPTANCE – Provide unconditional love and grace to them even when they fail. In spite of the fact that the love of God towards us is unconditional, we live and are influenced by a “judgmental” world. Pastors must accept leaders as they are, with their different personalities and without wanting them to be like us in doing God’s work.

5. ADVICE – Speak words of wise counsel and give them options for their decisions. Pastor, being a “good listener” will not only help you give good advice, it will also increase the chances that the person will take your advice. If you advise one thing but do the opposite, your advice will be seen as phony and hypocritical. If you do as you say, however, people will be more likely to respect your advice.

6. ADMONITION – Offer words of caution and warning so they can avoid pitfalls. One of the elements of leading a small group that can seem the scariest is managing interpersonal problems. People are people after all, and it’s not uncommon to have trouble when we get together on a regular basis. We must warn our leaders that the enemy of our souls does not appreciate the fact that we want to grow through the Strategy of Jesus.

7. ASSETS – Pastor, it is very healthy to reward and acknowledge your small group leaders by giving them tangible gifts and resources – a book, a CD, or even a meal, etc. In rewarding your team, practice these four important principles: (1) be consistent, (2) don’t be vague and general – be specific, (3) in order to show your appreciation well, know your people well, (4) be relevant.

8. APPLICATION

– Direct them to discover how they can practice what they’ve learned. It does help a bit to be born with some basic leadership traits, but just like it helps to be born with money, you don’t have to be born with money in order to become wealthy. Leadership is that way, too. A few leaders develop some leadership traits early in life, but most don’t. Most have to work at it. They work on their attitudes and their knowledge. They work on their behaviors. They learn from their own mistakes and from good role models. They simply practice and get better.

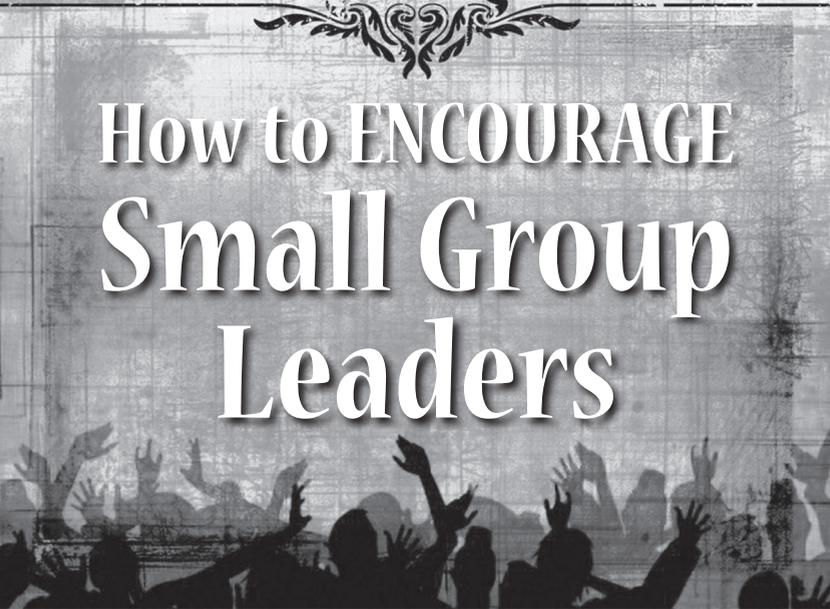
Conclusion

In any team the coach determines the strategy used to win the game, but to win, he must let each player be his best while working together as a team. If one member isn’t a team player, the coach has a problem. He could lose the game because this one person is arrogant and does not see the big picture. The coach needs to correct this person’s approach while appreciating his zeal. Talking, following through, and being sensitive to the challenges of multiple-staff leadership is part of what we do. Conflict among the staff is normal, but the senior pastor must be a conflict manager and peacemaker at all times.

LESSON 37



How to ENCOURAGE Small Group Leaders



“Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the LORD hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it. And the LORD, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed.” (Deuteronomy 31:6-8)

Introduction

The definition of the word encourage is: “to inspire with courage, spirit or hope”. “Encourage” is a very strong and pow-

erful word. When applied in the life of a small group leader, it empowers them to walk in the call that God has placed in them. *“That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you into his kingdom and glory” (1 Thessalonians 2:12).*

I. An Encouraged Small Group is a Healthy Small Group

1. Pastors, your small group leaders need to know that you love them and that you appreciate their work. Someone said: “Leaders need to know they are a ‘person’ and not a ‘pencil’”. What they meant to say was that you love them for who they are and not just for what they “do” for you as a pastor and for the church. They need to experience your care about their struggles, family concerns, and daily situations they face. Leaders need to know you are available when a crisis hits their group and that you are able to empathize them.

2. You need to be able to speak to them with words of encouragement and praise for all the good they are doing. Pastors and church ministries that learn to produce a healthy small group leadership culture will see positive growth in their cell ministries.

3. Seven words of encouragement for small group leaders (by Rick Howerton) are: (1) Thank you for being on the small group team with me. I am really grateful I have the opportunity to do this with you. (2) You are a very special leader, someone I truly admire. (3) There are a lot of people who could’ve done what you’re doing. Personally, I’m really glad you agreed to lead a group because it makes it possible for me to get to

hang out with you some. (4) I'm hearing great things about you from your group members. You must be doing a super job. (5) When I asked you to be a group leader, I knew you'd be super, but I didn't realize you'd exceed my expectations this much. (6) Would you pray for me? I've come to admire your walk with God so much... I'd be honored if you would. (7) If you have some time, I'd love to take you to lunch and pick your brain. I'm hearing things from your group members that are really exciting. I'd love to hear what you're doing and learn from you.

Note: These phrases are just an example of how you can learn to compliment your small group leaders, knowing that a word of encouragement that is personal, genuine and spoken, while looking into the eyes of a small group leader, will motivate him in ways few other actions will.

II. Encourage Leaders to Encourage Themselves in the Lord.

1. David often had to encourage himself in the Lord because he had nobody else to depend on. *"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"* (1 Samuel 30:6).

2. David knew how to encourage himself in the Lord in each and every situation he encountered. This is how real leaders lead! They don't fret in the face of despair; they learn to reach down into the depths of their soul and they find the Lord.

3. David was not the one that many people would have chosen to lead Israel, but he is the one that God chose. In our walk with the Lord, we may tend to doubt if we are really called by God. Every Pastor, minister and small group leader will face this harsh reality somewhere in his or her walk with the Lord. It is in these times that you will find out who your God is and likewise He will find out who you are!

4. "Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the LORD" (Psalm 128:4). This was all that David knew how to do. When he got into trouble, God became his refuge. When he was hungry, God became his bread, and when he went into battle with whomever or whatever, God became his shield and his sword.

III. Leaders Are Encouraged when Pastor Leads by Example

1. A pastor will probably never really understand the excitement of being a small group leader until he goes through the experience of having his own small group. It is not necessarily a requirement that the pastor "always" have his small group, simply because there comes a time when other responsibilities will take much of his time, if he has a growing church. However, nothing encourages a small group leader as much as seeing his pastor leading and making his small group grow.

2. The following are three (3) suggestions for pastors who desire to have their own small group and who want to lead their small group ministry by "example".

Fellowship – We emphasize that our group needs to learn the secret of “fellowship”. It is not a group that meets only on Thursday nights, but we have made it a lifestyle. The closer our group grows to each other, the more relevant our Bible studies seem to be and the better we are at sharing our hearts with each other.

Evangelism (Outreach) – We are not only a small group that concentrates on our members only. Our focus is on reaching out to our friends, families, and acquaintances and making them part of our group. We have established baptism goals for our group as well as all the groups in our church.

Opportunities – Since God has established a plan and purpose for everyone in the Church, I am convinced that in small group ministry, every believer must have an opportunity to discover their gift, talent, and ability. We encourage every member of our small group to participate in whatever aspect of the small group session they wish (songs, prayer, discussion, secretary, host, refreshments, children, etc.). This produces new leaders as well as spreading the responsibility around the group. It also emphasizes the fact that each member can become a disciple.

Conclusion

Your encouragement can have great power. One reason why is because everybody needs to be encouraged. The night Abraham Lincoln was assassinated at Ford’s Theatre he was carrying:

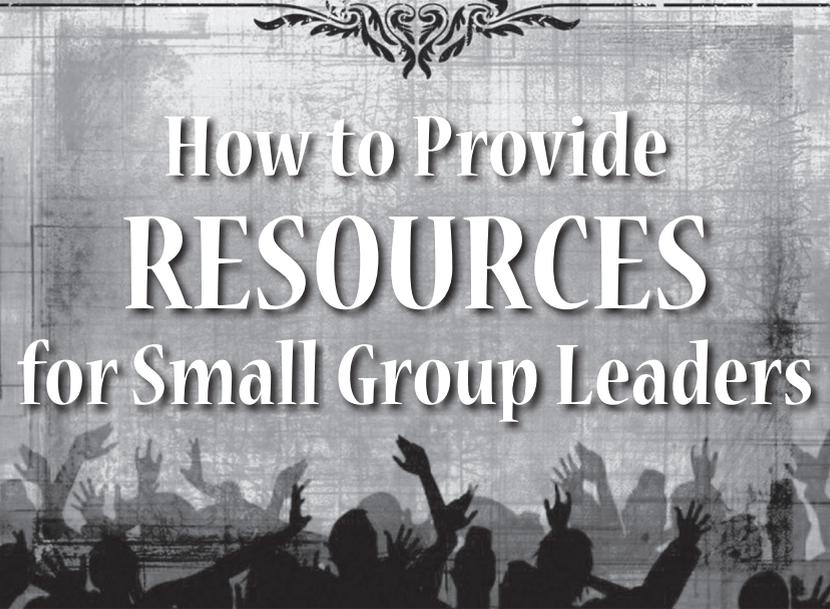
- Two pairs of glasses.
- A small velvet eyeglass cleaner.
- An ivory pocketknife.
- A large handkerchief with "A. Lincoln" stitched in red.
- A tiny pencil.
- A brass sleeve button.
- A fancy watch fob.
- And a brown wallet with a Confederate five-dollar bill.

But Lincoln also carried 8 newspaper clippings that he had cut out and saved. All of those clippings praised him. Everybody needs encouragement.

LESSON 38



How to Provide RESOURCES for Small Group Leaders



“Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus”

(Colossians 1:28).

Introduction

There can be no more fundamental step in the process of watching a church become healthy than finding the right Spirit-filled and God-gifted leader. Those called of God, prepared for ministry, and equipped to plant new life-giving churches. Who is to lead is often the most important issue to be deter-

mined. Too often the wrong people are placed in the wrong circumstance, with the wrong expectations and a new church becomes, at best, anemic or at worst, dead.

It has become increasingly important to help an individual discover God's shape for his or her ministry in order to ensure the long-range survival of a new church. The task is far more complex than a simple nod of the head or pat on the back. A cell group leader's primary goal is to help its Friendship Group become fully mature in Christ. Jesus desires that we grow deeper in our walk with Him so we're more prepared for the mission to which God has called us.

By mentoring small group leaders and their groups, we participate in the process of presenting every man and woman complete in Christ. This happens by helping them cultivate their spiritual health—even when it's an uphill battle.

I. Motivate Them to Find a Spiritual Partner

A. One of the greatest gifts you can give your leaders is another person who will help them move to the next step in their spiritual journey, including listening, encouraging, fellowshiping, and exhorting. Encourage the leaders to partner up with other leaders, preferably the older more experienced with a younger leader, a passing of the torch per say. Just as sheep create sheep, so do leaders create leaders.

B. Gently remind your leaders that if they're going to lead in the church, they must grow in their faith. This growing consists of four values that must flow through the group

in order for it to fully work. These values are summarized in the words Upward, Inward, Outward, and Forward.

- Upward: *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind” (Matthew 22:37).*
- Inward: *“Love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:39).*
- Outward: *“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations...” (Matthew 28:19).*
- Forward: *“Teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you...” (Matthew 28:20).*

II. Encourage Them to Review the Health Assessment Regularly

A. To help them identify the next step in their spiritual journey, guide them through a health assessment. These tools ask pointed questions about your spiritual journey and give guidelines for setting and achieving goals.

B. Using a health assessment is a way of taking stock—understanding the areas in which you are strong, as well as the areas in which you need to grow. You also might consider visiting your leaders’ small groups. Groups usually thrive in fellowship and discipleship, but struggle when it comes to evangelism and serving.

III. Never Forsake Gathering Together

A. If the disciples never gathered in the upper room or pulled away from the crowds with Christ, where would the church be? In the same way, you need to get away investing time with your leaders and study God's Word, because faith comes by hearing the Word of God.

B. Setting a time in which all leaders can meet together is often difficult, but try gathering in a home once a month. When you meet, make sure you have fun together. They'll look forward to regular gatherings if you laugh together, pray together, and "fill their cup" so they can leave recharged and energized. They will take that energy back to their groups.

C. Consider meeting around key events on the small group calendar: before a new small group curriculum is launched and after a small group session has ended. At these meetings celebrate with them, show your gratitude, and talk about the strong and weak aspects of their group. Always end the evening by praying for each other.

IV. One-On-One Is Vital

A. Most leaders receive little affirmation, though they're a vital part of your church's small group ministry. You need to spend time loving, honoring, and listening to them—this gives them a sense of purpose. When they hear you believe in them, they're reenergized to do their job well.

B. One-on-ones don't have to happen weekly, or even monthly; however, you should strive to meet every four to six weeks. Don't worry about meeting formally.

Conclusion

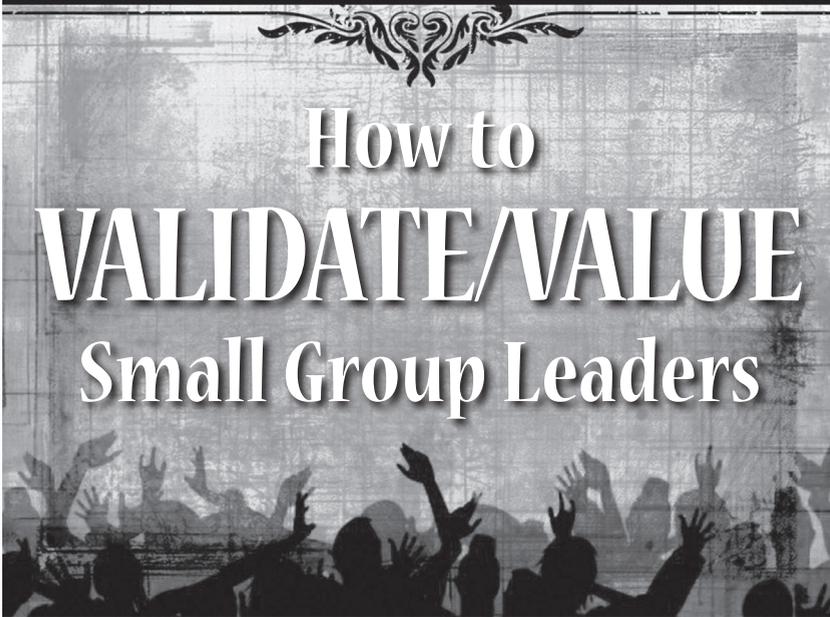
Part of coming together is also going back out. We don't come together for the sake of coming together. We come together so that we can go back out and multiply our lives. This means that I'm not just building into the lives of these leaders and they're not just building into the lives of their members. We are sending them out to multiply.

Mentoring is essential to multiplication. It's not just about studying the Bible and spiritual formation; it requires that you dream and facilitate a future for your leaders. While releasing them is difficult, it's important to challenge them to be courageous.

LESSON 39



How to VALIDATE/VALUE Small Group Leaders



“But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:43-45 KJV)

Introduction

Paul underscored the Lord’s view on leadership with these words: *“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:” (Philippians 2:5-7 KJV).* Small group leadership is about being a

humble servant, not an authoritative head. If true leadership is about service, then every member of a small group can share in the leadership of their group. Small group members should see themselves as developing leaders. In order to validate and value small group leaders, there are three key areas we must incorporate into our evaluation process. These are qualities, characteristics and skills.

I. Key Qualities of a Leader (evidenced and growing, but not perfect)

A. Quality, innate or acquired, that, in some particular, determines the nature and behavior of a person or thing:

- i.** A genuine heart for God and people (**Matthew 22:37-39; 1 Corinthians 13:1-7**)
- ii.** Humility (**Philippians 2:5-7**)
- iii.** A commitment to serve the Lord and group members sacrificially (**Luke 9:23**)
- iv.** A firm trust in the authority of the Word of God (**John 8:31**)
- v.** Empowered by the Holy Spirit (**Acts 1:8**)
- vi.** Prayerful (**1 Thessalonians 5:17-18**)
- vii.** Has a life that reflects the “Fruit of the Spirit” (**Galatians 5:22-23**)
- viii.** Pursues holiness (**1 Thessalonians 4:3-7**)

- ix. Disciplined and diligent to do what is necessary to foster growth (**1 Corinthians 9:24-27**)
- x. Is FAST oriented:
 - Faithful (**Luke 16:10**)
 - Available (**2 Timothy 4:2**)
 - Servant-hearted (**Mark 10:42-45**)
 - Teachable (**Proverbs 9:8-10**)

II. Character of a leader

A. Character

Character is the most important quality of servant-leaders. **1 Timothy 3:1-7** lists qualities of a pastor. Notice that of the fifteen qualities listed, only one deals with something he does: being able to teach. All the other attributes deal with the pastor's character. Notice that Paul is focused more on qualities of the heart than abilities.

Skill-sets are important, but ultimately, who you are is more fundamentally important than what you do. Of course, what we do is important, but our behavior ought to flow out of who we are. Rather than being a reservoir, we ought to be a river. We draw our life from Christ and allow his life to flow through us on an ongoing basis. Thus, a leader's character is more important than his/her skill. God is more concerned about who we are than what we do.

B. Attitude

The attitude of a leader is always more important than his aptitude. Attitude is a choice! The attitude we have is the attitude we have chosen.

- i. The wrong attitude – Some people fail to become better leaders because of a wrong attitude. They fall into one of two broad categories: overconfidence or lacking confidence.
 - Overconfidence: Produces pride, a sense of superiority and arrogance. This may cause a person to act hastily, come on too strong and head off in wrong directions.
 - Lacking confidence: Produces negative responses, fear, doubt, confusion, disbelief and lack of leadership (intimidated by fear of failing and falling short of expectations).
- ii. The right attitude – The well-balanced leader seeks to develop a good self-image as Christ's minister, depending solely on the quiet confidence and assurance that comes from trusting in the Lord and following His ways (**Proverbs 3:5-6**).

When considered from a human perspective, a sense of weakness and inadequacy should come over everyone when they consider the list of leader qualities. Thankfully, the Lord does not expect us to lead in our own strength. Paul declared: *"Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;"* (**2 Corinthians 3:5 KJV**).

So, what is God looking for in a leader? *“The eyes of the Lord search the whole earth in order to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him” (2 Chronicles 16:9)*. Listen, the Lord is not scanning the horizon for seminary students or those who see themselves as “lone ranger” spiritual giants. He delights to call those who are weak, those who are sincerely loyal to Him, those who are willing to be used by Him. The Lord is the “ability” of our avail-ability.

Our part is to “avail” ourselves to Him. Are you willing? Everyone has potential, so what’s your excuse? Sure, there are lots of reasons why God shouldn’t choose you for leadership, but if you are deeply committed to Him, if you are willing to trust Him, He will use you in spite of who you are, what’s in your past, how you feel and what you think about yourself.

III. Skills for Leading

Even though qualities and characteristics are important, there also needs to be some levels of leadership skills and a process by which these skills can be developed. The following are some of the skills that are needed in order to successfully lead a small group or even disciple the members of the cell group:

A. Vision – Great leaders are able to see a future and can articulate, in crystal clear language, a strategic plan to get everyone there.

B. Humility – Great leaders are energized not by being right, but rather by the glory that comes from the entire team reaching the pinnacle of success.

C. Patience – Great leaders use the wheels of time to their advantage, knowing that fast and first are rarely the attributes of long-term success.

D. Ambition – Great leaders boldly drive forward, passionately rising to new heights, clearing a path for those who follow.

E. Gratitude – Great leaders demonstrate appreciation loudly and often to those who give of themselves to support the group's success.

F. Accountability – Great leaders take full accountability when their team fails regardless of where mistakes were made or whose performance was substandard.

G. Courage – Great leaders blaze a trail in the dark and shed their own light, despite knowing that terror lurks around corners.

H. Humor – Great leaders never take anything too seriously, especially themselves, knowing full well that people need a congenial environment to succeed.

I. Tolerance – Great leaders accept that people are individuals who thrive best when allowed to choose their own approach to risk and happiness.

J. Compliance – Great leaders know how to play by the rules since even a rebel has to build respect and order for sustainability.

Conclusion

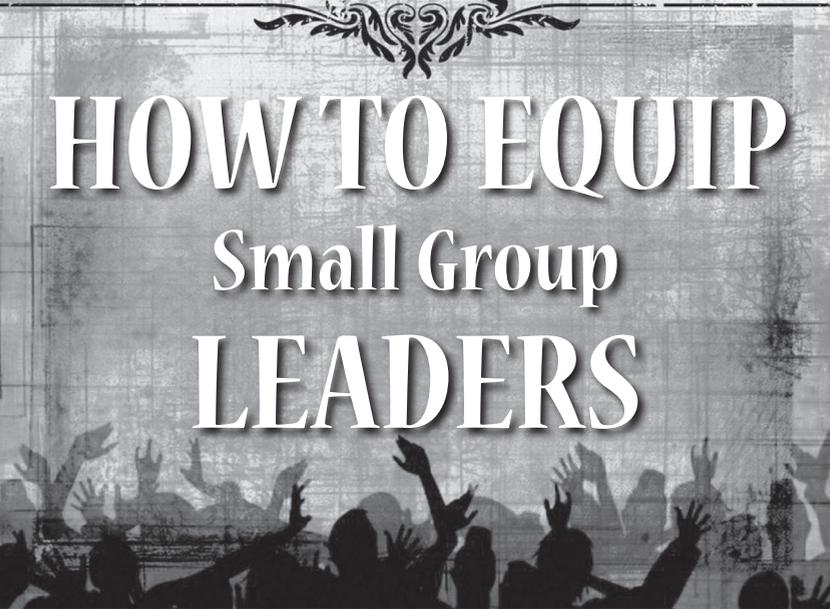
The way we think about ourselves (our self-image) has a big influence on the way we relate to others. If we feel good about ourselves, our relationship with others is usually good. But, if we feel bad about ourselves, we often react negatively towards others. Our self-image is built up, among other things, by our looks, personality, attitudes, abilities and perception of what others think of us.

Most of the time, recognition is given to the group who has the biggest number of visitors. Recognition should not be based on numbers but on spiritual growth of the group. It doesn't do much good to have a large group where there is no spiritual growth. It is better to have quality rather than quantity. Quantity will grow based on the quality of your leaders. Recognition should be based on maturity and spiritual growth of the leader and the group. Recognize the maturity and acquisition of skills at the same time evaluating and determining a growth path for the individual leader.

LESSON 40



HOW TO EQUIP Small Group LEADERS



“Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.” (Hebrews 13:21)

Introduction

As leaders, it is very important to understand that we don't work or minister in any aspect for our entertainment, but we work and we serve to please the God we serve. This is why in everything that we pray for and strive for, we should always, above all else, desire to be in God's will. Pastors will often stress over the point of being in God's will more often than other subjects. They are trying to get their leaders to grab hold of the concept “let thy will be done!” *“Saying, Father, if thou be willing,*

remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done" (**Luke 22:42**).

I. Exalt Christ

A. The concept of exalting Christ above everything else in our lives is crucial. In this, people will know and understand that the God we serve is real and living. Jesus said, "*And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me*" (**John 12:32**). Jesus was not just speaking in the physical sense of the word, but Christ was referring to all His believers in that a condition was set forth for them. If you lift Him up and exalt His name higher than any other, He will draw all men into His kingdom.

B. In the book of Psalms, it talks and explains in great detail about the great blessings there are in exalting the Lord. All men, everywhere in every nation, like and even will be inspired by praise. Likewise, the God that we serve, in whose image we have been made, also admires praise. Praise is actually something that will come natural to the heart of any person that is grateful.

C. **Psalms 150** says this: "*Praise ye the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power. Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness. Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp. Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs. Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals. Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD.*" In all situations and at all time, we as the Ministers of God, are sup-

posed to praise Him and magnify His name. For in doing this, we offer our bodies and our minds to the Lord!

II. Equip the Church

A. It is a Pastor's responsibility to equip the church with all the necessary things it will need to fight spiritual warfare. He does this through his leadership and specifically, through his small group leaders, in particular. Loyalty to the Pastor is very vital for this concept to work because whatever he is trying to build up in unity and faith, doubt and naysayers can crush instantly. The weekly meetings are so much more than just meetings; they become a place of learning and involvement on how to further educate and empower all those that are small group leaders.

B. We learn naturally, through others, the first concept, yet with this second one, it has to be taught through and through so that it can become like second nature to small group leaders. Equipping the church is the job of the Holy Spirit, is what most people would think! This is a true statement, yet how can Christ reach the whole world if we are not willing to be used. We must develop the creative abilities and talents with which God has blessed us, sharing our ideas and our failures.

C. Many people think that we should not share our failures as it will show weakness to the devil. However, the Bible is very explicit in showing in great detail the failures of the holiest of men and women that served God. We should not dwell on our failures, but we must be able to share them with others in "transparency" so that we may be able to grow together as the Church.

D. This is not an easy task to equip the Body of Christ, for it takes someone who will go beyond the natural and reach into the spiritual realm of things to see what God wants them to see! For even Peter, when the Lord called him into question in the twenty-first chapter of John, was perplexed that the Lord asked him the same question three times. On the third instance, Peter was a little upset. However, God just wants to know if we can truly live up to the task of “feed my sheep”.

III. Evangelize the World

A. Now this is our greatest task of all: to change the world with the Gospel that we live and preach. With Christ being our ultimate example, we as the people of God must consider ourselves fortunate to be “called” into His kingdom! The Pastor has recognized that he cannot and should not do it all. Through small group ministry we become the very thing that Christ called us to be in the first place: disciples. Just as the earliest ones followed Christ, we should, as faithful leaders become disciples under our Pastor.

B. So many times in life we want more than anything for our loved ones and our friends and family to be saved by this Gospel. Yet, a very key concept is learned through the examples given in the Bible. Not all will accept the Gospel and some will walk away. However, that should never hold us back from doing the “will of God”, which is that all men everywhere be saved. There is only one thing more powerful than the Word of God, which we have obtained, and study for our knowledge and edification, which is giving it away to someone else so they too can come to know the Lord!

C. Romans 1:16 declares, *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”* This must become everything that we do: get this gospel to a lost and dying world. If we cannot grasp the concept of the first two points in this study, it will be hard to do the third and final one. But if we can exalt Christ, then we can equip the church and evangelize the world!

Conclusion

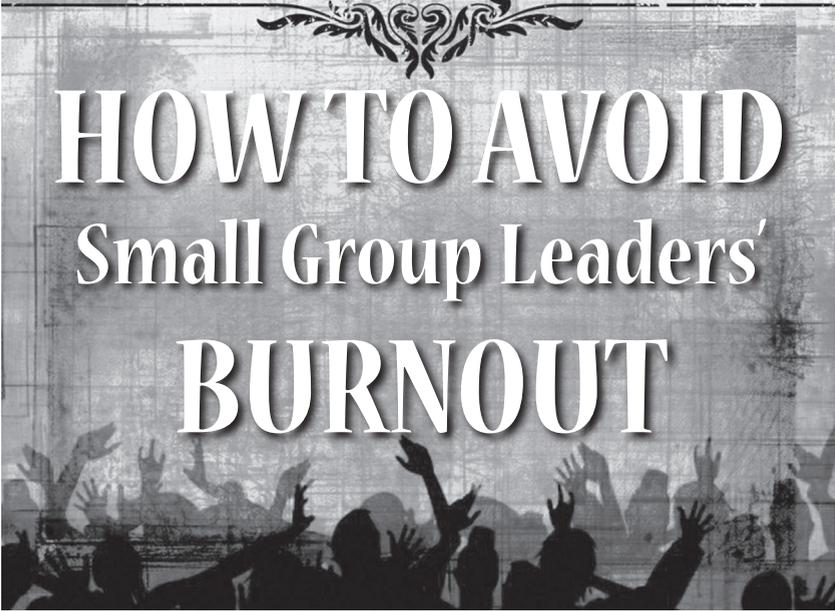
A good leader will not create followers; they will create more good leaders! In the world that we live in today, we are faced with so many challenges in our homes, our schools, our jobs and in our community, that we need more leaders!

This is why, more than ever before, we need to pray that the Lord gives us a burden for the world. It is very easy to just sit back and say, “Well, the Lord has to do it”. But look deep into your heart as Jesus did: *“But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest”* (**Matthew 9:36-38**).

LESSON 41



HOW TO AVOID Small Group Leaders' BURNOUT



“And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.” **(Galatians 6:9; see also 1 Kings 19:1-18)**

Introduction

How is it that a small group leader can avoid burnout? Or what about reversing the actual experience of going through burnout? What are the signs of burnout? And what steps can a small group leader take to beat the burnout experience in his life? The truth of the matter is that “burnout” is not a new thing. Even during Bible times, we are informed that great men and women struggled with it.

Moses worked very long and weary days trying to determine the best answers to the situations God's people were facing. Upon trying to do the job on his own strength, Jethro, his father-in-law confronted him saying: "What you are doing is not good." Was Moses at the edge of burnout? More than likely, yes. God will never place a bigger load upon us than we can handle, but we must learn to be sensitive to God's voice when speaking to us.

The prophet Elijah was living in a state of burnout even after coming out victorious on Mt. Carmel and after having defeated and killed the false prophets of Baal. Queen Jezebel wanted his head (**1 Kings 19:2**). You would think that doing God's work would be rewarded in better ways, but after being warned of Jezebel's intentions, Elijah became exhausted, depressed and ready to call it quits. Burnout is as real today as it was then. However, any small group leader can avoid burnout in ministry, but you need to start before the fuse has burned to the end. Let's learn more about "burnout."

I. What Is Burnout?

A. The definition of burnout is: fatigue, frustration, or apathy resulting from prolonged stress, overwork, or intense activity.

B. Burnout can occur in the physical, emotional, and spiritual areas of life. On occasions it will affect only one or two of these areas, but often enough it will take its toll in all three, as it did with the prophet Elijah.

C. He was physically exhausted from running before King Ahab's chariot, some 25 miles from Mount Carmel to the entrance of Jezreel (**1 Kings 18:46**). He was emotionally drained as evidenced by his wish to die: *"It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life"* (**1 Kings 19:4**). He was spiritually distraught, which was shown by his words, *"I, even I only, am left"* (**1 Kings 19:10**).

II. What Are the Signs of Burnout?

A. In her book *Mad Church Disease*, Anne Jackson gives several signs of burnout.

- i.** You begin to despise the people you are called to love and minister to.
- ii.** You often allow your mind to drift towards what else you could do OTHER than ministry.
- iii.** You feel like a "ministry machine" that does what you do out of a guilty obligation rather than out of an overflow out of your own intimate walk with God. In other words, as Bill Hybels says, "the rate at which you are doing the work of God is destroying the work of God in you!"
- iv.** You begin to make decisions based on what is the easiest rather than what you KNOW God wants you to do.
- v.** You become increasingly critical of churches, people and ministries that you feel God is blessing more than you.

- vi.** You can't remember the last time you actually opened your Bible to commune with God rather than trying to find a sermon/Bible study.
- vii.** You begin to view the staff you serve with as your servants rather than God's servants.
- viii.** You use delegation as an excuse to be lazy.
- ix.** You can't remember the last time you and your spouse had a conversation that was not church related.
- x.** You can't remember the last time you spent time with your children...and enjoyed it.
- xi.** You begin to doubt the power of God in your life and the life of others.

III. What Are the Antidotes for Burnout?

A. Rest Your Body – In dealing with the physical aspect of burnout, there is not a better suggestion we can give to small group leaders than the importance of simply “getting more rest.” The Lord’s first recommendation to Elijah was for him to get some rest. The bible tells us that after he slept for some time, the angel of the Lord brought some food to him. When finished, he rested some more. And again, the angel returned and provided more food. The Lord’s antidote for physical burnout is “sleep and eat and again, sleep and eat.”

B. Talk to Someone about Your Feelings – Someone once said: “If there is an area in your life that you absolutely can't talk about, that means it is out of control.” Even

though the enemy would not like for you to get help, this is when you need it the most. This area is related to emotional burnout. Our healing in this area will only come when you first talk to God about it, and are willing to talk to someone close to your heart about it also. In reality, there is no one better than the Lord for you to give your frustrations to. He not only sympathizes, but he “empathizes” with your situation, because He has gone through what no one has ever gone through.

C. Get a Fresh Glimpse of God’s Plan and Purpose for Your Life

– This is the third and the most important antidote from God for overcoming burnout. In Elijah’s experience with God, we read in **1 Kings 19:11-12**: *“Then He said, “Go out, and stand on the mountain before the LORD.” And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; 12 and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.”* It is so important that we be willing to listen to God’s “still small voice.”

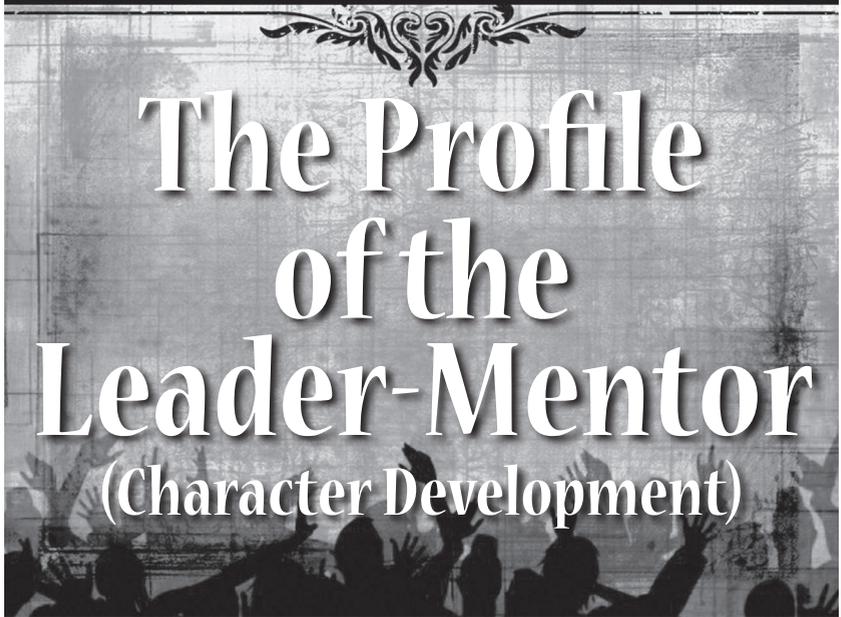
Conclusion

Small group leader, it is not God’s will that because of your weariness, the enemy takes advantage of your weakness and injects fear into your mind and heart. He has said in his Word: *“And let us not grow weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart”* (**Galatians 6:9**). Remember another promise: *“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound”* (**2 Timothy 1:7**).

LESSON 42



The Profile of the Leader-Mentor (Character Development)



“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7 NKJV).

Introduction

One’s profile or character is the essential foundation for the growth and stability of all leadership. All the characters in the Bible were men of character, although they failed many times, the character that God had formed in them made them get up and not give up. We need to learn what character is and know the condition of our character to be effective in mentoring others.

1. Definition

The word “character” comes from the Greek noun “Charakter” or “Charassa”, meaning recorder, and literally means “the mark etched on something that distinguishes it from others.” Therefore, character means: a sign or mark that is printed, painted, or sculpted. In the sense of moral quality, it refers to the manner of being peculiar and unique to each person. The manner of being is the set of traits and habits acquired by inheritance, health, education, friends, the environment, and other influences.

2. Character Concepts

2.1. As disciples of the Lord, we must labor so that the character of Jesus Christ is formed in us.

“My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you” (Galatians 4:19).

2.2. The way in which a leader deals with the circumstances of life says a lot about his or her character. Crisis does not necessarily build character, but it does reveal it. In adversity the leader has two paths which he or she must choose: compromise or character. If we choose character, we will become stronger.

3. Character Indicators: Actions and Reactions

3.1. Character is more than talk. Anyone can say he or she has values or sincerity, but actions and decisions are the indicators of our real character.

3.2. Our character determines who we are. What we are determines what we see, and what we see determines what we do.

3.3. Our character cannot be separated from our actions. Samson was a champion of God, anointed, but with character problems. He did not care about values like faithfulness and integrity.

3.4. Character is a choice in our formation. That is, there are many things in life over which we have no control.

3.5. People are not going to follow those who have a weak character or that have cracks in their character. Saul was a very talented, handsome, highly skilled man, but he had cracks in his character. One crack was his arrogance; the other was his fear of the emergence of other leaders like him or better. These cracks in his character led to self-destruction.

4. The Leader's Great Jewel: Integrity

4.1. Integrity is adherence to moral and ethical principles. It is important to understand that ethical principles are not flexible. A white lie is a lie. Stealing is stealing, whether it's one or a million dollars. The teachings of Jesus are clear as to the requirements of the integrity or the character of a leader.

"But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matthew 5:28 NKJV).

4.2. When we speak of character, we cannot set aside the principles of morality. Someone said, *"Character is formed in*

the small moments of our lives." In other words, whenever we break a moral principle, we are creating a small crack in our character.

4.3. One of the mistakes we make is to look outside of ourselves to justify our shortcomings in character. You must remember that the development of integrity is an inside job.

5. Leader-Mentor Characteristics

There is a vast difference between character and reputation. The character of a leader must...

- 5.1.** Be permanent.
- 5.2.** Take responsibility.
- 5.3.** Add value to others.
- 5.4.** Build a legacy for the future.
- 5.5.** Generate respect and integrity.

Solomon said, *"A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold"* (**Proverbs 22:1**).

Conclusion

The word "name", in its Hebrew and Greek roots, is translated character. We have to worry more about our character than our reputation. Moody said: *"If I take care of my character, my reputation will take care of itself."*

To change our character we need to let the Holy Spirit, through the Word, work in our innermost being. The Holy Spirit will not do it unless we are willing to give up and surrender everything to the Lord.

“My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways” (Proverbs 23:26).

LESSON 43



An Introduction to MENTORING I (Trained to impact lives)



"Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." (Proverbs 27:17)

Introduction

The word mentoring is a word that has become fashionable in the business and professional world today. It seems that everyone agrees that it is beneficial to mentor the younger and less experienced staff.

The Lord wants us to accompany or mentor each other as we follow and seek to become more like Him. We find in His Word that as iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another

man (**Proverbs 27:17**). We have been called to help each other grow and support each other, as **Philippians 2:4** says, “*Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.*”

1. Origin, Definition and Concept

Origin

In *Odyssey* (the work of the Greek poet, Homer), Odysseus (who is known as Ulysses in the Latin translation) is preparing to fight the Trojan War when he realized that upon leaving, they would abandon Telemachus, his heir and only child. As the child was young, and generally wars lasted for years (the Trojan War lasted 10 years), Ulysses entrusted Mentor, his wise friend in whom he had placed all his trust, with the care and education of Telemachus.

Definitions and Concepts

“Mentoring is the relationship by which a mentor helps the one entrusted to reach the potential God has placed in him or her” (B. Biehl).

“Mentoring is the process of opening your life to others; a process of living for the next generation” (RL Davies).

“Mentoring is a relational experience in which one person empowers another by sharing God-given resources” (JR Clinton).

Christian mentoring is more than instruction: it is discipleship. While the relationship between a teacher and student

may not go beyond the specific field that identifies their relationship, the mentoring relationship involves a much more personal contact in which he not only teaches skills, but also worldviews.

2. Types of Mentoring

2.1. Intensive Mentoring

2.1.1. Discippler. Attempt to train new believers in discipleship, for example, in following Christ according to the Word of God. It is a task that demands of the discippler, commitment, time, love, and interest in the spiritual welfare of the disciple. It involves constant monitoring and frequent personal contact, prayer meetings, the study of the Bible or of some other suitable material.

2.1.2. Spiritual Guide. This type of mentoring excels in the areas of promoting responsibility in the mentored, to provide adequate leadership and the correct perception of personal, family, work, etc. matters. It helps provide a serious commitment to the things of God. It directs in the decisions that have to do with spirituality and maturity.

2.1.3. Coach. This type of mentoring transmits motivation, promotes knowledge, skills and applications necessary to accomplish tasks and to meet challenges. Spiritual coaching is the process that helps others to develop their God-given potential, to grow personally and to contribute to the growth of the Kingdom of God. It is very possible that Barnabas, the “son of consolation”, is one of the most notable models of a person who accompanies another with his or her support and dedication (**Acts 9:27; 11:25, 30**).

2.2. Occasional Mentoring

2.2.1. Counselor. A counselor is characterized by giving timely advice and help so that the counselee has correct perspectives and views of self, of others, of circumstances and of ministry.

2.2.2. Teacher. A teacher provides knowledge and understanding of materials and content that the student should know better, and trains him or her in the handling of knowledge and actions.

2.2.3. Sponsor. A sponsor directs, accompanies, and protects the emerging leader when he starts out in a ministry or a new organization.

2.3. Passive Mentoring

2.3.1. Contemporary Model. This deals with contemporary person, whose personal life inspires an admirer's life, ministry, or profession. Sometimes the person's books have a great influence on the person, who becomes one who is mentored by this or that book.

2.3.2. Historical Model. This deals with the life of a person in the past, which transmits and teaches dynamic principles and values valid for today in our service to God.

LESSON 44



An Introduction to MENTORING II

(Trained to impact lives)



"Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend."

(Proverbs 27:17)

3. Examples of Mentors

3.1. The Old and New Testament have much to say about training. We see an example in Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, also called Reuel ("*friend of God*"). In **Exodus 18:1-24**, we find God's friend serving God's leader in vital ways as a mentor and coach.

Jethro advised and trained Moses when:

- He went to meet him **(v. 7)**.
- He dedicated time to find out how he was personally **(v. 7)**.
- He listened to the ups and downs of their journey **(v. 8)**.
- He rejoiced with him **(v. 9)**.
- He offered sacrifices with him **(v. 12)**.
- He ate with him **(v. 12)**.
- He observed his work **(v. 14)**.
- He asked him uncomfortable questions **(v. 14)**.
- He showed him that he wasn't doing his job well **(v. 17)**.
- He gave him wise counsel **(v. 18-23)**.

Jethro is an Old Testament example of a coach and mentor. With great wisdom he extracted what God was doing in the life of Moses and, at the right moment, he deposited it to help Moses develop a plan to properly lead God's people. He was God's friend and a friend of God's leader.

3.2. The book of Proverbs talks about training. The principles of Proverbs are timely. Flowing from the central theme of our need for wisdom, several verses remind us that we receive wisdom from others when they listen to us, challenge us, encourage us, and sharpen us.

(Proverbs 27:17, 19).

3.3. In **Ephesians 4:11** and **12**, the apostle Paul gave a mandate to train: *“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.”*

3.4. Of the characters of the New Testament, apart from Jesus and Paul, no one is a better example of a coach than Barnabas. His name means *“son of consolation”*.

No one had more influence on the development of key leaders in the early church than Barnabas. He was willing to support Paul when everyone else turned their backs on him. When Paul did not want for Mark to be part of the team, Barnabas did not abandon this young leader, who had to deal with certain personal issues. Barnabas’ ministry impact was so powerful and penetrating that his ministry to Paul and Mark produced the growth of the early church.

3.4.1. In **Acts 9:23-31**, Barnabas discerned the potential in others, specifically in Paul.

3.4.2. In **Acts 11:22-24**, Barnabas discovered the work of God when he helped others. Notice the words that describe his ministry: *“Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.”*

3.4.3. In **Acts 11:25-26**, Barnabas deployed the potential of others. With great purpose he brought Saul to a place of min-

istry because he was sure that Saul would be a blessing. When this new missionary work began, however, there was a significant change in the way the team operated. Before **Acts 13:2**, Luke spoke of *"Barnabas and Saul."* After they were sent by the church in Antioch, we read of *"Paul and Barnabas"*.

Barnabas took a step back in the team when he recognized the work of God in and through Paul's life. Barnabas was not only willing to introduce Paul into a ministry environment, but also was willing to let Paul take the leadership of the Apostolic movement. He had seen enough of Paul's heart and the fruit of his work to know when it was time to encourage his partner to exercise his leadership gifts. A favorite saying about training applies to Barnabas and how he trained Paul to fulfill his potential: *"A great leader is not the one in the spotlight, but is the one who leads the applause."*

4. The Role of Helping

Why should I bother to mentor someone? The answer is simple: In the same measure that you give yourself, your time, energy, and wealth of knowledge and understanding, will be the satisfaction you receive in helping others.

Today, mentoring is a process by which an experienced person helps another person achieve his or her goals and cultivate his or her skills through a series of personal, confidential, time-limited conversations, and other learning activities.

Consider the main role of a mentor:

Evaluate. The mentor helps encourage people assess their progress.

Motivate. The mentor encourages and motivates learning, helping him or her find additional developmental opportunities, and to actively participate in ministries that match their gifts.

Facilitate. The mentor should attempt to have people learn how to draw their own conclusions and applications, and not just tell them what they should know or do. In personal mentoring relationships, I suggest using the terms “mentor” and “mentor partner” because both tend to learn and benefit from each other in the process. Although he or she doesn’t gain anything extra, the mentor acquires different perspectives on life and work from his apprentice “partner”. **Proverbs 27:17** says, *“Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.”*

As a mentor, you will have the opportunity to share your wisdom and experiences, and evolve in your way of thinking, develop a new relationship, and deepen your skills as a mentor.

5. Other Passages Related to Mentoring

Consider the following verses and discuss them:

- **Deuteronomy 34:5-9**
- **Joshua 1:1-9**
- **Luke 5:1-11; 27-32**
- **2 Timothy 2:2**
- **3 John 1:4**

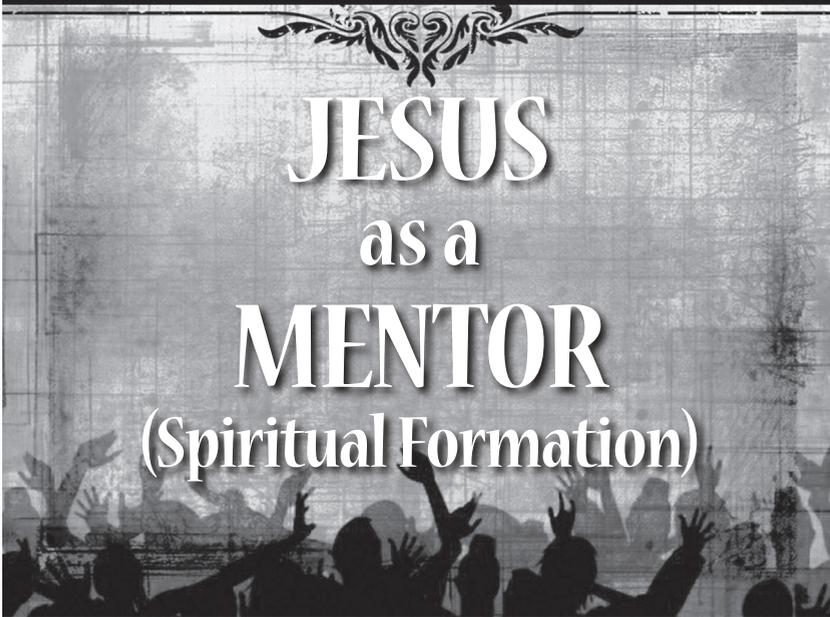
Conclusion

The Lord's desire is that others can see that we are His disciples by the way we love and care for one another (**John 13:35**). Recognizing our own needs and seeking support to address them, asking for advice to act wisely, sharing our knowledge, giving what we have received by the grace of God, are all related to mentoring. If we want to be effective leaders, who are constantly changing, we would be wise to look for someone to mentor.

LESSON 45



JESUS as a MENTOR (Spiritual Formation)



“And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying...” (Matthew 5:1-2).

Introduction

Jesus faced the task of changing the lives of people that would live thousands of years after His ministry on earth, and He succeeded. He did it without writing a book, without building a school, and without founding an institution. So, if Jesus chose to leave his legacy in people, we should learn his method and practice it as best we can. In the Bible we find the ideal model of a mentor to follow: Jesus, the master teacher of spiritual formation. He did it in the following way:

1. Association

Jesus chose 12 men with whom He would be closely related: *“And He went up on the mountain and called to Him those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach” (Mark 3:13, 14 NKJV).*

The Twelve were selected and set apart for a divine purpose. First, they were called to “to be with him” (verse 14). Jesus wanted to establish a close, quality relationship with the Twelve.

Jesus used this intimate relationship to teach his disciples how to live. By observing Jesus’ lifestyle, they learned to deal with people and with difficult situations. He invited his disciples to observe every aspect of his daily life, to be able to reproduce Himself in them.

2. Instruction

Jesus constantly taught and instructed more often in parables, and discussed issues with the Twelve. When the disciples asked him the meaning of a parable, He would explain it to them, revealing deep truths wrapped up in the story. Although his way of teaching was much more than “words”, it certainly involved careful instruction.

“...he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: And he opened his mouth, and taught them...” (Matthew 5:1-2)

The Master saw that his disciples had potential. He saw them, not as they were, but as they could become, through proper instruction. Jesus developed his disciples’ potential,

being their mentor on a daily basis, in a variety of ways. Peter was a reckless, impulsive and impetuous. However, through his mentor's instruction, Peter became a leader of the early church in Jerusalem.

3. Demonstration

Jesus was a model for his disciples to observe.

Educational philosophy relies heavily on instruction. If Jesus had taught his disciples only with words, without doing anything else, they never would have carried his legacy. But Jesus shared his life with them. He deliberately gave his life to his disciples as an example to follow. He knew that they would learn faster if He showed them, not just telling them. He taught with his life. He demonstrated what He said.

“For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you” (John 13:15).

4. Experience

He allowed His disciples to participate / apply the truth in themselves.

After Jesus modeled a good leader-mentor and taught spiritual truths, He didn't leave his men. He gradually worked with them and led them to leadership positions, by giving them valuable experience. Jesus transferred to them the responsibility He felt for the advancement of the Kingdom of God. Jesus gave his followers a chance to put into practice what He had taught them and the opportunity to practice leadership. He gave everyone the position of ministering through delegation and authority.

“And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits” (Mark 6:7).

5. Evaluation

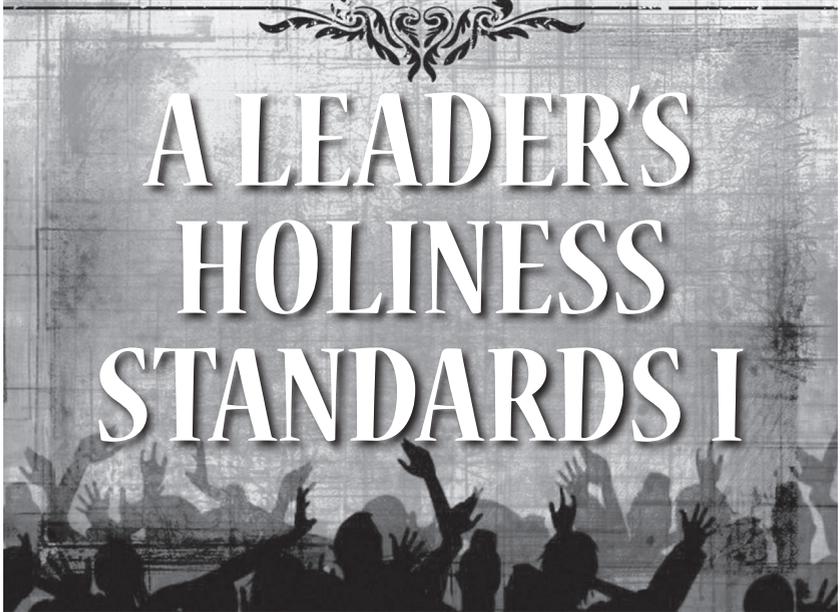
Jesus repeatedly evaluated the progress of his disciples. After the return of the seventy, He compiled their experiences; He instructed them regarding priorities, and celebrated with them (**Luke 10:17-24**). He also personally assessed each, including specific comments concerning his character and abilities. Once He had entrusted tasks to them, they knew they needed to give an account for their performance.

“Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven” (Luke 10:20).

Conclusion

What makes these principles special is that each of us can apply them. They are transferable concepts, so that any leader, of any generation, anywhere, can practice them. If you want to leave a legacy, you should look for people who will carry it for you. Find the right people and use the right preparation process for each. No one can give what he does not have. In this manner we become spiritual mentors who spiritually develop those around us in cell or Friendship Groups.

LESSON 46



“He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked” (1 John 2:6 NKJV).

Introduction

Holiness involves the fundamental idea of separation. God has “set apart” for Himself a people to worship Him and serve Him and to live with the same values (love, integrity, truthfulness...) that characterize Him. We are already holy, in the sense of being set apart for God. Yet, we are far from it in terms of a perfect experience based on those values. But we are already on the path of holiness (**Isaiah 35:8-10**) and in the process of being transformed into the image of Christ (**Romans 8:29, 2**

Corinthians 3:18), drawing closer every day to God (in contrast with how far we were before).

Consider the following standards of holiness for a leader:

1. Prayer

Diligence in prayer is the secret of eminent holiness. Undoubtedly, there is a big difference in the achievements of true believers. Some progress more than others. Some who are truly converted appear to remain as spiritual children throughout their lives. They seem to grow very little from year to year. They are bothered by the same sins, and still need the milk of the Word instead of solid food. Their spiritual interests remain very small and limited to their own circle. But there are other believers who are always growing and moving forward in their Christian life. They grow in faith, grow in good works, attempt great things, and do great things.

2. Master of Self

The true Christian leader does the right thing in relation to himself/herself. The suitable leader dominates his/her natural desires and uses them to glorify God. He/she lives according to the standards of the Word of God for their own life. They have learned to control their time and activities to achieve the priorities they have set for their life. He/she is a good steward of their emotional life. This characteristic is revealed in their self-control or self-discipline.

Paul refers to this quality as he compares the Christian life to preparing for a career. Those who run competitively under-

go training, have strict control of their life, in order to run well. They make their body a slave to win the prize (**1 Corinthians 9:24-27**). Whoever wants to serve God as a cell leader or in other areas of the Church, should control his/her life in the same manner.

3. Live the Word

Spurgeon said that the power of the sermon depends on what precedes the sermon, and encouraged men to prepare the message in intimate communion with God and true holiness of character. He said: *"I may be a brilliant preacher, but if my life does not demonstrate the fruit of the Holy Spirit and don't walk in holiness, it becomes inconsistent with the call of a Holy God."* If our life does not match what we teach in the cell, then the doctrine and the Word of God will be dishonored.

The call of God is: *"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord"* (**Hebrews 12:14**).

We are in a visible place and many Christians see us as models. In addition, we are the enemy's favorite target. Satan knows that if he can take down a leader, he will have greatly dishonored the name of the Lord.

Remember also that.

"...the Lord thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp, to deliver thee, and to give up thine enemies before thee; therefore shall thy camp be holy: that he see no unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee" (**Deuteronomy 23:14**). As leaders, the Lord exhorts us to not allow anything unclean in the camp.

4. Balance

The Bible makes it clear that *“without holiness no man shall see the Lord.”* Holiness is the inevitable result of true conversion. Holiness is not absolute perfection, complete freedom from sin. This will only exist in heaven. Neither is holiness something we can attain without continuous effort and struggle. Real holiness will make a man fulfill his obligations at home and at work, and will affect his way of daily life, and how he confronts problems. Holiness will make him humble, kind, generous, considerate of others, kind, and forgiving. It will not lead him to neglect the regular duties of family life, but will enable him to live a balanced Christian life, wherever God has called him to serve.

Conclusion

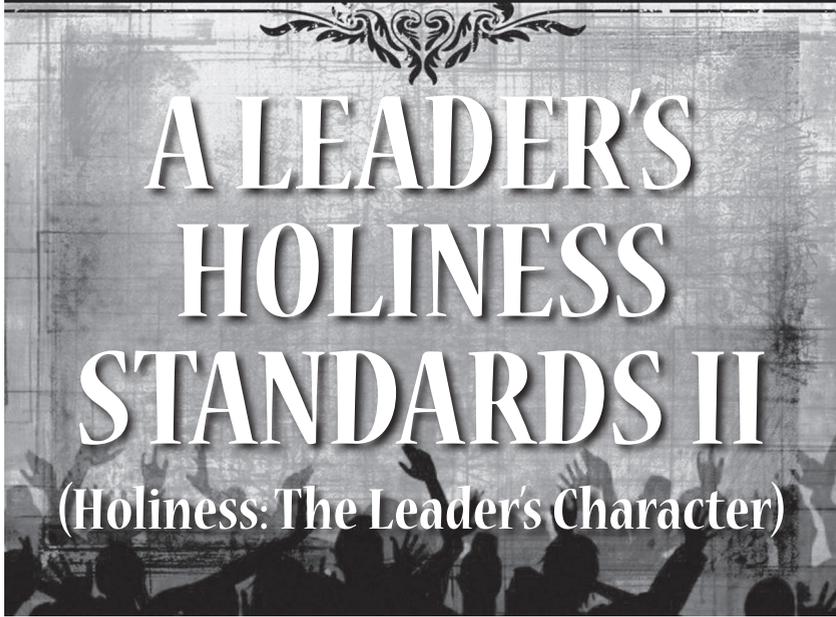
Our glorious destiny is to live completely cleansed from sin, in perfect communion with God. Holiness means breaking away from all manner of sin (**1 Thessalonians 5:22**), and practicing all manner of goodness. Essentially, it means to be like Christ and walk as He walked. This is the challenge of every Christian leader.

LESSON 47



A LEADER'S HOLINESS STANDARDS II

(Holiness: The Leader's Character)



“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled” (Hebrews 12:14-15).

Introduction

We know that holiness is the ability to keep ourselves separate and consecrated in obedience to God, and that it is our responsibility to pursue it. That is, God has called us unto holiness (**1 Peter 1:15**). It is a disposition of the heart; a daily decision and lifestyle.

In the Bible foundation of this study, we see that the writer of the book Hebrews speaks of holiness as a path that we must follow. Let us consider three concepts in relation to standards of holiness:

1. Staying on the Path of Holiness

Hebrews 12:12-13 exhorts us to continue on the path of holiness. We are not seeking to walk in holiness when we have lost the zeal and joy of our salvation (**Psalm 51:12**). When our energy and our passion for seeking God and the dreams we have in Him decline, we begin to look at everything around us. The things of the world begin to become more attractive and slowly, our love for God begins to wane, forgetting to fellowship with Him, and doing again the things we did before we met Him. That is, we cease walking in the Spirit and begin to walk in the flesh, in disobedience to the will of God (**Galatians 5:16**).

But this is not what this passage says. Here, the writer of Hebrews tells us that we must act so as to not let our spirits falter. We must lift our drooping hands (What are we doing to become increasingly more passionate for God?) and our feeble knees (What support and direction are our lives are taking? Are we moving forward, following the Lord?). We must do it for ourselves. The order is clear: Arise! It is an imperative! It is our responsibility! We must lay aside whatever is in the way and start walking again in the ways of the Lord.

We must involve ourselves in the path of holiness, making straight paths for our feet (**Jeremiah 6:16**). This speaks of remaining on the old paths of the Lord: in His Word. Also, the lame feet must be healed. When we abide in the Word of God,

we are healed and gradually restored, through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit.

2. The Main Consequence of Holiness

Holiness is a lifestyle, represented here as a path we must follow (**Hebrews 12:14**).

It is characterized by peace: peace with God and with men. So, we could also define holiness as a life that is lived according to what pleases God, where we walk in fellowship with God, for we know that He cannot tolerate sin. Therefore, when we're at peace with God, and that peace governs our heart, we can live in peace with men, doing what is pleasing to God, and as a result, we experience the main consequence of this attitude: we see God in our lives, our ministries, our families, etc. We do not physically see Him, but we see his support and blessing in everything we do. God blesses obedience. He looks at he/she who obeys and trembles at His Word (**Isaiah 66:2**).

The goal of every leader should be to pursue holiness. It is not only a mandate but also a mark of all genuine Christians. That is, everyone who has been born again, inevitably, sooner or later, making few or many mistakes, will pursue holiness. He/she will wholeheartedly long to see God in their life. One who does not have this interest and desire, is dangerously affected by his/her carnal mind and has filled his/her mind with what the world offers. The Bible clearly states:

“He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked” (1 John 2:6 NKJV).

3. Enemies of Holiness

Hebrews 12:15-17 describes two enemies of holiness. There are more, but these two are great and common enemies of holiness in a leader:

3.1. Roots of bitterness

What does this mean? To understand this remember the episode when Peter rebuked Simon the sorcerer (**Acts 8:18-23**). What was wrong with this man? He didn't understand his sinfulness before God and did not understand the Lord's unmerited grace. He thought he could keep doing what he did before and even better, buying some of his power from God to perform. The roots of bitterness are in our hearts. They pollute and hinder us in attaining the grace of God. The author of Hebrews means that we cannot live the fullness of the Christian life with an unbelieving and stubborn heart. Disbelief, materialism, unforgiveness, resentment, murmuring and such, are samples of these sins, which like roots, are deeply embedded in our hearts. We need to take them to the presence of God in prayer and repentance to be cleansed of them. Remember that our Father is the husbandman.

3.2. A profane heart

Our example here is Esau, Jacob's brother, who for a bowl of lentils, sold the dignity and honor of his calling as firstborn. Then, when he wanted it back, even though wept, he couldn't achieve it. Therefore, the other enemy of holiness is a profane heart: one that prefers temporary pleasures of sin instead of the glory, dignity and honor that comes from obeying the Lord. What a contrast to Moses who chose "...rather to suffer

affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward” (Hebrews 11:25-26 NKJV).

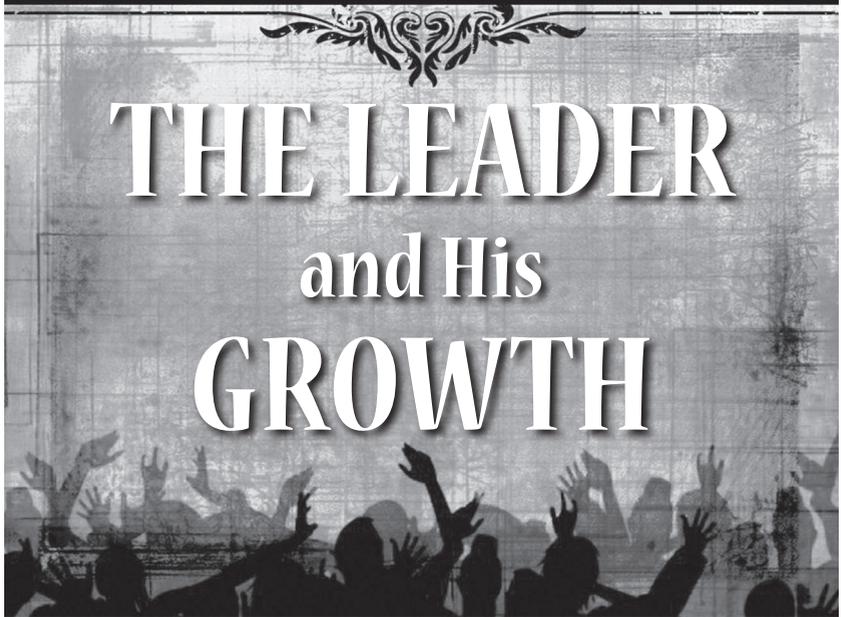
Conclusion

The call remains the same: *“Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.”* Why don't we see the hand of God in our lives, why is there no growth, why are the doors closed and don't reopen? Because we harbor sin in our hearts, because we cling to what we know is wrong and we do not get right with the Lord. We can deceive men, even ourselves, but we cannot fool God. It is He who searches the minds and hearts and gives to each according to their works (**Revelation 2:23**).

LESSON 48



THE LEADER and His GROWTH



“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works”

(2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Introduction:

It is important to read the Bible in its context in order to apply its truths to our life. Currently, there are many methods that emphasize what the Bible says and what each verse means. It is important to take the necessary time on a specific passage to

meditate upon it and pray to receive direction on how to apply it to our lives. A good method is to share what we have understood regarding the passage with our group to be able to come to a conclusion on the subject that has been studied. Following we will see some guidelines that will help us understand more clearly the meaning of some deep passages.

I. Observation

A. What does the text say? In order to understand what the text says, we need to read it several times to extract its correct definition, besides using different versions to identify key words that will help reveal and penetrate into the text.

B. The Context: For better understanding, the leader should answer the following questions:

1. Who is writing and speaking, and to whom? What is his relationship to the text? What is being dealt with? What is happening? Where did the event take place, and what is being communicated?
2. When did it take place in relation with other significant events? What is the person that is speaking saying and doing? What problems are the recipients encountering?
3. How does the passage coincide with the context? What comes first and what's next? How is God using this passage to speak to me?

C. The Structure: Examine the structure of the passage and note significant words in order to connect them; the ones that will help you understand the author's argument. For example: however, but, and, furthermore, therefore, consequently, etc. Try to paraphrase the passage, using your own words in which you'll find key words that will help you understand the emphasis that the author makes in the structure of this passage.

D. The Study of the Word: List the key words of the passage and use a Bible Dictionary, an Expository Dictionary, and a Study Bible to understand the meaning of the passage.

E. Questions: Answer the following questions regarding the passage you are reading:

1. What are the commandments to be obeyed?
2. What are God's promises in which I can trust?
3. What is it that I can learn about God?
4. Are there any words, ideas, or subjects that are being repeated?
5. Is there a comparison or a contrast (flesh against the spirit, **Romans 8**)?
6. Is there a list (fruit of the Spirit, **Galatians 5:22-23**)?
7. Is there any cause or effect in relation (**Romans 10:14-18**)?

II. Interpretation: What message is the text expressing?

A. Truths: List the specific points of your observation of the text. Bombard the passage with questions related to what it is trying to say. Proceed verse by verse, asking the question:

- what does this mean?
- What did the story mean to the original audience?
- What is the opposite of this truth?
- When can it be applied?
- How can I apply it to my life?

In order to understand the passage, you need to look up references. It is also important to trust in the Holy Ghost to be our teacher, without ignoring to pray and asking God for revelation.

B. Commentaries: Consult Bible commentaries. Under-score phrases that can help you understand the passage you are studying. Call your teachers or church leaders to get their perspective on the subject you are dealing with. Share your thoughts with your Friendship Group (apart from the lesson) so that they can help you understand the text.

C. Subject: Write a statement about the idea or main point that you think the author is dealing with through this text. Write two or three main points that you discovered in the development of the subject.

III. Application: Can I allow the Scripture to transform my life?

A. Teaching: How will this truth change my life? How will it change my family, my church, my job?

B. Failed: Where did I fail? Why did I fail? How can I evaluate myself? How can I evaluate the group?

C. Correction: What can I do about this? How can I correct it? How could others help me do this?

D. Training and Righteousness: What practices, relationships, and experiences could I pursue so that I could train myself to be more like Christ?

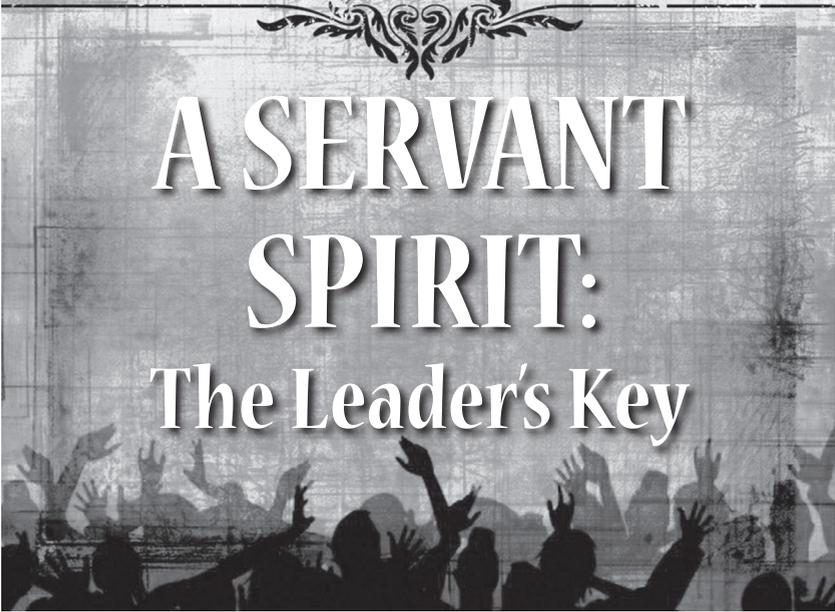
Conclusion

It is important that every leader that is leading a Friendship Group give him or herself to the task of perfecting his or her understanding regarding the study of the Bible. As mentors of the group, we should be well prepared to respond to the needs, and above all, help in the understanding of some passages that may not be very clear. We only have to follow the instructions in this lesson, and with God's help, we will improve our theological understanding. *"And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures"* (**Luke 24:44-45**).

LESSON 49



A SERVANT SPIRIT: The Leader's Key



“For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45).

Introduction:

“Minister” and “service” are words that the Bible uses to describe a leader. Whoever is not willing to serve is not qualified to lead. Leaders don a service towel as our Lord did. *“He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded” (John 13:1-17).* With this act Jesus demonstrated the leadership model that He wants for every leader to follow.

I. Care for Others

A. In the same manner that Jesus is the Good Shepherd, each leader should follow this example of caring for the flock that is under his or her care. *"I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine"* (**John 10:14**). Jesus Christ was willing to lay down his life for us. *"...the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep"* (**John 10:11**).

B. Caring for the group is part of the leader's role. Jesus expects for us, as group leaders, to give his people this type of care. Before the Lord ascended into heaven, He made his leader, Peter, responsible for watching over the sheep He entrusted into his care. *"17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, feed my sheep"* (**John 21:15-17**).

II. Work Together

A. When the time came for the disciples to go out and practice what they had learned from the Master, they went out as a team. *"These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give"* (**Matthew 10:5-8**).

B. At the onset of the Church, a need arose for more helpers to take care of the tasks that the great growth of believers merited. For this they chose men of good testimony to meet said needs. *“And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business...”* (**Acts 6:1-5**). Friendship Group leaders are the ones God has assigned to train and delegate the tasks within the group, which he or she is leading.

III. They are Affectionate

A. The leader will never gain the right to lead those whom he or she doesn't love. Leaders should follow Jesus Christ's example of loving his followers. *“Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end”* (**John 13:1**).

A sign that a leader is growing in his or her leadership is that he or she loves others with the love of Christ.

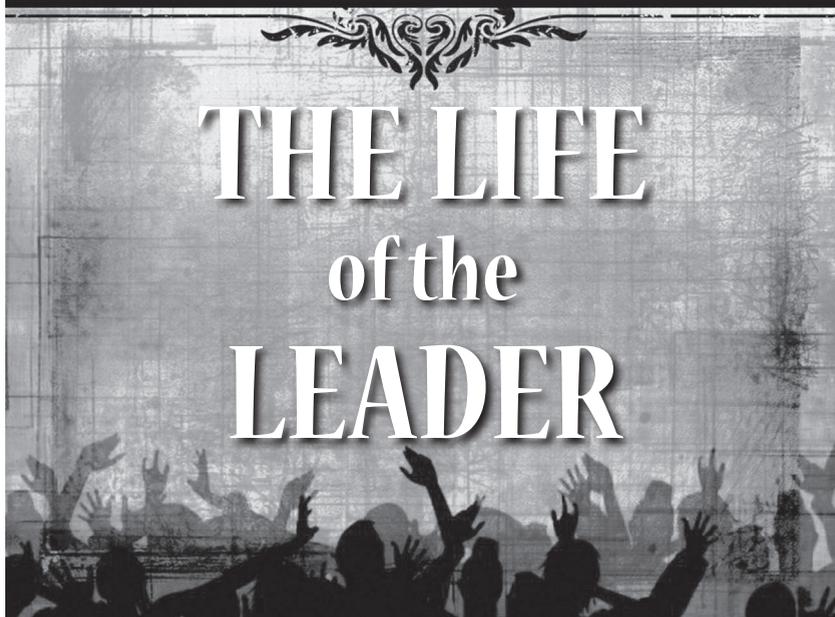
B. The writer Gary Chapman, in his book *“The Five Love Languages”*, writes about the different languages of love that the leader needs to demonstrate to the group he or she leads. His book focuses on the following five areas:

- 1) Words of affirmation
- 2) Appropriate physical touch
- 3) Giving gifts
- 4) Acts of service
- 5) Quality time

Conclusion:

With this in mind, every leader can improve the leadership that has been entrusted to him or her. Every leader must also be aware that caring for the flock requires sacrifice. On the other hand, he or she should share his or her leadership and delegate his or her authority with the rest of the group. Finally, the leader must not forget how important it is to show the love of Christ. This will help him or her lead them more effectively.

LESSON 50



“Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business”

(Acts 6:3).

Introduction:

In the early church there was the need to find more helpers to delegate the responsibilities that the work of God demanded. The Apostles looked for men who were willing to take the challenge of serving tables. To qualify they had to meet certain requirements. Seven men were chosen, who were given

the task of meeting the needs within the recently established Christian community. In this lesson we will discuss seven areas that the leader needs to successfully serve the small group that has been entrusted into his care.

I. His Relationship with Christ

A. His intimacy: The leader must daily develop his intimacy with Christ. This will help him find the direction the group should take. The members of the group will follow him just as the Corinthian Church followed Paul. *"Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ"* (**1 Corinthians 11:1 NKJV**).

B. His time: The psalmist knew how to invest his time in God's presence. There was a yearning in him to continually be bathed in the presence of God. *"As the deer pants for the water brooks, So pants my soul for You, O God"* (**Psalms 42:1 NKJV**). Similarly, the group leader must look, with the same hunger, for the presence of God and feed his soul so that he can have something to offer his group.

II. His Calling

A. His mission: The leader must continue to be persistent in his calling, though at times he might feel unable to continue, as in the case of Jeremiah when he said: *"...I will not make mention of Him, nor speak anymore in His name. But His word was in my heart like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I was weary of holding it back, and I could not"* (**Jeremiah 20:9 NKJV**).

B. His passion: That same fire that was in Jeremiah is in every Friendship Group leader. There is a mission to fulfill even in the midst of fatigue or discouragement. We cannot go back. Just as the prophet Jeremiah, we cannot fail to proclaim the Word of God. Furthermore, the group will follow the example of their leader. If the leader falters, the group will get discouraged, but if the leader continues fervently, the group will follow his leading.

III. His Character

A. His integrity: The leader must pay attention to the integrity of his heart, as Proverbs says. *“Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life” (Proverbs 4:23 NKJV).* It is important to reflect on what our heart dictates because from it spring the issues of life. The Lord Jesus Christ spoke of the importance of knowing and caring FOR what is in our hearts. *“A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things” (Matthew 12:35).*

B. His heart: The leader must be trustworthy and honest; in doing so he is showing his true character. When trust is lost, it is difficult to recover it and his leadership ability is over. With good reason the Apostle Paul continually advised the young leader, Timothy, to keep his integrity. *“Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Timothy 4:12 NKJV).* The age of a person does not really matter in the church; what really matters is that our life is upright before God and men. For this reason the leader should maintain a good balance between his person and his leadership.

IV. His Identity

A. His place: Many leaders strive to grow in their leadership, however, some end up frustrated. The reason is that they are trying to function in the “wrong” calling (ministry). The Apostle Paul established the order of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in his letter to the Corinthian Church. *“There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all” (1 Corinthians 12:4-7 NKJV).*

B. His gifts: It is important that the leader identify the gifts with which he is operating and to encourage the members of his group to discover their gifts. If a leader does not know the gifts in which he operates (ministers), there is the likelihood that his group will not grow spiritually or numerically either. Therefore, leaders must seek guidance from God to show them how to discover their gifts in their group and help them operate in them. *“And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues” (1 Corinthians 12:28 NKJV).*

V. His Ability

A. His development: Every leader needs to develop his skills, because without them, it is difficult to guide the group. The Apostle Paul told Timothy to develop his skills in teaching,

to be a competent communicator of God's truth. *"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth"* (**2 Timothy 2:15 NKJV**). If a leader does not develop, he or she will stall their abilities and those of the group. And to top it off, he or she will also stagnate the growth of the local church.

B. His aptitude: To become a competent leader, the leader needs to be involved in weekly training and extraordinary sessions. As time passes, the leader will be displaying his skills and this is going to enhance the growth of the group since he will transmit what they have learned and developed through training and practice.

VI. His Commitment

A. His firmness: The leader must stand firm on the commitment he has taken in leading the group. God has called him to this work to cultivate the lives of both the group and the guests who attend the meeting. The Lord told his followers to stand firm on the commitment they had made, and said to Peter: *"Feed my lambs..."* (**John 21:15-19**).

B. His skills: The leader is the one God has placed to prepare followers. He must be aware that it is rather easy to have brothers in the group, but what is most difficult, is to disciple them. This takes time and effort. So Paul told Timothy that he should strive in what had been entrusted to him. *"You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus"* (**2 Timothy 2:1 NKJV**).

VII. His Responsibility

A. His teaching: The leader must ensure that he and the group are being nourished in sound doctrine. *“Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you” (1 Timothy 4:16 NKJV).* The leader is responsible for making sure that other doctrines do not make their way into the group, even if they seem to be scriptural. Any group runs the risk of deviating from what is the doctrine of Christ. That is why the Apostle Paul was so careful to train Timothy, since he would then be training others (**2 Timothy 2:2**).

B. His priorities: First of all, the leader must place boundaries in his personal time and priorities. Secondly, the leader must establish guidelines in his life. This will give him time to be with the Lord and also to care for his family’s needs. Thirdly, he must be wise and reserved concerning his private life. The Lord Himself took time to be alone in private solitude. This will give him strength to move forward with the goals he has set for his group.

Conclusion:

To conclude, each leader should evaluate himself in those areas that need strengthening. He should also take note of what he’s learned and what he needs to implement to be a more successful leader. Above all, he needs to have a more intimate connection with Christ to continue making progress in his calling, maintaining his integrity and fulfilling his commitment. At the same time he must continue striving to develop his leadership skills, being responsible for taking care of sound doctrine in order to take his group to a higher level in the Lord.

LESSON 51



“Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others”

(Philippians 2:3-4 NKJV).

Introduction:

Being able to serve in the work of God is a great privilege. The angels desire to do the work that God has committed to us. However, it pleased Christ to choose us for this task so worthy of being carried out. *“You did not choose me but I chose you,*

and appointed you to go and bear fruit and that your fruit remain, that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it you” (John 15:16 NKJV). In this lesson we will consider two motives for serving and how the leader can distinguish between the right and wrong one.

I. Right Motives to Serve

A. Serving Christ: *“And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ” (Colossians 3:23-24 NKJV).*

B. Bearing fruit: *“By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples” (John 15:8 NKJV).*

C. Taking care of the flock: *“Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood” (Acts 20:28 NKJV).*

D. Be a good example: *“Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away” (1 Peter 5:2-4 NKJV).*

E. Equip the saints: *“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry,*

for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (**Ephesians 4:11-13 NKJV**).

F. Communicating the message: "...that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (**2 Corinthians 5:19-21 NKJV**).

II. Wrong Motives to Serve

A. Self-Exaltation: "Let another man praise you, and not your own mouth; A stranger, and not your own lips" (**Proverbs 27:2 NKJV**).

B. Feeling important: "But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts. For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness—God is witness. Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ" (**1 Thessalonians 2:4-6 NKJV**).

C. Serving under pressure: "Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly" (**1 Peter 5:2 NKJV**).

D. Outbursts of anger: *"...idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies..." (Galatians 5:20 NKJV).* *"But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth" (Colossians 3:8 NKJV).*

E. Unconfessed sins: *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9 NKJV).* *"Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?" (Romans 6:16 NKJV).*

F. False teaching: *"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables" (2 Timothy 4:3-4 NKJV).*

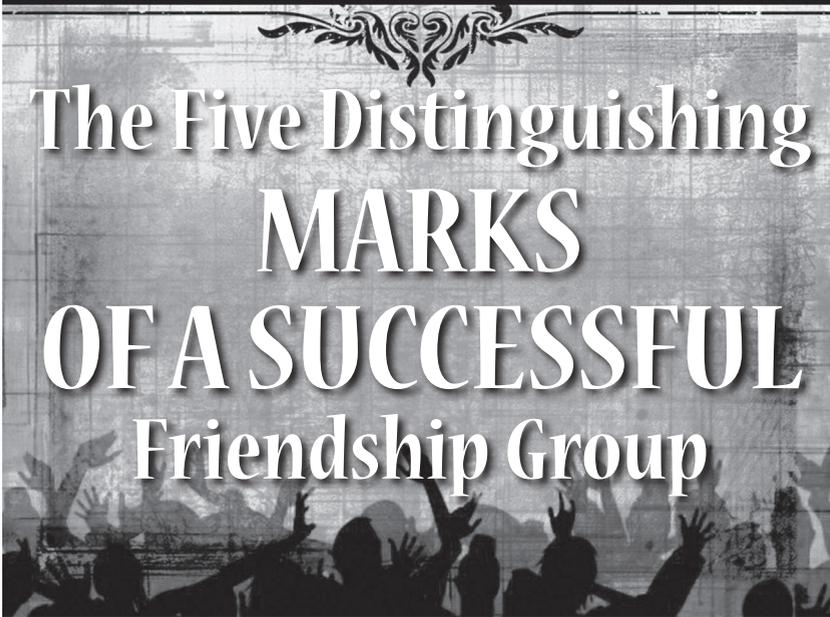
Conclusion:

As we have seen, there is a lot of difference between the right and the wrong motives to serve. This study will help every leader to know how he or she is serving the Lord. If you serve Christ with a good spirit, He will reward your time. If we serve while having a careless life, we will also receive according to our deeds, for that day will come where everything will be revealed. *"...each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work, which he has built on, it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire" (1 Corinthians 3:13-15).*

LESSON 52



The Five Distinguishing MARKS OF A SUCCESSFUL Friendship Group



INTRODUCTION:

The purpose of this lesson is to establish the basic concepts of the Friendship Group ministry in the hearts and minds of your leaders and members. It is critical that they receive a clear understanding of what the Friendship Group ministry is all about. A successful Friendship Groups is united, loving, forgiving, submitted, and evangelistic.

1. A United Group (Colossians 1:15-18 NKJV)

This first mark distinguishing mark of a successful group deals with the importance of everyone participating in the

group in a unified way. For this to happen, we must first understand that God's Church is a body, whose head is Jesus Christ. *"And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the pre-eminence"* (**Colossians 1:18 NKJV**).

Just as the human body is made up of many cells, so is the body of Christ —the Church. A Friendship Group is one cell in the body of Christ. Every natural cell has a nucleus, which directs the activities of the cell. It also has other parts, which work together to keep the cell healthy and make it grow.

A Friendship Group has a leader who directs the activities of the group. It also has members who participate in the group's activities. Every member is important and has something to contribute to the wellbeing of the group.

The goal of every cell is to increase in strength and size and eventually to multiply into two cells. This is how a body grows. All the parts of a cell work together to accomplish this goal. The goal of the Friendship Group is to increase in strength and size and to multiply. For this goal to be achieved, all group members must work together in unity.

Paul wrote, *"We will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work"* (**Ephesians 4:15-16 NIV**).

God is one; therefore His body must also be one. The best place to achieve this oneness is within the intimate atmosphere of a Friendship Group. We should all commit ourselves to doing our best to maintain unity in our group at all times.

2. A Loving Group (John 13:34-35)

There is nothing more important than the members of your group learning to love one another. Jesus' "New Commandment" was that we love each other, not just as we want to be loved, but as He loved us.

During the Old Testament period, God instructed His people to love one another by giving them specific rules dictating what they shouldn't do and what they should do: they should not kill, not steal, not lie, etc. In other words, He established the basic rules by which humans were to treat one another. People were to love others as themselves (**Leviticus 19:18**). This was the ultimate of human love. This was the best that God could expect of man at that time.

When Jesus came, He revealed a new dimension of love that went far beyond the Old Testament love. In **Matthew 5:44** He told His disciples that they should"

- 1) Love their enemies,
- 2) Bless them who curse them,
- 3) Do good to them who hate them, and to
- 4) Pray for them who used them and persecuted them.

These were revolutionary ideas concerning how we ought to treat other people.

As time went by, Jesus demonstrated this kind of love to his disciples. He then gave them the "New Commandment" that they should love one another in the same way that He had loved them. This kind of love went far beyond the love de-

scribed in the Old Testament. This was more than human love; this was divine love. Jesus finally demonstrated the length to which His divine love would go by actually dying for His enemies (**Romans 5:6-10**).

Some may feel as though they cannot love with this kind of love, but Jesus never requires anything that is impossible. He has enabled us to love this way by putting His own love within us. According to **Romans 5:5**, when we received the Holy Ghost we received God's own love. We should apply God's love in a very practical manner (**1 John 3:16-18**). First, we must "perceive His love" by understanding that He laid down His own life for us. We must then be willing to lay down our lives for our brethren. This means more than simply wishing one another well; it means going out of our way to help one another, to be a blessing to one another, even if it costs us something.

Loving other people by laying down our own lives is a dimension of love the Old Testament people could not perceive—Jesus had not yet demonstrated it. We now have an example we can look to, and we are under a "new" commandment. We must make every effort to love one another as Jesus Christ has loved us.

3. A Forgiving Group (**Colossians 3:12-13**)

The key to preserving unity within a group is resolving all conflicts that could result in division. When people spend a lot of time together, conflicts are almost inevitable. Often, the leader must be the peacemaker; he must take the initiative in resolving the dispute for the sake of the unity of the body. Teaching group members the importance of forgiving will help keep divisions to a minimum.

There is probably nothing that exemplifies the love of God any more than forgiveness. Forgiving someone does not mean you have approved of what he did. It simply means you are not willing to harbor a grudge against him for what he did. When you forgive, you are foregoing all desire for revenge and releasing the person from the prison of your own resentment. When asked how many times we should forgive a brother or sister, Jesus put virtually no limit on it—70 x 7 (**Matthew 18:21-22**).

In the parable found in **Matthew 18:23-35**, Jesus teaches that we qualify to receive and keep God's forgiveness by being willing to forgive others. One man was in debt to God, the other was in debt to man. The king (God), with amazing generosity, forgave the huge debt of the man who was in debt to Him (around \$20 million). The man then refused to forgive the debt of his servant, which was only around \$20.00. When the king found out about this, he revoked the forgiveness of the man and cast him into prison where he was tormented. In verse 35, Jesus says that this is how it will be for us if we refuse to forgive our brothers and sisters.

Why is God so concerned about our forgiving one another? First of all, when we forgive we manifest God's own forgiveness to the world. Secondly, it ends disputes and preserves the unity of His body. As members of the body of Christ, we must not only be quick to forgive one another, but we must also make it easy for others to forgive us.

Sometimes people's feelings are hurt even when we didn't do anything that was wrong. We must, by our attitude, make it easy for people to approach us to say, "I am sorry or forgive me." We can do this by saying we forgive, even if we have not necessarily done anything wrong. We must see the unity of the group and our relationships with the other people as more important

than making certain we are vindicated, more important than making sure that everyone knows we are innocent. Jesus took the blame for things He did not do. As Christians, we ought to be striving to be like Him.

So, we see that forgiving one another is the key to maintaining love and unity within a group. Sometimes it takes great humility to forgive, or to help someone else to forgive. But we must do this for the sake of Christ's body.

4. A Submitted Group (Ephesians 4:8-13)

Jesus works through those in leadership to govern and direct His Church. Those in leadership should be respected at all times, and their counsel should be given serious consideration when making important decisions.

Jesus gave pastors to His people to lead them as a body of believers. Every organization (business, military, etc.) needs one person to be at the head who makes all final decisions for the group. In the local church, this is the pastor. We ought to see our pastor as a gift that Jesus Christ has given us for our good.

Numbers 11:16-17 teaches that God has given pastors the authority to delegate some of their ministry to others who can help them lead the congregation. In a cell church, these would be Friendship Group leaders, assistants, and the senior leaders.

The nation of Israel, which foreshadowed the New Testament Church, was led by one man, named Moses. But those who helped Moses lead the people were given a portion of

the spirit (anointing) of Moses. The New Testament describes the responsibilities the Friendship Group leader has to those he is leading:

- **Ephesians 4:12** – To perfect the saints. This word “perfect” means to prepare them for their ministry through training and example.
- **Acts 20:28-29** – To feed the saints. This refers to the ministry of teaching and instructing in the Word of God.
- **Hebrews 13:17** – To watch over the spiritual wellbeing of the saints. This means that leaders must warn people when they see them heading down the pathway of sin and encourage them to do right.
- The New Testament also outlines the saints’ responsibilities to their leaders:
- **1 Thessalonians 5:12-13** – To esteem them very highly.
- **Hebrews 13:7** – To follow our leader’s faith.
- **Hebrews 13:17** – To obey and submit to pastoral authority.

5. An Evangelizing Group (Matthew 20:1-7)

The ultimate goal of each Friendship Group is to grow and multiply into two groups. If this is to happen, every member must submit himself or herself to Jesus Christ to be used as a laborer in His harvest. His goal is to make each member a soul winner. All He asks is that everyone do what he or she is able to do.

The 5 o'clock laborer was idle because he did not think he was worth being hired. He had been there, willing to work, since early morning. There is nothing worse than feeling unneeded. Jesus' promise to us is, *"Come and work for me, and I'll pay you what is right."*

Matthew 9:36-38 – The size of the harvest is in proportion to the number of laborers in the field. The wicked servant was not condemned because he failed to match the performance of the other servants. He was condemned because he did not do what he was able to do. What are you able to do?

Matthew 25:14-30 – All Jesus asked from His servants was that they work according to their own abilities (**v. 15**). The wicked servant was not condemned because he couldn't emulate the work of the others. He was condemned because he didn't do what he could do. What can you do?

James 2:14-26 – Faith that does not result in action is *"dead faith."* God does not expect us to put someone else's faith to work; He only expects us to put our own faith to work (**vs. 17**). He cannot bless "nothing"! Our works are what make our faith fruitful (**vs. 22**). We are each responsible only for what God has given us. We must be active Christians. If we do what we can, God will strengthen us and give us fruit.

The field is ready to be harvested. All Jesus needs to get it in is the 5 o'clock laborers. Regardless of how little we may think we have been involved up to now, no matter how little we may think our abilities are, God will use us now if we will yield ourselves to Him. In the last hours of the harvest, everyone gets involved. The Lord of the Harvest is calling you!

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION:

Discuss with your group specific actions each member can do to contribute to bringing in the harvest. Some ideas you may suggest are:

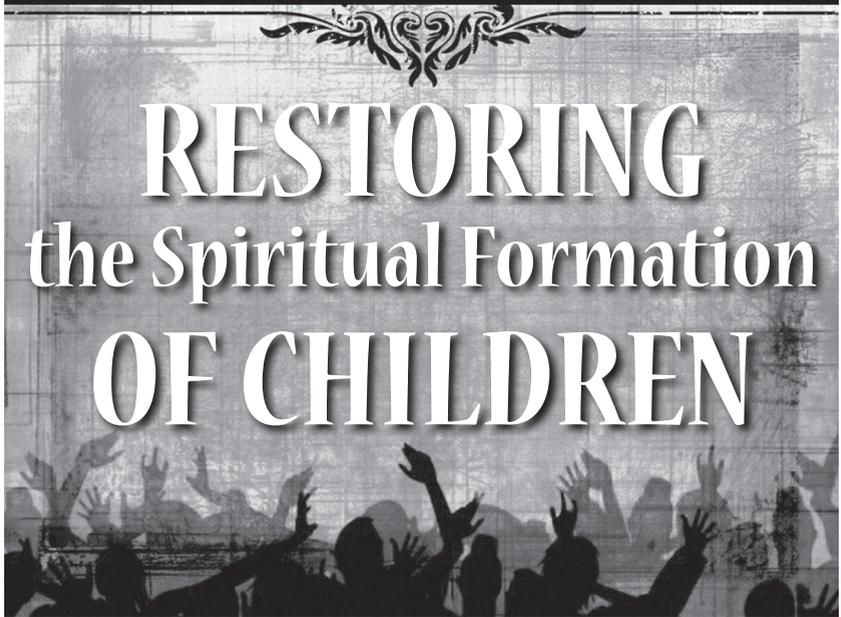
1. **Colossians 4:24** – Pray for open doors to tell someone about Jesus.
2. **Acts 1:8** – Be a witness to others.
3. **John 12:32** – Lift up Jesus; tell what He has done for you.
4. **Romans 5:5 & 1 Thessalonians 4:9** – Look for people in need and love them.

After your group members have committed to doing all that they can do to reach the lost, place an empty chair in the middle of the group and have everyone lay hands on it and pray that God would fill the empty chair. Do this every week until God gives the increase.

LESSON 53



RESTORING the Spiritual Formation OF CHILDREN



“Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it”

(Psalm 127:1).

With sadness we see that in recent years that attacks against children have intensified. Often, they commit murder among themselves; they kill their parents, not to mention drug addictions, and other ills of modern society. Whose fault is it, the children or the parents? The truth is that we need to restore, in our children, biblical values that for one reason or another have been neglected.

1. What should parents provide for their children?

A. Spiritual Provision: We must equip our children with all the necessary resources so that they can develop a spiritual perspective based on divine principles and ethical and moral values found in the Word of God. (**Deuteronomy 6:6-9**)

B. Emotional Provision: Our children need to develop in a safe environment where they feel loved, protected, and understood by their parents at all times. (**Proverbs 22:6**)

C. Intellectual Provision: It is the responsibility of parents to provide their children with the appropriate education and skills to compete in life and to carve out a proper financial future that meets the demands of the society in which we live.

D. Social Provision: Social respect is very important for children, because it is the means by which the children learn to interact with others.

2. What can we do so that our children will serve the Lord?

A. Practice a faith that pleases God, like the faith of Lois and Eunice, which they conveyed to Timothy and which influ-

enced him to become one of the most prominent leaders of the early church. **(1 Timothy 1:3-5)**

B. Implement virtues in our children through our example and direct exposure to the power of God. Take them to worship services, pray together with them, and encourage them to be baptized and be filled with the Holy Spirit. Help them to seek spiritual gifts and to put these into practice.

C. Give them the best thing in the world for their soul and mind, which is the Word of God. Can we implant these practices in our children if they see that we do not read or do what the Bible says? **(2 Timothy 3:15-17)**

What are some other attitudes that parents must assume for better parenting of our children?

A. They must see in us a strong and defined faith: You have to understand that the crisis of the modern family is due to the abandonment of the faith and service unto the Lord. **(Joshua 24:15)**

B. Apply purposeful discipline: The lack of happiness and peace in many homes is a result of the lack of the application of a loving and wise discipline. The text in **Proverbs 22:6** says that discipline should be applied so that when the children are older, they will continue to guide their lives by the principles of the Word of God.

C. Prepare (anticipate) them against the consequences of sinful behavior: As the children grow, many sinful attitudes begin to be expressed from their little hearts, which should be addressed through instruction and discipline. (**Proverbs 22:15**)

Conclusion:

We must remember that the major responsibility for the spiritual life of our children belongs to the parents, and as the psalmist said: *“Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it”* (**Psalm 127:1**).

