



SCHOOL OF DISCIPLESHIP

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Calvary Training Series



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BRUCE ZACHARY

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School of Ministry Training Manual

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Introduction

Objective: To provide a curriculum to mentor students to be disciples who are better spiritual leaders serving God in church and para-church ministry. The program includes 16 months of study, practical experience and personal discipleship. This curriculum can be implemented in churches of any size.

Purpose: There is a great need for Christ-like leaders. This resource is intended to train Christian leaders through personal discipleship, study, and practical experience. Our desire is to equip believers for the work that God has called them to (Eph. 4:11-13). Jesus spent time with the disciples and put them in situations where they had to apply what they were learning. The disciples learned from Jesus' teaching and example, and sought to replicate His ministry as they followed Him. This is our model for ministry.

When we consider the men and women used by God, we are impressed with the diversity of people that God uses to accomplish His purposes. Abraham was the father of the faith. Joseph was a gifted administrator. Moses was a prince and shepherd, and he spoke with God as to a man. He was the great lawgiver. Joshua was a courageous and brilliant military leader, and man of faith above his countrymen. David was a poet, shepherd, and Israel's greatest king. Solomon was the wisest man to walk the earth, besides our Lord Jesus. Ezra brought the Word of God to the life of the people to bring God into the people's lives. Jeremiah wept for the people when they refused to yield to God. Jonah rebelled, and fulfilled his calling with the wrong attitude. Esther received courage, when she thought she had none, and helped deliver her people. Peter was impulsive and acted first and thought later. John was a poet who never forgot that Jesus loved him. Paul was brilliant in his logic and understanding of God's Word and persuasive and bold in declaring the truth.

How would your life be impacted if you were motivated to serve God; and you learned to serve Him effectively? How would your family, church and community be changed if you learned to serve God and His people? If communities of believers are stirred to effective ministry our world will be radically changed.

Overview: the program requires one hour of class time per week, one to two hours of lifework (homework) per week, and approximately one to two hours of practical service per week. The school of discipleship will provide approximately 16 months of personal disciple training.

Enrollment: an application form is provided in the appendix. Students can enter the program at any module. In other words, module 4 is not dependent upon completing modules 1-3. This creates great flexibility regarding enrollment. Nevertheless, I recommend enrolling students as a group in the spring and fall; and promoting the enrollment 4-6 weeks in advance.

What's expected of the students (disciples):

1. **Ministry involvement:** be regularly involved in an area of ministry where you can apply the lessons that you are learning in order to become a more effective disciple. Each student must serve at least 4 hours per month (average 1 hour per week).
2. **Ministry report form:** each month you will complete a ministry report form that describes your ministry involvement in the preceding month, and what you learned about God, ministry, and yourself. Students are required to serve an average of at least one hour per week (four hours per month).

3. **Reading assignments:** every two months, students will be assigned a book that focuses on Christian living, spiritual leadership, or church history/biography themes. The books are approximately 200 pages. Students will submit a book report describing what they learned about God, the ministry, and themselves from the book. Thus, eight books shall be read, and reported upon during the program.
4. **Lifework:** homework, including reading assignments, will average one to two hours per week. Assignments are graded, and must be submitted in a timely manner. Late work will result in a diminished grade, and patterns of neglect may result in removal from the program.
5. **Attendance:** classes typically meet once a week, and last 75 minutes. Students are expected to arrive on time, and are allowed 6 absences during the sixteen-month SoM program. Students are expected to bring their Bible, and to take notes during class.

What's expected of the mentors (teachers):

1. **Preparation:** review the lessons and be prepared to teach each class (estimated 30-45 minute prep). The lessons contain questions that can be used for class discussion or presented as rhetorical questions at the leader's discretion.
2. **Student growth plans:** as you review the student ministry report forms, prepare a personal spiritual growth plan to help the student grow as a leader. The plan will be designed to intentionally expand the student's sphere of influence every 3 months. There will generally be 5 distinct steps during the sixteen-month program. For example, if a student is an usher on a team of four ushers, step 1 will be to become an assistant on the team during the next three months. Step 2 might be to become the leader of the team during the next three-month interval. Step 3 could be to train an assistant. Step 4 could be to appoint the assistant to a lead position on the team, and help to identify and train a new assistant. Step 5 would be for the student to now oversee two teams of ushers.
3. **Review and grade papers:** each lifework assignment should be reviewed and graded, and students provided encouragement and insight to help them grow.
4. **Bibliography:** a list of required and recommended books are described in the bibliography. The mentor must ensure the students have the assigned book available every two months. Also, encourage students to read the recommended books. Consider ordering copies for the students at a discounted price and pass the savings along to the students. Also, don't hesitate to coordinate with students who prefer to obtain e-copies of the books.
5. **Holiday schedule:** plan to give students approximately four holiday/vacation days during the year. This will likely result in the 15 modules being completed in 16 months.
6. **Assistants:** it may be helpful to recruit an assistant to review and grade papers. Program graduates may be excellent future assistants.
7. **Graduation ceremony:** coordinate a graduation ceremony to acknowledge the past accomplishments, and celebrate the commencement for future ministry. Provide a certificate of completion. Consider a group photo, commencement message, and valedictorian address as part of the event.

Module I: Leaders' Devotions

Lesson 1 - Prayer Matt. 6:5-9

Intro

Discussion: Why should we pray?

As the disciples saw Jesus pray, they saw intimate communication with God. Who wouldn't want to speak with God as Jesus did. The disciples urgently asked Jesus to teach them to pray. There is no record of them asking Him to teach them to preach, teach, or evangelize. They wanted to speak with God as Jesus did. Jesus gave them a model prayer, "Our Father."

The disciples were devout men versed in the prayers of the Hebrews, but their experience with Jesus made them want to go deeper in their communication with God. Prayer is the means to an intimate relationship with God.

Failing to pray to the true and living God is just as futile as praying fervently to a false god. Almost everyone prays to some degree to some perceived god, but few find fulfillment, satisfaction or transformation. **The problem** is we often approach prayer as a means to get something good or avoid something bad, rather than to develop an intimate relationship with God. Relationships require time. Our priorities are reflected by how we allocate time.

Oswald Chambers observed, "Prayer is the vital breath of Christians. Not the thing that makes us alive, but the evidence we are alive. What would happen if no one prayed? Would the world be different? Would events and circumstances be changed? Would the hearts of people be impacted? Our answers reflect our attitude about the effectiveness of prayer.

In **Judaism and Christianity**, prayer is rooted in a biblical understanding of God as a personal being who hears and responds to His people. The earliest prayers in the Bible are intimate dialogues: **Adam** speaking with God in the Garden of Eden, **Abraham** surprised by God's promise that he would be the father of a great nation despite his advanced age, **Moses** called by God from the burning bush to lead God's people out of bondage in Egypt and responding with obedience. In the New Testament, Jesus teaches us to pray. Jesus' prayer is intimate communication with God.

Subject: The invitation to pray

Object: Intimate communication with God

Outline: 1. God's invitation, 2. The example of Jesus, 3. Tips for praying

1. The invitation to pray: Theme - God has invited us to pray

v. 9 "In this manner therefore, pray..." He presumes we will pray, because we have been invited by God to pray.

3x proceeding four verses, Jesus declares, "when" not if, you pray [v.5, 6, 7].

note: prayer is a normal Christian attitude and behavior, not something reserved for "prayer warriors."

Jesus emphasized prayer is all about intimate communication with God. He contrasts the prayers of the religious leaders and His model for prayer (v. 5-6).

Pray for God's approval. Cf. prayers of religious leaders sought approval and recognition from men.

Prayer shall be rewarded: In verse 5 the word translated "wages" is *misthos* referring to payment for services relating to approval from men. On the other hand, in v. 6 the Greek *apodidomai* meaning to give away or restore is used to refer to God's reward or approval.

Discussion: What are some of the benefits of prayer?

Some rewards:

1. If we pray per His will we receive our requests,
2. Life transforming intimate communication with God

v. 8 Since the Father knows our needs before we ask, why do we need to ask?

5 Reasons

- 1. He is the source of blessing:** by asking, we are reminded that He is the source of blessing.
- 2. We get to know the need as He does.**
- 3. Affirms our dependence.** Acknowledges the Father as God
- 4. God delights to hear His kids ask.** Like earthly parents, God delights to hear His kids.
- 5. We have been invited to pray.** God wants intimate communication with us. God provides **access** as evidenced by the tearing of the veil that separated the Holy of Holies from the temple when Christ took our sins upon Himself (Matt. 27:51). The tearing from top to bottom reveals that God is providing access through Christ, rather than man attempting to gain entry by religious performance. One of the great mysteries of heaven is that men have been invited by God to pray and we neglect the invitation. Robt. Boyd Munger, in his book, "My Heart Christ's Home" notes that Bible study and prayer are not only for your growth, but bless God as He wants to be with you.

2. The example of Jesus: Pray with intimacy and intensity.

Discussion: What have you learned about prayer from Jesus?

19x times in the gospels we are told Jesus prayed. more than 25x in the brief gospel records we see the words "pray and prayer" associated with Jesus. What about Jesus' prayers distinguished Him from Hebrew religious leaders who prayed?

- a. Intimacy:** contrast relationship vs. religion and ritual. Jesus' prayers are fresh, not rote. He avoids vain repetitions (v. 6-7). Jesus prays as one who knows God intimately.
- b. Intensity:** Jesus' prayers are passionate, zealous, expressions of a heart that cries out to God. Jesus cleanses the temple and declares, "My house shall be called a house of prayer" (Matt. 21:13). God's people are called to be a house of prayer. In the garden of Gethsemane Jesus agonized in prayer until His sweat became like great drops of blood falling to the ground" (Luke 22:44). Jesus performed miracles without effort, but He agonized in prayer. Agony speaks of struggle, and Jesus prayed fervently without ceasing, straining in His appeal. And He continues His intense intercession before the throne (Heb. 7:25).

3. Tips for prayer (practical pointers for prayer):

- a. **Schedule a time(s) for prayer:** discover a rhythm of a time(s) that regularly work for you.
- b. **A place for prayer:** “When you pray go into your room ...” Jesus went to a solitary place to pray. Have a place that you associate with prayer.
- c. **Verbalize prayer:** “When you pray, say...” (Luke 11:2). God doesn’t need to hear us speak, but for our benefit and the benefit of others present it is helpful to articulate prayers. God knows need, before we even think about it, but speaking often gives us clarity.
- d. **Prayers can be simple:** don’t let someone else’s eloquence be a standard for your prayers. God is only concerned with your heart, not your vocabulary.
- e. **Expect God to speak:** Be prepared to listen to God as well as speak to Him (1Sam. 3)
- f. **Pray for attitudes and actions to align with God.**
- g. **Just do it!**

Discussion: What are some practical tips you have learned about prayer?

LIFEWOR

Pray this week and write a 1-page (3 paragraphs) report – what did you learn about: prayer, God, and self?

Lesson 2: Personal Bible Study

Intro.

Discussion: Why should we study the Bible?

1. Some reasons why Jesus' disciples need to learn the Bible:

- a. Essential to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus (2Pet. 3:18).
- b. Essential for spiritual maturity (Heb. 5:11-14).
- c. Essential for spiritual effectiveness (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

2. The example of Ezra:

Ezra 7:10 "Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord, and do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel."

- a. **Study:** Learn what the Bible declares and what it meant to the original audience.
- b. **Apply:** Consider relevant application to your culture and your own life.
- c. **Teach:** Share what you learn with others to grow and help them to grow as disciples.

3. The example of Joshua:

Joshua 1:8 "This book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success."

- a. **Meditate:** The Hebrew contemplates to chew like a cud. Contemplate and cultivate truth so that nutrition and flavor are extracted for edification and enjoyment.
- b. **Do it:** Learning truth and living truth promotes discipleship.
- c. **Success:** Promised blessings flow from learning and living God's truth.

4. Keys to personal bible study:

- a. **Consider why are you learning the Bible?** Learn to grow in Christlikeness rather than accomplishing task.
- b. **Establish Bible learning as a priority:**
 - i. Establish a schedule of daily/regular learning.
 - ii. Discipline yourself to guard your bible study time against interruptions.
 - iii. Consider a plan to learn the New and Old Testaments.

5. Some helpful tools:

- a. **Study Bibles:**
 - i. Wide margins for notes
 - ii. Subheadings: can be helpful to find info but can bias reader
 - iii. Cross references
 - iv. Concordance
 - v. Topical index
 - vi. Maps
- b. **Additional resources:**
 - i. Bible dictionary

- ii. Commentaries (e.g. Haley's Bible Handbook)
- iii. Online study sites (e.g. Blueletterbible.org)

6. How to study the Bible (Inductive Bible Study – Overview)

- a. **Observation:** what do I see?
- b. **Interpretation:** what does it mean?
- c. **Application:** how can I apply this to my life?

LIFEWOR

Read Joshua 1:1-9 and record only observations.

Lessons 3 & 4: Inductive Bible Study Method

Scripture: Joshua 1:1-9

Subject: (what is the theme of the passage?)

Objective: (how might God want His people to apply this passage?)

Note: perspective (forest v. trees, wide v. zoom angle)

Lifework: lesson 3 – observations and interpretation questions

Lifework: lesson 4 – interpretation and application

observation

interpretation

application

Teacher's note: lead the students through an inductive Bible study exercise using Josh 1:1-9 or any other text you choose. Consider having the students work in class as a group on the exercise

Sample: Josh1:1 observation and interpretation

After the death of Moses: how long after? Who is Moses?

The servant of the Lord: if Moses is the leader why is he called, "servant" ?

It came to pass that the Lord spoke to Joshua: how did God speak?

The son of Nun: who is Nun?

Moses assistant: how did Joshua assist Moses?

Module II: Worship

Lesson 5: Worship - Purpose and Person

1. Purpose: John 4:1-38

What is worship, and why should we worship? Worship is a life transformed by an intimate relationship with God. Worship is demonstrated in song, prayer, lifestyle, by individuals and an assembly, spontaneously and prearranged. Worship is the stirring by God's Spirit of our spirit, emotion and will. It is a response of the whole person to God.

True worship is a life characterized by devotion and allegiance to God.

The English word "worship" is derived from the Old English word "worthship" a word reflecting the worthiness of one receiving honor and devotion. Fundamentally, worship is about God, and for God. Worship is what God desires, and what He is worthy of. Our motive is to please God and glorify Him.

Discussion: (v.23) what are some things that are *not* true worship?

We go through life with a thirst that only God can satisfy. The relationship between this unquenchable thirst and the satisfaction of worshipping God, is seen in the account of Jesus' interaction with a Samaritan woman at the well as recorded in Jn. 4.

Characteristics of true worship:

a. satisfies:

i. us: living water: satisfies -> no thirst; v.28 woman left pot – content/satisfied.

ii. God: v.4 needed to go; v.23 God is seeking; v.32-4 satisfies Jesus.

The Greek term *proskuneo*, that we translate worship, can be defined as a kiss toward one in a token of reverence. True worship is a reverent kiss toward God. God desires, requires and is seeking that relationship.

b. Spiritual (23-4): Worship impacts emotion and intellect but is primarily a spiritual experience where worshipers seek to draw closer to God, and God enjoys community with His children.

c. Lifestyle (20-21): Worship is a lifestyle rather than a limited activity at a particular site.

d. Truth: (23-4) You need to know truth about God, and approach without hypocrisy.

e. Sin (15-18): Sin is an obstacle to worship, but as we say "no" to the flesh and "yes" to God we grow as worshipers.

f. Evangelism (35-38, Mt. 9-10): True worship attracts others to Jesus.

Discussion: how can your culture be an obstacle to true worship?

2. Person:

a. Who God is: What are the attributes or characteristics of God that you find worthy of worship?

note: We become like what we worship (Psalm 115:3-8).

Discussion: how might your knowledge of God impact your worship of Him?

b. Who you are:

i. Relationship issue: Worship is always personal. The Father seeks worshippers, not worship. God never separates worship from the worshipper. Worship is based on a relationship, not a ritual.

ii. Cloth issue: A desire to worship is manifest in different personalities (the type of cloth that you are cut from). Some are more demonstrative and they may seek to stand, kneel, weep, sing loudly, or raise their hands (1Tim. 2:8, Psalm 134:2). Others may be more reserved in their expression of worship.

iii. Context issue: Worship does not occur in a vacuum. We are real people, with real emotions, seeking to worship a real God. Circumstances impact your worship. Typically, it is much easier to praise God when you have just received a promotion than when you've just lost your job. In both instances we cry out to God, but in a completely different way.

The Psalms reveal human emotion expressed. David radiates with rejoicing in one song, and declares his despair in the next. I believe it is a blessing to see a full range of emotion expressed in worship. It is good to worship God with the emotions that we are experiencing today. Accordingly, we see that our worship to God is impacted by who we are generally, as well as who we are at any particular time.

LIFEWORK

Make a list of 25 or more reasons why God is worthy of worship.

Lesson 6: Worship - Preparation

1. Preparation

a. The need to prepare your heart (Gen. 4:1-6)

Theme: not all worship is acceptable to God

Cain: a farmer offered fruit of ground, Abel a rancher – offered firstborn of his flock to God. The LORD received Abel and his offering, but did not respect Cain and his. Why? Either it was the wrong offering, or the right offering with the wrong heart, or possibly the wrong offering and the wrong heart. Even before the provisions of the Mosaic law, we discover that not all worship is acceptable to God.

Perhaps it was the wrong offering, as the Mosaic system required the shedding of blood to provide a covering for sin; and the whole sacrificial system pointed to the ministry of Jesus. Since Abel offered an animal, and Cain offered produce, it might alert us that there was a problem with the offering. But, most likely it was the problem of the heart. Abel offered the firstborn of the flock, which shows that he was placing God in the place of priority, and giving God his best. God respected Abel and His offering, which shows that Abel offered with the right heart. For without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6).

Cain's heart was wrong, as shown by his response to God's correction. Cain was very angry and upset. God urged Cain that if he did well he would be accepted, but Cain refused, despite the urging and despite the warnings. Cain continued to refuse God, and he acted out in his anger and he killed his brother.

b. Price of preparation

Theme: real worship requires sacrifice

True worship comes with a price tag, the price of preparation. Warren Wiersbe asks, "Am I willing to pay the price in my own home and church so that I might have a worship experience that will please God, and accomplish His purpose in my life?"

King David understood that worship involved sacrifice (1 Chron.21:18-25): David had been guilty of self-reliance in numbering the people to determine the strength of his army, rather than relying upon God. God judged the nation for David's census, and David confessed his wrong to God and sought to intercede for the people. God restrained judgment, and instructed David to build an altar and worship.

King David comes to Ornan and requests to buy the threshing floor at full price. Ornan graciously offers to give the property to the king along with his livestock and wheat as a sacrificial offering, and the wooden implements for the fire. The threshing floor was a valuable piece of property near the top of Mount Moriah. There, the warm winds would rise up the mountain, and the grain would be tossed up into the air and the winds would separate the chaff from the good grain. Yet, David declines the generous offer, and insists on paying full price. David says, "I will not take what is yours for the Lord, nor offer burnt offerings with that which costs me nothing." David understood that true worship involves sacrifice, and he was willing to pay the price. Saying "yes" to God often requires us to say "no" to our own desires, and this is the price tag of preparation.

David's life reveals several shortcomings, but David is without doubt a true worshipper. Remarkably, despite some horrific lapses, God consistently speaks of David in a favorable tone, because David was a man after God's own heart (1 Sam. 13:14). God recognizes the heart of a true worshiper, one that is willing to pay the price of preparation. So David was recognized as the "Sweet psalmist of Israel" [2 Sam. 23:1]. Many of the psalms in the Book of Psalms were penned by David; and are psalms of rejoicing, psalms of lament, psalms of confession, and psalms of adoration. These are the expressions that can be described as the dividends of paying the price of preparation.

c. The benefits of preparation

As David came to the threshing floor, he had merely been instructed to build an altar there. David had not been told that he needed to purchase the land. Yet, David desires to obtain the land and dedicate the property to God; and David desires to pay the price. David is not looking to make a sharp real estate investment, but he is investing in eternal things. The payment of the price of preparation will always pay tremendous dividends sometimes in ways that we don't anticipate. Worship links us with present worshipers, past and future worshipers, and most importantly with Jesus

Consider the significance of this threshing floor in the spiritual life of Israel. It was at the sight of the threshing floor that God restrained His punishment during David's lifetime. Furthermore, this site is located on the same ridge where Abraham ascended with Isaac to worship the Lord. Abraham demonstrated the depth of his love for God there (Gen. 22). Abraham prepared to ascend that mountain with his son, and demonstrate his devotion to God even if it meant giving God his son. Yet Abraham's confidence and love for God are seen in his parting words to his servants. This passage is the first time that we see the terms "love" and "worship" used in the Bible. God had promised descendants to Abraham through Isaac, and they had not yet been born. Abraham believed God's promise and was confident that he and Isaac would both return. Abraham realized that God did not want his son as a human sacrifice, as much as he wanted Abraham's heart as a better sacrifice of worship. Nevertheless, Abraham was prepared to pay the price to demonstrate his devotion with action.

The threshing floor later became the location of the Temple (2 Chron. 3:1), and became the center of worship of the Hebrew people. The ridge where the threshing floor was located would also later be the site where Jesus would be crucified. The principle is that David reaped tremendous dividends in ways that he could not have foreseen. The moral of the story is that if we are willing to pay the price of preparation there will be an abundant harvest of fruitful worship.

Discussion: what are some other benefits you've discovered of paying the price of preparation?

LIFEWOR

Make a list of ways that you have made sacrifices to worship God in the last year. Describe how you would like to make sacrifices of your time, talent, and treasure in this coming season of your life.

Lesson 7: Worship – Passion and Power

1. Passion: Matt. 26:6-13

“There are two great **passions** in the universe: God’s passion to be glorified and man’s passion to be satisfied. However, these two do not need to be in conflict. They can come to simultaneous fulfillment in worship, because God is most glorified in me when I am most satisfied in Him alone.” [John Piper]

There are typically 3 attitudes in response to God: wrath, worship, waste.

a. Wrath: Mt. 26:1-5 – The religious leaders’ hostile opposition to Jesus

b. Worship: Matt. 26:6-13, Mary, the sister of Lazarus and Martha. In considering Mary’s anointing of Jesus in preparation for His burial we discover six keys to passionate worship:

- i. **Ministers to Jesus:** In verse 10, Jesus observed that what Mary had done was a good work for Him. Passionate worship always seeks to minister to the Lord (Acts 13:2).
- ii. **Involves voluntary costly sacrifice:** Jn.12:3 - very costly; Jn.12:5 - 300 denarii (a typical worker’s annual salary). Mary poured out the costly oil as a sacrifice to Jesus. She volunteered to worship Jesus without having to be compelled, because she loved her Lord. Similarly, we saw how David made a costly voluntary sacrifice to purchase the threshing floor of Araunah (aka Ornan) (2Sam. 24).
- iii. **Requires breaking:** Passionate worship involves breaking. Mary had to break the alabaster flask to pour out the costly oil (Mk. 12:3). Similarly, the Holy Spirit that God imparts to believers cannot pour out until we humble ourselves and break before Him.
- iv. **Extravagant:** As Mary poured out the costly oil she was extravagant in her worship. Mk. 12:3 anointed head, Jn.12:3 anointed feet and wiped His feet with her hair (i.e. head to toe). Passionate worshippers delight to be extravagant. King David displayed extravagant worship when the ark was being transported to Jerusalem. David danced before the Lord with all his might. The Scriptures tell us that David was dancing in a linen ephod. Essentially, David was dancing in his undergarments (2Sam. 6:14).
- v. **Gives our best:** Mary gave Jesus her very best. The costly oil was precious, and Mary was likely saving it for her wedding day.
- vi. **Fills the house with fragrance:** John tells us that the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil (Jn. 12:3). Not only did the perfumed oil provide the pleasant aroma, but it also removed unpleasant odors. Finally, the same aroma that was upon Jesus was upon Mary – true worship!

c. Waste: the attitude of indifference - Judas and the disciples: the attitude that assumes worship is a waste quenches the God-given passion to worship Him. To the contrary, true worship and sacrifice to God is never waste.

Contagious: worship in community is contagious whether passionate or quenching. Unfortunately, the cry from Judas (Jn. 12:4), that Mary’s worship was waste, was contagious. Soon other disciples echoed in agreement (v.8).

How you can know if your attitude is passionate or waste (3 tests):

Combustion: disciples on the road to Emmaus, their **hearts burned** as they heard Jesus teach and understood His words (Luke 24:13-35). A fire in the physical realm needs three elements for combustion: heat, oxygen, fuel. Heat= believing hearts, oxygen= work of HS, fuel=Word of God.

Consumption: Passionate worship is demonstrated when zeal for God “eats us up” (John 2:13-18). Charles **Wesley** wrote over six thousand praise songs or hymns in a period of approximately fifty years. As he approached the first anniversary of his faith he wrote, “O for a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer’s praise.” Wesley was not looking for a thousand people to praise God rather he wanted a thousand tongues of his own to praise God. This is a picture of consuming worship.

Compulsion: Sometimes we are so moved in our lives that we are compelled to respond despite a natural desire to restrain ourselves.

2. Power

2Tim. 3:1-5

a. The problem: spirituality without worship of God

In Paul’s second letter to Timothy, a young pastor, he warned that in the days before Jesus’ return there would be troubled times and troubled people. Paul explained that one of the characteristics of the times would be that people would have a form of godliness but deny its power. In other words, there would be “spiritual people” believing in many different philosophies, as well as professing Christians, who lack the power for godliness. People can go through the motions of going to church and singing, but in effect they are playing church.

b. What’s the power?

The power for godliness is made available to us through the Holy Spirit. Without the Spirit there is nothing pleasing to God and there is no power. The power of God is manifest in worship by the Spirit of God. The power is made available to please God, defeat the enemy, and deliver God’s people.

In places of worship throughout the world today there are worshippers with power, and there are unfortunately people with a form of godliness but lacking the power. Similarly, in churches throughout the world today there are congregations of people who worship God in power and some that lack the power. People can come to church and sing songs during a church worship service, but never experience the power of God in worship that produces Christlikeness.

c. Is it real or a counterfeit?

On the other hand, when the power of God is manifest, there is an awareness of entering the presence of God, and lives are changed. The resulting fruit is Christ-like character, or godliness (Gal. 5:22-23). Transformed lives reveal the power.

d. The problem of counterfeits:

Paul warned Timothy that the people who had a form of godliness, but denied its power, resisted or opposed the truth as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses. Who are Jannes and Jambres, and how did they resist Moses? And what does their opposition have to do with the power of God and worship?

Jannes and Jambres are presumed to be magicians of Pharaoh's court at the time of the Exodus. In Exodus 5:1 we read that Moses and his brother Aaron went to Pharaoh and said, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.'" God wants His people to be free to worship Him.

Pharaoh solicited his magicians to oppose God, and keep the Hebrews in bondage. As Moses and Aaron spoke to Pharaoh, Aaron threw down his rod and it turned into a serpent. When Pharaoh's magicians appeared to demonstrate equal power and their rods turned into serpents, Aaron's rod swallowed up the magicians' rods.

Then the power of God was manifest as the plagues were visited upon Egypt. As the plagues of blood and frogs were manifest, Pharaoh's magicians seemed to duplicate this power. But when the plague of lice and the remaining plagues were poured out, the magicians were unable to demonstrate or imitate the power. God's power was manifest, the enemy was defeated, and God's people were delivered and set free to worship Him.

How did the magicians seem to duplicate the power of God? Either they were simply magicians' tricks or they were displaying demonic power. In either scenario, **the key principle is that the opposition to the power of God was to produce a counterfeit or imitation of the power of God.** The enemy of men's souls continues to oppose worship of God by offering a counterfeit or imitation that appears to be real but lacks the power of God. For example, people can be moved by emotion at a ballgame, concert, or at church but it may not be the power of God. Emotions can't produce life transformation apart from the power of God.

Nevertheless, in the Exodus, God's power was manifest and ultimately was clearly distinguishable from the imitation. Similarly, Paul encouraged Timothy that as the magicians' imitation was exposed, so too the form of godliness that lacked the true power of God would be manifest (2 Tim. 3:1-9). Ultimately, God's power is distinguished from the counterfeit.

LIFEWOR

Make a list of ways that you have experienced change/transformation in your spiritual life in the last year.

Lesson 8: Worship – Praise and Participation

1. Praise

a. Why should you praise God? We learn that praising God is reasonable. We praise God for who He is (adoration) and we praise God for what He does (thanksgiving) (Psalm 150:1-6).

i. Required: all of God's creation that has breath, especially mankind, is called to praise the Lord. The Hebrew word *nesemah* denotes all living creatures that are given life by the creator, but in particular mankind. The angelic host of heaven, the birds of the air, the roaring lion, and His people are to praise Him.

ii. Reasonable: praise is a reasonable reaction to who God is and what He does. It does not surprise me to see God's people respond in praise. What is remarkable is the lack of praise offered by God's people. We of all people have reason to praise God because we understand who God is, and we should appreciate what He has done for us.

b. How to praise: distinguish biblical principles from subjective tastes.

Praise and worship involve subjective expectations as well as objective aspects. Sometimes when we consider our attitudes and actions in regard to praise as an assembly we confuse our subjective standards as being God's standards.

i. Message: Christian music should be distinguished from secular music by the content of the message. The fundamental test is, "Does the message of the lyrics bring glory to God?" The message of the song should strengthen our relationship with God. The words must help us to focus on God, and our relationship with Him. The book of Psalms contains songs focused on who God is, as well as songs that focus on our relationship with Him. But the message, and not the music, is primary.

ii. Music: is expressed in a variety of styles. Some believe that praise music is best expressed in A-cappella music. This is a Latin term meaning according to chapel, and refers to music or song without instrumental accompaniment. This style is presented in choral singing. Others believe that a piano or organ is the best way to praise. Still others believe that only acoustic instruments are the best way. Some believe electric instruments are the best.

Unfortunately, we tend to utilize our subjective bias and prejudice as a standard rather than letting God's word be the measuring rod. As we explore the Bible, we will discover that instruments, volume, tempo and rhythm are not obstacles to praising God.

The Scriptures show us that God can be praised with loud instruments such as percussion, horns and trumpets, as well as a variety of stringed instruments of varying volumes. God is praised with a variety of instruments including the voice. Similarly, the nature of the instruments, along with the lyrical theme, suggests a variety of tempos. For example, a song of lament and a song of exaltation may be suited to different instruments and tempos.

When we consider the music of praise, and our desire to worship, many of us have become comfortable with our particular style of music. We become resistant to change, and our praise and worship is hindered.

Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun (Ethan) were worship leaders under David's authority, and David was under God's authority. Therefore, God was to be the One directing worship. Asaph led a choir of singers and musicians at Jerusalem. Heman and Ethan had similar teams at the tabernacle at Gibeon (1Chron. 16:4-42). These choirs had 4000 members; 288 were trained musicians who directed the lesser-skilled musicians (1 Chronicles 23:5; 25:7-8). The musicians were divided into 24 courses or teams, each containing 12 skilled musicians. The worship teams consisted of musicians who played stringed instruments and cymbals to accompany the singers (1 Chron. 15:19-21).

As we consider the scene we realize that there are 24 teams, and there are musicians and singers of varying levels of ability. Presumably, there was at least a slightly different style as each team led worship. What is the likelihood that the people had favorite worship leaders? It is not too difficult to imagine the scene where two worshippers are comparing different worship teams and leaders; *"I sure like when Asaph leads worship instead of Ethan. He uses too many cymbals. I wish Asaph led worship all the time."*

People are going to favor one worship leader or team over another. There is nothing wrong with having a particular style of worship that we like the best. Nor is there anything wrong with having a favorite worship leader. But the problem is when we find it difficult to praise God beyond a narrow range of music style. The answer to this situation is to be willing learn to worship God in a wider variety of musical styles. We need to be willing to learn and willing to change. If we continue to rigidly cling to one style of music we tend to inhibit growth. And we tend to put God in a box, because we limit the musical style of worship despite God's liberty in this area.

iii. Modern: there is a tension between modern and traditional. In the 1960's and 1970's, contemporary Christian music became popular in places like Calvary Chapel and the Vineyard. Soon thereafter, contemporary Christian music spread through the country. The musical style was often folk or rock. The style was distinct from, and in conflict with, traditional hymns sung by choirs. A conflict between the modern and the traditional was stretching the fabric of unity. Change is frequently accompanied by tension.

Previously, the hymns had been the cause of conflict as the agent of modern change. The hymns were the contemporary form of worship as the traditional Gregorian chants were being replaced. Martin Luther and the Reformation were criticized as they introduced 16th century contemporary praise to the church.

The music of the 70's generation is now seen by some as outdated, ancient, and a relic of a bygone era. The next generation has its own music, and expression of worship and praise. It is never comfortable to discover that what was your cutting edge music is now being played in elevators. Similarly, those seeking to worship on the edge are afraid of contaminating the mix with a fossil. Accordingly, a tension exists between the heritage of the past and the needs of the present.

Jesus warned us of the need to remain flexible: a church that rejects any modern expression of praise has likely become inflexible. When contemporary or modern worship is typically frowned upon and viewed as, "Not really being worship" there is a yellow warning flag. We need to

remember that it is the message that generally distinguishes praise and worship from secular music. This allows for a great deal of flexibility in the musical expression of the message. The general rejection of the modern is an indicator of a strangle-hold on the past as being God's "true expression of praise." This grip on the past chokes out the potential life of the present. Furthermore, the position mischaracterizes God. Although God never changes, the expression of worship by succeeding generations exercising their liberty in Christ does. When we refuse to allow for this liberty, we end up putting God in a box and mischaracterizing Him.

On the other end of the spectrum, there is a danger in rejecting the traditional as being antiquated and obsolete. There is so much to be gleaned from the awesome expression of worship that has ministered to successive generations literally through the centuries. Flexibility allows us the wisdom to hold onto elements of the traditional while embracing the modern.

The model of appreciating the value of both the new and the old is also seen specifically in the context of worship. The Scriptures show us that there are new and old songs in heaven: Rev. 15:3 *They sing the song of Moses*; Rev. 5:9 *And they sang a new song*. Here, we see the song of Moses being sung in heaven. The song of Moses is the earliest recorded song in the Bible. Not only do they sing the classics in heaven, but the Bible shows us that they also sing the new.

2. Participation: If worship were a sport, would it best be a spectator sport or a participatory sport? Many of us have failed to consider how we approach worship from a philosophical standpoint.

a. Do we consider worship to be something that we participate in, or do we consider it profitable and sufficient to simply observe? Assuming that we come to church to experience God, rather than to see a worship team, it appears necessary to participate. Worship is not entertainment, it is not a performance, and it is not a spectator event. If we want our lives to be transformed by an intimate relationship with God, and we want to be worshippers, we need to participate. Participating in worship helps us to learn to worship. We learn more by doing than by watching.

b. Pattern:

Heavenly scenes described in the Bible: Whenever believers are seen in heaven, music and singing and worship are always present (Rev. 19:1-6). Furthermore, it appears that the only pictures of heaven where worship is not depicted involve the presence of Satan (see, Job 1:6-2:10; Zechariah 3:1-5) or foretell God's coming judgment (Ezekiel 1:4-28). The pattern reveals that God's people spend eternity with God praising and worshipping Him. It is interesting to me that we never see believers in heaven who are not worshipping.

For example, in John's descriptions of the heavenly scenes, we appreciate that John is an observer who is recording what he sees. John is not worshipping as such, but is providing a report of what God is revealing. But John does not observe anyone standing on the sidelines who is not worshipping. In other words, we do not see John describe that he saw thousands of thousands worshipping God, and he also saw fifty people on the sideline watching them. Effectively, all of God's people are participating in worship.

Sacrificial system: Per the Mosaic Law, we see that not only were sacrifices made for the people as an assembly, but each individual member of the congregation had to offer sacrifices. It is a pattern for worship that each believer participates.

c. Purposes:

Unity. Unity in the Body of Christ blesses God, and is His desire for His church as seen in Jesus' prayer in the Upper Room (John 17:20-21).

Motivation. The author of the Book of Hebrews reminds us not to forsake assembling together, because it stirs up love, good works, and exhortation (**Heb. 10:23-25**).

d. Prepare: there is a connection between worship and being prepared to receive from God, and to respond to God. Jesus and the disciples participate in the Passover feast or meal. We refer to this meal as The Last Supper or The Lord's Supper. During the course of the meal the participants would sing from the hallel or praise psalms (Mk. 14).

Near the end of the meal we are told, "When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives" (Mark 14:26). The fact that they sang a hymn is not incidental. The Passover psalms concluded with the singing of The Great Hallel, Psalm 136. This psalm repeats twenty-six times that we are to "Give thanks to the Lord for He is good! His love/mercy endures forever." There is an apparent irony that Jesus is singing this song as He prepares to be crucified to pay the price for mankind's sin. Nevertheless, Jesus is preparing by participating in worship. It is as we worship God that we can receive from God, and respond to Him.

LIFEWORCK

1. What has God done in your life in the past year that is worthy of praise?
2. What are some of the reasons why some people find it difficult to praise God in song?
3. What is your favorite praise song, and why?
4. What do you believe that song says about you as a worshipper?

Module III: Servant Leadership

Lesson 9: Servant Leadership – Example of Jesus

Matthew 20:20-28: What are some of the right attitudes about serving? What are some of the wrong attitudes about serving?

Subject: Serving and leading

Object: Be a servant leader

1. Basis of serving:

a. True greatness is discovered in serving (20-21): Jesus told us that true greatness is in serving. Yet in serving, like so many areas of our spiritual lives, the right attitude is essential. In our text we see that the mother of James and John approaches Jesus, and kneels before Him in respect. She is likely the Lord's aunt, and she has a favor to ask. She is seeking positions or places of honor and authority for her sons. Jesus was approaching Jerusalem, and there was a sense of anticipation that He was going to establish His kingdom at that time. The boys likely sent their mother as their ambassador to help secure the positions (Mark 10:35).

i. There is nothing wrong with ambition for greatness, but the means is serving others as we serve God. The way to the top is the bottom, and the path is humble service.

b. Being a servant involves hardship (21-23): Jesus inquired whether the brothers could partake of the cup that Jesus was about to partake. The brothers quickly affirmed that they were in fact able, but they did not truly appreciate that being a servant involves hardship. As a matter of fact, in the case of the brothers, James experienced a martyr's death, and John experienced a martyr's life. Jesus then explained that the Father would grant positions for those He had prepared. It is good to know that the Father is preparing us to fill the positions He has prepared for us. Yet the method of preparation may be unexpected and contrary to the corporate world's paradigm.

c. Striving for position threatens unity (24): The other disciples were extremely upset about the situation. Gayle Erwin wonders whether the ten were upset with James and John for approaching Jesus along with their mother and seeking positions of prominence; or whether they were upset for not thinking of the plan first.

d. Jesus' example (25-28): Jesus turns the model for greatness upside down, or truly right side up. The Master explains that true greatness comes from serving. Unlike those who don't know the Lord and seek to abuse authority, we will achieve greatness in humble service to Him and others. When God refers to Messiah, He calls him "My servant." To God, this is the pinnacle. How different from the world's notions of climbing the corporate ladder and seeking titles and name recognition.

This is Jesus' example to us. He came to serve rather than to be served, and to give His life for us. He who has every right to expect to be served by us shows that He came to serve (Mk. 10:44-45, John 13, Philippians 2). Essentially, God's glory is seen in sacrificial loving service.

e. A test of attitude: One of the great tests of our attitude toward serving others is how we respond when we are treated as servants. A servant in the context of the Roman Empire had little expectation of receiving applause, acknowledgement, or recognition for doing his job. He simply sought to please the master. Unfortunately, we often approach serving God seeking recognition, acknowledgement, or applause from people. Frequently we are unaware of this issue. As servants, our goal is to please our Master. What might motivate us to serve God in this way?

What benefits have you experienced in serving God by serving others?

2. Benefits of serving: Consider some of the following reasons to serve God:

- a. Greatness:** In Matthew 20, Jesus explains that true greatness is found in serving. Jesus never discourages a desire for greatness but explains that the means is serving.
- b. Gain:** In The Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 6:1-4), Jesus explained that deeds of service done with the right attitude shall be rewarded by God. We can serve God with confidence that God sees, remembers, and will reward.
- c. Giving:** Jesus taught that it is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35). It is often difficult for us to appreciate that we will be happier when we serve God and others than when we seek to be served. The realization that when we give we get to be blessed is a compelling motive to serve.
- d. Gifts:** God has given all believers spiritual gifts to build up the body of Christ as well as the individual believer (1Cor, 12). When we use our gifts to serve others, we discover that the body, as well as us as individuals, are edified.
- e. Growth:** Those who serve God grow in spiritual maturity. Consider Joseph, Moses, Joshua, David, the Twelve, Stephen, Philip, or the Apostle Paul. We all grow when we serve with the right heart.
- f. Getting out of self:** One of the benefits of serving others is that it provides a perspective that helps us to get out of ourselves. We can become depressed and discouraged as we spend too much time focused on our perceived difficulties. When we serve others it helps us to get out of ourselves and see more clearly God's view.

LIFEWOR

In what ways have you served in ministry in a local church or para-church (e.g. pregnancy center, rescue mission) ministry? Describe some of the benefits you have experienced in serving.

Lesson 10: Servant Leadership – People God Uses

Judges 11:1-3 - What are some of the characteristics of people that God uses to do His work?

Who are the people that God uses to accomplish His work? Are they the elite of society, the cream of the crop, or the likely heroes? Often it appears that God uses the least likely candidates to perform great works. The apostles were untrained, uneducated, and unimpressive to their society. They were seemingly unlikely candidates to be used by God. Yet they turned the world right-side up because they had been with Jesus. Accordingly, God received all the glory when the apostles fulfilled their ministry. That is the way God wants it, He will not share His glory with man.

When you consider the unlikely people that God uses, one of the least likely candidates is Jephthah, a man God used to deliver the Hebrews during the time of the Judges.

Subject: people God uses

Object: be a person God uses

Outline:

1. Disqualification
2. Desperation
3. Dispute
4. Dependence
5. Dedication

1. Disqualification: Jephthah's name means "He will open," but in his life it appears that many doors were closed. He is described as a mighty man of valor. He would certainly appear qualified as a military man and a man of great courage. But we are told that he was the son of a harlot. This became a major disqualifier. When his father's wife's sons grew up, they drove Jephthah away and sought to keep him from claiming any right to the family name or inheritance.

The religious leaders sought to disqualify Jesus from His rightful role as Messiah by questioning the circumstances surrounding His birth. Rather than receiving Him as the fulfillment of the prophecy of the virgin birth, they accused Him of being born of fornication (John 8:41). Therefore, Jesus, like Jephthah, was disqualified because of His past.

a. People are frequently disqualified by others because of their past. Sometimes it relates to something they have no control over, such as their gender, their race, or their physical appearance. Other times it is related to events that they have had control over. For example, God disqualifies some as a result of life-dominating sin issues such as adultery, drug/alcohol abuse, or pornography.

So Jephthah fled from his brothers and gathered a group of fighting men, who were also disqualified, and they went out raiding. These men, like David's mighty men of valor, were likely in debt, distress and were discontented. Despite being disqualified they displayed strength. These men that the world considered worthless demonstrated that if nothing else they were qualified to fight.

Despite being disqualified by others God delights to qualify us. We can be encouraged knowing that God can use us and is able to qualify us to bring glory to Him.

2. Desperate: Judges 11:4-11

a. Great leaders and people that God uses are often born out of desperate times. In Jephthah's case, it was the attack by the Ammonites against Israel. So the elders of Gilead, Jephthah's hometown, came to him and asked him to be their commander to fight against the Ammonites. Jephthah reminds them that he had been run out of town before, now they are asking him to be their leader, and it doesn't seem to make sense. Jephthah asks, "If you take me back home to fight against the people of Ammon, and the LORD delivers them to me, shall I be your head?" And the men of Israel assent; and Jephthah went with them.

Before considering the application regarding the people that God uses, we need to consider the picture of the ministry of Jesus. Jesus was rejected by His brothers and scorned regarding the circumstances surrounding His birth. Like Jephthah, Jesus was rejected at the first opportunity, but his people will cry out for him to come a second time and deliver them. And the whole of Israel will call upon the Messiah in the midst of their desperation during the Great Tribulation (Zechariah 11-13). Then they will affirm to make Jesus their Lord. Like Jephthah, Jesus not only wants to be our Savior, but He desires to be the Lord of our life. Just as Israel as a whole will call upon Jesus in their desperation, individuals have called upon Jesus in their desperation for more than two thousand years. In our desperation we cry for a savior; and Jesus asks, "If I deliver you, shall I also be your head?"

The people of Israel saw a need for Jephthah, and they no longer saw him as disqualified, so they approached him. In their desperation, they looked to one that they had previously determined was disqualified. They no longer saw his weakness but his strength. We can easily see the desperation of Israel, and why they would come to Jephthah. But it may be more difficult to see why Jephthah would agree to defend the people who had driven him from his home and risk his life in battle for them.

Here is the ironic twist: Jephthah was just as desperate as the people of Israel. Jephthah was called by God to a ministry to deliver the Hebrews from their enemies. In Jephthah's desperation to fulfill his calling, he is willing to go forward despite the sacrifice and risk. This is one of the primary factors characteristic of the people that God uses. They are desperate to fulfill their calling.

3. Dispute (12-28): People that God uses learn that the dispute with the enemy is a fight between the enemy and God, not a fight between the people that God uses and the enemy alone. Jephthah sends messengers to the Ammonites and frames the nature of the dispute as a battle between the Ammonites and God. Jephthah provides a history lesson to remind the Ammonites of Israel's claim to the land because God had given the land to them. Three times Jephthah emphasizes that it has been the LORD God of Israel who has given the land to the Hebrews, and the dispute is against the Lord (v.21,23,24).

David understood this principle. David realized that he was not the one fighting Goliath, but that the giant's dispute was with the Lord. David understood that although the giant was a champion, clad in armor and wielding fierce weapons, David came in the authority of God. Goliath was not disputing with David or the army of Israel but had defied the God of Israel.

David was confident that God would deliver him from his enemy so that all would know that there was a God in Israel (1Sam. 17).

People that God delights to use have learned to consider whether the conflicts and disputes that arise may in fact be a conflict with God. Sometimes we have behaved inappropriately so as to create a conflict. But other times, the conflict simply arises from a dispute with God. For example, a pastor needs to communicate the truth of the gospel that there is only one way to God and that is through His Son, Jesus. A person may be offended by the manner that this truth is communicated, or it is the message itself that offends. In other words, someone might say, "You are so narrow minded to think that your religion is better than someone else's beliefs and that your way is the only way to God." Really, the dispute is not with the messenger but with the author of the message, God.

4. Dependence (29-30): God delights to use people that are willing to depend upon Him to give them victory. When the dispute elevated to war, Jephthah relied upon God, and gave the glory to God for the victory. Four times Jephthah declared that the victory was caused by God (9,23,27,12:3). The Spirit of the Lord came upon him (v.29). Whenever we are yielded to God and His Spirit we choose to depend upon Him rather than our own strength.

God used Gideon to defeat the Midianites because Gideon was a man who was willing to depend on God. God reduced Gideon's army to only three hundred against an army of over one hundred thousand. Therefore, Gideon had to rely upon God and when God brought the victory, He got all the glory.

George Mueller was a man used by God to establish orphanages. He learned to fully depend upon God. When there was no food available and the cupboards were bare, he would gather the children to prayer and to give thanks to God for their food. Miraculously, food would be delivered to the door, and the children would be fed. God can use a man who depends on Him because God is dependable.

5. Dedication (30-40): God loves to use people who desire to dedicate themselves to Him. Jephthah made a vow to the Lord that if God delivered the people of Ammon into his hands, then Jephthah would offer God whatever came out of the doors of his house to meet him when he returned in peace. The Mosaic Law prohibited human sacrifice (Deut. 18:9-10). Jephthah was not intending a human sacrifice but was intending to demonstrate the extent of his dedication to God.

In Genesis 22, God tested the extent of Abraham's dedication when he sought to discover whether Abraham would be willing to give God his son Isaac, his only son. God never wanted Isaac as a sacrifice, but He wanted Abraham's heart. Abraham proved the extent of his dedication when he was willing to give his son, Isaac.

When Jephthah comes to his house, he is greeted by his daughter, his only child. Jephthah mourns with great sorrow because of his vow to God. He states, "I have given my word to the LORD, and I cannot go back on it" [v.35]. Literally the Hebrew declares "opened my mouth." Jephthah's name means "He will open." Perhaps God opened Jephthah's mouth, and he vowed to dedicate unto God what later was revealed to be his only child. There can be no greater sacrifice to God.

Rather than offering his daughter as a human sacrifice, it appears that Jephthah was dedicating his daughter to God as a perpetual virgin. In a similar sense Hannah made a vow to dedicate her son to the Lord if God would bless her with a male child. When God blessed Hannah with a son, Samuel, she did in fact dedicate her son to serve God. Perhaps it was an unwise vow to make to God, but it certainly reveals his dedication to God. Furthermore, it is commendable that his daughter sought to honor the vow her father had made to God. Jephthah's life had instilled in his daughter a desire to dedicate her own life to God.

Jephthah likely struggled at the decision to dedicate his only child to God. Perhaps he feared that there would be no one to continue the family line and he would soon be forgotten. But God saw fit to include Jephthah in the Hall of Faith (Heb. 11:3) so that his name would not be forgotten. Jephthah's dedication to God made him the kind of man that God delights to use.

God desires to use people who are dedicated to Him so that He can demonstrate His glory. He is actually looking for those people: "For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of *those* whose heart *is* loyal to Him" (2 Chron. 16:9). So who are the people that God uses for ministry? They are people who may have been disqualified by the world but qualified by God. They are people who are desperate to fulfill their calling. They are people who recognize that certain disputes are between people and God. Finally, they are people who depend on God and are dedicated to Him. Ideally, they are people like you and me.

LIFEWOR

1. What characteristics do you have that make you a person God can use?
2. Describe a time in your life when you were desperate to serve.
3. How can God's qualifying of you, after you were seemingly disqualified by others, bring comfort and build up another?

Lesson 11: Servant Leadership – Triumph in Trials

A new covenant ministry: 2 Cor. 2:14-4:16

What circumstances might make people in ministry lose heart?

What are some of your dreams and expectations in ministry?

What struggles do you expect in ministry?

Subject: A New Testament Ministry (Overcoming struggles in ministry).

Object: Triumph in trials

outline:

1. Remain grateful
2. Be Christ-sufficient
3. Characteristics of New Testament ministry
4. How to have a New Testament ministry

1. Remain grateful (2:14-16) theme: attitude of gratitude

v.14-Thanks be to God

1 Cor. 15:57 thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Phil. 4:6, 1Th 5:18 give thanks in everything

Ac.16: Paul and Silas in Philippian jail praising God.

v.15-16 In Rome, procession after a victorious battle, through Rome to temple. To the prisoners, the smell of incense was the aroma of death, but to Romans it was the aroma of victory.

v.16 Who is sufficient? Feeling inadequate for the task of representing God, we can experience frustration, anger, discouragement, disappointment, distress and even depression.

2. Be Christ sufficient [3:4-6] theme: don't be self-sufficient, but God sufficient.

3:4-5 self-sufficient is contrast with Christ sufficient: we are to be Christ sufficient.

v.6 answers the question in 2:16, "Who is sufficient?" He who has a NT ministry.

A covenant is an agreement. There are two kinds: 1. Where two parties bargain and make a deal; 2. where 1 person sets the terms, and other either accepts or rejects the terms [e.g. testament or will]. Here, God has established the terms, but the problem is we want to set terms. We want God to bless our plan or expectations rather than us yielding to His.

The Covenant is **new: kainos** new re quality or nature, not merely "new" in sense of time. The Old covenant/testament refers to the Mosaic law, but the law leads to death (James 2:10). The purpose of the Law is to show us we are sinners who need a Savior, not to make us right with God.

The Old Testament [OT] focuses on religious observation [man's works], and is contrast with the New Testament [NT] that focuses on God's grace through faith [Christ's work].

Note: Jer. 31:31, the promise of a New Covenant is given to the Jews, but we who believe in Christ receive the benefits of the covenant. The symbol of the New Covenant is the Lord's blood (1Cor.11:25).

3. Characteristics of New Covenant Ministry [3:6-9]

1. **Spiritual:** law says “do” but the Spirit says “done.” Law shows our need for Christ.
2. **Spirit gives life**
3. **Instead of condemnation, gives righteousness (9)**
4. **We are to share the message of grace, “You are accepted in Christ.”**

4. How to have a New Covenant ministry

4:1 this ministry: New Covenant ministry [3:6]

1. **4:1 don’t lose heart:** one of Satan’s primary tools to render us inoperative is discouragement
2. **4:2 don’t compromise the Word:** teach the truth, don’t manipulate, strive, shame, or use guilt to motivate.
3. **4:3-9 let the light out:** earthen vessels, clay pots: we are cheap pots, it is what’s inside that is what’s important, the light of the good news about Jesus. Paul moves from the metaphor of “aroma” to “light” [5 times in these verses]

How does the light get out?

a. Pour it out

b. Comes out when pitcher is bumped (v.8-9)

c. Pot may be broken: God will humble us. Gideon torches in pitchers, when vessels broken, light shines

4. 4:10-14 need to be crucified (Gal.2:20-21): our trials result in Christ-likeness

5. The results of a new Covenant Ministry (v. 15-16): grace, glory to God, gratitude. Therefore, “don’t lose heart!”

Lesson 12: Servant Leadership – Ministering to the Lord

Acts 13:1-5

intro. Ministering to God is the duty of all believers.

What are some dangers of being focused on the ministry more than Jesus?

Subject: Ministering to the Lord.

Object: Serve God with the right motive.

1. What does it mean to minister to God?

The church at Antioch *ministered* to the Lord. Sometimes the term is translated *worshipped*. The term is a picture of the service to God performed by the Old Testament priests in the Tabernacle and Temple. At Antioch, ministering to the Lord was characterized by: prayer, fasting, and seeking to hear from God through the prophets and teachers.

a. N.T. examples of *liturgeo* (English – liturgy)

i. **Service at house of worship** - Lu.1:23- Zecharias priest and father of John the Baptist;

ii. **Spirit-prompted giving** – 2Cor. 9:12, Rom. 15:27

iii. **Sacrificial service** - Phil. 2:17

iv. **More excellent ministry of the new High Priest and New Testament Heb.8:6**

Why is it more excellent? 3 reasons:

- Better covenant (grace v. law)
- Better promises (eternal relationship with God v. Promised Land)
- Better motive (love v. fear)

b. We can't minister to people until we minister to the Lord. When we minister to people we are ministering to the Lord, but this is to be the result of first ministering to the Lord. We cannot deliver to others until it has first been delivered to us from Him (1Cor. 15:3). Before going out on missionary efforts and before evangelism, they ministered to the Lord.

c. The church exists primarily to worship (minister to) the Lord. Although the study of the Word and evangelism are essential roles of the church, our purpose is to worship and appreciate God. The chief activity of heaven is worship (Rev. 4). We are to become worshipers more than merely students.

Being with Jesus comes first, then we serve Jesus by serving others.

Martha rebuked her sister, Mary, for not serving the Lord. Jesus corrected Martha for exalting working for the Lord above worshiping the Lord. Mary sought to sit at the feet of Jesus and receive from Him, and this ministered to the Lord more than any act of service that she could do (Lu. 10:38).

d. As we minister to God, He guides and directs our lives or ministers to us.

The church at Antioch sought to deny the flesh and feed the spirit as they prayed and fasted. They were seeking the Lord, and they sought to minister to Him. When the church ministered to the Lord, God spoke and directed Barnabas and Paul on their first missionary journey. The Holy Spirit likely spoke through one of the prophets.

i. God reveals Himself to us: Lu 2:36-38 - Anna ministered to Lord (*liturgeo*), and then she saw Jesus.

What are some possible danger signs that you can observe in someone who is trying to serve people without ministering to the Lord first?

2. What is the right motive?

As we serve the Lord we should consider our motive to minister. One of the primary passages dealing with our motives in ministry and God's rewards is: **1Cor. 3:12-15**

a. Only works with the right motive are rewarded: the analogy is to the Bema seat where awards were given in the Greco- Roman athletic games. Paul describes each work being tested by fire. The fire represents a test of the nature of the motive behind the work. The motive behind a work is more important than the work itself.

b. What are wrong motives?

i. Praise from people Matt.6:1-4 In the Sermon on the Mount, we see Jesus' opening manifesto for the Kingdom and His emphasis on attitude more than merely behavior. If we do our good works for God's approval, then He will reward openly, but works done with motive to receive praise from men yield no reward from God.

ii. Guilt: don't serve God because you feel guilty.

iii. Don't serve so people will be indebted to you, serve to give, not to receive.

iv. Don't serve to draw people to yourself, draw people to Jesus, not self.

v. Don't serve for power, position, or promotion. Too often, people approach ministry like a corporate ladder that they are seeking to ascend. They begin to serve with a plan to become an assistant leader of a ministry, the leader of the ministry, a deacon, an elder, an associate pastor, an assistant pastor, and then the lead pastor. Jesus said that Christian leaders would be characterized by their desire to serve rather than a desire for position, power, or promotion.

vi. Don't serve for profit. Acts 8 reveals Simon the Sorcerer sought to purchase the power of the Holy Spirit to use the gift for financial gain. Peter rebuked him and said, "Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money." Essentially, Peter tells Simon, "To hell with you and your money." God warns us not to serve for financial gain (1Tim. 3).

d. What is the right motive? The key to ministering to the Lord is love

The more excellent way is love (1Cor. 12:31-13:8). We are to demonstrate love for Jesus and love for others (Matthew 22:37-39). Jesus told the disciples in the Upper Room that He was giving them a new commandment that they were to love one another as He loved them, and by this all would know that they were His disciples (John 13:34-35). More than loving others as you love self – we are to love as Jesus loved, a higher standard.

note: Loving one another as He loves is a commandment, not a suggestion. Also, our love for others is a demonstration of our love for Him.

Note: when you serve because you are motivated by love for Him and love for others, you minister to the Lord.

Consider the life of Moses in the book of Exodus: as he spends time with God he may respond differently to the people than when he has not been with God. Describe some examples.

Module IV: The Leader's Time

Lesson 13: The Leader's Time - Faithfulness

1Corinthians 4:2 "It is required in stewards that one be found faithful"

Discussion questions:

1. What do you think of when you hear the term, "faithful"?
(True to one's word, promises; steady, loyal, constant, committed, reliable, trusted, believed).
2. What do you think of as an opposite of faithful?

Subject: Faithfulness

Object: Be faithful

Outline:

1. What is faithfulness; and why is it important?
2. How to be faithful.

Eph. 5:16 "Redeeming the time because the days are evil."

Jonathan Edwards – resolved never to waste a moment of time.

1. What is faithfulness; and why is it important?

a. Definition: being where you are supposed to be when you are supposed to be there, and doing what God has called you to do with the right attitude.

b. Jesus links faithfulness and goodness: When we stand before Jesus, the greatest experience will be to have our Lord look deep in our eyes and commend us for how we lived our lives for Him. Jesus describes those who have used their God given abilities for His kingdom as "good and faithful" (Matt. 25:14-30). On the other hand, those who are unfaithful are characterized as wicked.

c. Faithfulness is characterized as finishing well: I love fireworks! I love the spectacle, the anticipation, and the celebration. I love that no matter how much education we have, we are reduced to monosyllabic utterances - "oooh, aaah." And then it's over, no more fireworks, time to pack-up and go. I don't want my ministry to be like fireworks. God desires faithfulness and longevity in our Christian lives. If the Christian life is a race, then it is a marathon, not a sprint.

In Aesop's fable of the tortoise and the hare, the hare is speedy, but lacks faithfulness. The tortoise prevails despite his obvious limitations, because he is a faithful plodder. Step by step, competing by the rules, making steady progress, he finishes to the praise of those at the finish line. God would rather have faithful tortoises than unfaithful hares.

Demas is an example of one who did not finish well. Consider his regression. Paul refers to Demas as "A fellow laborer" [Philemon 1:24 (59A.D.)]. Paul was saying that they were in the same league. About a year later, Paul simply says, "And Demas" [Col. 4:14 (60AD)] "Luke the beloved physician and Demas"]. Paul makes no comment about Demas being in the same league. Finally, Paul would write, "Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world"

[2Tim.4:10 (62 AD)]. In essence, Demas failed to finish well, because he loved this world more than God. The sad testimony of Demas life is that he failed to finish well.

d. faithfulness requires commitment: One of the most difficult issues in the church today is: *commitment*. Faithfulness and commitment are related concepts. People are afraid of commitment because we are frequently afraid of making sacrifice for God or others. Our selfishness is displayed when we treat relationships as disposable. A lack of commitment is demonstrated when we approach our relationship with the Lord as an option for our lives rather than the essence of our lives.

The problem is that we are double-minded (Ja. 1:6-8). Our lack of confidence in God is caused by a lack of commitment to God, which results in being unstable in all your ways. People do not want to put too many eggs in a basket if they don't expect the eggs to make it to the desired destination.

The solution is described at the end of the letter Ja.4:6-8: 1. Submit to God, 2. Resist the devil, 3. Draw near to God, 4. Deal with sin (cleanse and purify). Faithful people are single-minded towards God.

We demonstrate faithfulness to the Lord when we demonstrate commitment to Him and commitment to others. The early church was a committed fellowship. They were committed to the Lord, so they could be committed to one another. This is the essence of faithfulness. Luke describes their faithfulness as steadfast: "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). As the early church approached their Christian experience, they were steadfast in all they did.

Similarly, the Apostle Paul was able to say to the elders of the church at Ephesus that even death threats were not going to move him from finishing his ministry to the Lord: "But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24). Paul sought to be committed, and steadfast or faithful. What would move you from your calling? Would a lack of affirmation and approval, difficult people, hardship?

Conversely, some are never moved to begin to follow their calling. Despite the prompting of the Holy Spirit, the encouragement of others, and the sincere desire to be used by God, they refuse to commit and be faithful and thus are not fulfilling their calling

Finally, it is comforting to know that even when we fail to be faithful God remains faithful (2Tim. 2:13). Nevertheless, let us continue to seek to be faithful.

2. How to be faithful

a. Grow-up: the early church regularly engaged in essential customs to help them grow as Christians: "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers" [Acts 2:42]. Here, we see four essential elements to spiritual growth:

- i. **Doctrine:** They regularly learned the Word of God. We are blessed to have the opportunity to study the Word of God, and to have access to sound Bible teaching.

Those who regularly partake of the Word will grow faster than those who do not. Sound doctrine is necessary for proper spiritual development.

- ii. **Fellowship:** The church is a community, and when we gather regularly as a community, we encourage others as well as being encouraged by them. When we spend time together with other Christians we strengthen each other and grow.
- iii. **Breaking of bread:** The breaking of bread refers to common meals as well as partaking of the Lord's Supper (communion). The observation of the Lord's Supper is intended to stir believers to remember the Lord and develop an intimate relationship with Him. The practice of common meals is intended to encourage the development of meaningful intimate Christian relationships with other believers as distinguished from superficial relationships. Faithfulness flows from an authentic relationship with Jesus into an authentic relationship with others.
- iv. **Prayer:** The church needs to learn to depend on God. Authentic relationship with Jesus and others results in growth. Through prayer we communicate with God. We not only make our requests known to Him, but we also hear from Him. People of prayer grow.

b. Show up: the keys to show up are: to **commit and come through**. As we mature, it is typical that we begin to make commitments to serve the Lord. It is only reasonable that once we begin to appreciate God's love, we want to respond and serve Him. Once we make a commitment, we want to come through. Let your "yes" be "yes." If you say you will do something, or be somewhere, people should be able to expect you to do it or be there because you are faithful. Sometimes the fear of not being faithful can paralyze us so that we won't commit. Sometimes we commit without an earnest desire to come through. Faithfulness yields a desire to commit and come through.

LIFEWOR

Describe an area in your ministry life where you want to be committed in the coming season. What does that commitment look like?

Lesson 14: The Leader's Time – Delegation

Acts 6:1-7

What lessons have you learned from your experience with delegating tasks, or having tasks delegated to you, that would benefit others?

Subject: Delegation

Object: Delegate well

Outline:

1. Requirements
2. Refusal
3. Right
4. results

As the early church grew, the sphere of its influence continued to expand. This was a blessing as more lives were touched for the Lord, but there were also growing pains exposing the need to delegate. In the early church, as in the synagogue, there was a ministry of providing food to the poor and needy. As the church ministered to the widows, a dispute arose between two groups of widows. The Grecian widows were predominantly Jewish Christians who were raised outside of Palestine and whose customs and culture were more Greek in their orientation. The Hebrew widows were raised in the Promised Land. They spoke Hebrew rather than Greek, and their customs focused on the Hebrew culture. The Greek widows felt that the Hebrew widows were being favored. As the church grew and experienced the problem of growing pains, the solution was delegation.

1. Requirements: what are qualifications for delegation?

- a. **Calling (4):** You need to know what you are called to do. The apostles knew that they were called to focus on prayer and the teaching of the word rather than directly overseeing the food ministry. Before we can delegate, we need to recognize what we are called to do and what someone else is called to do.
- b. **Good reputation (3):** The people chosen were known to those they were serving. They came from within the church and had a good reputation. It is a blessing to see someone raised up within a local body, rather than having to hire someone from outside the local body who is unknown to the body.
- c. **Full of the Spirit (3):** The people chosen to serve need to be spiritual people, controlled by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit empowers us to serve and is the oil that lubricates the inevitable conflicts between people. Fortunately, there is no shortage of God's Spirit. The same Spirit that came upon Moses, the seventy elders of Israel, and the disciples, is available to us for the asking (Numbers 11; Luke 11:9-13).
- d. **Wisdom (4):** The reference is to spiritual wisdom that God imparts to those who are close to Him. This is the ability to know what to do in difficult situations.
- e. **Availability (5-6):** God needs availability more than ability. Peter and John were uneducated and untrained men in comparison to the rabbis, but they had been with Jesus (Acts 4:13) and had a powerful ministry. Unfortunately, we can't delegate until people make themselves available. Sometimes people are just waiting to be asked to help. It may be that as we reach out to people, we discover that they are available.

- f. **the right person for the job (5):** In the case of the complaints from the Greek widows, all the people chosen to serve had Greek names. They were the right people for this job. They were likely chosen because it was expected that they would be able to relate to the people they were ministering to.
- g. **Authority with responsibility (6):** As the apostles prayed and placed hands upon the seven chosen to serve, they recognized their responsibility and granted authority. People need to receive authority with responsibility. They need opportunity to make decisions and mistakes as they fulfill their responsibilities.

2. Refusal: why do people fail to delegate? It is important to realize that most of the reasons reflect a lack of spiritual leadership, rather than truly reflecting on the attributes of the subordinates. Here is a list of seven reasons why people fail to delegate:

- a. **Fear that the subordinate can't handle the task.** Here, the leader needs to train the subordinate. In addition, the subordinate needs an opportunity to perform a task, develop, and grow. The leader needs to evaluate the subordinate's potential. If the subordinate is truly unable to handle the task, then new candidates need to be found and trained.
- b. **Fear of competition from the subordinate.** Sometimes the fear is not that the subordinate is not good enough, but that the subordinate is too good. The leader is threatened that his position will be lost to the subordinate. In ministry, we want to avoid the situation of King Saul, who tried to cling to a kingdom that God had already granted to David, His anointed king. If God is truly promoting another, graciously help him and trust that God will also provide a perfect place of ministry for you.
- c. **Fear of losing recognition.** In the early church, we see that Barnabas was a prominent minister. Yet, during his first missionary journey with Paul, Barnabas became less prominent than Paul. Nevertheless, Barnabas continued to support Paul. Barnabas wanted to promote the Lord and His Kingdom; he was not concerned about his own recognition. The fear of losing recognition plagues the leader who loves to hear, "We couldn't do it without you." Unfortunately, this leader has actually begun to believe the truth of the acclaim, and furthermore likes the sound of the praise. He is afraid of losing recognition when others competently complete the task. Here, it is best to realize that God deserves the glory, and let others be recognized rather than seeking the glory for ourselves.
- d. **Fear of weakness being exposed.** Sometimes people fail to delegate because they don't want anyone else to know the weaknesses that they have tried to cover up. Here, it is best to be humble; be willing to expose areas of weakness and grow. Most often, the fears are greatly exaggerated, and once we begin to delegate, we are free from the fears.
- e. **Fear of inability to train and meet a deadline.** Sometimes we refuse to delegate because we see a deadline looming and feel we are the only ones who can complete the project. Here, the answer is planning to create sufficient time to train and supervise.
- f. **Fear of losing control.** Sometimes we fail to delegate because we want to maintain control. A death grip on control chokes the creative life of subordinates. Here, we need to gently ease the grip on control, allow God to hold the reins, and learn that "It's going to be okay."
- g. **Lack of vision to expand.** Some people don't want to see their ministry expand, or they lack vision for the expansion of the ministry. They don't see a need to delegate because they have no vision to expand the sphere of influence of their ministry to a level that

would require them to delegate. We need to learn that God desires to expand the scope of our ministry (Acts 1:8, 2 Timothy 2:2). We need to seek God's plan for our ministry and delegate to allow the ministry to expand.

3. Right: Here we consider the right way to delegate. Once you realize the benefit of delegation then how do you delegate? It has been said that the final test of a leader is that he leaves behind in others the conviction and will to carry on. How can we effectively delegate to prepare others to carry on?

The following is a list of eight suggestions to effectively delegate:

- a. **Remember you are responsible for whatever you delegate.** Accordingly, create an environment that facilitates success for the subordinate.
- b. **Select tasks and prepare for turnover.** Identify the specific tasks to be performed, and do whatever preliminary preparation might be necessary.
- c. **Select the right person for the job.** Remember that integrity is the key.
- d. **Train and motivate the delegate.** Equip her with answers, and encourage her effort and performance.
- e. **Encourage independence.** Give authority with responsibility. Let them have the liberty to make mistakes. Let them know that you are available to provide answers, but they don't need to obtain approval on every detail.
- f. **Follow-up as a supervisor.** Insure that tasks are being completed on time and in a proper manner.
- g. **Give reasonable deadlines.** The more notice and opportunity that people have to prepare, the better a project is likely to go. If a project deadline is four months away, help to chart what needs to be accomplished in the first month, the second, and the third month, as well as the last month.
- h. **Avoid "monkey passing."** Monkey passing is the situation where work that has been delegated boomerangs back to the leader. The solution is to keep the monkeys with their owners. When the care and feeding of the monkey requires assistance, arrange a time to communicate and assist, but don't take the monkey. Create an environment for the team member to solve the problem, and set reasonable timelines for follow-up. Finally, don't accept a monkey without a proposed solution. Remember the moral of this story: cute little monkeys can become King Kong.

4. Results: The theme is the beneficial results of delegation. Two clear results are revealed in the early chapters of the Book of Acts.

a. The church influence grows: The word of God spread. The church grew rapidly, implying multiplication rather than mere addition, as people were drawn to the message, the joy, the love, and the enthusiasm of the church. Even priests, the least likely to be converted, came to believe.

b. Those who serve grow: We see that Stephen was entrusted by the Lord with miraculous power, and in the next chapter we see him deliver a stirring defense of the faith before the religious leaders. Also, we see that Philip had a tremendously effective ministry as an evangelist in Samaria. As we learn to delegate, the influence of the church grows, and those who serve grow.

LIFEWOR

1. Review the section on refusal to delegate. what did you learn? how do you intend to apply the lessons in the coming season?

2. What beneficial results of delegating would you like to see in your ministry in the coming season?

Lesson 15: The Leader's Time – Procrastination

Judges 18:9 “So they said, ‘Arise, let us go up against them. For we have seen the land, and indeed it is very good. Would you do nothing? Do not hesitate to go, and enter to possess the land.’”

1Cor. 16:8-9 a great and effective door has opened to me and many adversaries.

Open doors represent opportunities that are only available for a limited time. The Greeks used two terms to describe time. *Chronos* was used to describe measure of time such as minutes, or hours, and *kairos* related to opportunities. The Greeks depict *kairos* as a winged cherub with a long forelock. As the winged cherub flies by you must grab the forelock or he's gone. This is the nature of opportunities in life and ministry: you need to seize them before they pass. The enemy will go through the open door and oppose the work of God. So, the only issue is whether you will go forward to do what He has called you to or will you procrastinate, and likely miss your opportunity.

Often times we find ourselves well intentioned in regard to our desire to move forward in our ministry, but week after week, month after month, and year after year, nothing changes. We keep saying, “Today it's going to be different!” But we fail to move forward. The issue is the problem of procrastination. Dr. David Livingstone, the great missionary to Africa, once said, “I am ready to go anywhere for God, as long as it is forward.” It is good for us to desire to move forward. As we consider this lesson, we want to learn how to avoid the problem of procrastination.

Subject: Procrastination

Object: Move forward

1. Reasons for procrastination

a. Indecisiveness: One of the reasons causing us to procrastinate is the inability to make decisions. In ministry, we can spiritualize our indecisiveness. For example, we can respond, “I'm still praying about it.” It is a good thing to pray about ministry decisions, but we can try to justify a lack of decisiveness by saying, “I'm still praying about it.” This person needs to identify decisions to be made based on perceived priorities of time and importance. Then, he needs to decide to decide. Once we make a decision, we need to follow through to enhance success.

b. Distractions: There is an inherent conflict between play and work. There is also a conflict between performing tasks that seem pleasant or desirable and performing tasks that seem more difficult. There will always be distractions. We need to choose to stay focused and be disciplined.

c. Forgetfulness: Some people repeatedly justify procrastination by saying, “I forgot.” This pattern is more likely rebellion than true forgetfulness. If the issue is forgetfulness, then a notepad, PDA, and calendar will help us to remember. A short pencil is better than relying on a long memory.

d. “I work better under pressure”: Some people justify their procrastinating by asserting that they work better under pressure. Encourage them to volunteer for a SWAT team, or take up parachuting as a hobby, but to stop procrastinating.

e. Feeling overwhelmed: Some tasks appear overwhelming because of their scope. It is helpful to begin to view the task as component pieces. By breaking down the whole into smaller component tasks, it becomes less overwhelming.

f. Fear of failure: The fear of failing and the desire for perfection can keep us from ever getting started. It is helpful to realize that we glean valuable lessons from all experiences. The school of hard knocks provides a great education, and the tuition is not as expensive as we fear. The antidote for the fear of failure is small doses of failure.

2. Remedy for procrastination

a. Get started: The journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step. It is very difficult to drive when the car is in park since the car won't even move. At the very least, get the car in neutral so that you are available to be used by God. Ideally, get the car in first gear to begin. You will soon discover that once you are moving, there is momentum.

b. Be time specific: Learn to set time specific measurable goals. By establishing deadlines when tasks need to be performed, we can help stay on course. It can be very helpful to consider the various component tasks that need to be completed. For example, if you are organizing a concert, there are various tasks to be completed before the concert. You will want to arrange for the artists, secure the venue, arrange for promotion of the event such as flyers and radio/social media announcements, and coordinate event staff such as ushers and hospitality, to name a few of the tasks. There is an appropriate time frame for each of these tasks. Depending on the artist, you may need to schedule several months to a year in advance. The promotion will need to be coordinated about seventy-five to ninety days in advance. By setting time specific deadlines for each task, we are able to track to determine whether we are on course, or if we have begun to procrastinate.

c. Establish accountability: Find one or more people that can help keep you from procrastinating. Share with them the specific time goals, and be willing to let them review whether they are appropriate. Then agree to allow them to encourage you to meet the goals. Remember to avoid the situation where you shift your responsibility to your accountability partners for example, the person who continues to procrastinate and justifies the problem by saying, "It's your fault, you didn't remind me." If the accountability partners are not helping, get a new partner, but take responsibility to stop procrastinating, and learn to move forward.

LIFEWOR

1. What, if anything, keeps you from moving forward in your ministry today?
2. Review the section regarding reasons for procrastination. What reason(s) may be a particular problem?
3. Review the section regarding the remedy for procrastination. how will you apply the lessons learned in the coming season?

Lesson 16: The Leader's Time – Excellence

2Chron.9:1-9

intro.

Imagine Joseph's carpentry shop. You enter the humble shop where Joseph and Jesus craft doors, tables, chairs, yokes, and plows. The designs are functional rather than ornate. The shop is simple. How do you imagine the quality of craftsmanship? I expect that Jesus did excellent work. Consider the creation account: everything is good ... very good. I don't expect a wobbly leg, or uneven sides, or furnishings that appear unlikely to stand some wear and tear.

Discussion questions:

1. Why might excellence be important?
2. Why might excellence be related to time?

2Ch.9:1-9

v.1-2 Queen of Sheba was drawn to Solomon's fame for wisdom and sought answers to the mysteries of life. Solomon gave wise answers to all her questions.

v.3-4 The Queen was impressed regarding: 1. wisdom, 2. palace, 3. food, 4. seating of servants, 5. service and apparel of waiters, 6. cupbearers and their apparel, 7. entry to temple.

v.5-6 She was impressed by Solomon's wisdom and what she saw.

v.7 She praises Solomon's wisdom

v.8 She praises God of Israel re what she heard (God's wisdom) and what she saw (excellence).

Morals: 1. Excellence in ministry attracts people to receive the wisdom of God, and 2. Results in people being drawn to God and glorifying Him.

Subject: Excellence

Object: Give God your best

Philippians 1:10

"That you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ..."

In Philippians 1:10, Paul encourages the church to approve the things that are excellent. "That you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ..." The context is a prayer and exhortation for spiritual growth to distinguish good doctrine from poor doctrine. The Greek term *deafero* means "to differ." By implication, it means to surpass, be better, differ from, be of more value, and be more excellent. The term was used in connection with testing metals.

Paul urges the church to know the difference between good and bad and the difference between mediocre and excellent. Paul is a man who worked hard to live a life that was excellent for Jesus: "Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me" (Phil. 3:12). Solomon expressed a similar thought: "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might..." (Eccl. 9:10).

We must realize that excellence is not perfection. Excellence is an attitude, and the attitude is displayed in the process. Excellence is not an achievement since you never arrive. Excellence tends to see obstacles as opportunities.

What is required for excellence?

1. A standard: Excellence needs a goal. There must be a description of the standard. Since excellence raises the standard we need to determine how high the bar is to be raised. When is it good enough? We know that excellence is not perfection, but what is the standard?

For example the Raiders football team says they have, “a commitment to excellence.” What does that mean? No team will have a perfect season. A team may go undefeated, but it will not be a perfect season as there will be countless plays in every game that could have been executed better. Perhaps the commitment to excellence relates to winning the Super Bowl, or maybe getting to go to the Super Bowl or even the playoffs. Once you have set a standard, you can work toward the standard.

2. Discipline: To become excellent, we need to work towards the standard. Athletes must wake up early and train hard to improve their skills. They learn to avoid staying out too late and avoid certain excesses in order to be excellent. No one becomes excellent without self-control.

3. Discipleship: We need to be disciples of Jesus and learn from Him. But we also need to learn from others who have gleaned valuable lessons ahead of us. Excellence in ministry is learned from others and taught to others. Paul imparted the lessons that he had learned to Timothy, and instructed Timothy to teach others also (2Tim. 2:2).

4. Accountability: We need to be willing to be accountable to others such as leaders and other team members. We need to be willing to receive review from others. In this manner, we can better understand the effectiveness of the ministry. Sometimes we are reluctant to receive review because it will undoubtedly include criticism as well as affirmation. Yet failure to be accountable hinders excellence.

5. Motivation: We should desire an attitude of wanting to work harder for the Lord than for any other relationship. When we serve God, we want to give Him our best. The Mosaic Law provided that an animal sacrifice had to be without blemish or imperfection. Imagine a shepherd with two lambs. One of the lambs is blind and has a broken leg and the other is perfect. It would not be difficult to imagine that the shepherd would want to offer the “less than perfect” lamb as a sacrifice. Yet, God says it is unacceptable. He effectively tells us that if we love Him, then we want to give Him our best. The motivation to give God our best is not to impress people that we are excellent we desire to give Him our best because we love Him. It is love for God that motivates us to seek excellence as we minister to Him and His people.

LIFEWORk

1. What is the standard for excellence in your ministry?
2. What are some of the obstacles to excellence in your ministry?

Module V: Expository Preaching

Lessons 17-18: Expository Preaching - Studying and Outlining

1. Inductive bible study method (review for those who have completed module 1)

- a. Observation: what do I see?
- b. Interpretation: what does it mean?
- c. Application: how can I apply this truth to my life?
- d. Read the text multiple times and develop your own notes and outline of the passage before considering study aids (e.g. commentaries).
- e. Let God speak to you: the Word is living (Heb. 4:12). Before regurgitating what God has said to someone else, let God reveal Himself to you through His word. Learn the difference between merely correctly interpreting a text, and hearing from God.
- f. The teacher must have the message, and the message must have the teacher.
- g. Pray for insight.
- h. Answer the who, what, when, where, and why questions.
- i. Context: keep Scripture in context, so it doesn't become a pretext.
- j. Contrast: e.g. "but", Jesus vs. religious leaders; Matt. 5
- k. Cause and effect relationships: John 15 "If you abide in Me, then..."
- l. Repeated words: reveal themes, and emphasis

2. What is the subject?

- a. Each paragraph generally has one main idea. What is the relationship between verses in a paragraph? How are paragraphs in a chapter related?
- b. Identifying the subject exercises:
 1. John 15:1-10
 2. John 4:1-26
 3. John 6:1-14
 4. John 21:15-19
- c. State the subject in 3-5 words

3. What is the objective?

- a. How might God want to transform His people re the truth of the text?
- b. How might you apply this truth in your life?
- c. Tell them what you believe God wants them to do as a result of message.

4. Preparing a roadmap

- a. **introduction:** [identify text, 2x]
 - i. Orient the audience to the subject.
 - ii. Get the audience's attention: grab their ears, hearts, mind, spirit.
 - iii. Intro. should be brief (5% of message).
 - iv. There are three kinds of teachers: those you can listen to, those you can't listen to, and those you must listen to.
 - v. Motivate listeners to follow the development of the ideas.
 - vi. Let people know what you are about to say meets their needs.
- b. **Subject:** State the subject clearly, briefly and effectively
- c. **Object:** tell them what you want them to do

d. Outline: how do the points relate to main subject-**must relate**

- i. Points should relate to God/Jesus.
- ii. Use verbs/action words if possible-present tense.
- iii. Be positive.
- iv. Personal pronouns: you, I, vs. we.
- v. Be practical vs. academic
- vi. Alliteration: be careful not to abuse: [e.g. site, sin, spirit, sincere]
- vii. Limit to 3, possibly 4 points

e. transitions: Audience needs to know where you are going

- i. Signposts: ie. 1st, 2nd, 3rd.
- ii. Review-preview: "We've seen that worship satisfies God, now let's see that worship satisfies you."
- iii. Parallel structure or key words help transition: 1. Worship satisfies God, 2. Worship satisfies you, 3. How to experience satisfying worship

f. Supporting material

- **The best are biblical cross-references**

- i. Quotes, stories, testimony, polls
- ii. Good illustrations fit the theme, and add value
- iii. You can use a personal reference, but better to show your humanity, than you as a hero
- iv. Make sure it is in good taste
- v. Create interest, stir emotion, apply and explain truth

g. Conclusion

- i. Be a closer
- ii. Parallel the objective
- iii. Remind them what you want them to do

h. Practical tips for Bible teachers

- 1. Help people to understand what it means and how to live it.
- 2. Like a good Dr. explain the condition and answer implied questions.
- 3. Be disciplined – do your homework.
- 4. Care about people and be sensitive to their needs.
- 5. Focus on Jesus: Christ crucified and risen.
- 6. Be yourself: touch people in a unique way (your fingerprints).
- 7. Be real: reflect your needs, be authentic.
- 8. Teach the Word to reach the world.
- 9. Teaching the Bible is a holy calling with a sacred message. So, be holy
- 10. Proclaim the gospel: man's greatest need is salvation
- 11. Convince (intellect), rebuke (spirit), exhort (emotion).
- 12. Give hope: show people the hope available in Christ.
- 13. Show people what to do (application – e.g. now what/so what?)
- 14. Use visual aids occasionally to declare spiritual truth and create greater retention - Matt. 18 – Jesus holds a child rather than saying, "Imagine a child."
- 15. Be culturally relevant – consider current events (Ac. 17 Paul at Athens).

LIFEWOR

Study and outline a brief passage of scripture: select a passage of 1-5 verses, identify the subject/theme and object (what's the main idea) of the text.

Lesson 19: Expository Preaching – Presenting the Text

A trial lawyer's perspective

1. Opening statements and the pastor's introduction

a. Credibility test: are you perceived as sincere? Be credible. First impressions matter.

i. Relate to the audience. You need to know the values of the people you are presenting to.

ii. Timex vs. Rolex - both tell time, and end in "ex" but there is a perceived difference. What impression are you trying to create with your audience as you consider your attire, your demeanor and style of presentation?

iii. Informality vs. disrespect: being casual is okay, but being disrespectful to God and His people is not.

iv. Reasonable expectation of audience: What should they *reasonably* expect from you as a teacher/preacher and what should you *reasonably* expect from them.

v. Inspiration vs. lack of preparation: perception of a lack of preparation will likely result in a conclusion of a lack of credibility.

vi. Look to connect: "The velcro factor." The best presenters create sticking points with their audience.

b. Give a roadmap: an opening argument tells a jury what the presenter intends to establish

i. God's leading is clear: pillar of cloud/fire in wilderness. Be clear about where you plan to go.

ii. Where are you taking us? People can follow better when they know where you are going.

iii. Intro.> subject > object > outline: Help tell them where you are going.

iv. Introduction comments before exposition of the text are crucial. Jurors formulate an opinion on the merits of the case during the opening argument, before they have heard the evidence. Similarly, the congregation decides about your message before you explain the text.

2. Case-in-chief: the teacher's message

a. Be a zealous advocate for the One you represent:

b. Make the case clear

i. You know more about the subject than the audience. Simplify the complex wherever possible, but don't patronize or you'll offend. An insulted audience will never give desired response.

ii. Unless a jury understands an expert's testimony it is meaningless. Be sure to clarify not confuse.

c. Present corroborating evidence: the trial lawyer must present sufficient evidence to justify the conclusion she wants the trier-of-fact [judge/jury] to reach on a point or issue.

a. Pastors must support argument with cross-references, illustrations, extra-Biblical historical data or other references.

d. Be persuasive: you must seek to persuade the audience to reach a certain conclusion and act upon it whether a jury verdict or a life conformed to Christ.

i. Show the audience why your view is correct.

ii. Use a logical argument to progress ideas.

iii. Be impassioned: passion is not theatrical emotion or drama, but a firm belief in the argument you are championing!

iv. Expect and anticipate opposing arguments to your case, and rebut them in your message.

3. Closing argument

a. Be a closer: the most important aspect of the presentation of a trial is the closing argument. Be sure the points of the message are related to the close. Consider eliminating unrelated discussions which may distract or confuse.

b. Summarize the preceding points/argument developed during message/case

c. tell them what you want them to do, and why it is reasonable based on your preceding argument [see, Romans 12:1-2].

d. Ask for more than what you expect, but be reasonable: e.g. if you want a jury to award \$50,000, you would likely ask for \$100,000, but don't ask for a ¼ million. If you want to encourage regular Bible reading, ask them to read each day, but don't make an appeal for 10 chapters a day.

LIFEWOR

Prepare to present your text in class. Add to the subject and object: outline points, observations, interpretation, application, support material, and a conclusion.

Lesson 20: Expository Preaching – Message Critique

Speaker:

Evaluator:

Text:

Intro (What's the hook? Orient to subject? Relate to needs? Length?)

Subject:

Reading of the text:

Objective:

Outline: (were the main points clear?)

Transitions: (How were they made?)

Support material:

Illustrations:

Cross-references:

Application:

Conclusion:

Oral presentation: (voice)

Physical presence: (mannerisms, eye contact, posture)

Other comments:

LIFEWORk

Complete a message critique form regarding this weekend's teaching. Learning to complete the form helps you to learn to identify elements of Bible teaching.

Module VIII. Defending the Faith

Lesson 21: Defending the Faith – Defense of the Bible Part 1

1. Manuscript evidence

Manuscript: a word used to describe the ancient documents upon which Scripture is written and first copied. Early on there were no lap-tops and printers. People had to write out their works on papyrus (made from papyrus plant) or parchments (animal skins). Scrolls were made by gluing sheets of papyrus together and then winding it around a stick with an average of 20'-35' long.

Hebrew copying procedures: Holy Scripture was of extreme importance to the early Hebrews. The nation of Israel looked to the Scriptures for its laws, its spiritual guidance, and its hope for the future. The cultural importance of scripture made it virtually impossible for there to be inaccuracies. WHY? Check out rules the scribes followed in copying scripture:

- Scribes would count the total number of words and letters to make sure nothing was omitted.
- Scribes had proofreaders check and recheck their copy against the master copy.
- If there was a single mistake found, the entire scroll was destroyed!

Author	Book	Date Written	Earliest Copies	Time Gap	# of Copies
Homer	"Iliad"	800 B.C.	400 B.C.	400 yrs	643
Plato	Misc. works	427-347 B.C.	900 A.D.	1200 yrs	7
Julius Caesar	"Galic Wars"	100-44 B.C.	900 A.D.	1000 yrs	10
Herodotus	History	480-425 B.C.	900 A.D.	1300 yrs	8
Aristotle	"Ethics"	384-322 B.C.	1,100 A.D.	1400 yrs	5
Sophocles	Plays	496-406 B.C.	1000 A.D.	1400 yrs	100
<i>N. Testament</i>		<i>50-95 A.D.</i>	<i>125 A.D.</i>	<i>30 yrs</i>	<i>25,000</i>

The New Testament:

The reliability of Scripture should be tested by the same criteria by which all historical documents are tested.

- 5,600 ancient manuscripts of the Greek New Testament, 10,000 Latin Manuscripts, 9,300 other early versions
- 25,000 manuscript fragments alone give it credibility as a historical document. No other historical document even comes close.
- A mere 30 year "Time Gap" further strengthens its credibility. A fragment of the gospel of John was found in 125 A.D.
- All but 11 verses of the NT could be re-written using only 2nd & 3rd century church leaders.

"Today's Bible is verified to textual accuracy of 99.5%, compared with 95% for the best other ancient work, "The *Iliad*". Most of those differences are in punctuation or spelling, or misplaced

words. Less than 1% of the NT words are seriously debated and none of these affects any doctrine of the faith.” (Josh McDowell)

Illustration: If you were to go to the local university English professor and say “I don’t believe we have a reliable version of Homer’s “Iliad”, he would say “What are you talking about, of course we do”.

“In Real terms, the New Testament is easily the best attested ancient writing in terms of the sheer number of documents, the time span between the events and the documents, and the variety of documents available to sustain or contradict it. There is nothing in ancient manuscript evidence to match such textual availability and integrity.”

(Ravi Zacharias)

The Old Testament:

The Old Testament has been copied by different groups of scribes over the years. “In Judaism, a succession of scholars was charged with standardizing and preserving the Biblical text” (Josh McDowell) Ezra worked with the first group of scholars. As texts wore out with time, they were copied and given a ceremonial burial.

- The period of the Sopherim (400 B.C. - 200 A.D.)
- The Talmudic Period (100-500 A.D.)
- The Masoretic Period (500-950 A.D.) The Masoretes gave the final form to the Old Testament text. They were the first to give vowels to the Hebrew text based on the oral traditions!

“We have given practical proof of our reverence for our own scriptures. For, although such long ages have now passed, no one has ventured to add, or to remove, or to alter a syllable.”

(Flavius Josephus, 1st Century Historian)

Masoretic Text:

- The standard Hebrew text today
- The earliest manuscripts date at about 1000 A.D.

Critics used to point out the gap between the original writings of the OT and the earliest existing copies. The OT was completed around 400B.C, and the earliest existing copies we had were 900 A.D., for a gap of 1300 years. People would say “We don’t know what the original book of Isaiah said. With such a huge gap there must have been all kinds of changes.” Then, in 1947 a little shepherd boy found a large collection of manuscripts:

Dead Sea Scrolls:

- 100,000 fragments stored in earthen jars. These were pieced back together to form 800 ancient documents.
- Many of the documents were of the Old Testament Scriptures.
- A complete scroll of Isaiah was found that was 1000 years earlier than the earliest copy we had.
- It demonstrates the amazing accuracy of the copyists of the scriptures over a 1000 year period.

“There is a word for word identity in more than 95% of the manuscripts and the 5% variation consists mostly of slips of the pen and spelling... Of the 166 words in Isaiah 53, only 17 Hebrew

letters differ. Ten letters are a matter of spelling, four are stylistic changes, and the other three compose the word for light (v.11) and does not effect the meaning greatly”.

(Josh McDowell)

Septuagint Text:

- A Greek translation of the Old Testament, written supposedly by 70 Hebrew scholars (thus: LXX).
- Written for the dispersed Jewish people who had lost their Hebrew language.
- Translated in Alexandria, Egypt between 250-150 B.C.
- It is based on Hebrew text 1000 years older than our existing Hebrew manuscripts (900 A.D.)
- It is a close parallel to the Masoretic text and verifies its credibility.
- This was the Bible of Jesus and the apostles. Many New Testament writers would, at times, quote from the Septuagint text.

Point: The question as to the accuracy of the original text is a non issue to anyone who does a little bit of homework. *The Bible, and especially the NT, has more surviving early manuscripts by which we can “cross-check” and verify its accuracy than any other manuscript in history.* The evidence for the authority and accuracy of God’s word is incredible. God has preserved His Word and we can say with confidence, “here is what God says”.

2. Archaeological evidence

The Bible speaks of hundreds of different names, places, and events. It speaks of wars, captivities, and geopolitical movements. Opponents of the Bible have said “That never happened! There is no such place as this. There is no such place as that.”

“True, no archeological evidence exists for Abraham, Joseph, or Moses. Revisionist scholars (people who attack the Bible) say this means the Bible stories of Israel’s origin are fiction. Yet we have only recently discovered King Solomon’s seal, King David’s name in a stone, and a bull the Canaanites worshipped. Now two leading Egyptologists are marshaling evidence from the land of the pharaohs to answer the question: Did the Exodus ever happen?”

(Christianity Today Magazine)

Examples:

1. Moses authorship: “Moses didn’t write the first five books of the Bible because people couldn’t even read until 1400 B.C. Get Real! They also said that the priesthood and sacrificial system that Moses wrote about developed much later. Then in 1975, the Elba Tablets were discovered, nearly 20,000 written records dating 1000 years before the time of Moses. When they were translated, archaeologists found that many of the laws, customs, and sacrificial systems existed long before Moses.

2. The Hittites: People used to laugh at the references to the “Hittites”, which the Bible mentions about 50 times. Professors used to make fun of the Hittites as a ridiculous fabrication of the Bible. Recent Archaeological digs have found hundreds of references to the Hittite people. They lived over a 1200 year period in the Middle East!

3. Laban: People would wonder why he would chase his daughter down over a simple little idol she stole. In 1925, the Nuzi tablets were found in Mesopotamia. These tablets revealed that a person who possessed a family idol could make a legal claim to all the family property.

4. Jericho: Excavations in 1930-36 some archeologists found something so startling that they signed a statement attesting what they saw. “As to the main fact, then, there remains no doubt: the walls fell outwards” (Josh 6:20)

5. Luke’s Accuracy in Acts:

> The riot in Ephesus (Acts 19:23-19) taking place in a theatre. When excavated, the theatre proved to have room for 25,000 people.

> Publius the chief of Malta (Acts 28:70). Luke calls him the “first man of Malta”. Inscriptions have been unearthed that give him the title of “first man”.

Point: *“Discovery after discovery has established the accuracy of innumerable details, and has brought increased recognition to the value of the Bible as a source of history”*

(William Albright)

3. Internal evidence:

Amazing agreement:

Imagine taking 5 people and locking them in a room and give them topics such as sexual conduct, men’s and women’s roles, or life after death. What are the chances that they would agree on every point? We can’t even get 4 people who witnessed a car accident to agree on the same thing. Yet, the Bible odds are even more incredible!

- Written over a 2100 year time span
- It has 66 books written by 40 different authors
- The authors came from vastly different cultures, backgrounds, locations, and circumstances.
- It was written in 3 different languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek)
- It was written on 3 different continents Asia, Europe, and Africa.

Approximate Date	Probable Author	Book	Occupation	Where Written	Circumstances
2000 B.C.	Job	Job	Wealthy Farmer	Mesopotamia	Peace Time
1450 B.C.	Moses	Gen-Deut	Political Leader	Wilderness	Wandering
1400 B.C.	Joshua	Joshua	Military General	Canaan	War Time
1000 B.C.	David	Psalms	Shepherd, King	Fields/Palace	Conflict
750 B.C.	Amos	Amos	Herdsman	Fields	Pre-exile
535 B.C.	Daniel	Daniel	Prime Minister	Palace	Exile
440 B.C.	Nehemiah	Nehemiah	Cupbearer	Jerusalem	Rebuilding
40-65 A.D.	Matthew	Matthew	Tax Collector	Jerusalem	Early Christian
40-65 A.D.	Luke	Luke/Acts	Physician	Rome	Early Christian
60-90 A.D.	John	John, Rev	Fisherman	Asia	Early Christian
45-64 A.D.	Paul	Multiple Letters	Rabbi	Prison, Cities	Persecution

Point: How do you get 40 different people from different walks of life, separated by 2000 years, writing about the two things that nobody ever talks about (religion and politics) to agree?" They were writing down things that God Himself led them to write down. God wrote a book through people, and ***it agrees on every point!*** The Bible is consistent through and through, even on those highly controversial topics.

Total consistency: *"Everyone knows that the Bible is full of contradictions"* Who told you that? Saying that the Bible is jammed with contradictions is a serious charge! If the Bible is filled with contradictions, then how could God have written it? What kind of a God makes mistakes?

1. **"In Gen 1 it says that God created Man and woman. In Gen 2 it says he created man, and later came the woman"** > That is not a contradiction! Genesis 1 is a flyby (Day 1, day 2, day... and on the 7th He rested", whereas Gen 2 is a landing of the plane to get a closer look. It is not contradictory information, chapter 2 is simply more information.
2. **"Eye for eye and tooth for tooth" VS. "Turn the other cheek"** > In Matt 5:38-39, Jesus cleared that up for us. There is no contradiction; Jesus simply raised the bar of ethical conduct in the New Testament. The old covenant was being upgraded with a new covenant.
3. **"Mark & Luke say that 2 blind men were healed at Jericho, and Matthew says that 1 blind man was healed"** > A contradiction is when separate accounts of the same incident cannot be reconciled. Matt does not say that 2 blind men weren't healed. He simply says that "one man was healed", as if he was choosing to focus on the one rather than the other. Is that a contradiction? No way! Beyond that, who's to say that the writers weren't talking about two totally different events? John says that "the books of the entire world could not contain all the things that Jesus did." (John 21:25)
4. **"Matt 27 says Judas hanged himself, and in Acts 1 it says that he fell forward and burst open"** > Judas hanged himself in the valley of Hinnom. That area is a full of rocky ledges that surround the valley. It makes perfect sense that what he did was go to the edge of a cliff, hang himself on a tree, and swing there for a period of time. At some point, possibly the branch broke and he fell to the valley below landing on the rocky cliffs that rise as high as 25'. At this point his body burst open. One passage says what Judas attempted to do; the other passage says where his body was found.

Point: *Those who raise these kinds of objections know very little about the Bible.* When people say that, most of the time they are just parroting what they heard someone else say. Simply say to them "Name one". Don't let your faith be hurt by them. If you hear of a supposed contradiction and you don't have an answer, admit it and get some help. Whatever you do, don't be intimidated into an apathetic attitude.

4. Fulfilled prophecy:

One of the things that make God, God is the fact that He knows the future. In effect, He has the ability to see the end of time from the very beginning of time. One of the things that make the Bible unique is that it contains "predictive prophecy". The fact that many Old Testament Prophecies have been fulfilled is one of the greatest proofs of the reliability of the Bible. There

are hundreds of predictions, some of them given hundreds of years in advance, have been literally fulfilled.

“Other books claim divine inspiration, such as the Koran, the Book of Mormon, and parts of the [Hindu] Veda. But none of these books contain predictive prophecy.”
(Norman Geisler)

Examples:

1. King Cyrus is called by name (Isaiah 44:8-45:1-7)
2. The temple would be built by the pagan king Cyrus (Is. 44:8)
note: On Oct 12th, 539 B.C. Cyrus’s general captured the city of Babylon thus beginning the great Persian Empire. When Cyrus made his grand entrance, Daniel presented him with an ancient scroll of Isaiah, which contained a personal letter addressing him by name. (Josephus, Antiquities XI, I, 2) King Cyrus was impressed and in time he released the Jewish captives to return to their homeland and rebuild their temple! (Ezra 1)
3. The destruction of Edom (Obadiah 1), Tyre (Ezek. 12), and Nineveh (Nahum 1-3)
4. The return of Israel to the Land (Is. 11:11) {fulfilled May 14, 1948}
5. The life of Jesus:
 - When He would come (Dan. 9:24-27)
 - City of His birth (Micah 5:2)
 - That He would be born of a virgin (Is 7:14)
 - The tribe He would come through (Gen 49:10, 2nd Sam 7:12-16)
 - Betrayed by a friend (Ps 41:9)
 - Sold for 30 pieces of silver (Zech 11:12)
 - That He would be worshipped by shepherds & kings bringing gifts (Psalm 72:9-11,15)
 - Rejected by His own people (Ps 69:8, 118:22)
 - The day He would ride triumphantly into Jerusalem (Dan 9:25-26)
 - How He would enter Jerusalem on a donkey (Zech 9:9)
 - Events surrounding His death (Is 42, 53)
 - Crucified with thieves (Is 53:12)
 - Type of death (Psalm 22)
 - Resurrection (Psalm 16:9-11)

Fact: There are 61 major prophecies concerning the life of Jesus written many hundreds of years before His death. The chance that Jesus could have fulfilled just 8 of those prophecies are one in 10 to the 17 power (one hundred thousand trillion).

illustration: Cover Texas with silver dollars 2’ deep. Blindfold a person and tell them to wade out into the money and pick up the silver dollar that has the red dot on it!

“Of the 667 historical prophecies to date, all but three can be verified as being fulfilled (that does not mean that the three weren’t fulfilled; we just have no record).”
(Ralph O. Muncaster)

Point: This was not luck!!! It was designed by a God and foretold for us that we would have reason to believe!

5. Recommended books

1. *The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict* {Josh McDowell; Thomas Nelson Publishers}
2. *God Wrote A Book* {James MacDonald; Crossway Publishers}
3. *Can You Trust The Bible?* {Ralph O. Muncaster; Harvest House Publishers}
4. *The Case For Faith* {Lee Strobel; Zondervan Publishers}
5. *The Moody Handbook of Theology* {Paul Enns; Moody Publishers}
6. *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* {Gleason Archer; Zondervan Publishers}
7. *When Critics Ask* {Norman Geisler; Victor Publishers}

LIFEWORK

comparative religion assignment

During our module on defending the faith, we will consider

1. Certainty of Scripture
2. Creation and evolution
3. Cults
 - a. Jehovah's Witnesses/Watchtower
 - b. LDS/Mormons
 - c. Scientology
4. Comparative religions
 - a. Islam
 - b. Buddhism
 - c. Hinduism
 - d. Religious Science
 - e. Wicca
 - f. New Age

LIFEWORK (continued)

- a. Positive confession/faith movement

- b. Christian Science
- c. Hare Krishna
- d. Bahai
- e. Transcendental meditation [tm]
- f. Freemasonry
- g. Satanism
- h. Roman Catholicism
- i. Judaism
- j. Scientology
- k. Voodoo

Students shall receive an assignment to summarize one of the belief systems above (or another topic approved by the mentor). Each paper shall contain the following elements (headings):

1. **Key person or founder, date, location, and brief history:**
2. **Key writings:**
3. **Who is God:**
4. **Who is Jesus:**
5. **Who is the Holy Spirit:**
6. **How to be saved:**
7. **What happens after death:**
8. **Other facts, beliefs, or practices:**
9. **Comparison and contrast of the belief system and Biblical Christianity:**
10. **Current trends related to the belief system:**

Students shall provide a hard copy on the due date [four weeks to complete the assignment], and shall submit an e-copy of the final paper within one week of receiving their reviewed hard copy. The e-copies shall be gathered and distributed to all students as a PDF for their future reference. *Please use 12-point Helvetica font and follow the sample format below.*

Student sample paper: Zach McVicker: School of Ministry

Key Person, Date, Location, Brief History

Ancient philosophers Epicurus and Anaximander are known to have been early examiners of evolutionary thought, but the key person in developing a solid foundation for evolution is Charles Darwin. Darwin became convinced that species evolved from single cells or from one another during his studies spanning from his journeys to South America in the 1830s until the publication of *Origin of Species* in 1859. Since Darwin's time, evolution has gradually perhaps become the preferred account of how things came into being as they are now, as opposed to creation.

Key Writings

Darwin's *Origin of Species* laid the foundation of evolution. Published in 1859, it detailed Darwin's findings on the Galapagos Islands off the coast of Chile. Darwin perceived that since several animals on the island had different traits, like finches having different sized beaks from each other, that the species must have evolved somehow from their original state to better themselves in some way. This is where the principle of "survival of the fittest" originated.

Who is God

Evolutionists do not believe in the existence of God, hence the reason to try and find another way to explain life forms on Earth. They generally subscribe to the belief that the universe was formed by an explosion of epic proportions, the Big Bang. Evolutionists also often claim that nature is god.

Who is Jesus

For evolutionists, Jesus either never existed or was just a man.

Who is the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit does not exist. If God and Jesus never existed, the third part of the triune is even less likely to evolutionists.

How to be Saved

There is no spiritual dimension in evolution, so concern with eternal life does not exist.

What Happens After Death

There is no spiritual dimension in evolution, so there is nothing to look forward to after this life.

Other Facts, Beliefs, or Practices

Evolutionists do not practice strange rituals like many cults opposing Christianity do, but the belief system can be equally destructive. Many evolutionists slip so far into a state of atheism that even when Biblical and scientific evidence might corner them, they still will not admit there is a God. Evolutionists hang their hopes on the fact that many missing links will be found, which will show fossil proof of species evolving from one to another. So far, none of these have been found.

Belief System of Evolution vs. Biblical Christianity

In essence, evolution is for the atheists and agnostics of the world. It is a belief system that tries to dispel the notion of God and find a scientific explanation for everything that we see on Earth. The Bible states "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" in Genesis 1:1. He then went on to create every living thing after that. The belief evolutionists have that life forms evolve from one form to another is in direct contrast of the way that the Bible states that God created things, one at a time, individually made with a very intelligent design. Evolution also has been trying for years to come up with a provable theory of how the universe originated, with speculation mainly swirling around the aforementioned Big Bang theory. The battle between evolution and creation has long been dubbed the battle between science and religion, but one of the ironies of this era, scientific experimentation and study actually lean towards God with the lack of viable proof for evolution.

Beliefs for Salvation

The only salvation evolutionists believe in is freeing themselves from the weak-minded belief system that is religion. One is thought to be more enlightened, independent, and free if they seek more complex ways of explaining the universe.

Lesson 22: Defending the Faith - Defense of the Bible Part 2

1. How did God write this book?

God could have communicated with us in a lot of different ways. He could have written messages in the sky. He could have sent us all heavenly emails. He could have appeared in person and spoken to us. What God chose to do was write a Book, which we call the Bible! Did people know that they were writing the scriptures? Did they know that people were going to be reading it for 1000's of years? Did they get a direct feed from God or were they like "Hey God I'm a little confused, can we go over that again"?

We Believe:

1. **We believe that God wrote every word of it and not just certain parts** (2nd Timothy 3:16)! It wasn't like He was giving topics and then letting the author write about them as they wanted. God wasn't looking over their shoulder saying "oh yeah, that's good! Now write something about how much I love them". All 1,189 chapters. All 41,173 verses. All 3,566,480 letters (kjv). The word "inspired" (*theopneustos*) literally means "God-breathed." What we have recorded in the Bible are the very words of God. In a very real sense, God breathed into the human authors like wind into a sail.
2. **We believe that God worked through each of the individual author's personalities** (2nd Peter 1:20-21)! He supernaturally sent His word-for-word truth through the personality of the author. God did not simply dictate His message to them. God worked through human authors to bring the truth He wanted to communicate!

Peter was a very excitable, enthusiastic, and verbal person. When we read his writings we find much of the same style. He is talking about this and then talking about that. He's all over the place and you can see his personality in the way he writes.

Paul was a lawyer. Point one, point two, point three and a conclusion. He wrote with great logic and flawless argumentation.

John was the one who leaned on Jesus chest at the last supper. He was a tenderhearted and loving person. In his letters and gospel he seems to constantly bring up God's love.

2. Why these 66 books?

How did these 66 books written by 40 different authors over a period of 2000 years end up in this one book we call the Bible? Weren't there other books that could have been added? How did we come up with these 66 books?

"**Canonization**" is a word used to describe how individual books of scripture were set apart and recognized. The word **Canon** means "measuring rod". So, the canon of scripture is the collection of books that measured up!

The writing of scripture was done by 95 A.D. During this time, hundreds of manuscripts were copied and recopied so that everyone could hear the messages God had given. However, there were many other writings floating around that were not inspired by the Holy Spirit. It wasn't like

these 66 books were off in a pile by themselves with kind of a glow to them. How then were these 66 books chosen?

Old Testament Canon:

There is substantial evidence that the “canon” of the Old Testament was essentially “closed/determined” no later than 167 B.C. By the 1st Century, most Jews viewed them as **THE** preordained collection of Words from God. In Jesus day there was no doubt about the books of Scripture. Jesus referred to them as “The Scriptures” (John 10:35), and Paul referred to them as “the Sacred Writings” (2Tim 3:15).

- Originally the 39 books of the Old Testament were counted as 24 by combining 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings, 1-2 Chronicles, the Minor Prophets, Ezra-Nehemiah.
- The Old Testament is divided into 3 categories (The Law, The Prophets, The Writings: *wisdom books, poetic books, historical books*)
- The Verse divisions were not standardized until about 900A.D.
- The Old Testament canon was officially approved by Jews in 70 A.D.

New Testament Canon:

The Christians had a harder time coming up with the New Testament, because early Christianity was an underground movement. Christians couldn’t hold public meetings until the 4th century.

- The process of recognizing and collecting which books were from God began in the first centuries of the Christian Church. In fact, Paul himself recognized Luke’s writings as being on equal with scripture (1 Tim 5:8); and Peter recognized Paul’s writings the same way (2Pet 3:16).
- By the 2nd century, bishops (overseers of groups of churches) were writing to their churches saying “read these books, don’t read those books”.
- One of the reasons for finally coming up with the New Testament Canon was the amount of fraudulent books being circulated. One example was the “Gospel of Thomas”, which was falsely being circulated as if written by Thomas, one of the 12.
- While most of the **27** New Testament books were accepted as Scripture by the early 200’s (A.D.), final confirmation of today’s “Canon” was not made until the Council of Carthage in 397 A.D.

“It is important to note that the church did not create the canon; it did not determine which books would be called scripture, the inspired Word of God. Instead, the church recognized, or discovered, which books had been inspired from their inception.”

(Josh McDowell)

“A book is not the Word of God because it is accepted by the people of God. Rather, it was accepted by the people of God because it is the Word of God.”

(Norman Geisler)

The “Test” for inspired writings:

1. **Authority:** Was the book written or accepted by a prophet/apostle of God? Does an apostle—one of the 12 disciples or Paul, for instance—stand behind this writing? Did the book come across as having God’s authority? The writers of Scripture say without shame or apology that what they are saying and writing is the Word of God! For example, Luke

wrote under Paul's authority and Mark wrote under Peter's authority. "If the book was written by a spokesperson of God it was from God."

2. **Acceptance:** Was the book accepted by the church at large? There had to be a consensus regarding the books legitimacy. As the people of God in each community read it, did they confirm and recognize that it was in fact the very Word of God, or was it simply a human communication?
3. **Authenticity:** Does the book tell the truth about God, man, or salvation? Did it reflect the teachings that were already established? Is it consistent with what we already know to be God's Word? "God cannot contradict Himself" (2Cor 1:17-18) and "God cannot lie" (Heb 6:18). Therefore, no book with false claims can be the Word of God. They would take a particular verse and compare it to the "Pentateuch" written by Moses. Then they would line it up against the prophetic books and then with the historical and poetic books. They demanded that the message be consistent in every detail or else it was not authentic!
4. **Alive:** The early church fathers believed that the "inspired" Scripture was "living and active" (Heb 4:12). Therefore it should have the power of God to transform the readers. If it did not have the power to change a life, then God was not behind the message.

"So that's where the Bible came from. God wrote a book. The Holy Spirit communicated the words. Men wrote them down. The early church pulled them together"

(James MacDonald)

3. What are the Apocryphal books?

Apocrypha: The word means "hidden" or "hard to understand". These books were also part of the pile of books that the early church leaders waded through and considered to become part of the "canon" of inspired Scripture. These books were put to the tests that we just talked about: Authority, Acceptance, Authenticity, and Alive.

- There are 15-20 apocryphal books and have names like: **1st– 2nd Esdras, Tobit, Judith, Baruch, Bell and the dragon, 1st-2nd Maccabees, Apocalypse of Peter, The seven epistles of Ignatius, Shepherd of Hermas, etc....**
- They have been considered profitable in many ways, but not inspired by God.
- The early church fathers rejected them for at least a couple of reasons: They have a number of geographical inaccuracies and teachings that are contrary to Scripture.
- The Roman Catholic Church did not fully recognize them until the middle of the 2nd millennium, 1546. Today, 15 of them are part of the Catholic Bible.
- During the "Protestant Reformation", Christians began questioning the teachings of the Catholic Church and objecting to the lack of Biblical Support. In response, the Roman Catholic Church added the "Apocryphal" books to try and verify their position on things like purgatory and prayers for the dead.

Point: Originally these books were not accepted as "God-authored", and by the fact that they contradict books in the historically accepted canon, they should not be considered books that God wrote.

4. Why so many translations?

“The Roman Catholic Church dominated the expansion of Christianity for many years. It was successful in many ways and had a tremendous impact. During this time, monasteries were the centers for education and the tedious work of copying Biblical manuscripts. However, the church had dark times (1300’s-1600’s) when it fell into a time of general apostasy and corruption.

“Indulgences” were sold (supposedly to provide for salvation), positions were bought, and the innocent were persecuted. During this time the Catholic Church forbid the translation of the Bible into English. By insisting on Latin (the Vulgate translation), the Catholic Church had ultimate control over the common people’s understanding of Scriptures (most did not know Latin).”

(Ralph Muncaster, paraphrased)

- **1383 A.D. (Wycliffe Bible)** John Wycliffe produced the 1st translation into English (from the Latin Vulgate). As a result, he was condemned by Pope Gregory XI.
- **1530 A.D. (Tyndale Bible)** was the first to translate the entire Bible into English from the original languages of Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.

Note: He was forced him to flee to Germany to complete his work. He was condemned by the King of England, captured, strangled, and burned at the stake for “heresy”. His final words were “Lord, open the King of England’s eyes”. Two years later (1537), King Henry VIII broke ties with the pope and gave a version of Tyndale’s Bible “Royal Approval”.

- **1611 A.D. (King James Version)** King James issued the English translation by a group of 54 scholars. They too relied heavily on the Latin Vulgate but also used other Hebrew and Greek texts. It is still considered one of the best translations.
- **1885-1979 (English Revised, American Standard, and New King James)** These are modern translations of the King James.
- **1929-1990 (The Revised Standard, the New English, the New American Standard, and the New International Version)** These Bibles are translations directly from the earliest Hebrew and Greek manuscripts. Recent archeological findings including the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Codex Sinaiticus, the Codex Vaticanus, and many other manuscripts have given translators added insights.
- **1972-1996 (The Living Bible, the Good News, the Message, and the New Living Bible)** These are all what we call “Paraphrase” Bibles. They take the literally translated Bibles and paraphrase them. They attempt to present ideas in the most relevant language for modern culture.

“Translators reflect the original Greek and Hebrew as accurately as they can, but in a way that communicates clearly. It might be that one Greek word really should be translated as three English words. Some translations like the New American Standard (NAS), give an almost one-for-one correspondence between Hebrew and English or Greek and English. You can set an NAS right down beside a Greek text and follow along quite closely. But the New Living Translation (NLT), on the other hand, attempts to represent the heart and soul of the original languages, even though the sentence structures might be different from the original.”

(Gary Burge, New Testament Professor)

Point: Choose a translation that you feel comfortable reading. If you're not comfortable reading it you won't read it!

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Continue working on comparative religion assignment.

Lesson 23: Defending the Faith – Creation vs. Evolution

Creation vs. evolution: the question of beginnings

Gen.1:1-2 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

Intro: Gen. 1:1, if accepted there is no problem with the rest of Bible. Gen. 1:1 addresses fundamental life issues: Where did I come from and why am I here? Genesis is either a foundation for the entire word of God, and is reliable, or merely a collection of stories. The NT refers to Genesis over 200x, and Jesus and the twelve apostles clearly accepted it as reliable.

Subject: The Beginning of Creation

Object: Fully rely on God's reliable word

1. Did God really create (where did I come from)?

a. the Bible declares that God created you

1:1 In the beginning God: assumes God, rather than seeking to prove God; 1st verse is most important if reliable, then no problem with the rest.

b. Refutes other ideas about origins:

i. **Atheism:** rebuts the idea of no God since it starts with God.

ii. **Pantheism:** rebuts the notion that all is God, because it declares God exists before Creation.

iii. **Polytheism:** rather than many gods there is one God.

iv. **Dualism:** the idea of two gods, one evil and one good, is rebutted by declaring one God.

v. **Evolution:** the gradual modification through natural processes from prior materials is refuted by God created – a beginning point of time at which time and the universe as we know it begins.

Heavens: vast expanse of space in universe: cf. no stars, planets until day 4.

Creation: work of God in bringing all things into existence. Creation shows God is personal not an impersonal force. God creates from nothing (*bara-* used only re God) not merely a reworking of materials already in existence. Cf. evolution - life develops from earlier simpler forms.

v.2 describes earth at very beginning, not after long ages and cataclysm.

c. Is there a gap between v.1 and 2? (we do not believe so).

Gap theory is incorrect biblically and scientifically, advocates a gap of time to explain fossil record (a cataclysm re Satan's rebellion).

i. **Geologic and fossil evidence:** the gap theory is offered to explain "geological ages" that view levels/strata as created over uniform periods. On the other hand, a world-wide cataclysm (e.g. flood) would destroy/impact evidence of ages. For example, Mt. St. Helen's volcanic eruption: within days same effect as layers in the Grand Canyon. So, the "gap" is not needed to explain the fossil or geologic evidence.

ii. **Death:** a gap to allow for death between v.1 and 2 appears contrary to Biblical record where there is no evidence death until Gen. 3 (also repetition of good, very good 7x). In essence, death appears to be a result of the judgment for sin/rebellion in the Garden of Eden.

iii. **Maturity of creation (age):** God creates with maturity. For examples, trees bear fruit and people can reproduce from the time they are created. So, we do not need a "gap" to explain the apparent age of the creation.

d. Where God moves there is life: God's Spirit moving/hovering. God's Spirit moves and there is life. **Note: all 3 persons of Godhead involved in Creation.** Gen.1:1 *elohim* - plural, refers to 1 God manifest as 3 persons. Son's role: Jn.1:3, Heb1:3, Col.1:16.

2. Does the evidence support creation?

a. Intelligent design reveals a designer/creator. Note: life doesn't come from non-life

b. Fossil evidence supports creation: no transitional life form, missing link is missing.

c. Microbiology supports creation: complex simple systems. Cells, the simplest form of life are amazingly complex structures. In essence, the universe cannot be old enough to allow for the complexity of biological systems to have developed by random selection.

d. Physics support creation - laws of thermodynamics: 1st law – conservation – energy can't be created or destroyed merely convert from one form to another.

2nd law - entropy: things move from order to disorder. Order does not come from chaos.

e. Cosmology supports creation: life would not exist if any of the following: slower or faster rotation of the earth; further or closer to the sun [2-5%]; smaller or larger moon; more than one moon; change in oxygen/nitrogen ratio; earth's crust thinner or thicker, size and distance between planets.

f. Darwin's Origin of Species: pub. 1859 re 1830 voyage HMS Beagle – S. America, Africa, Galapagos Islands. **Natural selection:** assumes survival of fittest but almost all gene mutations are harmful/fatal. **Sir Arthur Keith:** forward to Darwin's 50th Anniversary, **"Evolution is unproved and unprovable. We believe it only because the only alternative is special creation ... and that is unthinkable."**

Most scientists reject Darwin's view, many accept the intelligent design view, but classroom texts won't publish due to religious implication.

g. Atoms: same charge repels, opposites attract. What keeps the atoms from splitting apart?

Col.1:17 In Him all things consist [NIV-In Him all things are *held together*]

Heb.1:3 Upholds all things by the word of His power

2Pet.3:10 The heavens will pass away with a great noise and a fervent heat. The big bang is at end when Lord let's go.

h. Flood geology: anthropologists – cultures around the globe have a history of an epic flood. Noahic flood explains geologic strata, as a viable alternative to uniform periods created over billions of years

3. Why am I here? what's life all about?

a. God created you for relationship with Him. We are created by Him and for Him (Col 1:16).

b. The creation account provides context to understand relationship: Gen. 1-2 is a brief record of creation to introduce the primary character of creation - humans. The Bible is a love story. We are quickly introduced to the characters of God and man, against a brief context of the creation account. Then we are told of man's rebellion, the consequences of same, and God's effort to restore relationship. The Bible is the narrative of God's redemption, and **Gen.1:1** reveals relationship and introduces us to God and His desired relationship with man.

c. Relationship begins when you trust God

Conclusion: God's word is reliable, it takes more faith to believe in evolution than creation.

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Continue working on comparative religion assignment.

Lesson 24: Defending the Faith – Victory of Truth

1 Kings 18:20-40

During the module on defending the faith, we consider:

- Cults
- Comparative religions
- Certainty of Scripture
- Creation and evolution

Subject: the victory of truth

Object: defend the faith

Outline: 1. battle of gods, 2. battle of prophets, 3. battle of books

- The essence of the conflict is described in Elijah's battle against the prophets of Baal recorded in 1Kings 18.
- Context: wicked King Ahab and Queen Jezebel expand Baal worship in Northern Kingdom of Israel.
- Prophet Elijah challenges 450 prophets of Baal for a contest at Mt. Carmel.

1. Battle of the gods (v.20-25)

Who is the real God? Choose either the Lord or Baal:

- The God that answers by fire is acknowledged as the true God:
- What does the *evidence* say about the God of the belief system:
- e.g. Baal is not the same as YHWH, Allah is not the same, the God of Mormonism is not the same, polytheistic gods are not the same.
- v.26-30 Baal is incapable of answering

2. Battle of the prophets (26-30)

Who is a true messenger of the true God?

- Consider the character, and behavior of the prophets of Baal that reflect how Baal is to be worshipped. They cry out, leap on the alter, wail, cut themselves until blood gushed out, but no reply.
- Who is the primary prophet of the belief system?
- In Biblical Christianity, the primary prophet is Jesus. The primary prophets of Islam - Mohammed, Mormonism - Joseph Smith, Unification (Moonies) -Sun Myung Moon, Scientology - L. Ron Hubbard, Buddhism - Siddhartha the Buddha, etc. cannot compare to the life, teaching, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus.

3. Battle of the books [31-40]

v. 31, 36 Word of the Lord (God has said)

- Battle between Bible, and other key writings (claimed "holy books").
- Manuscript, Archaeological, Prophetic, Scientific evidence [MAPS] provide overwhelming evidence in support of the Bible.
- The Bible is internally and externally consistent. In other words, the Bible doesn't contradict itself internally, and the external evidence is not contrary to the Bible.

- On the other hand, the Koran, Book of Mormon, Watchtower publications are not internally and externally consistent, nor can they be reasonably supported by evidentiary examination.

Conclusion: God had the victory, and truth prevailed [see, Matt.16:18]

God's people acknowledge He is God, put away false gods, and then God brought the rain, and ended the drought so that they experienced blessings.

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Prepare to present comparative religion papers.

Lesson 25: Defending the Faith – Cults and Comparative Religions

Oral presentation of papers: use the class time to allow students an opportunity to share their papers.

Module VII: Ministry and People Part 1

Lesson 26: Ministry and People – Compassion and Caring

Nehemiah 1:1-11

Why is caring fundamental to ministry?

Real ministry begins when you care for other people's needs. The world is a troubled place. There are wars, threats of wars, disease, poverty, and famine. There is fear of terrorist attack, threat of nuclear holocaust, and fear of economic collapse. In a more local context, there are struggling marriages, lost teens with no direction, financial struggles, and fear of the future. We see the media images, we read the stories, we hear the reports, and we are overwhelmed. There is a sense of its being too much, and we can't deal with it. We often respond by becoming apathetic and we stop caring. Yet we can't care about all things, and we can't ignore all things.

We have been comforted by God in our struggles so that we may comfort those in trouble with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God (2Cor. 1:3-5). In other words, we receive comfort so that we may comfort others. As we consider how to respond to various needs, we discover the need for a caring heart. As we examine the first chapter of the book of Nehemiah, we see the heart of the matter.

Subject: Caring

Object: A caring heart.

outline:

1. A heart to care
2. A heart to feel
3. A heart to pray
4. A heart to help

1. A heart to care (1-3): Nehemiah means "The Lord Comforts." Nehemiah is an example of a fruitful minister who brought the Lord's comfort. His father Hachaliah's name means, "Wait for the Lord" and his brother Hanani's name means, "The Lord is Gracious." The names reveal a message: The Lord comforts, wait for the Lord, and the Lord is gracious. Nehemiah had a prominent position in the court of the king, yet he was truly concerned about the well-being of his people in Jerusalem. Although Nehemiah was concerned about the city as a whole, he was more concerned about the people. It is important to ask how others are doing and care about the response. Sometimes we don't stop to ask how other people are doing. Sometimes we ask, but we really don't care about the response. Like when we are passing someone in a hallway, and they ask, "How are you doing?" as they keep on walking down the hallway. As we will see, Nehemiah not only cares enough to inquire, but he cares about the response.

Nehemiah is concerned about the issues that are a concern to God. God cares about His people, and He cares about Jerusalem because it is the place where His name dwells (Psalm 76:2). There are many issues in our lives that we must care about, but it is important to care about the things that God cares about.

Nehemiah received the report that the people were in great trouble and distress. The walls of the city had been destroyed as part of the Babylonian conquest. In that culture, walled cities provided a defense from enemies, looters, and robbers. No wall meant no protection from threats, great trouble, and division. Nehemiah truly cared about the hardship his people were suffering. A caring heart is the first step in how to respond. We can't care for all the world's problems; that's God's job. Therefore, the first step is to identify what we are called to care about.

2. A heart to feel (4): We learn that Nehemiah not only cared enough to ask about the condition of others, but he had compassion for them. We learn that Nehemiah wept, mourned, and fasted after hearing the report of the condition of his brothers. Compassion is the ability to be moved by another person's feelings. We learn that Nehemiah sat down and wept. The custom of Jewish mourners is to sit on a low stool and mourn for a week. He also fasted in an effort to identify with the grieving and hardship of his people. Nehemiah lived in comfort and ease in the palace; it would have been easy to be apathetic, out of sight out of mind. Yet he felt their pain and anguish.

We need to identify with other people's feelings. Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep (Romans 12:15). The heart of Jesus is a heart that feels. Jesus wept for Jerusalem (Matt. 23:39), felt for the multitudes that were hungry and were like sheep in need of a shepherd (Mark 6), healed the demon-possessed boy (Mark 9:20-22), raised the widow's son (Luke 7), and had compassion on a wounded traveler in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10). In each instance, Jesus was moved with compassion because he had a heart to feel. The heart to feel is the heart of Christ.

3. A heart to pray (5-11): Nehemiah knows God hears and turned to God in prayer. Great leaders in the Bible are people of prayer: Jesus, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Jeremiah, Daniel, Ezra, Esther, Paul, Peter, John, and James. We are invited to come to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:16). If we are to have a fruitful ministry we need to learn to have a heart to pray. Prayer is an effective response to mobilize God's resources and prepare us.

There are four elements of Nehemiah's prayer that reveal a heart to pray:

- a. **Praise:** Nehemiah offers praise to God for who He is: great, awesome, merciful, and a God who keeps His promises.
- b. **Perseverance:** Nehemiah prayed day and night. We see that not only did he pray night and day, but as we examine chapter two, we see that he had been praying for about three to four months. Nehemiah had been repeatedly knocking at God's door. We are reminded that we do not have because we do not ask (James 4:2). Also we are encouraged to keep asking, seeking, and knocking (Luke 11:5-10). Nehemiah has a heart to pray as seen by his persevering prayer.
- c. **Humility:** Nehemiah confessed the sins of his people, and included himself as one who sinned against God. Nehemiah saw himself as guilty as the other Hebrews who neglected God. Even though we would tend to see Nehemiah above the rest, he humbly included himself in the midst of his people.
- d. **Believes God's promises:** Nehemiah reminded God of His promises to gather and restore the people if they would confess their wrong. It is always good to remind God of His promises. Nehemiah believed that God would be faithful to fulfill His promises.

A praying heart is likely the most important element of a heart to care. President Abraham Lincoln realized the importance of prayer in the midst of the Civil War; “I am driven to my knees by an overwhelming conviction that I have nowhere else to go. My own wisdom and that of those about me are insufficient for the day.”

4. A heart to help: As the cupbearer, Nehemiah had access to the king, as he was in a position of trust. He was responsible for funds and servants and was the administrator over the kingdom. Nehemiah knew that he was in a position to help and asked God to open doors to help. The pleasures of life in the royal palace did not keep Nehemiah from being willing to help.

We can’t minister to everyone’s needs, and we can’t ignore everyone’s needs. Fruitful ministry begins when we begin to care about other people’s needs. As we consider how to respond to the need, we realize that only God can care for all the needs. We must identify the needs we are called to care about. We, then must be willing to feel compassion for others. We respond by praying to intercede and praying to prepare our hearts. Then we begin to help.

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Describe some of the issues that you care about and that you believe are important to God.

Lesson 27: Ministry and People – Conflict

Acts 15:36-41

After completing their first missionary journey, Paul proposed to Barnabas that they return to the cities where they had started churches to strengthen the believers. Barnabas sought to take John Mark, but Paul refused because Mark had left the team when the going got too tough on the first missionary journey.

We learn that the conflict became so great that Paul and Barnabas went their separate ways. Barnabas took Mark, and Paul took Silas. God graciously blessed both of their missionary efforts. An issue exists whether this was God's plan, or whether there was a better way to resolve the conflict besides the team splitting up.

Conflict is inevitable in ministry. It has been said that ministry would be great if it were not for the people. Whenever people and personalities differ, there will be conflict. How can you learn to effectively deal with conflict?

Subject: Conflict

Object: Navigate conflict well

Outline:

1. Types of conflict
2. Typical responses
3. Tactical responses

1. Types of conflict:

- a. **Hostile:** This conflict is characterized by anger and is a work of the flesh (Gal. 5:2). Hostile conflict is described as characteristic of fools (Eccl. 7:9; Prov. 12:6]. In responding, don't react with anger.
- b. **Shut-down:** This type of conflict is demonstrated by a lack of communication or "The silent treatment." In responding, seek to spend time and show that you care.
- c. **Rebellion:** The rebellion is often characterized by refusal to perform required tasks, sabotage, or creating an ever expanding sphere of conflict by recruiting allies for their position. In responding, show people that the rebellion may in fact be against God (Hebrews 3:12).
- d. **Slothful:** The conflict is created by a pattern of procrastination. Despite repeated admonitions from the Bible not to be slothful (Proverbs 6:6, Romans 12:11), they continue to procrastinate. We need to make sure that we are setting an example of diligence. Also, it is helpful to provide deadlines to help people schedule the necessary functions to complete the task.
- e. **Gossips:** Gossip is one of the most common causes of conflict. Any time that we unnecessarily communicate about others in a way that places them in a disparaging light we have caused conflict by gossiping. The Scriptures tell us to avoid gossips (Romans 16:17). In responding, we should confront them in love (Eph. 4:15) educate them about the harm to individuals, families, and the church, and the need to stop (Prov. 26:20).

2. Typical responses: Here, we consider various approaches to dealing with conflict (Management styles):

- a. **Ignore:** This approach is demonstrated by Eli in failing to correct the wrongs of his sons (1Sam. 4). Eli never effectively confronted his sons regarding their sins, so the problem continued to grow until the nation ultimately rejected the sons as leaders as well as reject the theocracy for a monarchy. Ignoring problems is often like ignoring an infection, if it is serious, the consequences can be severe.
- b. **Winner-take-all:** This approach is shown by Absalom in regard to conflicts with his father, King David (2Sam. 14-18). Rather than attempt to resolve his issues with his father, the son leads a rebellion and a struggle to the death for the throne. While this style generally results in a clear winner, the loser is generally alienated, and all participants are battle scarred.
- c. **Giving in:** This approach is demonstrated by the true mother in response to King Solomon's offer to "split-the-baby" (1Kings 3). The mother did not give in because she felt that her claim was wrong but because she wanted to protect her baby. Frequently, when people give in they still believe that their position is correct, but they have grown weary of the conflict and acquiesce. Accordingly, they are often alienated despite giving in.
- d. **Confrontation:** This style is seen in the example of Nathan, the prophet, confronting King David about the king's adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband (2Sam. 12). The prophet demonstrated great tact in approaching the king. As Nathan shared a parable about someone in the kingdom abusing his wealth and power over another, David did not realize that he was that man. Then the prophet helped the king to realize his sin against God. Confrontation can be a very effective way of dealing with conflict, but it must be approached with tact.
- e. **Compromise:** This style is seen in Acts 15 between Paul and Barnabas regarding the controversy over John Mark. Paul refuses to take John Mark on the second missionary journey, and Barnabas insists on taking him. The compromise is that Barnabas takes Mark and heads to a separate region to minister, and Paul takes Silas and returns to the churches that were begun on the first missionary journey. Compromise is frequently the best means of conflict resolution (recall that we are referring to non-doctrinal issues), but it is helpful to think outside of the box. For example, Barnabas may have proposed guidelines to Paul for Mark's participation on the trip. If Mark failed to meet the guidelines then Paul would be free to send him back to Jerusalem. Essentially, there were likely alternatives to Paul and Barnabas splitting up. Nevertheless, the compromise solution in Acts 15 is likely responsible for Mark's restoration in ministry as recognized by Paul (2Tim. 4:11) and the Gospel that bears Mark's name.

3. Tactical responses

a. Benefits of conflict:

- 1. Produces better ideas,
- 2. Produces new approaches,
- 3. Long standing problems are dealt with,
- 4. Tension is a catalyst for action,
- 5. People grow as leaders as they are taken past their comfort zones.

b. Harms of conflict:

- 1. People feel hurt, defeated, and discouraged,
- 2. Creates division in a church when people feel a wedge between them,
- 3. People leave relationships,
- 4. Drains energy,

5. Promotes selfishness rather than teamwork and selflessness.

c. How to initiate resolution

Matthew 18:15-20 instructs us to initiate resolution when there is conflict.

1. Begin by inviting a discussion.
2. Describe the behavior or attitude without passing judgment on the other person's character or motives.
3. Take responsibility for our own feelings. For example, "I am frustrated" rather than, "You are frustrating."
4. Clarify responsibilities and expectations.
5. Finally, be sure to listen to the response. Remember we are to please God before man, but live and work in peace with others.

d. How to respond when we are the target of conflict or criticism

1. A soft answer turns away wrath (Proverbs 15:1).
2. Look for the portion of truth. Generally there is at least a kernel of truth in the criticism. Separate the wheat from the chaff, grow from the wheat, and let the chaff blow away.
3. Avoid a defensive response. Listen, paraphrase what the person said so that he knows that you are listening, and take responsibility where you are wrong.
Remember, we can never eliminate conflicts. But we can resolve conflict and learn to more effectively manage to avoid conflicts.

LIFEWOR

1. Review the section on types of conflict. Which type is most offensive to you? Why?
2. Review the section on typical responses. Which is your most common type of response? Why?
3. Review the tactical responses section. What important lesson(s) did you learn?

Lesson 28: Ministry and People – Counseling

Theme verse: 2 Timothy 3:16-17 “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

Objective: help God’s people turn to a real God to deal with real problems. Equip people to apply the Word of God to the issues they are facing, and navigate problems. Provide comfort and confident hope in Jesus (See, Rom. 15:1-13).

General philosophy: the primary message of the gospel is hope and restoration available from God through Jesus. The counselor must demonstrate empathy and compassion for the counselee. We want to help people to understand and experience change as they apply the Word of God to their lives.

Confidentiality: all communications that are made during counseling are to be held in confidence, except those requiring disclosure by mandated reporters such as pastors.

Methods:

1. **Time:** typically one hour meetings. The counselor must manage counseling time in light of other ministry responsibilities.
2. **Duration:** Generally, complete sessions in 6-8 meetings. Issues that can’t be adequately addressed in 6-8 meetings might be referred to Christian counselors outside of the church.
3. **Couples:** when counseling couples, ideally, both should attend. This creates a level field from the start of the counseling relationship, and helps avoid issues of prejudice or bias.
4. **Personal experiences** of the counselor or others should generally be avoided. Instead, rely upon the Word. We hope to avoid creating unreasonable expectations based on the experiences of others.
5. **Homework:** encouraging the counselee(s) to do related homework can be helpful. For example: assigned reading and completion of questions at the end of the chapter, or doing a word study on a particular subject such as anger. Homework not only provides valuable resources but helps a counselor assess the level of motivation among counselees.
6. **Gender:** primarily, men are to counsel men, and women with women. If meeting with the opposite sex alone, use an area visible to the public.
7. **Medication:** do not counsel people to stop taking prescribed medicine without doctor’s approval. Whether for perceived physical or emotional issues (e.g. anti-depressants). Avoid asserting that if people had more faith that they would not need medication.
8. **Sexual or physical abuse** must be reported to the authorities “immediately” in many jurisdictions.
9. **Suicidal or homicidal** ideations must be referred to a staff pastor and will often need to be reported to the authorities “immediately” in many jurisdictions.
10. **Balance and boundaries:** the counselor must have compassion, but also establish boundaries. Remember it’s Jesus’ mission to save the world, and you are likely to burn out rapidly if you try to.

11. **Generally meet with one counselor in church:** if someone is receiving counsel from a counselor at the church, it is helpful to avoid creating confusion by engaging in simultaneous counsel with another. For example, if one suggests doing “ABC” and the other recommends against ABC, and suggest XYZ, it likely creates confusion.
12. **Psychiatry:** as a study of behavior is not contrary to Scripture per se. For example, a theory that people are motivated by positive reinforcement (B.F. Skinner- Behaviorist) is consistent in many respects with the principle of God’s rewards in the Bible. On the other hand, Freud’s psychosocial model that suggests that personality is determined by age 7 would conflict with the Bible’s teaching of a born again new creation. Therefore, the counselor must distinguish the Bible from other philosophies.
13. **Holy Spirit:** Jesus is the Wonderful Counselor (Is. 9:6), and has sent the Holy Spirit to counsel. The most effective counselors display the gifts of **Word of Wisdom** [e.g. Solomon 1Ki. 3; Jesus Jn. 11:4-6 (John the Baptist’s messengers, and the authentication of the Scriptures), Mt. 21:25 (reply to religious leaders to answer whether John was a prophet), Mt.22:21 (question re taxes)]. **Word of Knowledge** revelation by Spirit (Jn. 4 woman at the well, Jn. 8 religious leaders).
14. **Address issues one at a time:** despite the existence of many issues and overlap.
15. **Address issues in love without passing judgment (Eph. 4:15).**
16. **Listening:** the most effective counselors are often the best listeners.

Class exercise: create a hypothetical “case study” and have students work as a small group of 4-5 and discuss how they would counsel in that situation. If time allows, allow a spokesperson from each group to share their “counseling plan” with the class.

Suggested bibliography

1. How to Counsel God’s Way- Bob Hoekstra
2. Competent to Counsel- Jay Adams
3. Love Languages – Gary Chapman
4. Marriage - Zachary

Module VIII. Ministry and People Part 2

Lesson 29: Ministry and People – Restoration

Neh. 2:4

Why might it seem difficult to people to be restored when they have drifted from God?

There are times in our lives that it seems that everything is ruined and beyond repair. Relationships are damaged, ministry struggles, and perhaps we have drifted from God. We must remember God desires to see people restored.

In the Book of Nehemiah we see a great example of God's desire to bring restoration as God uses Nehemiah to rebuild the walls around Jerusalem. In the New King James Version there are six statements that begin with the term "So." These statements are the basis of our outline of six key principles to repair and restore. As we study these statements, we want to consider, "So, what should I do next?" Rather than, "So what."

Subject: Personal restoration

Object: Be restored

Outline:

1. Pray
2. Come
3. Respond
4. Build
5. Fight
6. Finish

1. Pray: "So I prayed to the God of heaven." [Nehemiah 2:4]. The context for the statement relates to the news that Nehemiah's people are in distress as the wall around Jerusalem lies in ruin. The Babylonians had conquered the city and destroyed the city wall and the temple. The temple had been rebuilt, but the walls remained destroyed for about one hundred-fifty years. In this book, there are at least nine recorded prayers of Nehemiah. Nehemiah understood that the first step to restoration begins with prayer. Remember, restoration begins with our knees before our hands. It is helpful to consider the dynamics of Nehemiah's prayer:

- **Purpose:** Nehemiah wanted to intercede to see the wall rebuilt and see His people restored. When we need to be restored, it is good to pray specifically for restoration.
- **Persevere:** We learn that Nehemiah continued to pray about the restoration for four months before seeking to begin the work. Jesus encourages us to persevere in our prayers (Luke 11:1-10). Restoration is a process. Plan to persevere in prayer during the process.
- **Prepare:** Nehemiah prayed to prepare his heart for his ministry. Despite the difficult circumstances and overwhelming obstacles, he was able to fulfill his ministry, because God had prepared his heart.

- **Petition:** Nehemiah is asking God for help to rebuild and restore Jerusalem's wall. There was a specific burden upon his heart, and that led to a specific petition before God.

2. Come: "So I came to Jerusalem ..." [Nehemiah 2:11]. Taking the first step to come speaks of attitude and action. We need to be willing, and we need to demonstrate willingness by progress. Restoration must be initiated. Two people can see an old car in need of repair. One can see a classic waiting to be restored, and the other, a piece of junk destined for the scrap pile. Our perspective will greatly impact whether we take the first step in the right direction.

Sometimes taking the first step to come is inhibited by our failure to recognize our need for help or the fact that we are going in the wrong direction. One year when my family was on vacation in San Francisco (pre-GPS), I got lost returning to our hotel from Fisherman's Wharf. I drove past Little Italy, Chinatown, Coit Tower, Pier 39, and other familiar city landmarks before finally arriving at our hotel. For some reason, my wife was not thrilled with her husband's newly found tour guide business, and urged me to ask for directions. Yet, I refused to humble myself and ask for directions. What made matters worse was the fact that I found out the next morning that our hotel was only blocks away from the Wharf where I began my journey. One right turn, both literally and figuratively was all it would have taken to bring restoration.

We can be reluctant to see a doctor, an attorney, or an auto mechanic, but by simply coming and seeking help, we can begin the process of restoration. The first step of seeing a doctor helps to diagnose the problem and begin the treatment. When we come to see Doctor Jesus, the Great Physician, restoration can begin.

It should be noted that shortly after coming to Jerusalem, Nehemiah inspected the damage to the city wall. It is imperative that we take an honest inventory of our situation. No entity can continue without taking an honest inventory. Damaged goods need to be removed and replaced. Taking the step to come is the beginning of the process. Taking the step to obtain godly counsel can help to determine the extent of damage and the needed restoration.

3. Respond: "And I told them of the hand of my God which had been good upon me, and also of the king's words that he had spoken to me. So they said, 'Let us rise up and build.' Then they set their hands to *this* good work." (Nehemiah 2:18). As Nehemiah reported what God was doing in his life others responded. They responded by saying, "Let us rise up and build." They were stirred to work together when they heard how God had stirred Nehemiah's heart, and the confirmation of God's leading was seen in the king's response.

When other people hear and see that God is beginning a work of restoration in our lives, they will be stirred to respond and help. People often greatly desire to help but are unaware of the need. When we share our desire for restoration, they respond with a helping hand.

4. Build: "So we built the wall, and the entire wall was joined together up to half its *height*, for the people had a mind to work." (Nehemiah 4:6). As the people worked together the wall was half-way completed. As they worked, there was measurable progress. Like a proven diet plan, when you follow the plan and work at it, you will see measurable progress. The key is to remember to work. The people built because they had a mind to work. The decision to build or work is the beginning of restoration.

In our culture, we are attracted to ads that tell us that we can lose all the weight we want while eating all the junk food we want and not working out at all. We foolishly think we can get results without working, building, or effort. We should desire to be diligent to seek God, and work to build that relationship.

Consider your relationship with God. A good relationship takes work, but unfortunately fixing a bad relationship takes more work. If we desire to restore so that it will last, we need to properly maintain what is being built. The issues are two-fold: What is the maintenance need? And are we performing the maintenance? For example, I would be happy if someone gave me either a Hummer or a Ferrari. But the maintenance needs of the two vehicles are probably very different. I imagine the Hummer can go 100,000 miles on one oil change, but the Ferrari is a typical temperamental Italian sports car requiring maintenance every 3,000 miles. What do I need to do to maintain a well-tuned relationship with God?

Relationships are often complicated by the fact that there is no owner's manual. So we need to determine what the maintenance need is, and then work to perform the maintenance.

5. Fight: "So we labored in the work, and half of *the men* held the spears from daybreak until the stars appeared" (Nehemiah 4:21).

"And I looked, and arose and said to the nobles, to the leaders, and to the rest of the people, 'Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, great and awesome, and fight for your brethren, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your houses'" (Nehemiah 4:14).

When we are seeking to restore we should expect a fight. I'm not suggesting that we fight one another but that we fight for our relationships and the ministry God gives us. The enemy of men's souls wants to oppose the work of God, so we should expect a battle. Satan has a corresponding hatred for the things that God loves. What are we willing to fight for? As the people met opposition in their effort to restore the wall, Nehemiah urged them to not be afraid, to remember the Lord, and to fight for their families. I can't think of anything more precious to fight for than our families. But we should also be highly motivated to fight for our ministry.

In regard to ministry what would you be willing to fight for?

In Romans 8:37 we are reminded that we are more than conquerors. The Greek term *nikao* (e.g. Nike) meaning "victorious" is modified by *hyper* (ie. hyper-victorious) to yield "more than conquerors." I would be satisfied to be a conqueror, yet I am reminded that I am more than a conqueror. I imagine the scene of a boxer standing over his beaten opponent sprawled upon the canvas with limbs flung in every direction like a child's bendable toy figure tossed upon the floor. The victorious boxer has his arms held high as a champion. When I feel like tossing in the towel and giving up the fight, the words of Nehemiah like a good "ring-man" encourage me to go back and fight another round. Rather than toss in the towel, and give up because of the beating we have taken, let's fight and experience the thrill of victory in defeating the enemy. We may lose a round or two, but the fight is not over.

6. Finish: "So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth *day* of Elul, in fifty-two days" (Nehemiah 6:15). In fifty-two days the wall was rebuilt. In about two months, sooner than expected, the wall around the city was completed. The enemies of God's people said that the

wall would never be completed and that the wall would be so weak that if a fox walked upon the wall that it would break (Nehemiah 4:3), yet the archeological evidence reveals that the wall was nine feet thick. The people had security, the city was resettled, worship was restored, and they grew and prospered. Restoration had taken place not only of the wall but in the lives of the people of the city.

The Jewish historian, Josephus, tells us that the work of rebuilding continued for the next two years. In other words, although the wall was rebuilt, there was still work to do to finish the job. The people finished what God had called them to do.

It is important to see that the work of restoration and repair took place far sooner than anyone would have expected. In less than two months, the wall was repaired. Sometimes in ministry, God will restore a person sooner than expected. For example, Jonah was restored in three days after his rebellion. Peter was restored in less than forty days after denying the Lord three times (John 21:15).

Time is a relevant factor for restoration. Paul urged Timothy not to lay hands on anyone hastily (1Timothy 5:22). In other words don't be too quick to recognize or restore authority. Yet, the Bible does not give us hard rules regarding a timeline. It reminds me of when I was a kid, and we would go swimming. After lunch, my mom would make my brother and me wait to go in the pool. If we had an apple, we waited ten minutes; a sandwich, fifteen minutes; or a slice of pizza, twenty minutes. I wondered if there was some sort of chart that moms had that would give them these guidelines. Similarly, in ministry we don't have firm timelines to determine how much time must elapse before someone is restored. A good guideline is uttered by John the Baptist to the religious leaders, "Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance" (Matthew 3:8). When someone has truly repented, there is fruit manifest to confirm the change of heart. Just as fruit in the natural realm takes time to be revealed, in the spiritual realm there needs to be the passing of a season to bear fruit. Once the fruit of repentance has truly been manifest, then restoration can take place. Finally, let us remember that God desires to see us restored.

Discussion question: how can a testimony of restoration bring comfort and edify others? [consider assigning as possible lifework].

Lesson 30: Ministry and People – Relationship Building

intro: John 15:12-15

Why do you like your best friend? What do you think are important qualities of a good friend?

Jesus said the disciples were His friends. They were so close they were like brothers. He wasn't into networking but relationship building. Jesus displays a perfect balance between relationship and task. Jesus uses His ministry to build people, rather than using people to build His ministry. Jesus accomplishes task through relationship. As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another (Pr. 27:17).

In God's kingdom, authority is related to influence rather than position or office [Matt.20:25-28]. Thus, to lead effectively in God's kingdom, you must develop relationships and team rather than relying on a position to establish power.

Subject: Relationship building

Object: Build relationships

After the Civil War, a group of die-hard former Southern rebels met with President Lincoln. The President's gentle, friendly manner, created a new respect from his old enemies. A northern politician criticized Mr. Lincoln for befriending the enemy, and suggested that instead of befriending them he should have had them shot as traitors. Lincoln replied, "Am I not destroying my enemies by making them my friends?"

1. The problem: ministry at its essence involves relationships. Effective ministry requires the development of relationships and team. The establishment of healthy relationships is threatened by the amount of tasks that need to be completed, and thereby minimize our available time for relationships. The problem is further complicated by the apparent truth that some in our culture are not as relational as they need to be.

What are some other obstacles to building relationships?

2. The solution: consider Jesus' example for relationship building.

Jesus gathered the disciples together and told them they were his friends. They were like brothers to Him. What were some of the qualities of their relationship that teach us about friendship?

a. Love: Good friends really care about you. They are willing to put the needs of others before their own. They are willing to make a sacrifice. Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends." Love is often expressed through sacrifice for another. For example, David and King Saul's son, Jonathan, were best friends (1Samuel 18). Jonathan was a prince, and would likely be the next king. But, Jonathan knew that God had called David to be the next king. Jonathan was a real friend and made a great sacrifice to help David become the next king.

David and Jonathan were men who forged a relationship based on a common love for God, a shared great faith, and mutual acceptance. When Jonathan gave his royal garments to David, he was in effect saying David was his equal and peer. David was accepted even though he was a lowly shepherd and Jonathan a prince.

b. Respect: the feelings and wishes of others. Jesus' friends respected what He told them. Jesus associates friendship with respect when He declares, "You are My friends if you do whatever I command you." If you ask a friend not to do something, and they keep doing it, they may not be a good friend. Respect can also be demonstrated by loyalty. Good friends stick with each other through the good times and the bad times. Jesus was committed to the disciple to the end, and after a brief lapse of faith, the disciples were loyal to Him. Proverbs 17:17 reminds us that real friends love at all times – through thick and thin - unconditionally.

David respected Jonathan and continued to treat him as a prince, even when the kingdom had been taken by God from Jonathan's family. Jonathan was loyal to David, and protected him from his father Saul.

c. Communicate with each other. Jesus told the disciples important things about His life and about God. Good friends learn to share their feelings, fears, hopes, disappointments, and excitement. Good friends should be honest with each other, counsel us to do the right things, and should encourage us, rather than discourage us. Remember, "The wounds from a friend can be trusted" (Pr.27:6).

Good friends bring comfort. We don't have to be careful about what we say, or how we say it, we can just pour out our hearts, and know they will listen and not judge us harshly. Good relationships are often forged by communicating encouragement, and comfort. Jonathan went the extra mile to meet David in the wilderness to offer encouragement after David was betrayed by the people of Keilah (1Sam. 23). Titus went the extra mile to comfort Paul, and report good news about the church at Corinth (2Cor. 7:6-7).

Remember, communication involves listening. Jesus was a great listener he heard their fears, dreams, hopes and feelings, and He truly cared. He never seemed to hurry people, but knew when it was time to move on.

d. Time. Jesus had special relationships with the 3 (Peter, John, and James), the 12 (the disciples), the 70 (those He sent out on a first missionary journey), and the multitudes (the many who came to Him, both believers and others). The role that the three and the 12 would experience was different than the 70 or the multitude. Accordingly, Jesus spent sufficient time with them to prepare them.

LIFEWORk [class group exercise]

What makes you a good friend? How can you be a better friend?

Lesson 31: Ministry and People – Reaching Your City

intro. Nehemiah 7:1-3

Discussion question: How does your local church impact your community?

When we come to the seventh chapter of the book of Nehemiah, we see that the city wall has been completed, and the people have returned to dwell in the city. A great spiritual harvest is about to occur, and Jerusalem is once again being won for the Lord. Jesus promised His church that as they received the power of His Holy Spirit, they would be His witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the outermost parts of the world (Acts 1:8). He was promising an influence for Christ in the immediate area of a church and an expanding sphere of influence. In this lesson, we learn how we can reach our city for Jesus.

Subject: How to reach your city for Jesus

Object: Reach your city

Outline:

1. Protect
2. Praise
3. Priority
4. Plan

1. Protect: how can a church protect its community? The theme here is a desire to protect the city. Nehemiah appointed gatekeepers. Generally, gatekeepers stood guard at the Temple gates, but because of the danger the guards were placed at the city gates. Generally, city gates were opened at dawn and closed at sunset. Here, the security need resulted in the gates being opened for only limited hours. Also, the gates were barred after people entered or exited. Some of the guards were posted at homes, and others were posted at strategic or vulnerable locations.

The watch was set to protect the city from harm. Similarly, a church can help protect a city from corruption. The church can help shut the city doors to corrupting influences. There are corrupting influences of philosophies such as hedonism, materialism, secularism, and relativism. There are polluting influences of pornography, alcohol, and drug abuse. Providing a watch may not have anything to do with political activism, or a boycott. The watch will take place regardless of these efforts simply by learning the standard of God's Word and applying the truth in people's lives.

2. Praise: The theme here is spiritual preparation for praise. Nehemiah made it a priority to appoint singers who would help the people to learn to praise and worship God. There is an urgent need to help people learn to worship. God has created us with a desire to worship. Everyone is a worshiper. The only question is what or whom will we worship? Although **people have a desire to worship, they need to learn how to worship God.** I want to **be careful not to reduce worship to merely praising God in song. Worship is much greater than merely singing, it is something we do with all of our heart mind, soul, heart, and strength.** Yet worship seems to travel so well through the medium of song.

Worship music is a particularly attractive way to help draw people to the Lord. Ideally, worship music inspires us to desire to see our lives transformed by an intimate relationship with God. The singers are to have a passion for God that helps us to enter His presence, see His power to defeat the enemy, and be delivered from things that bind us.

The church that teaches people how to worship God will reach its city for Jesus. God's people need to learn to praise Him so that the world can see the light of Christ and be drawn to Him. When our church was meeting in a shopping center storefront, we had a sanctuary filled wall-to-wall with two hundred twenty-five chairs. As a person walked past or drove by, he would watch and listen to the church praise God. People standing up, raising their hands, and singing to the Lord, can be a curious spectacle and also be very attractive. On many occasions, people were attracted to the music and would enter the sanctuary, hear the gospel, and would receive the Lord. People are often drawn to God through praise and worship as moths are drawn to light.

3. Priority: the priority is God's Word. Spiritual transformation of a city has the Word of God as a foundation. Nehemiah appointed Levites to minister. Levites were responsible for ministry in the Tabernacle and the Temple. They helped the priests who made sacrifices and were responsible for maintenance. After the Babylonian conquest and the destruction of the Temple, the responsibility to teach God's word became the priority. God desired to use the Levites to minister the Word because they were the messengers of the Lord (Malachi 2:4-7). Towards the end of chapter seven of Nehemiah, we learn that there were only seventy-four Levites who returned with Ezra to Jerusalem from Babylon (v.43). Interestingly, when Ezra was about to leave Babylon about thirteen years earlier, he had to delay to enlist additional Levites (Ezra 8:15-20). In other words, **there was a shortage of those who were capable and/ or willing to minister as teachers.**

There is a need for sound Bible teaching to impact a city for Christ, but it is difficult to find. Even today, it seems that there are not enough committed "Levites" to teach the Word of God. God said that His Word does not return void, but would accomplish what God pleases and prosper in the thing for which God sent (Isaiah 55:11). God guarantees that if we teach His Word, He will make it prosper. What the church needs to do is simply communicate the simple truth of God's Word. The church does not need to try to compete with the world to entertain people, but we need to present Jesus to people by the Word.

4. Plan: five principles regarding a plan to win a city for Christ:

a. Large: The scope of Nehemiah's vision was big. As the walls of the city were rebuilt to their original size, the city had a capacity for a population of about a half million people. Yet the population at the time of rebuilding was only 50,000 (7:66-69). God had put a big vision into Nehemiah's heart, and he had the faith to begin and complete a large undertaking. Too often we underestimate the size of our God and limit the scope of the vision. Often we are reflecting our limitations rather than reflecting God's ability.

b. Leaven: Leaven or yeast is a picture of corruption or impurity. When God does a new work, He encourages His people to remove the leaven so that they might be pure. Therefore, the Hebrews removed the leaven from their homes in connection with the Passover, and the church is reminded that it is pure and without leaven (Exodus 12, 1Corinthians 5:6). Nehemiah used a registry to assure that the city was repopulated by Hebrews (7:5). The register was a record of

the faithful who returned under Zerubbabel (Ezra 2:1-70). Those who were unable to establish genealogies as priests were excluded from ministry (Exodus 28, Leviticus 8). The work was new, and Nehemiah wanted to keep the work pure.

Similarly, when a new work was begun in the Promised Land by Joshua, God quickly removed the impurity as Achan was judged for deception and disobedience (Joshua 7). In the life of the early church, God also quickly removed leaven as Ananias and Sapphira were judged for the sin of hypocrisy (Ac. 5).

The work of ministry is to be done by God's people. Imagine a worship team full of talented musicians and singers, who are looking for a new drummer. They don't know any Christians who can play well enough to fit in the group. So they decide to have a non-believer play drums in the group, hoping that the influence of the worship team and the church will help lead him to the Lord. The problem is that the drummer does not even know the Lord, let alone have a desire to lead others to worship Him. This is the type of impurity that can corrupt. We can't forget what leading worship is truly all about. We are trying to lead God's people into the presence of the True and Living God.

The ministry of the church has to be done by people with a passion for purity and a passion for Him. Then our city will see that there is something that sets us apart to Him and draws them to God.

c. Leaders: If a church is to reach a city, it needs effective leaders. We are told that Nehemiah gave charge of Jerusalem to his brother, Hanani, and Hananiah the leader of the citadel, for he was faithful. In the first chapter, Hanani reported to Nehemiah the sad condition of the people of Jerusalem before the wall was rebuilt. Hanani's compassion and concern for God's people was evident and compelling as seen by Nehemiah's response of going to Jerusalem to rebuild the wall.

Nehemiah was likely returning to Persia to report to the king regarding the developments at Jerusalem. These men were reverent and reliable. They had a love for God and could be counted on to be where they were supposed to be when they were supposed to be there. Hananiah was faithful, and he was also the leader of the citadel. The citadel is the fortress. As a military man he was courageous and ready to lay down his own life to protect God's people. As the leader of the citadel, he was also presumed to be an effective leader. Hanani and Hananiah were men of integrity, truth, character, and competence. These are the kind of leaders God desires (Exodus 18:2; 1Timothy 3).

If the city of Jerusalem were to be won for God, it would need more leaders than merely Nehemiah. In the seventh chapter, we see that Nehemiah developed a leadership and ministry team. There were priests and Levites appointed to lead the people in worship. There were gatekeepers appointed to protect the people. Also, the Nethinim, literally "dedicated ones" who were temple servants that assisted the Levites (7:46-60). With a leadership team in place, and a commitment to win the city, a fruitful ministry flourished.

d. Laity: Laity refers to the people who will be ministered to. In chapter seven there is a list of the families that came with Zerubbabel as pioneers returning from Babylon to Jerusalem (6-38). Families and villagers who settled outside of the city are identified. The names are unfamiliar to

us, but God has kept a record of them and preserved them in His word for us. These people were about to make a huge life transition as they left their farms outside of the city to come and repopulate the city. Fifty thousand people returned to Jerusalem at that time, and within a relatively brief period of time, the population would increase more than ten times.

Who are the people that we are called to minister to? While God certainly knows them, have we sought to connect with them? They are about to make a tremendous life transition as they leave the world and enter the Christian life. Are you sensitive to the needs of your city as you try to reach the city for Him? We need to know the people of our community in order to reach them.

e. Love gift: At the end of the chapter (70-73), we see that Nehemiah, the leaders, and the rest of the people gave generous gifts and substantial donations to the treasury. The desire to win the city for Christ typically comes with a price tag. Fortunately, the greatest price has already been paid by Jesus. Nevertheless, if we want to see our city won for Jesus, it involves sacrifice of our time, talent, and treasure. These sacrifices will be effective if motivated by love.

LIFEWOR

List ways that your church impacts your community.

Lesson 32: Ministry and People – Recognizing Gifts

intro: Eph. 4:11-12

God gave some to be evangelists, missionaries, pastors and teachers (Eph. 4:11). Not all evangelists are pastors, not all teachers are evangelists. You need to know your calling.

J. Oswald Sanders observes, “Leadership is the ability to recognize the limits and abilities of others and the capacity to fit each one into the job where they will do their best.”

Effective church leadership involves the ability to recognize gifts. This involves leaders being able to recognize their own gifts, as well as identifying the gifts of other team members. An effective team leader knows his calling as well as the ability to discern the best position for others to fill. You must be able to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the team.

Subject: Recognizing gifts

Object: Realize your own gifts, and the gifts of others.

Outline:

1. Recognizing the gifts of others
2. Recognizing your gifts

1. Recognizing the gifts of others

The example of Stephen and Phillip Acts 6:1-8

Context: a dispute arose in regard to a benevolence program such that the Greek/Hellenistic widows complained that the Hebrew women received preferential treatment. The disciples realized that it would be unwise to neglect the ministry of prayer and the Word, so they delegated this ministry to others.

a. It is unhealthy for the leaders and the body to neglect gifts

b. Ministry needs often help to reveal gifts in the body

6:2 There was an appeal to the multitude of disciples

c. Make the body aware of the needs

d. Know what you are called to do. The apostles knew that they were called to focus on prayer and the teaching of the word rather than directly overseeing the food ministry. Learn what you are called **not to do** (develop a not to do list).

e. For any job, there are necessary gifts: what does the job require?

i. Good reputation: The people chosen were known to those they were serving. They came from within the church and had a good reputation.

ii. Full of the spirit: The people chosen to serve need to be spiritual people, who are controlled by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit empowers us to serve.

iii. Wisdom: The reference is to spiritual wisdom that God imparts to those who are close to Him. This is the ability to know what to do in difficult situations.

iv. Availability: God needs availability more than ability. God will enable those he has called. Someone may be very gifted, but if they are unavailable they will not be used. Consider following-up at a later date

v. The right person for the job: In the case of the complaints from the Greek widows, all the people chosen to serve had Greek names. They were the right people for this job. They were likely chosen because it was expected that they would be able to relate to the people they were ministering to. Consider people as well as task issues.

What might some job description provisions included for this position?

- Prior experience in food distribution/benevolence in synagogue.
- Length of commitment (e.g. month, 6 months, a year).
- Weekly time commitment/expectation.
- Prior ministry leadership experience.
- Training development for volunteers.
- How many widows are we currently feeding and how many would we like to serve in the coming year?

vi. Results: can often provide evidence of a person's calling. When people are walking in their gifts, a church will be blessed. The **church influence grew** (Acts 6:7). The Word of God spread. The church grew rapidly, implying multiplication rather than mere addition, as people were drawn to the message, the joy, the love, and the enthusiasm of the church. Even Jewish priests, the least likely to be converted, came to believe.

Development: those who served grew. We see that Stephen was entrusted by the Lord with miraculous power, and in the next chapter we see him deliver a stirring defense of the faith before the religious leaders. Also, we see that Philip had a tremendously effective ministry as an evangelist in Samaria. As people are encouraged to use their gifts, they grow, and often new gifts are revealed.

Those who are faithful in small things are often entrusted with greater responsibility (Matthew 25:23).

2. Recognizing your gifts:

Effective ministry requires that we realize our own calling/gifts, as well as the gifts of team members. Spiritually mature people can seek to minister in areas they have not been called to, so be careful. Paul was called to minister primarily to Gentiles (Acts 9:15), but he wanted to minister to Jews. Unfortunately, this was not his calling, and the results were essentially unsuccessful and often disastrous. Paul wanted to go to the Roman province of Asia, but was forbidden by the Holy Spirit (Acts 16:6-10), and was directed to Philippi.

God gave some to be evangelists, missionaries, pastors and teachers (Eph.4:11). Not all evangelists are pastors, not all teachers are evangelists. You need to know your calling.

God will give you the desire(s), and then confirm His gifts and calling through open/closed doors and resources (Phil. 2:13).

LIFEWOR

1. What are you gifted to do? What are some of your strengths and weaknesses?
2. What gifts are needed to enhance your team to be more effective?

Module IX: Missions

Lesson 33: Heart of Missions

Psalm 22 Great Messianic Psalm (22:27 shows purpose of missions)

“All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before you” (Ps. 22:7).

intro. The ultimate and overreaching mission of God to bring worshippers to Himself.

“Missions is not the ultimate goal of the Church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn’t. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever.”

- John Piper, intro to “Let the Nations Be Glad”

Subject: God’s heart for missions.

Object: be on God’s mission

I. What is God’s heart for missions?

A. What is missions?

1. Missions are often considered an activity or ministry of the church like youth missions, short-term missions, missionaries, and downtown rescue missions. All those activities are good and right, but they tend to define missions as man’s activities. It is better to consider missions as a work of God as a response to the fall in Genesis 3. This is displayed beautifully in what is probably the best known verse of the Bible:

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)

Consider the word “love” in the verse speaks of the unconditional grace filled agape love of God. Then consider the word “world” is the word “kosmos,” which we transliterate to cosmos and means the whole order of creation. God unconditionally loves the whole world. that helps us understand God’s heart.

2. Let us define “missions” as: “God’s plan displayed in man’s activities to gather His own special people from all cultures to proclaim the praises of the God that saved them out of darkness.” that definition makes missions a response to God’s goodness and makes it cross-cultural without necessarily making missions defined by geography [though it is often in far off lands, reaching every nation, tribe and tongue is often done domestically]. today that is primarily done through His people the church and is why foreign and domestic missions are primarily activities focused around church planting and building up of existing churches. The results are peoples worshiping and praising the God that called them out of darkness and into His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9).

B. What is “misseo dei?” (Latin, “mission of God”).

1. Thought of as a communicable attribute of God (character aspect He shares with us).

3 Points to consider.

i. Mission of God is not primarily a ministry of the church, but character of God displayed in the

ministry of the church (Acts 1:8).

ii. Mission of God is His mission played out through His people being sent to serve and save as He was sent to serve and save (John 17:8).

iii. Mission of God began with response to man's rejection of God in the garden, "Where are you?" (Gen. 3:9) and continued through "The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). It will be final when all redeemed of every nation, tribe and tongue gather around the throne in heaven to worship the Lamb that was slain to save them (Rev. 7:9).

C. God's heart for mission is displayed throughout the Bible.

Note: "Nations" in the Bible is usually not a geo-political identification. The word in Hebrew is usually "*goyim*" meaning Gentiles, or often something closer to an ethno-linguistic grouping. Generally it is those outside of God's people.

1. The mission began at point of separation (death) from God – Gen. 3:15.
2. God is willing to kill to save, requires shedding of blood – Gen. 3:21.
3. God was creating His own special people – Gen. 12:1-3.
4. God is willing to turn from wrath to save His people – Ex. 32:12-13.
5. Among the reasons God parted the Red Sea was as a witness to the unbelievers around the Children of Israel, "That all the peoples of the earth may know the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty, that you may fear the LORD your God forever." - Josh. 4:23-34,
6. Temple worship was never for Jews only - 1 Kings 8:43.
7. David brought the Ark into Jerusalem for all peoples -1 Chron. 16:24.
8. The Jews sang hymns and psalms of the Nations being an inheritance for God - Psalm 2:8.
9. God's gospel has always been for all poor, all brokenhearted, and to set all captives free - Isaiah 61:1-2.
10. God eternal plan always included Gentiles, other nations, those far off - Ezek. 47:22.
11. Messiah has always been the desire [treasure-wealth] of all nations – Hag. 2:7.
12. Consider the Apostles preached the saving message of Jesus ONLY from the Old Testament.

D. God's heart for missions is best and perfectly displayed in Jesus Christ.

1. Consider John 3:16 and that God sent His only Son as a sacrifice.
2. Jesus was intentionally sent to live an incarnate life among sinful man.
 - a. Incarnate speaks of living in the flesh among people. John begins his Gospel making the point of Jesus being an incarnate missionary: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." and "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:1, 14.
 - b. Jesus left all the perfection of heaven to suffer and die. Jesus then entered and dwelt in a fallen culture to purposely create understanding between God and culture.

II. The believer's heart for missions.

A. seeing God's heart, what should a believer's heart be towards missions?

1. some have suggested 3 choices for believers & the missionary endeavor:

i. **Involved:** missionaries and full-time ministry workers regularly engaged in bringing gospel to a culture.

ii. **Support:** people that pray, give practical help and financial support for those that serve full-time.

iii. **Ignore:** people not engaged in God's missionary endeavor because missions is optional.

B. Paul recognizes: "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? And how shall they preach unless they are sent?" [Rom 10:14-15a].

C. what are the motives for missions?

i. **The wrong motives: "mission guilt" or "pride of mission"**

Guilt can propel people onto the mission field or to support missions. On the other end of the spectrum, is the danger of pride for the missionary activities a church engages in, or lifting missionaries themselves as "Super Christians."

ii. **The right motive for missions is outpouring of passion for God and His gospel.** God is not dependent upon us, as if He needs us. instead of guilt or pride, missions should be our response and the outflow of the worship we give to the God that saved us. We encounter Him and have the great blessing of being able to worship and praise our God. It is natural to then desire others to encounter Him and be able to honor Him with worship and praise as we are able to honor Him with worship and praise.

Note: consider if you were given great seats to a world series baseball game. The only condition would be that you could not cheer or talk about the game. You could only watch and there was to be no response on your part. It would be frustrating and leave the watcher pent up. Every great play on the field would elicit great desire to cheer, yell, maybe even scream, but you must remain sitting and quite. Our joy at experiencing the game would be a natural outflow. Our joy of the Lord should naturally be our outflow and spontaneous response to who He is, which of course includes His missionary nature.

a. **Henry Martyn**, missionary and Bible translator to India and Persia in early 1800's, "The Spirit of Christ is the spirit of missions, and the nearer we get to Him, the more intensely missionary we become."

D. How can we align our heart with God's heart for Misseo Dei?

1. Live God's mission by ministering to the Lord: It was in a time of intimacy and ministering to the Lord that the Holy Spirit gave direction for Paul and Barnabas' first missionary journey. Even after clear direction to go by the Holy Spirit Paul and Barnabas continued to fast and pray, presumably for more intimacy (Acts 13:1-3).

2. Live God's mission in the power of the Holy Spirit: Compassion, mercy and being broken for others is good and Christ like, but it is not the primary fuel for missions. The problems of the world are overwhelming and we are limited. All our strength and all our resources are but a drop in the bucket of the sea of suffering and desperation. We will run out, be burnt out and ineffective if mission is fueled by anything except God's power. This is true of all missions efforts.

3. Live God's mission with love: the greatest human missionary, Paul, said his driving force was the love of Christ. It is telling that Paul continues not by saying the love of Christ compelled him to live and serve others, but the love of Christ compelled him to live for Christ (2 Cor. 5:14-15).

This is knowing God's heart for missions and joining His mission, *Misero Deo*. This is when we can begin to know our heart for mission.

a. Missiologists, those that study missions and the expansion of God's church, often call this "**top line and bottom line theology**." Top line is the Missionary God on God's Mission engages a life and the result is the person responding with a bottom line of praise and desire for others to have the same. Some have refined the term to say, "**blessed to be a blessing**."

i. Gen 12:1-3, top line is God will bless Abraham, make his name great and bring a great nation through him. **bottom line** is so all the families of the earth shall be blessed as Messiah would come through his line.

ii. Psalm 67, top line is God is merciful, blesses and causes His face to shine upon His people. **bottom line** is so His ways may be known on all the earth and people will sing His praises.

iii. 1 Peter 2:9, top line is God's chosen people are lavished with extravagant titles and called "His own special people." **Bottom line** is "You may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light"

E. heart of action: when our heart is united to God's heart action always results.

Note: in 33CE there were approximately 120 known Christians in the world (Acts 1:15). The number jumped to 3,000 in one day (Acts 2:41) but still likely represented less than 1% of people in Jerusalem. today 2.2-billion people identify themselves as Christian and represent approximately 33% of the world.

1. Heart of action includes living God's mission in your culture or mission field:

a. Live purposely incarnational at work, school, neighborhood, and where you recreate.

i. Recreational youth sports and social gatherings (e.g. coffee houses).

2. Heart of action includes short-term missions trips (under two-years).

a. Consider opportunities within your local church. Consider what place, people and needs stir you (e.g. orphans, pastoral training, construction, relief work).

b. Consider opportunities outside of your local church, possibly para-church.

3. Heart of action includes full-time, or career, missions and Christian workers.

a. Supporting indigenous churches or missionary churches.

b. Supporting para-church works.

Note: generally God's tool for missions and discipleship is His church and He promises it will not fail (Matt. 16:18). He has allowed many fine para-church organizations to work along churches and to aid churches in their missionary endeavors.

i. Medical outreach: Can be midwifery, dental, health teaching.

ii. Sex/human trafficking ministry: domestic and internationally.

iii. Bible translation: there are an estimated 2,000 people groups without a Bible in their language for a total of 350-million people.

iv. Vocational training: most unreached peoples live in poverty and relationships can be developed through training.

v. Micro-enterprise: helping establish small business loans to help the disadvantaged or help poor pastors establish their “tentmaking” work to fund their ministry.

vi. Purposeful tent making: taking jobs and career moves to purposefully put yourself in contact with people otherwise cut off from the gospel. This is particularly useful in closed countries and often includes elements of all of the above.

vii. Teaching English as a second language: many otherwise closed countries will invite foreigners to come teach, even paying salaries and housing.

viii. Immigrant and refugee ministry domestic and foreign: health, sanitation and logistics ministry in war and crisis situations has proven effective. God has also brought thousands of refugees to America and they are all seeking help.

4. Heart of action includes church planting.

- a. Noted missiologist Ed Stetzer recently observed,** “There are no verses expressly telling God’s people to plant churches. The apostles simply interpreted the great commission of Jesus as the Lord’s directive to spread His church. This is why we believe church planting is the core of missions.”

LIFEWOR

1. How are you presently involved in God’s mission?
2. What are some ways you would like to become more involved in the next year?

Lesson 34: Missions – Call to Missions

intro: The missionary call is often spoken of in hushed voices like it is super special. Some may see it as a burden, or worse, they see it as contagious and to be avoided. Others see it as a great blessing. few understand it.

The Bible speaks very clearly of God's call to salvation, God's call to holiness, and God's call to service, but most Bible scholars agree the “missionary call” is a bit of a mystery. The Bible does not give a clear definition or list of qualifications for those called to missions. the call to leave all that is familiar and join God's mission as a cross-cultural minister of the gospel can be distinct.

So what is the call? The call to missions is primarily a response to seeing God and responding by joining Him in His endeavor to seek and save that which was lost. All Christ followers should be on His mission, but it seems He gives a special missionary call to some.

Isaiah 6:1-8

Prophet Isaiah 1) had God revealed to him, 2) repented before God, 3) responded to the holiness of God by going for God.

Subject: God's call to mission.

Object: discern your call, respond to your call.

Breaking the paralysis of analysis concerning the missionary call: understanding of the mystery of the missionary call can be better understood by breaking it into 4 points: 1) compassion, 2) commission, 3) conviction & 4) confirmation.

I. What is compassion & how does it relate to call to mission?

A. compassion of Jesus resulted in action:

1. Compassion can begin with pity and concern, but God's compassion always has the element of desire for action leading to transformed lives and kingdom expansion. consider from heaven God saw the suffering of His people Israel under the bondage of Egypt, heard their cry, and acted by coming down to deliver them (Exodus 3:7-8).

i. Jesus made a whip, chased the moneychangers and overturned their tables comes from compassion after seeing the Court of the Gentiles blocked along with their access to God (John 2).

ii. Jesus healed the multitude of their sicknesses in compassion after seeing their suffering (Matt. 14:14).

iii. The Good Samaritan had compassion after seeing another suffering human on the side of the road, even after other religious people passed him by (Luke 10:33).

iv. Compassion lead the father to run, fall on the neck and kiss his prodigal son (Luke 15:20).

B. Our knowledge of the lost and suffering brings compassion leading to desire for mission action:

Note: most of these statistics are in the 10/40 window. the area of Middle-East, Asia and North-Africa that is 10-degrees by 40-degrees north of the equator that has 1) the greatest densities of people, 2) greatest socio economic challenges and 3) least access to the gospel.

1. See the multitudes and have compassion leading to action:

- i. **Unreached peoples** = 7,000 + groups without enough Christians (under 2%) to sustain themselves (Joshua Project).
- ii. **Unengaged peoples** = about 3,200 of the unreached peoples are unengaged: meaning there is no known gospel witness among them (Joshua Project).
- iii. **Bible access:** 513 of 6,800 languages have the whole Bible. about 2,000 people groups have no Scripture translation at all (SIL/Wycliffe).
- iv. **Poverty:** 80% of the world lives on under \$10-per-day. 40% live under \$2-per-day. UNICEF reports 22,000 children die from poverty related issues every day.
- v. **Human trafficking (about 80% sex exploitation, 20% labor exploitation):** the average cost of a human is under \$90 and there are about 27-million people trapped in various forms of slavery right now according to Doctors at War.

2. Knowledge of these things may compel compassion leading to life transforming and kingdom expanding action. Compassion should go from knowledge to burden for those suffering without hope in Jesus.

Consider people groups that God has put on your heart (Country, particular need, particular situation).

- i. **Location:** e.g. China, Africa Mexico?
- ii. **People:** poor, widows, orphans, single mothers, teens, disabled.

What is the great commission? What can you do?

Matt. 28:19-20 is the best known great commission statement, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen."

In 1896 a man in an Atlanta laboratory mixed water, flavoring and sugar to make what he called Coca-Cola. The endeavor cost him \$70 and the first year he only made \$50 in return, which was a considerable loss in 1896. Within a few years the small company developed methods to bottle the sweet drink, which allowed for wide spread distribution. Today 94% of the world recognizes Coca-Cola signage. [taken from "The Missionary Call," by David Sills]. today approximately 33% of the world recognize Jesus as Lord and many have never heard His name. Obviously, some are not hearing the commission of Jesus to spread His fame.

A. The commission is about going to nations.

Note: our God is relational and created us in that image. while statistics are important, the great commission compels us to engage people.

1. Go local to international people

- i. Ask Muslim friends if you can join them for Eid-al-Fitr celebrations. offer cakes, dates or other blessings for the end of the fast.
- ii. Offer new immigrants help navigating social systems, DMV or to explain an American holiday [Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter...].
- iii. Purposely shop in an ethnic community, purposely learn to greet in their language.
- iv. Go on mission to a place where there are few Christians, or at least people are ignoring the

gospel (make an evening of playing pool in a gay bar, go to a punk rock concert, take Indian/Arab/Indonesian/Chinese cooking classes).

v. Save some July fireworks and celebrate Diwali.

2. Learn internationally about people

i. Follow the missions endeavors of your local church.

ii. Follow international news sources [Aljazeera, BBC, Asia Times...].

iii. Read about world evangelism: "Operation World," Joshua Project, U.S. Center for World Mission, "Evangelical Missions Quarterly," "Mission Frontier Magazine."

3. Go internationally to people, not statistics.

i. give, pray, help and go on a short-term mission through your local church.

ii. many career missionaries recount a short-term mission experience where they felt God calling and commissioning them to full-time incarnational missions.

iii. pray to discover if you are to remain at home or to go.

What happens when God convicts us to action?

Conviction, related to the missionary call, usually comes from having God's compassion and a deep, almost burdensome desire to take action with the great commission.

The Apostle Paul already had the missionary call by the time of his second missionary journey in Acts 16, but we can learn much about the missionary call by looking at how God called him to go to Macedonia. clearly Paul had compassion as the Macedonian man pleaded for help. Paul was focused on the great commission because the Lord lead to the preaching of the gospel, but there must have also been conviction to go because Paul changed his plans to go to Asia (Acts 16:9-10).

A. God's conviction compels you to action, 1Cor. 9:16 "For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for NECESSITY is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!"

1. Hudson Taylor, the missionary to China, said, "Words can never describe it. I felt I was in the presence of God, entering into covenant with the Almighty. I felt as if I wished to withdraw my promise, but I could not. Something seemed to say, 'your prayer is answered, your conditions are accepted.' And from that time the conviction never left me that I was called to China."

2. Amy Carmichael saved many children from temple prostitution in India, pouring out her life for 55 years without a furlough. she prayed and heard, "Go ye." the conviction was so strong that she told her mother, "I cannot stay" (from Amy Carmichael of Dohnavur: the Story of a Lover and Her Beloved).

B. Conviction is needed because there is great opposition to call.

1. Spiritual opposition at the hater of our souls attempts to stop the edification of God's church (Matt 16:18, 1 Thess. 2:18).

2. Family and relationship opposition pulling missionaries to return.

3. Selfish opposition of putting your own desires for comfort before God's call.

4. Church opposition as people focus on local ministry instead of going to nations.

C. Conviction is needed: missions are difficult and temptation is to give up.

1. Consider Paul's CV: "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— besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches" (2 Cor. 11:25-28).

- i. Danger of violence.
- ii. Danger of transportation in developing nations.
- iii. Exhausting journeys.
- iv. Broken relationships among nationals, other missionaries, friends.
- v. False accusations: with today's internet technology rumors and lies spread even from remote areas.
- vi. Hunger, weariness, hard work, lack of sleep.
- vii. Distress over the work.

2. There must be conviction enough to step in faith. To the point where faith almost becomes sight. A missionary must be able to communicate that conviction.

IV. How will compassion, commission and conviction come to confirmation?

Presuming there is compassion for the lost and suffering, an engagement in the great commission and a personal conviction of calling, then the calling should be confirmed before major steps are taken. though possibly at a lesser level, this is true of short-term and domestic missions as well as international.

A. Confirmation in prayer, fasting and Bible study.

1. Confirm the call through prayer and fasting. both are associated with decisions, spiritual warfare and bringing down strongholds, all of which are related to missions.

2. Confirm the call through the word of God, it is reasonable to ask God to give a verse or passage to confirm the calling.

B. Confirmation by church leaders of your local church.

1. Missionaries of all types, domestic, short-term, full-time, should be sent from their church (Acts 13:1-2) and not just go. Confirmation happens as God develops and displays His gifts in the potential missionary and they are confirmed in Godly church leadership similar to Paul and Barnabas displaying, "The evidence of the grace of God" (Ac. 11:23).

2. Short-term missions within the local church is a great place for church leaders to see the calling.

C. conformation is completed in training.

1. School of Discipleship or Bible college.

2. Prepare for assessment and training: support raising, interpersonal conflict, cross cultural living, health, security, expectations, furloughs.

3. Vision tour: develop vision, establish relationships and set budgets.

V. How can you further discern and respond to the missionary call?

A. Read missionary biographies, newsletters, blogs.

1. Pray for missions.
2. Give to missions.
3. Take a missionary to dinner or host them while Stateside.

B. Get a passport and go on a short-term trip.

If possible, every Christian should at least make one short-term mission trip to support a work related to their local church or a para-church organization.

LIFEWOR

Discover areas where your local church is involved in missions. Which one[s] interest you and why?

Lesson 35: Missions – Obstacles to Missions

Introduction: Isobel Keuhn was a missionary to China and Thailand. In her book, “Nests Above the Abyss” she wrote about a tribe that had asked for a missionary to come teach them about Jesus:

“Ten years they have waited. Do you think that when they called for Gospel messengers, God did not respond? It could not be. He gave His precious Son that all might know and receive eternal life. I think that man did not respond. It costs something to leave loved ones and the comfort of civilization. I believe that in each generation God has called enough men and women to evangelize all the yet unreached tribes of the earth. Why do I believe that? Because everywhere I go, I constantly meet with men and women who say to me, ‘When I was young I wanted to be a missionary, but I got married instead.’ Or, ‘My parents dissuaded me,’ or some such thing. No, it is not God who does not call. It is man that does not respond.”

1Thesolonians 2:18 “Therefore we wanted to come to you—even I, Paul, time and again—but Satan hindered us.”

If Satan put obstacles in the way of Paul’s missionary work and his desire to visit the church in Thessalonica, we can be assured there are obstacles to our call to the mission of God [misseo Dei]. Acts 20 records Paul arriving back in Thessalonica, so we know obstacles can be overcome.

Subject: obstacles to missions.

Object: overcome and help others overcome.

I. What obstacles arise when we have fear in missions?

Followers of Christ in the United States currently live in a unique season of church (redemptive) history. We have experienced generations without religious sectarian violence or persecution against churches. In most communities Christ followers have multiple churches to choose from. There are over 100 English Bible translations (2,000 languages do not have one verse). Christian books, Bible commentaries and other helps are readily available and most communities have multiple Christian radio stations. The rich Christian heritage of America has allowed for churches to own land, be given great tax advantages and its citizens to receive tax benefits for tithes and offerings. It would seem the only obstacle to going on mission is fear.

A. Fear of the unknown (fear of leaving comfort zone):

“Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who shall not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come eternal life” (Luke 18:29-30).

1. Consider the acronym “VET”

i. **Value:** Christ followers should value God and His glory among the lost greater than what is comfortable and familiar.

Missiologist Stephen Neil in his book “Call to Mission” put the value of Christ in relation to the value of comfort in the right perspective: “If I could not live without Christ, can I lie in my bed at night so long as there is one person in the world who has not heard of Him?”

ii. **Experience:** seeing and experiencing God transform lives brings joy that is indescribable. as you take part in God’s mission, you are changed. It assures us our life is of value and not in vain.

iii. **Trust:** intentionally trusting God in leaving your comfort zone to obey the great commission motivated by the great commandment and showing great compassion to the lost is not a risk. it is putting all you are, all you have and, all you will be into the hands of God.

B. Fear of not being able to relate to people:

While it is incredibly important to be sensitive to cultural barriers, the missionary message is intrinsically cross-cultural. The simple message of the cross translates to all cultures. The love of God is relatable to all people and all people can relate the love of God (1 Cor. 1:20-25).

1. God has given you at least one testimony (telling of the test God has brought you through).

- i. Being able to share how God saved you is relatable to all people.
- ii. Testimonies of healings, provision and miracles are often relatable to other cultures.

Note: stick to testimonies relatable to the human condition. short-term missionaries should ask the full-time missionary, or a national that understands American culture, if the testimony is relatable in the local community. For example sharing about God healing a child will relate to all parents, but sharing the equally true testimony of God's provision for expensive university tuition may stumble someone struggling to feed his or her family.

2. God has given you universal experiences to build relationships around.

- a. Share pictures of your family. Share your host culture's food and share your food with them.

Note: "Where God leads I will follow, the food I'm fed I will swallow."

3. God has given you life skills to build relationships around. Most of these life skills can be used for short-term missions as well as full-time cross-cultural ministry. While making disciples remains the core of missions, many life experiences can be used for the furtherance of the gospel on the mission field.

- i. Career skills can be used for vocational training: e.g. carpentry, construction, baking, and the arts.
- ii. Life position can be used to edify Christ followers and too reach pre-believers: e.g. most people can teach simple English as second language classes, athletes can help sports camps, medical professionals can help with clinics.
- iii. Ministry skills can be used to equip national church leaders. If you come from a church that teaches through the Bible, has a balanced view of the ministry of the Holy Spirit and have completed a School of Discipleship or similar program, you are better equipped than most developing nation pastors and church leaders.

C. Fear of losing control of time and money:

When Christ is our treasure, we spend time and money accordingly. "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matt 6:21).

1. It is less money for a family to spend a week on short-term mission in Mexico than two days at Disneyland [tickets, hotel, food]. Of course a family trip to Disneyland can glorify God and has many positive aspects, but so does a family mission trip.

2. China Inland Mission founder Hudson Taylor famously said, God's work, done God's way, will never lack for God's supply."

3. Psalm 63 David says, "Because your lovingkindness is better than life," and, "Thus I will

“bless You while I live.” In heaven we will all be worshippers and the time of God’s mission will be completed. It is only in this life that we can be on the mission of God. If we treasure God now, we will use our time to make His ways known.

4. Investing time and money into the kingdom of God is investing where moth and rust do not destroy and no thief can steal from (Matt 6:20).

D. Fear for safety:

“‘Safe?’ said Mr. Beaver. ‘Who said anything about safe? ‘Course he isn’t safe, but he’s good. He’s the King, I tell you.’” — C. S. Lewis; Chronicles of Narnia.

1. Safety is a real concern for missionaries in developing nations.

- i. Good to have written contingency plan outlining evacuation and crisis debriefing policies.
- ii. Good to have security training: e.g. first-aid, abduction survival and defensive driving.

2. Regardless of preparation, it must always be remembered that a life lived for the glory of God among the nations is a life of risk.

- i. Isaiah, Jeremiah, John the Baptist, Jesus and Paul all suffered as they lived on the mission of God.
- ii. The only security that is assured is salvation in Christ (John 10:28-29, Jude 24).

3. missionaries are not to take needles risk, but to take the words of Paul in Romans 8:38-39 to heart, “For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

II. What obstacles arise to mission from a lack of burden for the lost?

lack of burden may be the largest obstacle to missions. Matthew 9:36-38 tells us Jesus was moved with compassion and we see His burden for the lost when he said to His disciples, “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.”

A. ask yourself: what is my burden? what moves you:

- 1. location:** China, Africa [general or a particular country], Mexico, or Russia?
- 2. people:** poor, widows, orphans, single mothers, teens, disabled?
- 3. needs:** clean water, vocational training, churches planted, medical clinics?

B. ask God to develop, further clarify, your burden:

- 1. read Bible seeing God’s burden for people** leading to His mission to seek and save that which is lost [Luke 19:10] from Genesis to Revelation.
- 2. read missionary biographies** [e.g. C.T. Studd, Jim Elliot, Hudson Taylor] and discover how they were burdened.
- 3. passionately worship and minister to God.** it was in setting of worship that God said, “Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” [Acts 13:2]
- 4. share your desire with trusted spiritual leaders and ask for prayer.**
- 5. pray, fast and ask God to give you a dream.**

III. what action can you take to overcome obstacles to missions?

note: Romans 15:20 speaks of Paul's aim to preach the gospel where it was not already known. surely this is the will of the Lord, but it should also be noted Paul made it his aim, meaning he had to take decisive and purposeful action looking for open doors.

A. do you have a passport? [currently \$110, lasts 10 years, and you can apply at many post offices].

1. purposeful step of faith allowing you to go if God opens a door.

2. needed for all international travel [even Mexico and Canada].

3. to not have a passport is to not be open or prepared.

B. have you been on a short-term mission? [use your passport!].

short-term missions can change your life and help you see past obstacles.

1. short-term missions is valuable to the sending church:

i. develops leaders.

ii. equips people within the church to be part of God's mission.

iii. most people upon return are changed. they are often willing to attempt new ministry on the mission field and then bring it back to the local church.

iv. build fellowship among the team.

2. short-term missions is valuable to those that go.

i. helps develop a Biblical worldview.

ii. gives new perspective on material wealth and celebrity culture.

iii. can help develop gifts, burden, calling.

iv. stepping out of comfort zone often forces a reliance on God for help in matters that are simple at home [e.g. hygiene issues, challenging foods, sharing your faith].

3. short-term missions, when done right, are valuable to the work on the field.

i. can provide a needed boost to a work.

ii. provide resources for equipping saints.

iii. can provide accountability and encouragement for missionaries.

4. while on a short-term mission, ask what it would take for you to stay for three months.

C. research and pray for a people group. become their advocate.

1. use tools like the Joshua Project and "Operation World."

2. discover their greatest need: e.g. Bible translation, water projects, church planting.

D. take other bold steps from your house and local church.

1. research what mission activities your church is engaged in. meet with the missions pastor.

2. choose to learn a language for a group your church is engaged with: Pimsleur, Rosetta Stone, tutoring, community college, immersion.

3. give to missions. as you sacrifice, God will unite your heart.

conclusion: the greatest way to overcome obstacles in mission is to realize the prophetic element of the great commission. Jesus said, “You will be my witnesses.” therefore he will get us through any obstacles.

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What is your plan to overcome, and/or help others to overcome obstacles to missions in the coming year?

Lesson 36: Missions – Cost and Rewards of Missions

Intro: in the 1400's in what is modern Czech Republic, the Moravian Church began what many believe to be the first purposeful Protestant missions movement.

by the 1700's two young Moravians heard of an island in the West Indies owned by a hardened atheist holding upwards of 3,000 slaves. The hardness was so complete that he did not allow any Christians ministers onto the island under any circumstances.

Knowing there were Africans living and dying without hearing the Gospel of Jesus Christ the young men counted the cost and sold themselves into a lifetime of slavery to the atheist. their plan was to live incarnationally among the slaves to bring Jesus to them. Because they were not coming from Africa, the Moravians had to use their slave price to transport themselves to the island.

The day they left the port at Hamburg many from their church came to say final goodbyes. there was much weeping as everyone knew it was the last time they would see the two young men on earth. as the ship left the dock the young men raised their arms and shouted the last words their church heard: "MAY THE LAMB THAT WAS SLAIN RECEIVE THE REWARD OF HIS SUFFERING!" –it became the anthem of the Moravian mission movement. P. Reidhead and History of the Moravian Church by Joseph Edmund Hutton.

Col 1:24, "I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church." Of course there is nothing lacking in the saving work of Jesus, but there is human cost to sharing about the work Jesus did on the cross. In context Paul is writing from a Roman prison and saying his sacrifice of suffering is for the benefit of the church at Colossae.

Subject: the cost and reward of missions.

Object: sacrifice and be rewarded.

I. What is our sacrifice for being on the mission of God?

For the joy that was before him Jesus went to the cross (Heb 12:2). God's mission begins with God and leads to our response. The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross was horrific in the brutality and in the cost, but the reward was far more beautiful than the cost. Jesus gained glory for the Father, joy for Himself and salvation for whosoever will believe on Him.

Definition: "Sacrifice is to give up something you love for something you love more."

A. Sacrifice of friends and family:

God followers on His mission should elevate family and relationships as God given institutions for His glory. This is indisputable, but unfortunately many have said they cannot go on mission because they unwilling to leave behind family and friends. For us to reject leaving all we know behind to go on mission for God may be exchanging worship of the Creator for the worship of family and relationships He created for us. Colossians 1:5 links coveting with idolatry, meaning it is possible to serve the idol of family and relationships instead of going on mission.

1. Modern missionary families are still called to sacrifice their family, church and friend relationships for something they love more. Unlike earlier generations of missionaries, the modern generation has communication opportunities that were unheard of only a few years ago: email, video messaging, text messaging and social media keep people close. Missionary life is still a life of transitory relationships and sacrifices, but not as it once was.

2. Missionaries need to pray and talk through family and friend sacrifices before field departure. Once on the field shocking news may be too emotional to make wise decisions.

- a. Will missionaries return for weddings, graduations or funerals. If, yes: then which ones?
- b. What if a parent is sick and needs care?
- c. Will the missionary be buried locally, or will the remains be repatriated to America?
- d. Will the missionaries stay on the field when their children return for university?

3. Missionaries must pray and go through their contingency plan with others. Friends and family must understand they are to remain out of any crisis, abduction or ransom negotiation situation.

- a. In this litigious climate, family may be asked to sign liability waivers or agreements to not hold the home church or sending agency responsible in a worst case scenario.

B. Sacrifice of dignity or perceived dignity.

Hebrews 13:2, "Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate." Jesus suffered indignity, not only of the cross, but in the location of the cross, outside of His city, away from the Temple.

- 1. perceived indignity** of not being able to provide for self.
- 2. perceived indignity** of mocking and ridicule as friends and family hear of your call.
- 3. perceived indignity** of having to ask people for financial support.
- 4. perceived indignity** of loss of privacy in many nations, particularly in toilet issues.

C. Sacrifice of finances.

1. Financially, missions are sacrificial for churches, sending agencies and supporters. Christian Reformed Church estimates it costs \$120,000 per-year for a missionary couple [less than half of that is salary]. The International Missions Board [Baptists] budget about \$50,000 per-year for a single person. In some situations more than \$150,000 must be raised before the missionary can leave for the field.

- a. A church may sacrifice a new building or staff to provide for a new missionary or missions project.
- b. Sending agencies need to operate in shoestring budgets to keep administrative costs low and finances in the field.

Note: the cost of keeping missionaries on the field is why wise stewardship dictates raising up indigenous pastors and church leaders.

2. Financially, missions are sacrificial for missionaries. missions is not a career move or way to climb the job ladder. There are no employer contributions to a 401k or employer provided health insurance.

- a. Often missionaries send their children to expensive international schools.
- b. Petrol, utilities and travel can be more than double what it costs in the States.
- c. Occasional comfort foods or toiletries from America can be very expensive.

D. Sacrifice of comfort.

1. Sacrifice of comfort of language and culture: the novelty of a new language and cute idioms quickly diminish when dealing with government officials and being asked for bribes to have utilities hooked up.

2. Sacrifice of familiarity: knowing where the best shopping is, where to find a quiet place to have coffee and a trustworthy plumber can be exhausting.

3. Sacrifice of peace: going to doctors, or taking children to doctors, that do not speak your language and have different procedures can be difficult.

E. Sacrifice of people.

Acts 13:1-2 says, "Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

1. The church at Antioch gave two-fifths of its leadership team to missions. this meant the local church made a sacrifice of their beloved leaders to bring a better sacrifice to God.

2. Individuals give of themselves. most missionaries will experience extreme interpersonal conflict, loss of relationships and, possibly, violence. Tensions from living overseas can effect marriages and families.

F. Sacrifice of life.

Missionary C.T. Studd said, "Some wish to live within the sound of the Church or Chapel bell; I want to run a Rescue Shop within a yard of hell." Being near hell to stop people from entering is always a dangerous place.

1. About 171,000 Christians pay the ultimate sacrifice, of their life, as martyrs every year [Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary]. Christians actively on the mission of God are always the first target.

2. Even missionaries that do not make the ultimate sacrifice are forever changed by their time in the field. Some lose their cultural groundings and no longer feel at home in America or their host country.

II. What are some of the rewards of going on God's mission?

In Matthew 19:29 Jesus explains there are rewards for going on the mission of God, "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life."

A. hundredfold rewards of family, friends and children.

1. Missionary life may be a life of transitory relationships, but it is also a life with very deep bonds. like Paul, Barnabas, Timothy, Luke, Titus and others, God gives a special relationship to missionaries so any relationship they lose by going to the field is multiplied back to them.

2. Third Culture Kids [TCK's] are better educated and prepared for modern globalized world than children that have never seen the world. Opposition may come from family and friends concerned for children leaving America to live in a (dangerous) foreign land, but most experienced missionaries will say raising children on the mission field is a great reward.

Note: this is a portion of a letter a 17-year-old TCK wrote a week before returning from the

missions field to attend university in America:

My English teacher is having my class write books on what has affected who we are and what our goals and dreams are. As I work on this assignment I realize more and more how much my life has been affected by growing up as a missionary kid. From the pain of a slum crawling with death, disease and despair to the beauty of a sunset over the savannah littered with acacias and the occasional hut or herdsman, these experiences have created who I am.

God called my family to the mission field. He called my dad to start churches and my mom to help him. I never understood why He wanted Jackson and me here, we're not that useful. But now, with the end in sight, I see God didn't just have me here to be part of Mom and Dad's family, He brought me here to shape my life. I have grown up in a world where things like poverty, starvation and violence aren't 30 minute specials on CNN; they are part of daily life. This perspective has changed who I am, what my dreams are and how I will look at the world for the rest of my life. It has been worth every adjustment struggle and awkward moment I can think of. I'm still nervous about how I'm going to fit into that country over there, but I will not doubt my peculiarities and my difficulty to fit in are worth the experiences I have had. I am grateful of my status.

I thank God He brought me here and I thank you for praying for, caring for and supporting me in this portion of my pilgrimage.

Mungu Akubariki & Dios te Bendiga, (God bless you in Kiswahili and Spanish).

B. Reward of knowing you are secure in God's will.

Carol Richardson, wife of Don Richardson, author of "Peace Child" said, "If you're going to talk about dangers, you're in just as much danger living right here in the United States as you are in the jungles of New Guinea. And God has just as much power to protect in both places. The question should not be 'Is it safe?' rather, 'Am I doing God's will?'"

1. In God's will on His mission, we are assured that any sufferings will result in a greater glory being revealed in us (Romans 8:18).
2. In God's will on His mission, we are assured that any sufferings allow us to know and gain Jesus more (Philippians 3:8).
3. In God's will on His mission, we are assured even in the midst of sufferings, there will be contentment and comfort from God (2 Cor 1:7, Philippians 4:12).
4. In God's will on His mission, we are assured that our sufferings and struggles bring us into good company: Job, the prophets, John the Baptist, Paul.

C. Special rewards of being on the mission of God:

1Corinthians 3:8, "Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor." Speaks of rewards for those in the harvest fields of God.

1. Consider the scene in Revelation 7:9-10 and the rewards of seeing someone in that great multitude that you first met while on God's mission.
2. There is reward of being part of something greater than yourself.
3. There is the reward of knowing another culture, language and people.

Module X: Planning and Vision

Lesson 37: Planning and Vision - Establishing and Communicating a Plan

Nehemiah 2:1-8

intro. It is essential that leaders have vision and seek to plan for ministry. Nehemiah was a man with an effective ministry. He was a man with a plan, and the people followed him and the plan. As we consider the beginning of the second chapter of the Book of Nehemiah, we see four essential keys to unlock vision for ministry:

Subject: Planning and vision

Object: Receive and conceive

Outline:

1. Prayer
2. Plan
3. Power
4. Presentation

Context: the Lord had given a burden to Nehemiah to minister to the need in Jerusalem after he had received the report regarding the hardships the people were experiencing following the destruction of the city's wall. Nehemiah is moved with compassion but does not yet know what to do.

1. Prayer: Nehemiah was praying about the situation for about four months. The second chapter begins with a reference that it is the month of Nisan. We learned in the first chapter that Nehemiah had begun to pray for the needs of Jerusalem in the month of Chislev. From about November to March, he prayed. Nehemiah was diligent to seek God in prayer so that he could hear God speak. True vision is inspired by God and must be distinguished from the good ideas of men.

Nehemiah also knew the value of a quick prayer. When the king inquired what Nehemiah was seeking, Nehemiah prayed to God before responding to the king. Under the circumstances of Nehemiah standing in front of the king, his prayer was understandably brief, but it was honored by God. A quick prayer, like an arrow, can reach God if the person praying is close to God. Nehemiah wanted assurance that the vision was from God, so he likely prayed that God demonstrate His will by "opening or closing the doors."

2. Plan: When the king asks what Nehemiah is seeking, Nehemiah responds by sharing the plan. Nehemiah details his desire to help rebuild the city, especially the wall. He is able to advise the king how long the project is expected to last; and he has an estimate of the materials he will need as well as permits from the king to undertake the project.

We need to consider how to get from here to there. What is the destination? What does the finished project look like? What are the needed steps to get from the beginning to the end? Nehemiah's response to the king makes it evident that he had spent time considering some of the details of the vision and formulating a plan.

3. Power: Nehemiah understood that it is God's power that opens doors and sees a vision come to pass: **"And the king granted *them* to me according to the good hand of my God upon me"** (v.8). God opens doors that no one shuts and closes doors that no one opens (Revelation 3:7). Nehemiah's vision to rebuild the walls was a tremendously big vision, especially as the walls had been in a heap of ruin for more than a hundred years. The scope of the vision is consistent with a very powerful God. In other words: big God, big vision; small God, small vision. God is able to do exceedingly, abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us (Ephesians 3:20). There may be times that we dishonor God by compromising the vision because we don't believe that God will supply the power. We need to learn to trust that God will supply the power for His vision to be accomplished.

As we consider the remainder of the book of Nehemiah, we see an additional essential key to unlock vision for ministry:

4. Presentation: Once we receive vision from God, we need to present the vision to others. Unless we can effectively communicate the vision to others, it is extremely difficult for them to follow our lead. Therefore, I recommend that we formulate a statement of the vision. The following is a **template** to help formulate and communicate a vision:

vision statement [sample handout]

Ministry: Here, we identify the particular ministry [e.g., children's ministry, ushers' ministry].

Leader:

Assistant(s):

Theme verse: Here, we encourage leaders to identify a particular verse that relates to their ministry. We encourage people to consider why they believe that God has given them that verse as a theme for their ministry. Ideally, the verse clearly relates to the particular ministry.

Objective: In a brief expression, describe the big picture for your ministry. What do you believe God wants to do through your ministry in the coming year? As you consider your objective, it may be helpful to consider how your ministry impacted people's lives during the past year. Also, how would you like your ministry to impact people's lives in the coming year? A sample objective for the counseling ministry might read as follows: "Help real people turn to a real God to deal with real problems; and enable them to find answers in the Word of God to the questions of life."

Consider the strengths and weaknesses of your ministry and the vision. What has been the direction of the ministry, and where do you want to be going?

Goals: The statement of goals is distinct from the objective. The objective is broad or big picture, but the goals are specific. When considering goals remember the acronym SMART:

Specific

Measurable

Accountable

Reasonable

Time Specific

For example, expressing a goal as, “Meet with assistants as needed” fails to meet the SMART guidelines. The goal is not specific, measurable, or time determinable. On the other hand, a goal described as, “Meet with assistants on the second Wednesday of the month and otherwise as needed” is SMART. Describe goals that are reasonable, but also take into consideration that our God is awesome. For example, a desire for a small groups ministry may be to see 100% of the church involved, but this may not be a reasonable goal. On the other hand, setting the goal at only 10% might underestimate God. Therefore, a goal regarding participation might be stated “10% of the church participating by March, 25% by June, and 33% by September.”

Here is a sample statement of goals used in a counseling ministry:

- a. Implement a marriage mentor ministry. Determine the feasibility by January 31st and implement by the end of February.
- b. Identify and secure two books to utilize as a counseling resource to train counselors. Resources to be identified by the end of February and purchased and distributed to counselors by the end of March.
- c. Identify a counseling resource bibliography by the end of March. Confer with other pastors and counseling ministries in February.

As you consider the goals for your ministry, what are the priorities? What are the specific activities that are needed to address each priority? For example, your ministry may have ample volunteers but may need to emphasize training. This may require you to secure or develop training materials and schedule formal and/or informal training. Perhaps your emphasis this year is recruiting volunteers. Perhaps you have ample trained volunteers, but the ministry is not being utilized. You likely need to focus on promoting the availability of the ministry to the body.

Methods: Describe what your ministry does and how you do it. How does your ministry operate? What steps need to be taken to see the goals and objectives of the ministry fulfilled? Give a step-by-step picture of what the ministry does. This will help sharpen your vision and help to communicate it to others.

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Prepare a draft vision statement for a ministry. Share the vision with at least one other person. Perhaps you will share the vision with someone involved in that particular ministry, or a pastor, or a small group leader. The assignment shall be due in two weeks.

alternative class exercise: break-up the class into groups and assign the group the task to establish a vision for a large-scale project such as a community service event. Encourage the groups to identify visionary, administrative and relational leaders in their groups and use their gifts together to seek a vision and prepare a vision statement to communicate it. Consider awarding a prize such as a gift basket to the group that has the best idea and most effectively articulates their vision.

Lesson 38: Planning and Vision – Vision Considerations

1. Vision is: a realistic, credible and God-inspired (attractive) future

2. Vision audit:

- a. What are the strengths of the group?
- b. What are the weaknesses of the group?
- c. What are the highest priorities?
- d. What do we do well?
- e. What do we do poorly?
- f. What barriers need to be removed to be effective?

3. Vision characteristics:

- a. Reflect the organization's values.
- b. Right for the organization and time.
- c. Elevate high ideals and standards.
- d. Clarify purpose and direction.
- e. Inspires enthusiasm and commitment.
- f. Is well articulated and easily understood.
- g. Reflects God's values, inspiration and empowerment

4. Goals: set short and long term goals

5. Catching the vision:

- a. Give people time to process and catch the vision.
- b. Resistance does not mean that God is not in the vision. Resistance is to be expected. Many people are resistant to change, and vision always involves change.
- c. Receive input and let people know that you care.
- d. Seek to forge consensus among the group rather than mandating vision.

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This week review and refine your draft vision statement for ministry (see, lesson 37).

Module XI: Equipping and Evangelism

Lesson 39: Equipping and Evangelism – Personal Evangelism

Principles of personal evangelism from the book of Acts

intro: What tips would you give regarding sharing faith in Christ?

Many people realize the need to demonstrate love, but we must go beyond acts of love to communicate the message of the gospel.

Subject: Personal evangelism – a missional life.

Object: Share your faith and make Jesus known.

A. Why we share the good news:

1. Compassion: Jesus does not want any to perish but to have eternal life (John 3:16). When we begin to appreciate that people are facing eternal separation from God based on whether they receive or reject Jesus, we can begin to have compassion for the lost from an eternal perspective.

2. Commission: In Matthew 28:19, Jesus gives the disciples (and us) “The Great Commission” to go and make disciples. Early in the Lord’s ministry, He called Peter and Andrew, two fishermen, and promised, “I will make you become fishers of men” (Mark 1:17). During the next three years, the Lord taught them to become fishers of men. Then near the end of the Lord’s ministry He commissioned them to make disciples or committed Christ followers. Essentially, the Lord reminds us that we have a job to do, and we must do it. We are to be missionaries to our culture.

3. Calling: Jesus is on a mission from God. His mission statement is succinctly reflected in His words to Zacchaeus, “The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). His heart is to continuously seek and save those that are lost. When I hear people say that they found Jesus, I appreciate the sentiment, but He was never missing. We are the ones who are lost, and we get to participate in the search and rescue.

B. Principles of personal evangelism from the book of Acts

1. Central theme is Christ crucified: Why did Jesus need to die?

a. Explain Jesus’ death and resurrection: the early church realized the focus of evangelism is the simple gospel message. Unlike so many efforts today that emphasize helping people feel good, positive, or attempting to meet perceived needs, the Acts’ church preached Christ.

b. Explain the gospel elements: The first “outreach” occurred at Pentecost. Peter’s message contains all the elements of the gospel message: the **cross**, the **resurrection**, a call to **repentance**, and the promise of **forgiveness** of sins in Christ. Peter exhorted his audience to come to Christ and 3,000 received Jesus as Lord (Ac. 2:14-40).

Similarly, after Peter was used to heal the lame man (Ac. 3) his message focused on Christ and the need to repent. Similarly, before the Sanhedrin counsel Peter’s central point was Jesus

crucified and risen (Ac. 4:10). When Peter preached to Gentiles, just like Jews he simply focused on Christ: His resurrection and the forgiveness of sins for whoever believes (Ac. 10:40-43).

2. Power of the Holy Spirit:

note: the most common manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts is boldness to share Christ [tongues is the 2nd most common].

a. The Spirit produces boldness to share Jesus: in Ac.2 we see the result of the filling of the Holy Spirit as a transformed Peter preaches at Pentecost. One of the clearest manifestations of the Spirit is power and boldness to share Jesus. Similarly, the apostles at Jerusalem gave witness to His resurrection with great power as the Spirit came upon them (Ac. 4:33). After being released from prison the apostles continued to preach with boldness despite the threat of continued reprisal. As they preached at the temple, they received a praise report as they were charged with “Filling Jerusalem with their doctrine ...” (Ac. 4:17-28; 5:40-42). They were doing in the Spirit what they could not do in the flesh.

b. Spiritual work requires spiritual power: Barnabas, a leader in the early church, was, a good man full of the Holy Spirit” (Ac. 11:23-24). Stephen’s message to the council was a result of the power of the Holy Spirit (Ac. 7) and we see the effect upon Paul (Ac. 9:15). It is interesting that despite all of Paul’s intellectual ability, there is no record of him preaching the gospel until he was filled with the Holy Spirit. The Church needs to remember that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to draw people to Christ (John 16:7-13). In essence, any effort to share Jesus with others has to be in the power of the Holy Spirit.

3. Reasoning from the Scriptures:

a. The Bible reveals Christ: the Acts church realized the Scriptures were one of the greatest tools for evangelism. Peter’s sermons were a well-reasoned presentation of the Word of God [see, Ac. 2,3,4]. Stephen’s stirring message to the Sanhedrin council summarized the Bible’s description of Israel’s history of initially rejecting God’s appointed including Joseph, Moses, the prophets, and ultimately Jesus [Ac7]. Phillip helped the Ethiopian treasurer understand the Bible so that he could know Christ [Ac.8:26-39].

b. The Bible is reasonable: Paul used the Scriptures to demonstrate to Jews at Athens, Thessalonica, and Corinth that Jesus was in fact their Messiah by showing that Christ’s life, death and resurrection were all in fulfillment of Bible prophecy (Ac. 17:3, 16-17; 18:4).

c. The Bible shows our need for Christ: The word of God reveals God’s perfect standard and shows that we fall short of His holiness. Our imperfection is sin and it separates us from God. The Bible also reveals our need for a Savior and proves beyond a reasonable doubt that Jesus is our Savior [see, 1Cor. 15:1-4].

4. Meet people where they are at:

a. Go to people where they are at physically: The early church reached out to various people and groups to meet them at whatever physical location and spiritual level they were at. Initially, we see outreach efforts at the temple (Ac. 2,3,4). As pilgrims gathered at Jerusalem for Pentecost this it was a tremendous opportunity to share Christ with the multitudes.

Nevertheless, they generally gathered in the more intimate setting in homes – breaking bread from house to house (Ac. 2:46). An opportunity for neighbors to gather and know Christ and grow together. At Athens (Ac. 17) Paul went to people in the synagogue, marketplace, and Mar's Hill. These 3 locations in Athens were places where the religious and seekers met like church [synagogue], the community gathered like parks, malls, restaurants [marketplace], and where intellectuals gathered to exchange philosophies like our colleges, universities, and even coffee houses [Mar's Hill].

b. Go to people who are outcasts of religion: The Acts church were trailblazers in bringing Jesus to people who were often outcasts of the religious system. Phillip went to the Samaritans to preach Christ to the outcasts of Judaism. Peter was surprised that God opened the door to share the gospel to Gentiles (Ac. 10) but discovered God's love for all people.

c. Go to people as individuals: God directed Phillip to leave a thriving evangelistic ministry in Samaria to share Jesus with an individual Ethiopian treasurer in the middle of the Gaza desert. Paul went to a woman's prayer meeting in Philippi and shared the gospel with Lydia (Ac. 16). They simply followed Jesus' mission as demonstrated in a Samaritan village where Jesus introduced a woman to her Messiah.

d. Go to people where they are at culturally and spiritually: At Athens (Ac. 17), Paul presented Jesus to the philosophers of the epicenter of art, culture, and thought in the ancient world. Paul demonstrated a cultural connection by praising them for being spiritual people and desiring to introduce them to the God that they had not yet known but would likely want to honor. Paul quoted their poets and displayed a sensitivity to the culture's philosophies.

5. Power of a personal testimony:

a. Share your experience with Jesus: Paul utilizes his personal experience with Jesus as a powerful tool for evangelism. Billy Graham observed that one reason for the lack of personal evangelism is a lack of experience with Jesus. The book of Acts was originally written by Luke on a scroll and thus had very limited space to record the history of the early church. Yet, three times Luke records Paul's experience of sharing his testimony with others (Ac. 9, 21:40-22:23, 26:4-23).

b. The elements of a testimony: In essence, a testimony is your story and Jesus' story intersecting. The following **elements** are typical: **what your life was like before your experience with Jesus; what happened; and what your life is like today.**

LIFEWOR

Pray and ask God to lead you by His Spirit to share Jesus this week with someone who doesn't know Him yet. Talk to someone about Jesus and write a brief summary of your experience.

Lesson 40: Personal Evangelism (John 4:27-39)

intro: Jesus committed the gospel to the disciples to pass along to others who would also be able to pass to others. Amazingly, there is no back-up plan to move the gospel from generation to generation ... yet Jesus' plan has continued to succeed. It is interesting to consider that if someone offered \$10,000.00 to the 1st 10 people who went out and shared the gospel, regardless of the recipient's response, what would likely happen? On the other hand, when we are encouraged to be motivated by love for God, people, and understanding the eternal consequences the church is often negligent to share Jesus with others.

What keeps people from sharing their faith?

Subject: How to share your faith

Object: Share Jesus

Context (Review): Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman (Jn. 4:1-26)

1. Relate [1-9] – initiate relationships
2. Create [10-15] – create a desire for things of God, attraction
3. Convict [16-24] – show sin vs. God > conviction > see need for a savior
4. Reveal [25-26] – reveal Jesus as the only Savior

outline:

1. Share with all [27]
2. Share your experience [28-30]
3. Sharing satisfies [31-34]
4. Share now [35-39]

1. Share with all (27): no one is too good or too bad for Jesus

Note: who wouldn't want a relationship with God ?

v.27 disciples were shocked that Jesus spoke with a woman, especially a Samaritan woman.

Rabbis would not speak with a woman in public, even their wife. Disciples thinking, "Why waste time with her." Cultural prejudice towards Samaritans as "½ Jews" and Gentiles generally.

Mk. 16:15 go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature [Jew & Gentile].

Cf. disciples [4:8] were in town buying food and it doesn't appear they told anyone about Jesus.

Why didn't the disciples tell anyone about the Lord? They likely did not expect people in Samaria to be interested. Think of all the people we don't share our faith with, because we don't expect them to be interested.

Why wouldn't want someone want a relationship with Jesus?

D.L. Moody: asked, "Are you a Christian? Response, "Mind your own business!" Moody replied, "This is my business!"

1Cor. 9:22 Paul sought to become all things to all people to win some for Christ.

Look for opportunities to discuss spiritual issues:

- What do you think about God?
- What do you think happens when you die?
- How do people get to heaven?
- What might be the meaning of life?

- What do you think life is all about?

2. Share your experience (28-30) Theme: your experience attracts people to Jesus.

v.28 Why did she leave her waterpot? Perhaps now that she had living water *she* was satisfied, or simply excited about Jesus.

v.29 Went and told others about Jesus.

v.29-30 Her witness was simple but effective: I think I found Messiah, and people came to Jesus.

v.39 Many believed because of her testimony.

What was her testimony? She's not a theologian, or a Bible scholar, and she's a new believer.

note: She shared her **experience** with Jesus: set free from her past, and a future hope.

- All of us can share our experience with Jesus.
- A candle doesn't wait till it's half-burned up to give light.
- Blind man: One thing I know; that though I was blind, now I see (John 9:25).
- Billy Graham, "One of the great hindrances to evangelism today is the poverty of our own experiences."

Harry Winston, the famed jewel merchant shared about a wealthy Dutchman who was shown a very expensive and beautiful diamond by one of Harry's salesmen. The man initially declined to buy, and was about to leave when Harry stopped him and showed him the beauty of the gem. The man soon bought the diamond, but wondered why he bought it from Harry, but not the other salesman. Harry explained, that the salesman knew all about diamonds, but Harry loved them.

3. Sharing satisfies (31-34):

The disciples urge Jesus to eat, he had been hungry and weary. Jesus explained that He had food they didn't know, referring to the satisfaction of doing the Father's will and sharing the gospel.

Note : sharing your faith satisfies: *satisfies you and God*

Note: reaching out revives, refreshes, and renews:

A 17 year old Taco Bell employee had an experience that changed his life: a very pregnant woman entered the restaurant and went into labor. The young man helped deliver the child. The young man told reporters, "Things had been pretty bad in my life lately, and then I got to do this, I'm really glad." **Note:** there is nothing more meaningful than helping someone experience a new birth.

4. Share now (35-39): The time to share is now – don't delay.

v.35: still 4 months: ie. plant seed, wait till harvest, plenty of time.

Note: the time is now! This life is the only opportunity to tell people about Jesus.

-The harvest is ready/ripe, but we must be faithful re our part in harvest.

- **Ollaliberries:** about a 3 week season. If you snooze you lose.

v.35 White for harvest: ripe wheat is gold, overripe is white.

Sychar at Galilee is the grain belt of Israel like the Midwest in U.S.

v. 36-38 Eternal rewards for sharing our faith. 1Cor 3:6-9 one sows, one reaps, but each one is rewarded. **Note:** most people hear gospel from multiple sources before deciding. Our commission is to share our faith: plant, water, tend, reap, God brings increase.

v.38 Entering another's labor: prophets, John the Baptist, Samaritan woman-not alone in work of Lord. **Note:** the Lord's work is a team effort.

v.39 Many believed because of her testimony: others will be attracted to Jesus by your testimony.

Matt. 9:35-38 Jesus saw the multitudes and was moved with compassion for they were sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest is truly plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest send out laborers into His harvest.”

Matt. 10 we see the disciples on their 1st missionary journey. In essence, the disciples prayed for God to send forth laborers into His harvest and as they did they discovered that God was sending *them*.

Moral: as you decide to know Jesus and make Him known God will move in your heart to share Him with others.

LIFEWOR

Pray and ask God to lead you by His Spirit to share Jesus this week with someone who doesn't know Him yet. Talk to someone about Jesus and write a brief summary of your experience (especially if you haven't completed last week's assignment).

Module XII: Pastoral Epistles

Lesson 41: Pastoral Epistles – 1 Timothy Part 1

Outline

1. Purpose for sound doctrine
 - a. sound doctrine
 - b. save sinners
 - c. sure soldiers
2. Pattern for public worship
 - a. prayer
 - b. position
3. Prescription for leaders
 - a. qualifications for elders
 - b. qualifications for deacons
 - c. quality of goodness
4. Paradigm for teaching
 - a. erroneous teaching
 - b. edifying teaching
 - c. examples of teaching
5. Pattern for people
 - a. how to treat the family of believers
 - b. how to treat widows
 - c. how to treat elders
 - d. how to treat people
6. Plan for pension
 - a. godliness not greediness
 - b. good works

1 Timothy Overview

1. Relevant issues: then and today

- Church's role in society
- Church's responsibility to the poor and outcast
- Christian message among competing messages
- Wealth and materialism
- False teachers
- Leadership
- Godliness and faithfulness

2. Purpose of letter - 3 reasons for the letter

- Encourage Timothy
- Establish church at Ephesus
- Explain ministry

3. History: written about 65 A.D. from Macedonia. The church had been founded by Paul about 2-3 years earlier (Ac. 19). Paul returned to Ephesus after release from Rome after his first trial. Paul left Timothy in charge of work at Ephesus, and went on to Macedonia.

Paul writes to Timothy to disciple, encourage and assist regarding problems.

Timothy was timid by nature, and lacked confidence. He also had some health issues. He was probably about 30 years old at the time (4:12). It would be difficult to follow Paul as the pastor at Ephesus. Consider that Ephesus was a pagan epicenter, and hosted the Temple of Diana, one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world.

4. Keys:

- Key verses: 3:14-15
- Need to know how to care for and lead the church
- Need to tell people how to behave, before you can say “behave”
- It’s a message to Timothy personally, as well as the church in general (e.g. 6:21-“you” is plural)
- Themes: faith, sound doctrine, godliness

1 Timothy 1:1-11 “The Need for Sound Doctrine”

intro. How can pastors, Bible teachers, church leaders, and godly people oppose false doctrine?

Subject: Sound doctrine

Object: Be transformed by sound doctrine

Outline:

1. Problem of false doctrine (1-4)
2. Purpose of sound doctrine (5-11)

Context: 8x in the letter, Timothy is exhorted about the need for sound doctrine [1:10, 4:6, 4:13, 4:16, 5:17, 6:1, 3, 4].

1. Problem of false doctrine:

v.1 apostle: Paul establishes his authority, and that his message is of God.

hope: Jesus is our hope; encourage Timothy and us.

Note: life (and ministry) is difficult in a fallen world – people need hope.

v.2 Timothy was led to the Lord and mentored by Paul during Paul’s 1st visit to Lystra (Ac. 14:6-20). Timothy was with Paul at Athens, Corinth, Thessalonica, and in prison. The letter reveals that Timothy was dear to Paul.

Grace, mercy, and peace are Paul’s greeting to Timothy. Paul’s typical greeting is simply, grace and peace, but ministry requires mercy. God’s help in time of need.

v.3 urged: A military term which communicates a command.

Note: duty to oppose false doctrine is Timothy’s reason for staying at Ephesus.

Problems of legalism, liberalism, Gnosticism. **Gnostics** were Greek philosophers who taught matter is evil, and spirit is sacred. Thus, sin in the flesh could not corrupt the spirit. This false doctrine led to abuses of sin to the harm of spiritual life in Christ.

v.4 Jewish false teachers used O.T. law and genealogies to assert a spiritual pedigree and thus authority to support false doctrine regarding the role of the Mosaic Law and rituals such as circumcision or religious feasts conferring rightness with God.

Note: The goal of sound doctrine is to build-up believers in faith. Confusion re false doctrine and false teachers hinders growth

Note: wrong doctrine leads to wrong thinking.

What are some of today's issues which are contrary to sound doctrine?

Pluralism: All religions are okay and true, tolerant of all, except declared objective truth.

Legalism: Imposing regulations beyond those imposed by the New Testament (NT).

Liberalism: Neglecting boundaries created by the NT.

Syncretism: attempting to reconcile and combine biblical Christianity and another doctrine (e.g. voodoo, new age – metaphysics, Buddhism, etc.).

2. Purpose of sound doctrine: establish love and expose sin

What are some purposes of sound doctrine?

a. Establish love [5-6]

v.5 love of God and others (3 conditions to establish love)

1. Pure heart: *katharos* used re good grain separated from chaff. The pure in heart will see God (Matt. 5:8).

2. Good conscience: able to hear God speak.

3. Sincere faith: cf. *san ceros* Latin, literally without wax or without hypocrisy.

b. Expose sin

v.6 Idle talk: NIV translates “meaningless talk.” The problem of compromising doctrine (orthodoxy) by neglecting or omitting. The issue in the “Seeker Sensitive” approach is not that heresy (false doctrine) is being taught, but that sound doctrine regarding sin, sacrifice, repentance and holiness may be neglected.

v.7-9 The Mosaic law doesn't save or make us more righteous, it exposes our need for Jesus. The law is a tutor to reveal our need for Savior (Gal. 3:21). The law and commands are holy, just and good (Rom.7:12), but can't make us right with God apart from Christ, because we can't comply with God's perfection.

v.9 if we were righteous, we would not need the law

v.9-10 Various types of people condemned by the law (see also, Mk. 7:20-23, Rom. 1:18-32, Gal. 5:19-21):

v. 1-2 unholy and profane: no respect for God.

> **Fornicators:** reference to sex outside of marriage covenant.

> **Sodomites:** homosexuals

> **Kidnappers:** slave traders

> **Liars:** cf. Satan is the father of lies, Jn. 8:44-45

> **Perjurers:** false oaths

> **anything else opposed to sound doctrine:** false teaching, false living (hypocrisy)

v.11 message of good news from a good God. The law convicts re the need for a Savior, but the law without the gospel is like a diagnosis without a remedy. It is the love of God, not the law that restrains us. Be more concerned about breaking His heart than a citation for violating the law.

Conclusion: Be transformed by the renewing of your mind with sound doctrine.

LIFEWOR

Identify the major theme of each of chapters 1-6.

Lesson 42: Pastoral Epistles – 1 Timothy Part 2

1 Timothy 1:12-20 “Saved to Serve”

intro.

Imagine someone being caught in a rip tide in the early summer, nearly drowning and being rescued at the last minute. They promise to make lunch for the lifeguard every single day for the rest of the summer. How long is it likely to last?

Why is it difficult for people to serve God?

Why is an attitude of gratitude for grace essential?

John Newton “Amazing Grace” – inspired hymn of a former slave trader saved by grace to serve Christ.

Key verse 1:15

Subject: Good news of grace

Object: Gratitude for grace

Outline:

1. Save sinners (12-17)
2. Sure soldiers (18-20)

Review: 1:1-11 need for sound doctrine, problem of false, purpose of sound doctrine to establish love and expose sin.

1. Save sinners (12-17): purpose of grace is to save sinners.

v.12 Paul is thankful for the opportunity to serve God by God’s grace.

Counted faithful - NLT considered trustworthy

Put Paul into ministry: the Lord needs to put us into ministry, what He calls us to.

Note: He has put us all into ministry - saved to serve, we merely need to discover the call.

a. Paul’s testimony (v.13-16): Every testimony should have three components: how it used to be, what happened, how it is today.

i. How it used to be [v.13]: Paul’s before Christ [B.C.] condition:

- > **Formerly a blasphemer:** denied the deity of and spoke evil of Jesus.
- > **Persecutor:** caused people to suffer for faith in Christ (Acts 8:4,9:1).
- > **Insolent man:** proud bully, abused people.
- > Actions became progressively more wicked

ii. What happened (v.13-15)

Mercy: re ignorance of unbelief.

v.14 grace: unmerited favor, exceedingly abundant, Greek *huper* > English hyper

With faith and love which are in Christ Jesus: He is the source.

v.15 faithful saying: trustworthy

Note: purpose of Lord’s ministry: to save sinners. More joy in heaven over 1 sinner who repents than 99 just persons who need no repentance (Luke 15:7).

The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost (Luke 19:10).

Chief sinner: first and worst, not mock humility.

I am vs. I was: Written about 64 A.D. Compare: “least Apostle” (56 A.D. 1Cor.15:9), “least saint” (60 A.D. Eph.3:8). The closer Paul came to Christ the more aware he was of his sin.

The change in Paul’s life was so radical, the church at Jerusalem couldn’t believe it at first. They thought Paul was trying to infiltrate the church to bring harm (Acts 9:26-31).

Mary Magdalene: Lu.7:47 those who are forgiven much, love much.

Note: need to remember where we have come from

English Reformation: Thomas Bilney, studied law at Cambridge, ordained at Trinity Hall in 1520, still no peace but stirred by **1Tim. 1:15** and became a central figure at White Horse Inn meetings of theologians at Cambridge. Bilney’s most famous disciple was Hugh Latimer who became the most prominent preacher of the English Reformation.

iii. What it’s like now [12,16]

v.16 pattern of long suffering- Template or sample, for others who will come to believe, encourage others. Hope for the worst! Grace of God can save and change any sinner.

v.17 Praise of God: what we have been saved from to what we are saved to. **Eternal-** beyond time, **immortal-**beyond death and decay, **invisible-**beyond our vision, only **wise honor/glory**.

Note: all believers should be prepared to share their testimony

How old were you when you began to appreciate all your parents tried to do for you?

When did your children begin to appreciate what you tried to do for them?

Moral: gratitude is a function of growth and maturity not emotion.

2. Sure soldiers [18-20]

v.18 charge: command, military term. Paul reminds Timothy of his commission to minister.

Prophecies previously made: e.g. Acts 13:1-3 re Paul and Barnabas.

Good warfare: fight the good fight.

1Tim. 6:12 fight the good fight of faith ...

2Tim. 2:4 No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.

Note: since called by God, and under His command, do your job!

v.19 suffered shipwreck: a ship broken to pieces.

Note: rejecting faith results in danger and damage.

Heb. 2:1 Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard lest we drift away.

v.20 Hymanaeus: false teacher (2Tim. 2:16), Alexander was a coppersmith who harmed Paul (2 Tim 4:14).

How to defend the faith: 1. teach the truth, 2. expose lies.

> **Deliver to Satan:** picture of being sent from church to world. The synagogue practice of excommunication at time of Jesus: a public rebuke, if no repentance then banish for 30 days. If still no repentance, then remove from fellowship. Problem today of people not receiving correction, and often simply go to another church without changing/repenting.

Conclusion: gratitude for grace causes us to serve the One who saved us by serving others.

LIFEWORk

Prepare a 3-5 min personal testimony to share in class. a testimony should have three components: how it used to be, what happened, and how it is today. Consider providing an opportunity for students to share their testimony in class. For example, allow a few students at the end of each class, or devote an entire class.

Lesson 43: Pastoral Epistles – 1 Timothy Part 3

1 Timothy 2:1-11 “Pattern for Public Prayer”

Intro: Why don't we pray more? How can we pray more?

The disciples asked the Lord to teach them to pray (Lu. 11:1), but there is no record that they ever asked Him to teach them to preach, teach, or evangelize.

Subject: Pattern for public prayer

Object: Pray

outline:

1. Prayer (1-8)
2. Position (9-15)

Context: Chapter 1 focuses on the need to preserve sound doctrine.

1. Prayer (1-8)

a. Pray for all (1)

v.1 Therefore: flows from the exhort to fight the good fight (1:18-20). Prayer is the weapon to fight the good fight.

Pray for all: saved and unsaved, rich and poor, Jew and Gentile, good and bad...

cf. Pharisees prayed only for Jews, not Gentiles.

Supplications: Requests for your needs.

Intercessions: Petitions for others.

Giving of thanks: for who God is and what He does

b. v.2-3 pray for governing leaders: Pray for kings and all in authority cf. Nero sentences Paul and Peter to death.

Peace and godliness: State is to provide peace for the church, and the church is to pray for the state. God appoints leaders (Rom.13:1).

v.3 Good Greek *kalos* refers to intrinsically good, pleasing, beautiful, excellent.

Note: prayer pleases God.

c. v.4 pray for salvation: God desires all to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth

1. Can't save self, 2. need to come, 3. there is objective truth.

2 Pet.3:9 Lord does not will that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

d. v.5-7 who should we pray to?

v.5 Jesus is the only mediator: we pray to the Father through the Son [cf. Mary, priests, angels, saints, departed loved ones].

v.6 prayer is based on Jesus' work upon the cross

Heb. 7:25 He ever lives to make intercession for us.

Heb. 9:15 He is the Mediator of the new covenant.

v.7 preacher and apostle: Paul's authority

e. v.8 How to pray - 4 keys

i. Pray everywhere: ie. not only at Jerusalem, Temple, synagogue

ii. Holy life/set apart to God: lifting up holy hands. Prayer posture at the synagogue: standing, palms raised to God. Holy life speaks of a desire for a right relationship with God and others.

Holy hands reach for God. Position of the body is not the issue, but the heart.

- Dan. 6:10-kneel, Lu. 18:11-stand, 2Sam. 7:18-sit.

iii. Without wrath: forgiveness, no disputes

iv. Without doubt: in faith

Note: much prayer, much power; no prayer, no power

2. Position (9-15)

Problems of drawing attention to self, distraction

v.9-10 in like manner: message to women.

Modest apparel: self-control or modesty to be distinct from temple prostitutes at Ephesus.

> Towering hair-dos adorned with jewels, reflect Greek and Roman influence.

> Not a prohibition about making a fashion statement, but what are we saying with our lives?

> Avoid drawing too much attention to yourself and distracting from God.

v.10 godliness and good works: contrast humility of godly character and good works vs. pride of drawing attention to self.

Notes:

1. Seek to draw attention to God, not ourselves.
2. Godliness is an inside job, while glamour is skin deep.
3. We come to be seen by God, not to be seen by others.
4. Consider some potential problems of needing attention, and receiving the wrong kind of attention.

Conclusion: pray – just do it! [end the study by forming small groups to pray together].

Lesson 44: Pastoral Epistles – 1 Timothy Part 4

1 Timothy 2:11-3:13 “qualifications for leaders”

intro. What are some important qualities for leaders?

Growing pains leads to need for more leaders in a church (Num. 11:16, Ac. 6).

The more the church grows, the more leaders and infrastructure are needed.

Note: as leadership goes, so goes a church. Thus there is a need effective spiritual leaders.

Note: God has a plan for His church to have leaders like Jesus.

Subject: Qualifications of leaders

Object: Be a spiritual leader

outline:

1. Problem of authority in the church (2:11-15)
2. Qualifications for elders (3:1-7)
3. Qualifications for deacons (3:8-13)

I. Problem of authority in the church (2:11-15)

v. 11-15 problem of authority: God places qualifications and limits on authority

v.11 learn in silence: translated “peaceable” and “quiet” (1Tim. 2:2)

In synagogues men and women were separated, but in the church: men and women are together, and this can cause problems of interruptions and distractions.

v.12 position/authority: not a reference re value or ability.

Gal.3:28: neither Jew or Greek, male or female, free or slave in Christ

Titus 2:3-4 women are to teach women primarily. Women are not to be pastors in the church

Women may teach men, but are not to exercise biblical authority over them (Acts 18:26 Priscilla with Apollos).

v.13 Adam: firstborn has authority, both are created in Christ’s image.

Note: whenever Creation is the model it appears that the principle is intended for the entire Church Age, and is not limited to a particular culture or time.

v.14 both men and women sin, the issue is not who is more sinful. As a consequence of Eve’s sin she loses certain authority, but will continue to want to exercise authority (Gen. 3, 2Cor. 11:3 Eve fell 1st then Adam).

v.15 women’s role in child birth can’t be performed by me. Saved by birth of the child (Jesus) born through Mary makes salvation possible.

Note: Women can hold all leadership roles in the church with the exception of pastor.

II. Qualifications for elders (3:1-7) 13 qualifications listed

Note: except for teaching, all qualifications deal with character rather than ability.

1. Blameless: not bringing reproach to self, Lord, or church. In essence, a good reputation.

2. Husband of one wife: faithful to wife. Not an exclusion of single pastors or even divorced under certain circumstances, but prohibits polygamy.

3. Temperate: level-headed, sensible, self-controlled.

4. Sober-minded: not foolish, wise regarding decisions impacting the church.

5. Good-behavior: orderly, modest .

6. Hospitable: love the stranger, and willing to open home to people.

7. Able to teach: 2 Tim. 2:2, 15, 1Pet. 5:2. Emphasis on Bible teaching in the Calvary movement.

8. Not given to wine (3): don’t drink to excess (Prov. 31:4, Rom. 14:21).

9. Not violent: not quarrelsome, nor looking for a fight. Fruit of the Spirit includes gentleness (Gal.5:22-23). Be able to make peace, and accept criticism.

10. Not greedy for money: content vs. covetous. False shepherds/hirelings fleece the flock. You can be drunk on money, and as dangerous as drunk on wine.

1Sam. 12:1-4 Samuel at the end of his ministry had a testimony that he had cheated no one.

11. Rule own house well (4-5): godly family, children in submission with reverence

If unable to lead own house, can't care for God's house. *Care for* is the same word used in Luke 10:34 re the Good Samaritan. A leader's job is to care for God's house referring to people not a building.

12. Spiritually mature (6): not a novice, literally one newly planted. Spiritual immaturity is a breeding ground for pride. Spiritually mature people provide the stability the church needs.

13. Good reputation (7): Those outside the church (unbelievers) think well of the person.

Snare of devil – the enemy desires to strike shepherds (Zech. 13:7).

All pastors must meet qualifications for elders, but not all elders are called to be pastor-teachers (Eph. 4:11). An elder must be able to discern sound doctrine, but does not have to teach large groups.

III. Qualifications for deacons [3:8-13]

Note: deacons minister to spiritual as well as physical needs.

Note: deacons and elders help pastors minister to people.

Acts 6:3: good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit, and wisdom.

Note: The English deacon is from the Greek *diakonos* referring to a servant (Mark 10:44-45).

Likewise (8): The requirements for deacons are similar to those for elders, except teaching, but Paul repeats for emphasis.

Reverent: respect for God.

Double tongued: rather than gossips and backbiters leaders are to be sincere.

v.11 lit. women likewise: deacon's wife vs. deaconess

Romans 16:1 Phoebe was called a *diakonos* referring to the office of deacon office or her serving nature. There is no biblical prohibition re women as deacons. Calvary Chapel as a movement recognizes women as deacons

LIFEWOR

Review the lesson leadership qualifications, and consider spiritual leadership generally. List five to ten reasons you are qualified to lead. List three to five areas where you would like to grow this year.

Lesson 45: Pastoral Epistles – 1 Timothy Part 5

1 Tim.3:14-16 “Quality of Goodness”

intro. How should believers behave or conduct themselves?

Should believers conduct themselves differently in church and the world?

Nine times in this letter we are exhorted to “godliness.” Let’s discover the quality of goodness.

Subject: Goodness (godliness)

Object: Have Christ-like character

Outline:

1. Our conduct
2. Our confession

1. Our conduct (v.14-15) theme: how we should be

v.14 Paul planned to visit Timothy, but it’s uncertain whether they ever united before Paul’s 2nd arrest and Roman imprisonment.

v.15 Purpose: know how to conduct ourselves in the house of God.

3 pictures of the church:

a. The church is God’s house: we come together at God’s place. For example, you telling kids how to behave at someone’s home. God’s family gathers to relate to Him, and others. God’s word is the blueprint for God’s house. The model for the church is the Word, not the world

Note: help people come to God’s house, to know Him.

b. The church is the assembly of the Living God; *ekklesia* is translated assembly or church.

His Church: therefore, He can tell us how it should be run.

Living God: contrast with idols, temple of Diana.

Note: God’s people are called out to gather together with Him. We come with others to hear Him, the voice of the Shepherd, not sheep.

A.W. Tozer: “100 pianos tuned to the same fork are in tune with each other in harmony.”

Hebrews 10:25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much more as you see the day approaching.

Psalms 73:17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God, then I understood ...

c. Pillar and ground of the truth (architectural image)

Pillar raises the roof high for all to see the truth. The Temple of Diana in Ephesus where Timothy was had 127 white marble columns 60’ high, with a marble roof. It was one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world.

Ground: hold firm, stability.

Truth: “Sanctify them by your truth, your word is truth” (Jn.17:17).

John 14:6 I am the way, the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father except through Me.

Gal. 2:9 Paul describes James, John, and Peter as church pillars.

1Cor. 3:11 No other foundation besides Jesus.

Eph. 2:20 the household of God is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.

Rev. 3:12 Jesus promises to make over-comers a pillar in the temple of God.

6 guidelines: (I marvel at the absence of list of rules, cf. Leviticus).

1. **Word: 4:13** Till I come, give attention to reading, exhortation and to doctrine.
2. **Love: 1:5-** purpose of the commandment is to love from a pure heart, good conscience and sincere faith.
3. **Grace: 1:12-17** God's grace to Paul, counted worthy to minister, is a pattern for us. Grace to us and grace from us.
4. **Fight: 1:18-20** fight the good fight, protect sound doctrine (1:3).
5. **Prayer: 2:1-8**
6. **Character: 3:1-3** more important than ability.

2. Our confession (v.16): truth proclaimed and defended by the church

v.16 Mystery: truth previously veiled in OT now fully revealed by God through the NT.

a. Revelation: God manifest in the flesh: birth and earthly ministry of Jesus.

John 14:1-9 Jesus to Phillip, since you have seen Me, you have seen the Father

b. Resurrection: Justified by the Spirit

Despite rejection by the Jews, the presence of the Holy Spirit in the world, proves Jesus' resurrection (John 16:7-11, Matt. 3:15-17, Rom. 8:11).

Seen by angels- birth, temptation, Gethsemane, Res., ascension

c. Reception: earth, and heaven

Preached among Gentiles: from the Book of Acts to today and continuing.

Believed on in the world: In the upper room there were only 120 believers (Acts 1:15), and in less than 40 years the message had spread throughout the Roman Empire.

Received up in glory: Acts 1:2, 22 records His ascension. **Note:** the story of Jesus begins and ends in heaven.

Conclusion: have Christ-like character and display His goodness (godliness).

LIFEWOR

If you have not completed last week's assignment, review the lesson on leadership qualifications (1Tim. 2:11-3:13) and consider spiritual leadership generally. List five to ten reasons you are qualified to lead. List three to five areas where you would like to grow this year.

Lesson 46: Pastoral Epistles – 1 Timothy Part 6

1Tim.4:1-11 “Pattern for Teaching”

What are some of the benefits of good Bible teaching?

Subject: Edifying teaching

Object: Be built up

Outline:

1. Erroneous teaching (1-5)
2. Edifying teaching (6-11)

1. Erroneous teaching (1-5) 3 problems: deceit, discipline, diet.

a. Deceit: v.1 end times: characterized by a falling away from faith. Satan will use false religion to deceive and lead astray. Paul fears that the Corinthian church, may be deceived, as the Serpent deceived Eve, from the simplicity and purity of Christ (2Cor. 11:3). Cults seek to draw people to the cult, not to Jesus.

1st test: What does the belief system say about Jesus? For example the Koran declares Jesus is a prophet of God, but denies what He says (e.g. John 14:1-9).

v.2 speaking lies in hypocrisy: don't even believe their own false teaching. **Conscience seared:** stop feeling guilty about the lies they teach. Cf. 3x Paul exhorts Timothy: have a good conscience (1:5,19,3:7). Practice what you preach.

b. Discipline: wrong view of discipline, deny God's word. **Problems related to legalism:**

v.3 forbidding to marry: taught that being single is more spiritual than being married, but God ordained marriage (Gen. 2:18-24; Matt. 19:5-6). The Essenes of Qumran rejected pleasure as evil, and esteemed virginity more than marriage.

> **4th Cent. Monks:** taught that marriage and meat were of Satan; lived in deserts in Egypt, and tried not to sleep, eat any pleasant food, or bathe. Thought it made them more spiritual; but this is not God's way to become “spiritual” or Jesus would have lived that way.

c. Diet: denying yourself of what God has blessed, does not make you more spiritual, and is false worship.

v.3 command to abstain from certain foods:

Jesus taught that all food is clean and does not defile (Mark 7:14-23). In Acts 10, Peter saw a vision of animals clean and unclean (3x). The Lord declared all were clean.

Let no one judge you in food or drink, festivals, new moon, Sabbaths, which are the shadow of things to come, but the substance is Christ (**Col. 2:16-23**).

v.4-5 give thanks: Hebrew *Hamotzee* prayer of thanks for bread, Jesus' example of giving thanks for bread at Passover.

2. Edifying teaching (6-11) builds people up

note: the way to godliness is not to avoid foods or marriage

a. Diet (v.6-7): feed on good doctrine

v.6 Need for solid teaching. Good ministry is related to good teaching

> called to **instruct**, not order/beat the sheep; love vs. legalism

> **nourished:** need to take in to give out.

2 Tim. 2:2 And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

2 Tim. 2:15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Matt. 4:4 Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds forth from the mouth of God.

John 21:15-17 Love and feed sheep [feed the Word].

Acts 20:27 Teach the whole counsel

Note: Be a good student and become a good teacher

v.7 Reject profane and old wives' fables. Christians can identify poison without having to partake

b. Discipline (7-10):

v.7 exercise: *gymnazo* Greek to English gymnasium

Godliness: Christ-like character, 9x in 1Tim. Greek culture re gym as a main part of education of 16-18 yr. old (1Cor. 9:24-27).

v.8 bodily exercise profits a little: for a little while. Temporal benefit. Long before Paul, Greeks worshiped physical beauty and held pagan athletic contests, associated with their gods: Olympian [Zeus], Isthmian [Poseidon], Pythian [Apollo]. By Paul's day, there were similar contests in Rome assoc. with Jupiter, Diana etc. Our culture also tends to exalt physical beauty rather than godliness.

Godliness is profitable for all things, and has eternal value.

Note: be as diligent to godliness as a great athlete is to his sport.

c. No deceit (9-10):

v.9 faithful saying: trustworthy/reliable re the relative value of godliness vs. bodily exercise.

v.10 end: desired end is godliness (8).

Labor: agonize

Trust living God: essence of faith.

Savior to all: has the potential to save all, but is the Savior of all believers, not universal salvation

v.11 these things command and teach: Greek tense is present active indicative meaning continuous action.

Conclusion: Be built up by learning, loving and living God's word.

Lesson 47: Pastoral Epistles – 1 Timothy Part 7

1 Timothy 4:12-16 “A Godly Example”

intro. What example should a spiritual leader give?

Subject: Characteristics of a godly leader

Object: Be a good example

Outline:

1. Character
2. Calling
3. Commitment

Context: Paul’s preparation of Timothy to carry-on the work of ministry.

1. Character (v.12)

v.12 let no one despise your youth: live beyond your years and beyond reproach. Timothy was about 30-35 and young compared to Paul.

Be an example to believers, a pattern to follow. Rather than look down at you, live so that they look up to you as a good example of Jesus.

Phil. 3:17 “Brethren join in following my example and note those who so walk as you have us for a pattern. See also, 1 Thess.1:7, 2 Th.3:9.

Note: silence criticism by conduct revealing character.

6 specific areas of character: know them by their fruit

1. In word: Let your words reflect a Christlike attitude. Control the tongue (Ja. 3), and speak the truth in love (Eph.4:15).

2. In conduct: walk the talk. Plato, the great Greek philosopher, was once accused of dishonorable conduct, and replied, “We must live our lives in such a way that all will see that the charge is false.”

3. In love: By our love for one another, all will know that we are His disciples (Jn. 13:35, 1Cor. 13).

4. In Spirit: Excitement and zeal of God’s children. {NU omits “in spirit”}.

5. In faith: trust God, and be faithful and loyal to Him.

6. In purity: honor, honesty, self-control, and chastity were all in contrast to the immorality that characterized Ephesus. Treat women with purity (1Tim. 5:2).

D.L. Moody: If I care for my character, my rep. will take care of itself.

2. Calling (v.13)

v.13 till I come, give attention to: be absorbed in, devote yourself to calling as a pastor-teacher.

3 keys:

a. Reading: public reading in the assembly of the Old Testament, Apostles letters, Gospels. Pattern of synagogue reading of Mosaic Law, prophets (Ac. 13:15, 15:21; Jesus at Nazareth Lu. 4:16).

b. Exhortation: encouragement, warnings. Help people apply the Word to their lives.

c. To doctrine: teaching, expounding the Scripture. There are 22 references to teaching or doctrine in the pastoral epistles. Ezra read distinctly from the Book in the Law of God, and gave the sense, helped them to understand the reading (Neh. 8:8) and the result was revival.

Note: right doctrine > right thinking > right choices > right life! Be radically biblical!

Teach the Bible, not merely a topic from the Bible. The Bible is like a caged lion, just let it out!

3. Commitment (v.14-16)

Set-apart for a special task; 3 key concepts:

a. Charisma (v.14):

Don't neglect the gift (charisma). God spoke, gave gift, gift recognized. Eph. 4:11 gift of pastor, teacher. **2Tim. 1:6** later Paul exhorts Timothy to stir-up the gift.

Prophecy/hands, not the means, but recognize gifts of HS; likely done at Ephesus, before Paul left.

1Cor. 12:1-11 all believers have gifts

b. Consume (v.15):

Meditate on these things: contemplate continuously.

Josh.1:8 meditate on word day and night (Heb. reference to cow chewing its cud).

Give yourself to them: Be consumed with God's business.

Note: The work of ministry is a balance between inspiration and perspiration

Progress may be evident to all: literally to cut forward, or blaze the way. Let others see your progress and follow. Paul acknowledged Timothy's growth in his letter to the Philippians (Ph. 3:12). As pastors and leaders grow and go forward the church grows with them.

Note: devote yourself to Jesus as a consuming passion.

c. Careful (v.16): watch your life and doctrine closely. Sound doctrine and godly life lead others to Christ. Take heed to yourselves and to the flock (**Acts 20:28**).

Need to care for own spiritual condition to care for others. Can't give away what you don't have.

Conclusion: be a good example

LIFEWOR

Consider the question, "What example should a spiritual leader give?" make a list of 25 characteristics of a godly leader that you believe are important.

Lesson 48: Pastoral Epistles – 1 Timothy Part 8

1Tim. 5:1-16 “Pattern for People”

intro.

Difficult to lead a church or a family when there are financial issues or moral issues to correct. Need godly wisdom to deal with people. There is always need, the poor you have with you always (Jn. 12:8). Needs appear to exceed resources. There will be people who drift from Christ, and conflict. Paul wants to impart to Timothy how to deal with people

Subject: How to correct and care for the believers.

Outline:

1. Correction
2. Provision

1. Correction (1-2)

a. Respect older people as parents.

v.1-2 Older people are to be shown respect like a mother or father. Correct with respect
Lev.19:32 You shall rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man, respect your God.

Western culture and our obsession with youth, and fear of aging often results in a lack of respect for seniors’ wisdom and rights.

b. Respect younger people as brothers and sisters. What we say as well as how we say it should reflect respect, dignity, love, and care.

Be flexible in relationships. What style of correction do you think someone will respond best to?

How does Jesus correct? Compare and contrast Jesus’ correction in various contexts with various people: Mary and Joseph (Lu. 2), Mary (Jn. 2), the woman at the well (Jn. 4), woman caught in adultery (Jn. 8), disciples lack of faith, and the Scribes and Pharisees.

2. Provision (3-16): church benevolence policy.

If you were to create a church benevolence program, what guidelines would you include?

Context relates specifically to how to treat widows, but principles have broader application.

a. Use benevolence resources for true needs.

v.3 honor: proper respect; **really widows:** no other means of support.

b. God wants to provide for widows and those in need. God wants us to be concerned for those in need.

Old Testament: provision for charity (from harvest and call to justice)

Ruth: gleanings (Deut.10:18, 14:28-29, 24:17).

2Kings 4 Elisha and the widows oil.

New Testament:

Jesus ministry to widow at Nain (Luke 7:11-12).

Ja.1:27: Pure and undefiled religion [worship] before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble.

Acts 6 Ministry to Greek and Hebrew widows.

v.4 children and grandchildren should support a widow before the church has to. Provide emotional, spiritual, and physical support to **repay parents, and it is good before God.**

Aristotle: “A man should starve before allowing his parents to suffer.” Greeks considered the failure to care for parents as the most haunting sin.

Children should respect, not neglect; and parents should respect a child that cares for them.

v.5-6 godly widows seek the things of God; spiritual powerhouse.

v.7 blameless: good testimony re caring for relatives.

v.8 Refusal to care is worse than unbeliever. Greeks, Romans, Hebrews- all provided support for widows: dowry system, cultural norms in Asia, and Africa re extended families vs. West.

Old storks: unable to fly, remain in nest and cared for by young.

Medical advances cause greater life expectancy resulting greater issue in society and church.

v.9-15 principles re benevolence: financial and spiritual qualifiers:

note: widowhood, in and of itself does not qualify

consider three factors: 1.age, 2. faithfulness, 3. good works

v.9 age: 60 yrs. old, in that culture they would be unlikely to remarry

faithful to husband: ie good marriage record

taken into the number: register of widows the church provided for

v.10 good works:1. hospitality, 2. service, 3. care for the afflicted

2Thess. 3:8-12 limitation re benevolence; don't enable.

v.11-15 reasons why younger should not be registered:

1. The desire to remarry can lead to decline in relationship with Lord. Consider a young married woman whose husband dies. The widow in sorrow pledges to serve Lord the rest of her life, but later has a change of heart, and wants to remarry.

2. Idle time can cause trouble: be useful, not idle (not all young widows are alike).

Note: be busy workers, not busy bodies.

Application:

1. resources – time, talent, and treasure are limited. Leaders steward resources.

2. Appears that needs exceed resources.

3. Need to allocate resources wisely

a. e.g. paying a \$2,500 mortgage as a benevolence gift may mean being unable to provide \$100 food for 25 people.

b. e.g. caring for 1 person in your ministry for 8-10 hours a week may make you unavailable to care for the other 49 people.

4. Learn to say no in love: not merely a loving tone, but it has to hurt a little when we have to say no, because we care. Nevertheless we have to say “No.”

Lesson 49: Pastoral Epistles – 1 Timothy Part 9

1 Timothy 5:17-6:2 “Provision for People” II

intro. How should leaders treat the church? How should the church treat their leaders?

Hebrews 13:17 Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

Obedience is related to actions. Those who rule over you. Who exercises spiritual authority in your life? Who do you exercise authority over? **Be submissive** is an attitude like honor or respect.

Watch out for your souls: do you sense that your spiritual leaders watch out for your soul? Are you the kind of leader that those who serve under you sense that you are watching out for their souls? **Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you:** be a good follower and bring joy not grief to your leaders as this benefits *you*.

Subject: how to treat (church) leaders

Object: respect (leaders should respect the church, and the church should respect their leaders).

Outline:

1. Care for
2. Correction
3. Cautions

Review: 5:1-16 respect people and provide for needs (widows and benevolence).

1. Care for: (17-18) Support God’s work. A pastor-teacher is responsible to lead and teach. Thus, worthy of double honor. The ministry of the pastor is to equip the saints for the work of ministry to build-up the body of Christ (Eph. 4:12).

Note: Provide sufficient resource to allow people to minister. God gives right to all workers to partake of fruit of their labor.

Rule of thumb: pay scale consistent with others in the church and community, with similar education, age, level of experience, responsibility.

2. Correction: (19-21) leaders must correct with love and without fear.

v.19 corroborating testimony of 2 or more witnesses (Dt. 17:16, 2Cor.13:1). Accused have the right to face their accusers.

note: Need to balance between no correction which is liberality, and too much which is legalism.

v.20 public correction is the last step, before the whole church. The purpose of presenting to the whole body is to encourage repentance and discourage sin.

Goal: help people get back on course (2Cor. 2:6-11).

Note: time for public vs. private correction (Matt. 18:15-18; 1Cor. 5; 2Tim. 2:23-26).

v.21 Be impartial: no bias or prejudice regarding the charges and the accused.

3. Caution (22-23): exercise care re authority – 5 areas

a. Giving authority: recognition and restoration of leaders

laying on hands is a symbol re conferring authority (1Tim. 4:14, 2Tim.1:6).

Acts 6:3 men of good reputation who have been observed.

Restoration time limits: Jn. 21 Peter 40 days, Jonah 3 days.

Mt. 3:8 Bear fruit worthy of repentance. Ensure enough time to see repentance is real.

b. v.22 care for purity: impurity brings reproach to the Lord.

c. v.23 care for health: ministry can be hazardous to your health.

Wine was used medicinally; Luke 10:34 (Good Sam), Talmud, Hippocrates. Not an endorsement for excess drinking, not re grape juice, or no need for qualifier "little."

note: intimacy re personal tone of letter.

d. v.24-25 character: people's true character will be revealed. people are not always what they appear to be at 1st sight.

Evident: open, plain before all. Recall the qualifications for leaders and emphasis re character (1Tim. 3).

Samuel (1 Samuel 12) ministered all his life, and at end was able to stand before the people and they confirmed he had not done any wrong to them.

Note: character is a leader's most valuable asset

e. 6:1-2 respect authority: how to treat employers (masters):

note: Good leaders are good followers

v.1 unbelieving master: respect master for position, if not person. Work as unto the Lord.

Rebellion leads to reproach against the gospel. Historically in the Roman Empire in the early church there was tension in church regarding many slaves and freemen coming to the Lord. Half the population of the Roman Empire were slaves, an estimated 50-60 million. Some were very well educated like Luke who was a physician. Slaves had effectively no legal rights. Aristotle taught that slaves were living property not people.

Gal.3:28 All are equal in Christ, men and women, free and slave, Jew and Gentile.

note: The gospel is a message of hope, salvation, and equality. Yet, a problem arises when freedom leads to disrespect and disobedience.

Christian slaves were more valuable in slave markets because of their reputation as hardworking honest people.

Note: be a good worker who respects authority.

v.2 don't resent your position in relation to employer. If your employer is a believer, don't expect preferential treatment.

Conclusion: respect - leaders should respect the church, and the church respect leaders.

Lesson 50: Pastoral Epistles – 1 Timothy Part 10

1Tim. 6:3-21 “Plan for Pension”

intro.

There is a tension between pursuing God and seeking His kingdom; and material comfort and living for this world. The Bible does not create clear lines to govern how much is enough and how much is too much. Yet, there are principles and the clarion call of the Holy Spirit to help you navigate this tension.

Subject: Proper attitudes towards wealth and working for God

Object: Godliness not greediness

1. Godliness (3-12)

a. false teachers minimize Jesus [3-5]

v.3 theme of false teachers [1:3] and theme of opposing false teachers throughout the letter.

Note: false teachers minimize the place of Jesus

Note: false teachers invite us to the banqueting table for what is on the table, rather than the host of the feast. On the other hand, sound doctrine is healthy, Christ focused, and leads to godliness.

v.4 proud: literally “wrapped in smoke,” filled with flames of conceit.

knowing nothing: no spiritual insight or knowledge.

contentious: seek arguments leading to division, and seek to draw people to themselves.

v.5 using ministry for gain: e.g. hireling, not true shepherds. The fleece is more important than flock to false shepherds. False teachers have a wrong desire for praise, popularity and profit.

♦ Prosperity teachers began in the 60’s not the 1960’s.

Cf. Paul Acts 19 worked and taught daily (see also, 1Cor.9:15-19).

Note: key is to withdraw yourself from the false teachers

b. True teachers promote godliness

i. godliness and contentment is a great blessing (v.6)

Test: does the teaching promote godliness with contentment in Christ, or covetousness?

Epicurus, Greek philosopher, “To whom little is not enough, nothing is enough.”

Note: nothing the world can give can add to your character, contentment is true wealth.

v.7 Job1:21 Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I shall return ...

v.8 food clothes and shelter: Needs met

Phil. 4:10-13: *learned* to be content

Thoreau: a man’s wealth is in proportion to the things he can live without.

ii. Desire to be rich can be a trap causing many foolish harmful lusts (v.9)

Note: we often know the price of things, but not the value

v.10 love of money: not money itself; cf. a root vs. the root. Money is not neutral, tends to corrupt, but capacity to do good.

kinds of evil: selfish, greed, neglect, betrayal, hoarding, coveting, etc.

Luke 12:15 Take heed, and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of things he possesses.

Wander from faith: Matt. 6:24 you cannot serve God and money.

Spurgeon: If we are not content with what we have, we won’t be content with twice as much

Test: do we own our possessions, or do they own us?

c. The person who is submitted to Christ pursues godliness and good works

v.11-16 but you: Contrast man of God

1. 3 keys to godliness

i. Flee (v.11) separate from false teaching

2Tim.2:22 flee youthful lusts, but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace, with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Gen.39:12 Joseph and Potiphar's wife.

ii. Fruit (v.11) pursue fruit of the Spirit [Gal.5:22-23]

iii. Fight (v.12) don't compromise the truth. The tense means keep fighting. The Greek *agonidzo* leads to the English agonize.

1:18 Wage the good warfare

Neh. 4:7 builders on the wall; 1 hand worked, and 1 hand on weapon/sword

v.13-14 Jesus is returning and we want to do His work right until He comes

appearing: Greek -> English *epiphany* (glorious manifestation)

v.15 In His own time *Kairos*: God knows the time, and our opportunity is limited.

v.16 Power and honor belong to God, not to money

Note: wealth is not a sin (Abraham, Job, Solomon) but is a responsibility. Cf. poverty is not a blessing per se.

2. Good works (17-21)]

v.17 trust in God, not money and a false sense of security.

note: Enjoy what God has given for good.

v.18 don't be lazy or greedy, but be generous

Note: have working hands that give, not greedy hands that hold

v.20 guard, avoid: God committed to Paul, Paul to Timothy, and Timothy to others (2Tim. 1:14, 2:22).

v.21 you: plural, message to Timothy, church at Ephesus, and to us.

Conclusion: choose godliness not greediness.

Module XIII: Church History

Lesson 51: Church History - Beginnings 33-312 A.D.

1. Beginnings

- **Pentecost** begins the church
- *Ekklesia* - Greek term for gathering of God's people, "church" in English
- Start teaching Jews, especially **Peter** – teaching at synagogues, gospel not taken to Gentiles largely until...
- **Paul**, who was fluent in Greek and could express doctrine in pagan concepts. He was also a Roman citizen so he had access everywhere; Antioch was his base (first place Christians identified as such {derogatory *christiano*i – devotees of Anointed One})
- Roman Empire had great road system, so message could travel
- Churches met wherever they could (homes, public buildings, synagogues) on Sundays, to commemorate the day Jesus rose from the grave (1 Cor 16)
- Service included hymns, prayer, Scripture reading, teaching and communion
- Had a great social impact; women, children, slaves, traders, and soldiers now felt as if they had purpose, and the church reached out to the poor in a way no one else did (Paul's collection)

2. External Relations

A. Important Relationships

1. Judaism – gets worse over time with bias being spread
2. Roman Empire – starts bad, gets worse with persecutions

B. Accusations

1. Christians were polytheists
2. Theology was despicable because God was involved in world
3. Did not worship the emperor
4. Atheistic because no pictures
5. Great appeal to poor (threat to security)
6. Did not join the army
7. Cannibalistic orgy lovers

C. Persecutions

- Romans allowed freedom of religion, so early persecution was instigated by Jews
- Roman persecution rare at first, but then became widespread
 1. 64 AD- Nero needed a scapegoat for the fire that burned Rome (last time we hear from Paul and Peter)
 2. 96 AD- Domitian was angered that Jews did not pay a certain tax (Christians were still associated)
 3. 250 AD- Decius made Christianity illegal because of orders to sacrifice to gods
Reason: Decius needed someone to blame for decline of the empire, and he believed that the gods were not blessing it because the Christians were not worshipping them
 4. 303 AD - Diocletian actively persecuted Christians

Note: Question for churches became “What do we do with apostates?”

- Churches made it very hard for people to join and get baptized because they wanted to make sure the person was not a Roman spy
- Martyrdom became the noble Christian service

3. Internal Activity

A. Development of Theology

1. Jerusalem Council (49 AD) – the gospel of Paul won out; “God-fearers” now able to join
2. Seven Ecumenical Councils (involving the whole church)
 - i. *Nicea* (325 AD) - Jesus is deity
 - ii. *Constantinople* (381 AD) - Holy Spirit is deity
 - iii. *Ephesus* (431 AD) - Man is born into sin, and can only accept God’s grace for salvation (Augustine deals with Pelagius)
 - iv. *Chalcedon* (451 AD) - Christ is human and divine
3. Creeds – statement of belief or faith

Ex: *The Apostles’ Creed: I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.*

B. Heresies

1. Gnosticism – believed you are saved by a “secret” knowledge, very dualistic (therefore Jesus has to be all-God), and Jesus is the “divine spark”
2. Docetism – Jesus is not really a man, but just a spectral appearance. He only “seemed” to suffer for man’s sins since divine phantoms are incapable of really dying
3. Ebionites – Jewish-Christians that believed Jesus was a mere man who was justified by His strict adherence to the law and became Messiah
4. Marcion (140-160 AD) – believed God of OT different from NT, wanted to throw out OT
5. Montanus (156-172 AD) – greater separation from the world

C. Apologists

1. Justin Martyr (100-165 AD) – Christians worship *Logos*!
2. Tertullian (160-225 AD) – *Apology* encouraged those suffering martyrdom, defended against moral accusations, attacked heretics, and helped develop Trinitarian theology
3. Clement (150-216 AD) – combated Gnosticism in Alexandria through philosophy
4. Origen (185-254 AD) – allegorical interpretation of Scripture (literal, moral, spiritual)

D. The Canon

- Christian writings were needed for worship

How did they choose it?

1. Christian Scripture was self-evident, and it changed lives

2. Apostolic authority – If someone is an apostle, what they say must be from God

Ex: Mark (Peter), Luke (Paul), Revelation (John)

- Very difficult to put together because different churches were already formulating their own opinions on what should be Scripture

- Therefore other writings circulated

Ex: *Shepherd of Hermas*, *Epistles of Ignatius*, *Gospel of Thomas*

- Muratorian Canon (190 AD) had basic NT already in place; by this time the church had accepted the idea of including Jewish Scriptures

- Canon of NT was recognized by 367 AD in a letter Athanasius wrote; Council of Hippo in 393 AD and Council of Carthage in 397 AD published same lists

4. References

- *Church History in Plain Language*; Bruce Shelley

- *Halley's Bible Handbook*; Henry Halley

- *The Christian Theological Tradition*; Catherine A. Cory and David T. Landry

LIFEWOR

Church History Biography Assignment

Required Format:

1. Subject's name and why you chose them:
2. Place and date of birth, and date of death:
3. Summarize their primary impact on the faith:
4. Early life/background:
5. Beginning of their ministry:
6. Middle of their ministry:
7. End of their ministry:
8. Summarize some of their significant contributions:
9. How did this person's life impact your life:
10. Notable quote(s):
11. References: list 3 or more references for your research

general:

- a. Students are to select a subject for their biography by next week's class [please receive approval before beginning].
- b. Reports are due 4 weeks from today.
- c. Approx. 3 pages, 12 point font.
- d. In describing their ministry history, identify struggles and triumphs in each period.

LIFEWORk [continued]

- e. If the person has authored books please include a few titles that you believe would benefit your fellow students [list the titles after the notable quotes]**

Church History Biography Subjects for Consideration:

Augustine, Francis of Assisi, Thomas Aquinas, Brother Andrew, Gladys Aylward, Bill Bright, John Calvin, William Carey, Amy Carmichael, Oswald Chambers, Bernard of Clairveaux, Fanny Crosby, James Dobson, Jonathan Edwards, Elizabeth Elliott, Jim Elliott, Joni Erickson-Tada, Charles Finney, Billy Graham, Keith Green, Matthew Henry, H.A. Ironside, Martin Luther King, Jr., John Knox, Greg Laurie, C.S. Lewis, Martin Lloyd Jones, David Livingstone, Martin Luther, Justin Martyr, Andrew Murray Mc Cheyne, D.L. Moody, George Mueller, John Newton, John Piper, Polycarp, C.I. Scofield, Amy Semple Mcpherson, Chuck Smith, C.H. Spurgeon, Thomas Spurgeon, Billy Sunday, Hudson Taylor, Mother Theresa, J.R. Tolkien, R.A. Torrey, A.W. Tozer, William Tyndale, Rick Warren, Charles Wesley, John Wesley, Susanna Wesley, George Whitfield, William Wilberforce, David Wilkerson, K.P. Yohanan, Ulrich Zwingli, Jim Cymbala, Jan Huss, Leonard Ravenhill, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, William Booth.

Lesson 52: Church History – Imperial Church 313-1291 A.D.

Intro./Discussion: how many are concerned about: removal of Scriptures and prayer from public schools, the removal of the Ten Commandments from our courts, the removal of crosses on public property, the legalization of abortion? Should Christianity be adopted as a national religion to confront these concerns? Why or why not?

1. The Imperial Church

A. Constantine

- Reversed persecution of Diocletian
- Claimed to have vision of cross in sky (“By this sign, conquer”)
- Won battle at Milvian Bridge outside of Rome, became emperor in east, eventually west
- **313 Edict of Milan**, legalized religions
- If emperor was Christian, then it was cool to be Christian
- Theodosius made Christianity official religion in 380

B. Seeking Unity

Christianity supposed to be glue of empire, but was divided itself

i. Arian Controversy (318)

1. **Arius** - the work to save humanity had to be done by a “second-class” God, so Jesus is a creature
2. **Athanasius** challenges – Christ is divine, John 10:30 “I and the Father are one.”
 - Constantine and other emperors called ecumenical councils to resolve these issues
- i. *Nicea* (325 AD) - Jesus is deity
- ii. *Constantinople* (381 AD) - Holy Spirit is deity
- iii. *Ephesus* (431 AD) - Man is born into sin, and can only accept God’s grace for salvation
- iv. *Chalcedon* (451 AD) - Christ is human and divine

C. Church Fathers

1. Eusebius (265-339) – “father of church history”
2. Jerome (347-420) – Latin Vulgate
3. Ambrose (340-397) – kept state out of spiritual affairs
4. **Augustine of Hippo** (354-430)
 - “Why is there evil in the world and human beings? Why do we delight in doing bad?”
 - Becomes monk after conversion experience, is named bishop of Hippo in North Africa
- i. **Donatist Controversy (311)**
 - If renounce faith, then never really had it and none of works done were legitimate (baptisms, marriages, etc)
- a. Donatus – community of holy people
- b. Augustine – hospital for sinners
- ii. **Pelagian Controversy (418)**

- a. Pelagius - works for salvation
 - Humans are free regarding salvation, can attain through intense spirituality
- b. Augustine - salvation is only by God's grace, His work
 - Human nature: original sin (we're born in it, idea of predestination)

2. Monasticism and the Dark Ages

Discussion question: how should the church respond the increased immorality of the culture around the church? Should the strategy be primarily to establish an enclave [refuge] from the culture or to engage the culture?

- After fall of Roman Empire in 476, barbarian tribes dominated the so-called Dark Ages (5th – 10th centuries), culture freezes
- Many felt the need to retreat into isolation because of decadence of the world

A. Monasteries become centers of education, libraries

- Monks mortify the flesh through celibacy, fasting, study, etc (follow example of Jesus, Paul, John the Baptist)
- Being a monk was noble form of Christian service since martyrs no longer happened (produced true Christians again)
- During this time, many barbarians become Christians and bring customs to Christianity

B. Key figures

1. Antony of Egypt (251-356) – traditional founder, sought to subdue human appetites to restore the innocence seen before the Fall
2. Benedict of Nursia (480-547) – founded Monte Cassino in 529; wrote the “Rule”, a set of disciplines for monks
3. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) – leader of Cistercians, sought to renew spirituality after Dark Ages
4. Francis of Assisi (1182-1226) – Mendicant (beggar) order called Franciscans; avoided everything in institutional religion

C. Rise of Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox (4th century)

- Episcopacy – rule by bishops
- 5 ruling cities– Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, and Constantinople
- Gradual split of church between West (Rome), East (other 4)
- went along with the split in the empire, and rise of Byzantine Empire
- Patriarchs – Roman bishop was special, given title of Pope

i. Differences

1. Language – Latin in West, Greek in East
2. Marriage of priests – East allowed, West did not
3. Relationship between church and state – West wanted to be directly involved in politics, while East thought it was despicable
4. Veneration of icons – East used them as part of worship
5. Filioque –West had said that Holy Spirit came from both the Father and the Son; East says Father is source of sole being in Trinity
6. Papal primacy – East honors pope as first among equals, but nothing more
7. Teachings on purgatory – East saw it as healing place, West as punishment for sinners

8. Leavened or unleavened bread at Eucharist

- 1054 Western pope and Eastern patriarch excommunicate each other
- 1204 West sacks Constantinople
- Second Council of Lyons (1274) and Council of Florence (1439) tried to mend relations, but not until 1965 that churches start talking again

3. Holy Roman Empire

- Gregory I (590) – helped make Roman church very wealthy, future popes continued to look for help in this area

Different states and families tried to revive Western Roman Empire

A. Carolingians

- Charles Martel - defeated Muslims at Battle of Tours in 732; grandson Charlemagne crowned by pope in 800
- Developed system of taxation that enriched the papacy through various taxes paid to the church

B. Crusades (1095-1291)

- Campaigns to liberate Jerusalem and other holy areas from Muslim control; organized by Holy Roman Empire
- Kingdom of Jerusalem established but didn't last (1100-1187); Muslims regained control, 1291 took Syria, 1453 Constantinople
- Not just for spiritual reasons, but also wanted to open East to trade with the West
- Strengthened nationalism and thereby weakened the pope
- Inspired gothic cathedrals, with stained glass telling Bible stories to illiterate public

LIFEWORK

Continue church history biography assignment.

Lesson 53: Church History – Reformation 1291-1590 A.D.

In the 13 century...

- Dark Ages end → Peace, prosperity
- Return to cities, culture; rise of middle class
- Education – cathedral schools in 12th century first universities
- Mendicant orders: e.g. Dominicans, Franciscans, oaths of poverty, serve poor
- Rediscovery of Aristotle's writing and metaphysics
- Rise of mysticism – if block out senses, then you experience God

1. Scholasticism

Effort to synthesize Greek philosophy and science with theology; originated in universities, developed systematic theology from councils

A. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)

- Professor in Paris; Dominican mystic; *Summa Theologiae*
- Very high view of human reason → leads us to belief in God

5 Ways

1. Argument from motion / change – unmoved mover is God who set things in motion
2. Cause and effect – uncaused cause is God; created all things
3. Necessary vs. contingent existence – contingent beings are caused, having been created from a necessary one, God
4. Arguments from gradation in things – different things have different quality; God is perfection
5. Teleological argument - or from design

B. Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109) – ontological argument; nothing greater can be imagined than God so therefore God must exist

Discussion question: what are some of the current cultural challenges to the Christian faith [consider: modernism, post-modernism, and post – post? How will you defend your faith against the current challenges of your culture?

2. Winds of Change

1. Renaissance (14th century) – very religious-centered in Northern Europe; revival re humanities [e.g. art, medicine, philosophy, language, music, science]
2. Black Plague – 1347 One-half of workforce gone, so protests easier to start; people questioning Christianity because of this and Schism [within Papacy between France & Rome]
3. Avignon Papacy (1309-1377) – two different popes; papacy is deteriorating (money, sex). Seven Popes in Avignon (France) influenced by French monarchs, and then Papacy returns to Rome, albeit with schism between France and Rome.
4. Johan Gutenberg – 1450 printing press
5. Growing middle class – higher rate of literacy
6. Ottoman Empire – capture of Constantinople [1453] and other invasions into Europe a major concern

7. Spanish Inquisition – begins 1479 by Ferdinand V & Isabella, tortured, burned, & exiled Jews, Muslims and heretics

A. Key Figures

1. John Wycliffe (1325-1384) – translated Bible into English, Christ is head of church, and the Bible is sole source of authority

2. Jan Hus (1372-1415) – similar to Wycliffe; *De ecclesia*

3. Erasmus (1466-1536) – Dutch scholar who analyzes NT in original languages [compiled Textus Receptus – Greek NT] and questions why church does not look like what Bible says

4. Martin Luther (1483-1546)

- Begins teaching in Wittenberg; Galatians and Romans (1:17) → *justification by faith*

- Good works done b/c of salvation, not salvation by good works (denounces monasticism)

- Posts 95 Theses, October 31, 1517 – sought to discuss/debate issues

- Indulgences - If pope had the power to forgive sins, why not do it out of love instead of money? Pope doesn't have that power

- *Sola scriptura, gratia, fide* [only/solely grace, faith and Scriptures – i.e. saved by grace, through faith, and the Bible is the only authority]

- Only accepts two of the sacraments – Eucharist (communion) and baptism

- 1521 Diet of Worms – imperial meeting makes him an outlaw

- While in exile, translates NT into German

Council of Florence (1438-1445) – 7 sacraments to guide from womb to tomb; baptism, communion, confirmation, confession, marriage, ordination, last rites

[Protestants generally recognize baptism, communion. Tests: is the ritual/practice described/instructed in the Gospels, Book of Acts, a Epistles?]

i. Foundations of Protestantism

1. How is a person saved?

2. Where does religious authority lie?

3. What is the church?

4. What is the essence of Christian living?

Discussion question: consider some of the issues in the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches that need to be reformed? How would you suggest reforming?

B. Reformation Splinters

Conflict over communion

Catholic tradition – *transubstantiation* (change/substance)

- Luke 22:19-20 - *is* taken literally

Luther – *consubstantiation* – Christ is spiritually present, i.e. body and blood coexist with Lord's supper elements

Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531 Swiss Reformer) – *is* not literal – symbol

- This difference forces Zwingli to go different way than Luther

|-----|-----|-----|

Radicals Reformed Luther Catholic

Luther: *If Scripture does not require us to change, why do it?*

i. Radical Reformation

1. Anabaptists – believers' baptism [cf. infant baptism] by immersion, separation of church and state, pacifism, polygamy, communism [Amish, Mennonites]
2. Anti-Trinitarians – Unitarians [only the Father is God]
3. Spiritualists – primary authority is direct teaching of Holy Spirit to humans, not Scripture

ii. Swiss Reformation

- Jean Calvin (1509-1564) takes over for Zwingli
 - Sovereignty of God – omnipotence
 - Salvation is God's choice = double predestination, election
 - Meant to be a freeing doctrine; people did not have to worry about their works if their faith had already been decided
 - More Augustinian than Augustine

iii. English Reformation

- Henry VIII (1509-1547) marries Catherine of Aragon (Mary), Anne Boleyn (Elizabeth), and Jane Seymour (Edward VI)
 - 1547 Edward becomes king at young age, dies six years into reign
 - 1553 Mary becomes queen, turns Catholic again and persecutes Protestants
 - Elizabeth leads coup; defeats Spanish Armada in 1588 to keep country Protestant; Anglicans and Puritans arise in England

C. Catholic Reformation

- 1545 Council of Trent – no Protestants invited
- 1563 No changes in doctrine, but in practice
 - Reforms
 1. Have to be religious
 2. Live in area
 3. Learn language
 4. Responsible for training priests
 5. Preach regularly
- Society of Jesus (Jesuits) created; were influential in spreading Christian faith around the world

LIFEWOR

Continue work on church history biography.

Lesson 54: Church History – Modern Era 1600 – present

1. Challenges to Christianity

Middle Ages: Catholics dominant, silenced experimenters

A. New Scientific Discovery

1. Copernicus (1473-1543) – sun-centered solar system; humanity not center of universe for which everything existed

2. Galileo (1564-1642) – moons of Jupiter; championed Copernicus' theory

3. Isaac Newton (1642-1727) – universal gravity, which meant world wasn't a structure moved by unseen hand of God

4. **Charles Darwin** (1809-1882) - 1859: *The Origin of Species* puts forward evolution

- Science is inductive (individual trial used to deduce actual truth)

B. The Enlightenment (1648-1789)

Rationalism – reason alone can provide us with knowledge of reality

1. Rene Descartes (1596-1650) – “I think, therefore I am”; only what can be proved by reason is absolutely certain

2. Voltaire (1694-1778) – “If the Holy Spirit wrote this history, He did not choose a very edifying subject”

3. David Hume (1711-1776) – laws of nature so firmly entrenched that any testimony against them is unconvincing

4. Marquis de Condorcet (1743-1794) – human race was moving towards perfection

5. Deism – God created but then stepped back; deny revelation, miracles

i. Lord Herbert of Cherbury (1583-1648)

1. God exists
2. It is our duty to worship Him
3. Virtue and piety are important parts of worship
4. People ought to repent of their sins
5. Rewards or punishments will follow death

C. Other Challenges

1. Karl Marx (1818-1883) – history is governed by simple economic forces; religion is “opium”

2. Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) – religion is a childish stage of human development

3. Split between Conservative and Mainline

- Depends on view of Scripture

i. Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) - 1799 *On Religion*

- “father of modern liberal theology” in an effort to reconcile Christian faith and challenges of the Enlightenment

- Not belief or morals, but feeling and intuition; feeling of absolute dependence

Discussion question: consider the challenges of new atheism [modern atheist writers don't simply tolerate religion but attack the Christian faith wherever its influence arises]. How might we respond to the challenges of men like Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, Daniel Dennett or Christopher Hitchens, and others?

2. Christian Responses

1. Orthodoxy movement (denominations)
 2. Pietism - in response to loss of fervor after Reformation; more intellectual thinking than movement of the Spirit
- Joseph Butler (1692-1752) – dealt with deism; reason has its limitations as well
- 1870 reasserted infallibility of pope; restrictions on scholarship
- A. Evangelicalism** (basic doctrine, personal experience, inspiration of the Bible)
1. Premilennialism (1870s) – Rev. 20:2 Satan bound for 1,000 years is not symbolic
 2. Dispensationalism – Divides time generally into 7 stages; God’s plan for Jews is not the same as the church, Jews go through Tribulation
- B. Fundamentalism** (1915)
1. Inerrant Scripture
 2. Virgin Birth
 3. Bodily Resurrection of Christ (and other miracles)
 4. Second Coming of Christ
 5. Substitutionary Atonement
- C. Second Vatican Council** (1962-1965) – move to present
1. Liturgy – mass now in vernacular, priest facing forward
 2. Church – people of God, pope working with bishops
 3. Ecumenical Movement – improved relations with others (Orthodoxy, 1999 Joint Declaration on Justification)
 4. Dialogue with Secular World
- *Pluralism* - Is truth or salvation in other religions?
- i. Exclusivism – no and no
 - ii. Inclusivism – maybe and maybe
 - iii. Pluralism – yes and yes
5. Theology of Revelation – rather than fixed body, now can be modified through guiding of the Spirit
- 3. Christianity in America**
- Religious freedom (1st Amendment, 1791)
- Puritanism in New England, Anglicans in Virginia, Baptists in Rhode Island, Lutherans in Delaware, Quakers in Pennsylvania, and Baptists and Presbyterians in the South
- A. Great Awakening** (1725-1775)
1. Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) – “fire and brimstone”; used theology to argue against spiritual depravity
 2. John Wesley (1703-1791)
- 1738 – “strangely warmed” reading Luther’s preface to Romans
- *Methodism* – split from Anglican Church because of devotion to piety and plain living; private charity rather than public reform
3. George Whitefield (1714-1770) – Wesley’s American associate; 130 sermons and 800 miles in 73 days of traveling
- B. Second Great Awakening** (1800-1861)
- *Camp meetings* where people could come to Christ; some became permanent
1. Charles Finney (1792-1875) – city ministry
 2. Dwight L. Moody (1837-1899) – door-to-door literature

- *Missions*

1. William Carey (1761-1834) – India
2. Hudson Taylor (1832-1905) – China
3. David Livingstone (1813-1873) – Africa

C. Modern Trends

1. Pentecostal movements
2. Parachurch groups
3. Megachurches
4. Mass evangelism and media
5. Liberation Theologies (1960s)
 - i. African-American
 - ii. Latin American
 - iii. Feminist
 - iv. Queer
6. Who is Jesus?
 - Jesus Seminar 1985

LIFEWOR

Request volunteers to share their church history biography papers during next class [5+ minute oral presentations].

Module XIV: Calvary Distinctives

Lesson 55: Calvary Distinctives - What is Our Philosophy of Ministry Part 1

[What We Believe and Why]

Outline:

- a. A brief history of the Calvary Chapel movement
- b. Centrality of Christ
- c. Book of Acts as a model
- d. Emphasis on Bible teaching

By identifying our philosophy of ministry, and theology we communicate what we believe and why we believe it. These core values are essential to transmitting the DNA of a Calvary Chapel church. These core values are slow to change and remain constant in their influence. We are passionate about these values, and care deeply about them. Associations seek to establish accountability through relationship rather than exercising control as in a denominational model. Our values drive our churches towards a particular destination or model. Core values determine a church's ministry distinctive, communicate priorities, inspire action, enhance leadership, influence the ministry's character, contribute to success and create the church's culture. So what makes a Calvary Chapel?

1. The Calvary Chapel movement: a brief history

The following history is available on the CCCM website and is used with permission:

1960s: Calvary Chapel is a non-denominational Christian church that began in 1965 in Costa Mesa, California. Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa's pastor, Chuck Smith, became a leading figure in what has become known as the "Jesus Movement."

1970s: It has been estimated that in a two-year period in the mid '70s, Calvary Chapel of Costa Mesa performed well over eight thousand baptisms. During that same period, we were instrumental in 20,000 conversions to the Christian faith. A remarkable pattern kept repeating itself. As soon as we moved into a new building, our fellowship would already be too big for the facilities. In two years we moved from our original building (one of the first church buildings in Costa Mesa) to a rented Lutheran church overlooking the Pacific. Soon thereafter we decided to do something unprecedented at the time and move the church to a school that we had bought. The building did not match up to code so we tore it down and built another. But by the time the sanctuary of 330 seats was completed in 1969, we were already forced to go to two services, and eventually had to use the outside courtyard for 500 more seats. This was all fine in good weather.

But by 1971 the large crowds and the winter rains forced us to move again. We bought a ten-acre tract of land on the Costa Mesa/Santa Ana border. Orange County was quickly changing and the once-famous orange orchards were making way for the exploding population of Los Angeles. Soon after buying the land, we again did the unprecedented and erected a giant circus tent that could seat 1,600 at a stretch. This was soon enlarged to hold 2,000 seats. Meanwhile we began building an enormous sanctuary adjacent to this site.

By the time Calvary Chapel fellowship had celebrated opening day in 1973 moving into the vast new sanctuary of 2,200 seats, the building was already too small to contain the numbers turning

out. We held three Sunday morning services and had more than 4,000 people at each one. Many had to sit on the carpeted floor. A large portion of floor space was left without pews so as to provide that option.

1980s: Calvary Chapel also ministers over the airwaves, and this must account for many of those who travel long distances to fellowship here. A Nielsen survey indicated that our Sunday morning Calvary Chapel service is the most listened-to program in the area during the entire week. As of 1987, Calvary's outreach has included numerous radio programs, television broadcasts, and the production and distribution of tapes and records. The missions outreach is considerable. Calvary Chapel not only supports Wycliffe Bible Translators, Campus Crusade, Missionary Aviation Fellowship, and other groups, but we donate to Third World needs. We then built a radio station in San Salvador and gave it to the local pastors there. We also gave money to Open Doors to purchase the ship that, in tandem with a barge, delivered one million Bibles to mainland China. Our financial commitment to missions exceeds the local expense budget by over 50%.

current: Today (2010), Calvary Chapel of Costa Mesa, the church which only had twenty-five members, has grown to a fellowship of approximately 1500 churches worldwide and has been listed as one of the ten largest Protestant churches in the United States.

A pastor's perspective: When I first came to Camarillo, I met a couple that had gone to Calvary Chapel of Costa Mesa for years and were going to a local church in town. They told me, "It was just like Calvary Chapel." Suffice it to say that in reality it was not really like Calvary Chapel at all. There was a very different philosophy of ministry as well as systematic theology. Perhaps the couple simply lacked some of the sophistication necessary to discern what were to me very obvious differences.

I'm a big fan of the Calvary Chapel movement based on the philosophy of ministry and theology described in the sections to follow. Although I confess my prejudice, I do believe that it is the best approach to ministry. I also recognize that there are many other good churches, philosophies of ministry, and approaches to systematic theology. It is critical for a church planter to carefully consider philosophy of ministry and theology before beginning to plant. A disciple becomes like the rabbi they follow. Know what you believe and why you believe it. Your philosophy of ministry and theology should be compass-like in keeping you on course during good and bad seasons. If you are not committed to a philosophy, you are likely to grasp for any system or model that looks attractive, especially when things are tough. So, as you study the sections below seek to determine what you agree with and also identify areas that you don't agree with.

Leader's note: each section in the lessons regarding our philosophy of ministry has lifework questions related to it. As the leader, you may assign all of the questions or part.

LIFEWORK

Perhaps you have attended [or served at] different types of local churches. perhaps there are other movements, philosophies of ministry, or systematic philosophies that you are curious about or attracted to.

1. Describe some of the differences you are aware of.

LIFEWORK (continued)

2. What are some of the questions you have about different approaches?

2. the church belongs to Jesus so it is His ministry, His church and His message:

a. His ministry: First and foremost it is all about Jesus. As Paul described his ministry at Corinth he declared, “For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus’ sake” (2Cor. 4:5). The New Covenant ministry is all about the gospel of Jesus. We are made sufficient for this ministry by the empowering of the Holy Spirit that gives life unlike the Mosaic Law that kills (2Cor. 2:14-3:6). Man’s efforts, for man’s glory don’t bring life! Resolve that it is His church, His mission, by His grace, and that it is for His glory and not yours. We are simply earthen vessels that the excellence of power may be of God and not of us (2Cor. 4:7).

b. His Church: Jesus used the term “church” two times. First, in Mt.16:18, “I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not overcome it.” The Lord affirmed that it is His church, and that He is the source of growth. He did not propose a methodology but declared authority over his church. Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain (Ps. 127:1). The gospel is an obstacle to people for a host of reasons so there will be temptation to make the message more palatable to people by minimizing or obscuring the commandments, teaching, and life of Jesus. So, make sure that you are committed to trusting Jesus to build His church rather than relying on any methodology that would minimize His rightful place. Remember, whatever you strive to gain you’ll need to strive to maintain. If you’ve pushed and pressured to gain it in your strength you’ll have a burden to maintain it. Man-made works are a heavy burden but Jesus’ load is light and provides rest for the soul.

Second, in Mt.18:17, “If an admonished brother refuses to receive correction, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or tax collector.” Jesus affirms his protection and purification of the church. Pastors who feel threatened about the growth or decline of the church are likely to consider using a methodology that is contrary to Jesus’ plan for His church. Fundamentally, we must decide that it is Jesus’ church and His mission so we decide to do ministry His way. How do we do that?

c. His message: focus on Jesus: Charles Spurgeon, “Preach Christ, always and everywhere. He is the whole gospel. His person, offices, and work must be our one great, all comprehending theme.” All of the Bible focuses on Jesus either predictive of His work, preparatory of His work, reflective of His work, and/or resultant of His work [Brian Campbell- *Christ Centered Preaching*]. The gospel is rooted in Jesus from Genesis to Revelation – His promise, person, or work [cf. Lu. 24:13-35]. Jesus isn’t saying, “Let me show you how to live” but rather “Let me show you why I died” [Greidanus – *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*].

Some popular counterfeits to Christ-centered preaching are: moralism, relativism, self-helpism, & activism. Moralism suggests that we appease God’s wrath toward sin with our good deeds. The focus becomes good works. Relativism is the idea that truth is self-determined & we approach God the way that seems best to us. In essence, we create our own God and obey our own law. A departure from God’s commandments is characteristic in relativism. Self-helpism: appeals to the will by challenging people to apply biblical principles without necessarily applying the gospel to their hearts. Christ becomes more of an example than a Savior. Finally, activism emphasizes the social gospel & tends to produce cause-oriented rather than Christ-centered people. Attempts to effect social change without a change of heart/nature. Caring for the poor, for example, is very important, but it should not be divorced from Jesus & man’s greatest need – salvation.

Remember, the admonition of William Willimon, “Unable to preach Christ and him crucified, we preach humanity and it improved.” If we lose focus on Jesus we’ll stop being the church.

A pastor’s perspective: relatively soon after planting the church, some well-intentioned encouraging person will approach you after the service and say, “Pastor, I just love your church!” Of course, you will give the right reply, something like, “It’s not my church, it’s Jesus’ church.” I know from experience. Yet, it can be really challenging to be humble and remember that the purpose of the church is to proclaim Christ’s message of the gospel for His glory. Saying the right thing is relatively easy the greater challenge is what we’re thinking. When Paul alluded to his struggles in wanting to do the right things and avoid doing the wrong things [Rom.7] he mentions coveting. No one sees coveting – it is first an attitude issue before the behaviors reveal the problem. In the same way, our desire to control the church and seek accolades for its success is an attitude issue.

LIFEWOR

Consider various approaches to church ministry. What are some of the ways Jesus and the gospel are obscured?

3. The book of Acts as our model:

A pastor’s perspective: when I first moved to Camarillo and met with some local pastors I was asked about my model for ministry. At the time, some of the popular trends were being explored by Bill Hybels at Willow Creek [seeker sensitive model], Rick Warren at Saddleback [purpose driven model] and C. Peter Wagner [various church growth methodologies]. I replied that my model was the Book of Acts. Some of my peers were perplexed, or perhaps astonished at my ignorance or naiveté. Nevertheless, it is the only model I have known, sought to know, or care to rely upon. 25 years later [2021] I can affirm that from my experience it definitely is sufficient.

The New Testament, early church, described in Acts is holistic in that it has: sound doctrine, strong devotion, genuine community, evangelistic passion, and meaningful social justice. The church as described in the Book of Acts is presumed to be our model for the Church because, it was established by the apostles selected by Jesus, it has a record of being extremely effective in performing Jesus’ mission, and the majority of the seven churches of Revelation 2 and 3 were admonished for their departure from the model. In less than sixty years the church had generally departed from the blueprint and was rebuked by Jesus. We’ll consider these traits in greater detail later in this section, however it is good to consider a snapshot of the Acts church:

a. Sound doctrine: means that the church emphasizes the Word of God, and the teaching is consistent with orthodox theology. Each of the writers of the New Testament opposes false doctrine whether it is the Pharisee’s legalism, the Gnostic’s liberalism, or the Sadducee’s failure to recognize spiritual realities. Continue in the apostles’ doctrine (Ac. 2:42).

b. Strong devotion involves prayer worship and the work of the Holy Spirit: the early church as described in Ac.2:42-47 continued to emphasize prayer and worship (see, Ac. 3,4,6,12,13). The church was birthed by the Holy Spirit and the apostles were keenly aware of Jesus’ admonition to wait for the power of the Holy Spirit (Lu. 24:49). The early church understood that effective church (and Christian) life requires the work of the Spirit. Jesus promised expanding influence if the Holy Spirit was empowering the church (Ac. 1:8). As the church at Antioch ministered to the Lord [worship, prayer, and the Word] the Holy Spirit directed, guided and empowered the

expansion of God's kingdom as Barnabas and Saul were sent out to begin New Testament churches. The Holy Spirit inspires true faith adventures. Too often, church leaders pursue a radical idea birthed by the intellect or flesh rather than the Holy Spirit.

i. The need to start and finish in the Spirit: the church must not only begin in the Spirit, but needs to continue and end in the Spirit (Ac. 2). Assuming your church begins in the Spirit and experiences expanding influence there will be a temptation to neglect the work of the Spirit. The danger of "success" is the tendency to confuse momentum and emotion with the work of the Holy Spirit. Where the Spirit is moving there is life transformation. Make sure you continue to depend on the power of the Holy Spirit. Church history reveals a life cycle in a local church or movement of God. Movements become monoliths as the Spirit of God is neglected and routine and ritual replace power and anointing. As Paul warned the Galatians, it is foolish to believe that we can improve upon the power of the Spirit by the works of the flesh (Gal. 3:1-5). As the Lord promised, "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of hosts" (Zech. 4:6).

c. Community involves authentic relationships experienced in the context of smaller groups. The early church grew exponentially so that there were soon several thousand. They continued daily with one accord in the Temple, and breaking bread from house to house (Ac. 2:46). In addition to emphasizing teaching doctrine and worship as a larger group the early church was intentional to develop community in the context of smaller groups. The early church shared their resources so that those in need would be cared for (Ac. 4:32-37). Authentic relationships help to identify physical, emotional and spiritual needs that the members of the community can care for. Genuine community and authentic relationships are often experienced in the context of smaller groups that promote biblical fellowship *koinonia* (Ac. 2:42-47) sharing togetherness in oneness in life through Christ –doctrine, fellowship, prayer, gathering together and sharing a meal.

d. Evangelistic passion: the early church sought to seek and save the lost without compromising Biblical truth or avoiding the primary issues of sin, confession, repentance & faith in Christ [Ac.5:42]. The results were exponential growth (Ac. 6:1;11:24), and missionary vision (Ac. 11:19-21; Ac. 13 Church at Antioch). The early church was outward focused and sought to fulfill the Great Commission. The tendency is that established churches become more inward focused – creating an enclave rather than engage the culture around them. Keep breaking down walls that become obstacles and constantly model and encourage people to live on mission and go into the culture and make disciples.

e. Meaningful social justice: the Acts church was concerned for and purposed to influence and minister to tangible needs of its community. In Jerusalem, the church provided benevolence in the form of a program to feed needy widows. It provided opportunities to show the love of God in tangible ways, to establish new leaders, and create a bridge for pre-believers to know the Lord. The result, "Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith (Ac. 6:7). Not only did the church grow exponentially but even priests, perhaps the least likely to come to faith, came to Christ. Community service will always have an attractive quality and should supplement a teaching ministry of the church, not replace it. Remember, the apostles sought to delegate oversight of the community service to others so that they could continue to prioritize the word of God and prayer (Ac. 6:1-4).

LIFEWORk Review the five characteristics of the early church described in the Book of Acts. On a scale of one to ten, with ten being the best, rate your current local church in each of the areas.

4. Emphasis re teaching the Bible:

The teaching of the Bible is the hallmark of a true church - 2Tim. 4:2 "Preach the Word!" John Stott observes, "Whether the text is long or short, our responsibility as expositors is to open it in such a way that it speaks its message clearly, plainly, accurately, relevantly, without addition, subtraction or falsification." The Bible and message of the gospel is the primary revelation of God and Christian Living.

The strengths of the teaching (doctrine-driven) model are the church is taught sound doctrine & the assembly is encouraged to study the Bible for themselves, and consider and reflect upon deep theological truth. Nevertheless, we must guard against creating self-righteous people who lack compassion. Bible teaching may not always be popular but people will respect and be drawn to God by declaring, "This is what the Bible says, and this is how to apply it. We are trying our best to apply it in our lives and you can, too." A primary role of the lead pastor in this model is to teach the Bible.

Expositional verse-by-verse teaching allows people to understand God in the context of books of the Bible. If you start at chapter one, verse one of a book and teach systematically through verse-by-verse, paragraph-by-paragraph, chapter-by-chapter until the end of the book people are likely to understand doctrine and theology. Paul declared that he was innocent of the blood of all men, "For I have not shunned to declare to the whole counsel of God." (Ac. 20:26-27). It seems that the only way to teach the whole counsel of God is to teach through books of the Bible.

In Nehemiah 8, when the children of Israel had returned from captivity and were rebuilding the city, the leadership gathered the people together and began to read the Word of God to them. Nehemiah 8:8 declares, "So they read in the book of the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading." This is the essence of expositional teaching. Read the text, observe, explain what it means, and help people to understand how to apply the truth of the Word to their lives.

I encourage you to consider teaching the Old Testament during the mid-week Bible study and teach from the New on weekends. There seems to be very few churches that teach through books of the Bible, and even fewer that teach through the Old Testament. This approach will set the church apart in the community and help establish a reputation as a strong teaching ministry. Your teaching must edify believers, reach mature disciples, and strengthen less mature. Also, teaching should encourage pre-believers to decide to follow Jesus. The teaching should be simple but not simplistic. Consider what does the passage say about God, and what are the likely objections that people are thinking or feeling, and then refute the objections.

Narrative texts (e.g. Gospels, Acts, Genesis) will grow even more popular as people resonate with story as a means of communicating truth. Books that emphasize doctrine [e.g. Paul's letters] are essential to teach so that people understand Christian life. Thematic or topical expository teaching in a series can be very helpful for a church to understand what the Bible teaches about a particular subject such as prayer, worship, marriage, the Holy Spirit, etc. Consider offering a topical series in the middle of a long book study or between books.

A teaching style has been modeled and taught at Calvary that is effective in regard to elements of teaching [see, appendix re teacher training materials], but discover who *you* are as a teacher and develop that gift and style. Nevertheless, Teachers should help the audience remember the message by identifying a theme [subject], object, using biblical cross-references, support material, and illustrations. Personal short-comings and struggles are easier for people to relate

to (be real). Know your audience. For example, the challenges of jr. high students are different than high school students, and college students have their own unique experiences, etc. Let listeners be challenged and shaped by the truth of God's word in the context of the passage and in the context of their culture. An appropriate hermeneutical question is not simply, what does this text mean? but rather How is the text asking me to change?

Be committed to the Word of God. As Paul said to Timothy, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2Tim. 2:15). You can be taught how to study and how to teach the Bible but you must choose to remain diligent as a student and teacher of the Bible. Remember to, "Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching." (2Tim. 4:2).

Finally, it is important to recall that evangelism, worship, community service, and fellowship should not be ignored which will eventually cause the church's demise.

a pastor's perspective: as a church planter there is a temptation to want to gather a large following as soon as possible. A "dog and pony show" would seem like a great way to accomplish that goal. For example, invite special guests like a celebrity to share their testimony, an athlete to display their skill, special music, or an epic display (think skate demo, bmx, bungee baptisms, fog machines and light show, etc.). The problem isn't that any of those things are wrong. The problem is that it tends to erode confidence in the Word of God and Spirit to draw people to God. You will tend to think that you need to reach people through some "new" thing. Furthermore, if people were attracted by "the attraction" then you will need to constantly up the ante to keep them interested.

LIFEWOR

Consider your history as a Bible teacher.

1. What experience do you have teaching verse by verse through a book of the Bible?
2. Assuming you have taught through books of the Bible which did you enjoy the most and why?

Lesson 56: Calvary Distinctives - What is Our Philosophy of Ministry Part 2

[What We Believe and Why]

Outline:

- a. Worship
- b. Ministry of the Holy Spirit
- c. Church government
- d. Attitude of grace

5. Worship - music as an aspect and expression of praise and adoration:

This area of ministry will have as much impact on a local church as any. In essence, almost every local church will devote one-third or more of the weekend service time to corporate praise and worship through music. So, it is extremely important to have a comprehensive philosophy of ministry. God designs people to worship. People also need to learn how to worship. The church that teaches people how to experience worship will influence its community for Christ.

a. What is worship? Worship is a life transformed by an intimate relationship with God. Worship is a spiritual response to God's truth and Spirit (Jn. 14:6, 17:17, 4:23-24)). Worship is yielding to the revelation of God through the person of Jesus the Christ (Jn. 4:25-26). Worship is demonstrated in song, prayer, lifestyle, by individuals and an assembly, spontaneously and prearranged. Worship is the stirring by God's Spirit of our spirit, emotion and will. It is a response of the whole person to God (Rom. 12:1-2). We worship God because only He is worthy (Rev. 4:1). Worship should be God-focused, build-up believers, and stir pre-believers to desire a relationship with God. Although worship is much more than expressing praise and adoration through song, music is an excellent means to communicate worship as an assembly.

b. What is the role of leaders? Leaders must model worship by their lives to establish a healthy church. Authenticity is a key element to true worship – prepare your heart (Gen. 4:1-6; Ps. 51:10]. Model and encourage people to participate, rather than passive observation, and give them liberty to express themselves: to sing, stand, sit, kneel, pray, raise their hands, etc. Be passionate and others will follow the lead. Passion does not necessarily mean energetic or upbeat. You can be passionate while singing the blues or contemplative worship songs. Leaders are to help implement the lead pastor's vision not their own agenda. The worship leaders are to learn a philosophy of ministry from the lead pastor and they help to communicate and model that philosophy to the church.

i. Anyone on the platform will be perceived as a leader. So, do not put a pre-believer on the platform as a musician or a singer. They may be talented, and you may have a perceived need but they cannot lead people into the presence of God if they have no desire to go there and haven't been there themselves. Remember, we are considering worship not entertainment.

ii. Finding a worship leader can be a challenge especially early in the life of the church. The ideal is finding someone who is talented and has a heart for God. If someone is talented and has a desire to grow in the Lord you can mentor them, but if they really have no interest in growing in Christ, I would choose someone with a heart for God even if they have "less talent" as a musician.

iii. Real worship is characterized by the power of the Holy Spirit: help people distinguish the emotional energy of an event (e.g. concert, sports, etc.) from the transforming work of the Spirit (2Tim. 3:1-5). When people are experiencing corporate worship as an assembly it can be a very dynamic experience. Leaders need to remind and exhort the assembly that an authentic work of the Spirit will encourage life transformation resulting in God's glory.

iv. Who selects the songs? I have never asked a worship leader to select songs that would mirror the teaching theme of the message. It is not that I'm fundamentally opposed to the idea, but because I trust that the worship leaders are seeking God's direction. I expect that God will direct them regarding their song selection as He directs the teaching and want to give the Spirit liberty to direct. On the other hand, if you as a lead pastor feel that you should select songs you have the liberty and authority to do so.

v. Women as worship leaders: I'm all for it, but remember that you will be spending a lot of time working together especially in a church plant so create accountability. Also, I do not believe that there is any biblical prohibition from a woman overseeing the worship ministry or sharing devotions with the worship community.

c. What about conflicts regarding musical style: our philosophy values reaching the next generation. If we are going to reach the next generation we will have to embrace contemporary music. Contemporary is a constantly changing standard. So, remind the church of the vision to reach the next generation and the need to remain contemporary. In addition be a wise steward who remembers retains and reveals some of the past. Also, keep in mind that each generation will have their own preferences, and it is not unreasonable to expect new generations to reach back to older forms of worship whether it is classical, ancient/liturgical, choral, hymns, unplugged, a Capella, etc.

i. Multiple worship teams: develop multiple worship teams as quickly as reasonable. This develops variety of expression of worship that ministers to various tastes, and also provides depth in the worship ministry of the church. It also provides a place where people called to minister in worship music can share their gifts.

d. Excellence: encourage leaders to establish and seek high standards. The goal is to keep progressing towards spiritual growth & technical proficiency. Leaders need to be prepared and help their team to be prepared. Team rehearsals and individual practice should be required and members of the worship community should expect to be stretched to grow. Evaluate and adjust frequently by meeting with your worship leader(s) and giving meaningful constructive feedback. Help worship leaders to understand that excellence is not perfection – don't put a yoke of perfection upon the worship team.

A pastor's perspective: learn to distinguish competency and authority. As a lead pastor you have *authority* to choose all the songs, all the members of the worship team, and all the arrangements. Nevertheless, you may not have the *competency*! In other words, the worship leader may know far more than the lead pastor about music ... so let them make decisions. In essence, give them authority along with the responsibility. Impart to them a philosophy of worship ministry, and give profitable feedback but then let them oversee their ministry.

Also, if you as a lead pastor are also a worship leader, musician, or pseudo-musician I would encourage you to remove yourself from the worship ministry as soon as reasonable. When our church was young, I used to play drums on one of the teams. People thought it was cool that their pastor played drums. I thought it was fun and that I could set an example as a worshiper and spiritual leader to the worship team and congregation. If I had to do it all over again, I would not get involved with the worship team for several reasons. First, it distracted me from other more valuable uses of my time as a teacher leader and shepherd. Second, it may have potentially undermined my role as a pastor-teacher. Third, it placed our worship leader in the difficult role of leading and developing a team, and exercising authority over the team with the lead pastor participating in the team.

LIFEWORK

All of the worship leaders at our church read the book “Fruitful Worship” to ensure that we are all on the same page regarding a philosophy of worship ministry.

1. Talk with pastors, worship leaders and potential church planters about a recommended book or resource that addresses a philosophy of worship ministry. Once you’ve identified a resource ensure your team reviews it.

6. Ministry of the Holy Spirit and gifts:

a. We believe the gifts of the Spirit are operating in the church today: gifts of the Spirit are listed in 1Cor.12, Rom.12, Eph.4:11-12, 1Pet.4:9-11. An extensive amount of space was devoted to the gifts and their use in the church. “Charismatics” or “Pentecostals” believe the gifts are available today. The Bible doesn’t clearly state that the gifts pass away or continue. “Cessationists” believe the gifts ended at the end of the Apostolic age. A passage used to support cessation is 1Cor.13:10, “When that which is perfect has come, that which is in part will be done away.” The Greek word that is translated *perfect* is *teleo* and is often translated as mature or complete. They assert the passage refers to the completion of the New Testament. While charismatics would agree that the New Testament is complete and perfect in every sense, we believe that 1Cor.13:10 likely refers to Jesus’ Second Coming. The problem generally relates to sign gifts: tongues, interpretation, prophecy, healings, miracles; but if we do away with those gifts, we would need to do away with: teaching, leadership, serving, giving, etc. Also it is difficult to effectively determine when exactly did the gifts end? Immediately, one day, one week, one month later, when the New Testament was delivered to Jerusalem?

We believe that the gifts are available today, but we don’t center congregational life on the pursuit of the gifts, instead we focus on the giver. Typically, miracles occurred “in groups” to signal or confirm that God is doing a new thing (e.g. Moses/Joshua, Elijah/Elisha, Jesus and disciples, 2 witnesses of Rev. 11). The miracles validated the message. Thus, there may be occasions where gifts were displayed in greater frequency and intensity to confirm God’s

dealings [e.g. Azusa St. revival, Jesus Movement]. Nevertheless, we must be on guard re abuses and counterfeits that don't bring glory to God.

b. We need the Holy Spirit to empower us: it is the power of the Spirit through the Word which brings about true change in people. Jesus instructed the apostles that they needed the power of the Holy Spirit to effectively live the Christian Life and represent Him. When the Spirit empowered the church an epic transformation was manifest (Acts 2). The church needs to find balance regarding the Word and Spirit. If we neglect the Spirit we dry up, and if we neglect the Word we blow up. Yet, if we find the balance we grow up.

When were the disciples saved in a New Testament sense? For three years, the twelve had related to Jesus as Messiah in an Old Testament sense: they had identified Jesus as Messiah, believed in His words and works and yielded their lives as they followed Him. After the Resurrection, Jesus gathered with His disciples, commissioned them, then He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit." It was at that moment that they were saved in a New Testament sense ~ the Holy Spirit was now *in* them (Jn. 20:22). Yet, they were instructed to wait in Jerusalem until they received the Promise of the Father – the baptism of the Holy Spirit to empower them (Lu. 24:49, Ac. 1:5-8).

c. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is distinct from salvation: the baptism of the Holy Spirit empowers believers with gifts for Christian service. Jesus described three relationships between a person and God's Spirit. First, the Spirit is *with* a person to bring them to Christ (John 14:17). Second, the Spirit comes *in* a person when they yield to Christ (John 14:17, 1Cor. 6:19-20). Third, the Holy Spirit comes *upon* a believer to empower them for Christian living and service ([Ac. 1:5-8). This relationship is referred to as the baptism or filling of the Holy Spirit (Ac. 1:5-8, Ac. 2:4, Eph. 5:18).

Jesus described this relationship as an overflowing of the Holy Spirit when on the great day of the Feast of Tabernacles, He stood and cried out to the multitude, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified (Jn. 7:37-39). The filling of the Spirit would be like rivers, a torrent, of living water flowing out of the life of the believer. Jesus was distinguishing the Spirit being poured into your life from the experience of the Spirit overflowing out of your life.

i. The baptism can be same time as salvation or subsequent to: In Acts 2 and 10 the baptism of the Spirit occurred at the same time as salvation for Jews at Pentecost and Gentiles at the house of Cornelius. On the other hand, it happened after salvation for the Samaritans (Ac. 8), the apostle Paul (Ac. 9) and at Ephesus (Ac. 19).

ii. The baptism of the Spirit and tongues: the baptism of the Spirit is often associated with tongues but it is not limited to imparting the gift of tongues. Tongues are not necessary for salvation (1Cor. 14:5). Tongues is not the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

d. Spiritual gifts are to be exercised in order: balance is the key concept as Paul sets forth guidelines for the use of the gifts. The limits are intended to avoid confusion and build-up believers (1Cor. 14:26, 33, 40). The Holy Spirit does not interrupt Himself – so we don't want

people standing up in the middle of the teaching and declaring, “Thus says the Lord ...” unless it’s the teacher.

i. Pneuma: believer meetings (aka “afterglows”) provide a forum for people to exercise sign gifts such as tongues, interpretation of tongues and prophecy, and to seek the filling of the Spirit. We’ve tried them at various times such as Sunday nights, and once a month during our normal mid-week Bible study, and after our mid-week study. My experience is that trying to offer the pneuma when people generally expect a Bible-study is ineffective because of the crowd that is drawn. Also, mid-week, after a study, can simply be too late for the majority of people’s schedules. Lately, we’re experimenting with a prayer-worship experience on a quarterly basis. I confess that I would like to see more of the gifts sought and exercised in our body and want to insure that we abide in our charismatic roots.

A pastor’s perspective: one of my biggest challenges in the last 25 years is to find the “right” balance between the work of the Spirit and the Word. In our movement we place a premium on teaching, and although that is clearly to be a Spirit-led activity, it can sometimes seem more intellectual than spiritual. I want to make sure that we don’t neglect our experience with the fullness of the work of the Holy Spirit. So, as noted above, I want to create opportunities through the pneuma (believer meeting or afterglow) as well as regularly offering teaching on the work of the Holy Spirit and the availability and use of gifts in the Christian life. I confess that I struggle to find the right balance.

LIFEWOR

Consider attending a service at a church that is “hyper-Pentecostal” and one that believes the gifts ceased at the end of the first century. Compare the experience with the services at a calvary.

1. In what ways were they different?
2. In what ways were they the same?

7. Church government:

a. N. T. does not clearly establish a model of church government:

Church government helps to establish and maintain biblical order, authority, accountability and effectiveness. There are theological arguments that can be made to support the pastor or elder led model. There is less support for a congregational model of authority (no positive model - Num. 16 Rebellion of Korah; 1Sam. 11-12 desire for a king and rejection of theocracy). Yet, the Bible likely allows liberty in the form of church government. Let’s consider some forms of government:

b. Denominational control: a biblical example as seen in Ac. 15 in regard to the Jerusalem council. There the decision from Jerusalem was to guide and direct churches in other areas. This form is referred to as Episkopalian, flowing from *episkopos* often translated bishop.

c. Elder rule: This is the Presbyterian form coming from the Greek *presbuteros* translated elder. A reference to elder rule can be seen in 1Pet. 5:1-5. In this model the elder board leads, directs and the pastor is subject to the board, performing ministry at their direction. In most situations staff pastors are best qualified to lead not because they are more intelligent but because of the

time they spend immersing themselves in the church's ministry on a full-time basis, and their training for ministry. Most pastors will ultimately spend 50 or more hours per week serving in ministry and most non-staff elders spend about 10 hours a week.

d. Theocracy: the concept relates to God's leading of His people. In the OT God ruled the nation of Israel, in its inception, as a theocracy. In this model, God spoke and directed Moses who was assisted by and accountable to 70 elders (Ex. 18). Aaron and the priests assisted Moses in ministering to the people and the Lord. In the NT model Jesus is the Head of the Church (Eph. 5:23, Mt. 16:18) who raises up pastors who then appoint elders to assist and establish accountability (1Tim. 3:1, Titus 1:5). Pastors and elders form a plurality of leaders, the lead pastor serves as an elder and is first among equals. Other elders may be paid staff or volunteers. The lead pastor is the primary visionary but is not the only decision maker of the church, thereby avoiding potential for abuse of authority. The lead pastor is the leader of the board but looks to church board to share in tasks of leadership and decision making (Ac. 14:23, 20:17, 1Pet. 5:1-5). **Calvary Chapels have historically adopted this model.**

e. The roles of various leaders and boards:

i. Communicate to the church the model of government: the lead pastor should communicate the model to the core group, and later to the church, and the congregation should allow its leaders to direct the affairs of the church.

ii. Board of Directors (a.k.a. elder board): these are the people empowered and authorized to vote on significant issues that impact the implementation of the short and long-term vision. Board members must meet all the qualifications for elders described in 1Tim. 3 and Titus 1. Although they must meet the character requirements they do not need to function in the office of elder described below. They decide major decisions impacting the church rather than day-to-day operations. Although most board decisions simply require a majority decision I urge you to seek unanimity. Unanimous decisions often reflect the unity of the Spirit. Our board is made up from an even number of pastoral types and business types with the lead pastor acting as the president of the board and creating an odd number of board members.

iii. Pastors: pastors care for the spiritual needs and development of the body as they help to shape and implement the church's vision. They have met the qualifications for ordination. Their opinions are not binding, unless they sit on the board, however I strongly urge you to seek and consider their counsel as they are generally most familiar with the operation of the church and ministry in general.

iv. Elders and deacons: again these people must meet the requirements per 1Tim. 3, Titus 1, and Acts 6. As mentioned earlier, women can be deacons but we do not recognize women as elders. Elders and deacons oversee, or assist in the oversight of various ministries of the church. They shape and implement the vision of specific areas of ministry and provide insight and counsel regarding the overall church vision. Although their opinions are not binding authority it is wise to seek and consider their counsel.

v. Financial advisory board: these are believers who are business savvy as a result of education and/or experience, entrepreneurial, and able to think strategically. They advise the lead pastor and/or board of directors to assist in developing the church's short and long-term strategic plan.

Their business expertise can be invaluable and can offer clarity, as well as providing an opportunity for these leaders to have significance in advancing God's kingdom. The board members do not have binding authority but advise re financial matters likely to influence the church.

vi. Staff: help to implement the vision and can include various directors, assistants, and administrative support in addition to pastors. Since they are working in the church for many hours each week they have great insights and their opinions should be sought and considered as the vision is contemplated.

A pastor's perspective: the concept of church government relates to authority and the decision making process. In practice, when there are matters that are likely to have significant impact on the church such as long term vision I generally use the following approach: First, I share the idea with our fellow staff pastors. After receiving input from the pastors, I'll share with the staff and then elders and deacons. Once I have gleaned their insights, I'll present to the financial advisory board for review. Finally, the refined vision is shared with the Board of Directors for a formal vote. The process allows various leaders to share their perspectives, offer insights that I failed to consider, and creates consensus among us as we move forward.

8. Attitude of grace:

There is a tension as local churches try to effectively carry out the mandate to see people restored in their relationship with God. There are some local churches that seem very harsh inflexible legalistic and create apparent roadblocks to repentance and restoration that go beyond the Scriptures. On the other hand, there are some local churches that seem to be very loving but are liberal and lack standards so that restoration is offered without a clear biblical understanding of prerequisites. We want to balance the tension by being a church that manifests an attitude of grace. All our doctrinal orthodoxy and understanding of Scriptures are of no value without love (1Cor. 13:1-8). If we love one another as Jesus loves then the world will know that we are His disciples (Jn. 13:34-35). Biblical grace manifests Christ's love as follows:

a. Compassion without compromise: grace is more than politeness or some nebulous emotion. Grace relates to an attitude of unmerited favor that flows from recognition of God's grace towards us as sinners. Compassion without compromise requires you to avoid legalism and liberalism. This is the example of Jesus to the woman caught in adultery, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more" (Jn. 8:11); and Peter's restoration following his denial of Jesus (Jn. 21:15-17). It is also the attitude we are to show one another in light of God's forgiveness of us (Eph. 4:32). Compassion and grace help to reduce hypocrisy and create authenticity, as people will be less afraid to receive restoration.

b. Restore with a spirit of gentleness: we are to restore others with a spirit of gentleness and humility (Gal. 6:1-3). The whole message of Scripture from Genesis 3 to Revelation is God's desire to restore fellowship with humanity to Himself. Minister grace by creating an environment where people know that God accepts them in Christ; but once they yield to God in Christ they need to seek to apply the truth of Christ to their lives. In seeking to be gracious don't compromise the integrity of the Word or you'll bring reproach to Jesus.

Imagine Jesus washing the disciples feet (Jn. 13). They had engaged in ceremonial baths in Jerusalem to prepare for the Passover but walked in open sandals on dirt roads to the Upper Room. The water was not too hot or cold and Jesus did not rub their feet so hard that He began to remove skin or so soft that He left dirt on their feet. The right amount of heat and pressure for the situation is our goal.

c. Church discipline and grace: Our God is the God of second chances and sometimes third, fourth, etc.. Jesus admonished Peter that extensive grace and forgiveness was available so that relationship with God and others could be restored. The rabbinical view of Jesus' day was to forgive up to three times. Peter thought he was being gracious when he suggested forgiving up to seven times, however Jesus urged seventy times seven. He wasn't setting a numerical limit of 490 but rather implies don't bother counting. If someone repents let them be restored into fellowship (Matt. 18:21-22).

i. Grace is balanced by discipline and the need for repentance (Mt. 18:15-18). If someone refuses to repent of their sin after being confronted by the one they have sinned against and other witnesses then you'll need to consider informing the church, especially if the sin is threatening to the spiritual health of the whole. The ultimate sanction of excommunication or removal from the church (Mt. 18:15-18, 1Cor. 5:1-8) should never be used capriciously and should be used judiciously. Removing someone from the church implies that as a pastor in a position of spiritual authority you are asking God to withdraw His protection from that person until they repent.

ii. Grace and restoration of authority: when someone is removed from a position of authority because of moral failure the issue arises as to when and if the one disqualified can be restored. Preliminarily, don't remove someone without evidence to support the charges, and don't assume someone is either guilty or innocent without considering the evidence – be impartial (1Tim. 5:19-21). Once someone is removed, the Bible gives no clear time limit re restoration. Any guidelines suggesting 6 months, one year, 2 years or never is man-made and suspect at best. Paul urges Timothy and us not to lay hands suddenly (1Tim. 5:22). In context it appears that the passage deals with restoring authority more than the initial conferring of authority.

I believe the best guideline is uttered by John the Baptist, "Therefore bear fruit worthy of repentance" (Mt. 3:8). In essence, you need to wait long enough to ensure that genuine repentance has taken place as evidenced by the fruit of their life. At some point, you'll need to make a decision re timing and I suggest you err on the side of grace. Certainly, there will be times that you'll discover that you were wrong but generally you can't "go wrong" in seeking to be gracious.

iii. Grace and boundaries: grace doesn't mean an absence of boundaries. Reasonable boundaries are essential to the Christian life and a healthy church. For example, if someone was convicted for a sex crime against a minor it is likely reasonable that they can serve in the church but not with children or youth. Furthermore, the greater the person's influence the greater the need for caution. Thus, a lead pastor who has committed adultery likely needs to be proven while serving under the authority of others for an extended period.

A pastor's perspective: I've had multiple experiences where a person in the church has committed sexual sin involving a minor. For example, a young man age nineteen has sex with a seventeen-year-old girl and her parents call the police. The man ends up with a conviction record and now is part of an Internet registry of "sex-offenders." He subsequently comes to

Christ, repents and has led an exemplary life for the past decade. He now wants to become involved in the ministry of the church. I will welcome him with open arms, although I will set what I believe to be a reasonable boundary in that he will not be allowed to serve in the children's or youth ministries. Inevitably, some well-meaning person in the church knows that he is a registered sex offender and objects to him being involved in any ministry. Although I'm confident that the "objector" will gossip and tend to cause division in an effort to rally people to their position if I do not acquiesce, I won't back down from the position of grace. Instead, I'll use the opportunity to teach grace to the offender, the objector and the whole church if necessary. To date, I've never regretted a stand for grace.

LIFEWOR

Imagine an elder contacts you to confess that he has been tempted by pornography in the past. He has experienced more than ten years of victory over temptation to pornography with the exception of a single incident two years before, and another incident six weeks ago. He has confessed, repented, and is receiving biblical counseling as part of his recovery. He doesn't want to bring reproach to the Lord or the church, and thinks he may need to step-down if that is what you want.

Discuss how you would respond.

Lesson 57: Calvary Distinctives - What is Our Philosophy of Ministry Part 3

What We Believe and Why

Outline:

- a. Systematic theology
- b. Reaching the next generation
- c. Outreach & evangelism
- d. Equipping for the work of ministry

9. Systematic theology:

a. What is a dispensational system of theology? We follow a dispensational system of theology, which is contrast below with the reform or covenant system. **Dispensationalism** is a system of theology that has **two primary distinctives**. **1) a consistently literal interpretation of Scripture, especially Bible prophecy. 2) a distinction between Israel and the church in God's program.** Dispensationalists claim that their principle of hermeneutics is that of literal interpretation, which means giving each word the meaning it would commonly have in everyday usage. Symbols, figures of speech and types are all interpreted plainly in this method, and this is in no way contrary to literal interpretation. Even symbols and figurative sayings have literal meanings behind them. **There are at least three reasons why we believe this is the best way to view Scripture.** First, philosophically, the purpose of language itself seems to require that we interpret it literally. Language was given by God for the purpose of being able to communicate with man. The second reason is biblical. Every prophecy about Jesus Christ in the Old Testament was fulfilled literally. Jesus' birth, Jesus' ministry, Jesus' death, and Jesus' resurrection all occurred exactly and literally as the Old Testament predicted. There is no non-literal fulfillment of these prophecies in the New Testament. This argues strongly for the literal method. Third, if literal interpretation is not used in studying the Scriptures, there is no objective standard by which to understand the Bible. Each and every person would be able to interpret the Bible as he saw fit. Biblical interpretation would devolve into "What this passage says to me..." instead of "The Bible says..." Sadly, this is already the case in much of what is called biblical interpretation today.

Dispensational theology teaches that there are two distinct peoples of God: Israel and the church. Dispensationalists believe that salvation has always been by faith—in God in the Old Testament and specifically in God the Son in the New Testament. Dispensationalists hold that the church has not replaced Israel in God's program and the Old Testament promises to Israel have not been transferred to the church. They believe that the promises God made to Israel (for land, many descendants, and blessings) in the Old Testament will be ultimately fulfilled in the 1000-year period spoken of in Revelation chapter 20. Dispensationalists believe that just as God is in this age focusing His attention on the church, He will again in the future focus His attention on Israel (Romans 9-11). Using this system as a basis, some dispensationalists understand the Bible to be organized into **seven dispensations: Innocence (Genesis 1:1–3:7), conscience (Genesis 3:8–8:22), human government (Genesis 9:1–11:32), promise (Genesis 12:1–Exodus 19:25), law (Exodus 20:1–Acts 2:4), grace (Acts 2:4–Revelation 20:3), and the millennial kingdom (Revelation 20:4-6).** *Again, these dispensations are not paths to salvation, but manners in which God relates to man.* Dispensationalism, as a system, results in a **premillennial interpretation of Christ's second coming and usually a pretribulation interpretation of the**

rapture.

b. What is the difference between covenant vs. dispensational theology? **Dispensational theology** essentially sees the Scriptures unfolding in a series of “dispensations.” A dispensation can be loosely defined as the means through which God governs his actions with man and creation. Dispensational theology views the revelation as progressive, i.e., in each dispensation, God reveals more and more of His divine plan of redemption. The thing to remember with dispensational theology is that there is a sharp distinction between Israel and the Church. They are two different people with two different destinies in God’s economy. The Church is seen as a ‘parenthesis’ between God’s dealings with Israel. The restored kingdom promised to Israel will be fulfilled in the Millennium. Until then is the Church Age—the time of the Gentiles.

Covenant theology is effectively the polar opposite of dispensational theology. *While both agree that Scripture is progressive, the overarching principle of covenant theology is the covenant. Covenant theology sees two theological covenants in Scripture—the covenant of works and the covenant of grace.* **The covenant of works** was introduced in the Garden between God and man in which God promised mankind life for obedience and judgment for disobedience. The covenant of works was re-introduced at Sinai as God promised Israel long life and blessing in the land upon on the condition of their obedience to the Mosaic covenant, but expulsion and judgment in the event of their disobedience. **The covenant of grace** was implemented after the fall and represents God’s unconditional covenant with man to redeem and save the elect. All of the various biblical covenants (Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, and the New) are out-workings of the covenant of grace as God works His plan of redemption in human history. So where dispensational theology saw a discontinuity between the various dispensations (and in particular between the Old and the New Testaments), covenant theology sees a great deal of continuity. This is especially evident in the fact that covenant theology does not see a sharp distinction between Israel and the Church. Both entities are seen as one continuous people of God with one ultimate destiny. All of that serves as the backdrop to view new covenant theology. New covenant theology is a middle point between the two. It shares a lot in common with classic covenant theology, in particular the continuity between the Church and Israel as being one people of God. However, it also differs with covenant theology in that it does not necessarily view the Scriptures as the unfolding of redemption in a covenant of works/covenant of grace framework. Instead it sees the Scriptures in a more promise/fulfillment paradigm.

New covenant theology is best described as a hermeneutical principle, or an interpretative grid through which one reads and interprets the Scriptures. As a hermeneutical principle, it stands as a bridge between **dispensational theology** and **covenant [reform] theology**. That is not to say that new covenant theology has intentionally set itself up between dispensational theology and covenant theology, but that new covenant theology shares things in common with both dispensational and covenant theology. As such, we cannot say what new covenant theology is without reference to dispensational theology or covenant theology.

By far the biggest difference between new covenant theology and covenant theology is how each views the Mosaic Law. Covenant theology sees the Law in three ways: civil, ceremonial and moral. The civil aspect of the Law was those laws in the covenant of Sinai which governed the theocratic nation of Israel while they live in the Promised Land. The ceremonial aspect of the Law governed the worship of God by Israel while in the land. Finally, the moral aspect of the Law

governed the behavior of God's people. It should be understood that the Law, in and of itself, is one cohesive whole and that the Jews did not delineate between civil, ceremonial and moral; these are just terms used to help identify the three areas of Israelite life that the Mosaic Law governed.

According to classic covenant theology, Jesus came to fulfill the Law (Matthew 5:17). He did so by satisfying all of the ceremonial, civil and moral aspects of the Law. Jesus Christ is the reality behind the shadows of the Old Testament sacrificial system and thereby fulfills the ceremonial aspect of the Law. Jesus Christ also bore the penalty our sins deserved and thereby fulfilled the civil aspect of the Law. Finally, Jesus Christ lived in full accordance with the moral aspect of the Law and fulfilled the righteous requirements of the Law. Now the moral aspect of the Law represents the essence of the covenant of works. As such, it transcends the Mosaic economy. In other words, God has always required holiness from humanity. The covenant of works was not negated due to the fall, nor was it negated even though it was fulfilled in Christ. The moral aspect of the Law still stands as the standard of morality for mankind because it is reflective of God's character, and that does not change. *Therefore, covenant theology still sees the Mosaic Law (especially the Ten Commandments) as prescriptive for the Church, even though the ceremonial and civil aspects have been rendered obsolete in Christ.*

New covenant theology sees the Mosaic Law as a whole and sees it all fulfilled in Christ (so far in agreement with covenant theology). However, because new covenant theology sees the Mosaic Law as a whole it also sees the moral aspect of the Mosaic Law as fulfilled in Christ and no longer applying to Christians. Instead of being under the moral aspect of the Mosaic Law as summarized in the Ten Commandments, we are under the law of Christ (1 Corinthians 9:21). The law of Christ would be those prescriptions that Christ specifically stated in the Gospels (e.g., the Sermon on the Mount). *In other words, the entire Mosaic economy has been set aside in new covenant theology; it no longer applies in any way to Christians.* So while new covenant theology sees a continuity between the Old and New Testaments in regards to God's people and the way of salvation, new covenant theology draws a rather sharp line of distinction between the Old and New Testaments when it comes to the difference between the old Mosaic covenant and the new covenant mediated by Christ. The old covenant is obsolete (including the moral aspect of the Mosaic Law) and replaced by the new covenant with the law of Christ to govern its morality.

c. What is the difference Calvinism vs. Arminianism? Calvinism and Arminianism are two systems of theology that attempt to explain the relationship between God's sovereignty and man's responsibility in the **matter of salvation**. Calvinism is named for John Calvin, a French theologian who lived from 1509-1564. Arminianism is named for Jacobus Arminius, a Dutch theologian who lived from 1560-1609. Both systems can be **summarized with five points**.

1. Calvinism holds to the **total depravity** of man while Arminianism holds to partial depravity. Total depravity states that every aspect of humanity is tainted by sin; therefore, human beings are unable to come to God on their own accord. Partial depravity states that every aspect of humanity is tainted by sin, but not to the extent that human beings are unable to place faith in God of their own accord. Note: classical Arminianism rejects "partial depravity" and holds a view very close to Calvinistic "total depravity."

2. Calvinism includes the belief in **unconditional election**, while Arminianism believes in conditional election. Unconditional election is the view that God elects individuals to salvation

based entirely on His will, not on anything inherently worthy in the individual. Conditional election states that God elects individuals to salvation based on His foreknowledge of who will believe in Christ unto salvation, thereby on the condition that the individual chooses God.

3. Calvinism sees **limited atonement**, while Arminianism sees it as unlimited. This is the most controversial of the five points. Limited atonement is the belief that Jesus only died for the elect. Unlimited atonement is the belief that Jesus died for all, but that His death is not effectual until a person receives Him by faith.

4. Calvinism includes the belief in **irresistible grace**, while Arminianism says that an individual can resist the grace of God. Irresistible grace argues that when God calls a person to salvation, that person will inevitably come to salvation. Resistible grace states that God calls all to salvation, but that many people resist and reject this call.

5. Calvinism holds to **perseverance** of the saints while Arminianism holds to conditional salvation. Perseverance of the saints refers to the concept that a person who is elected by God will persevere in faith and will not permanently deny Christ or turn away from Him. Conditional salvation is the view that a believer in Christ can, of his/her own free will, turn away from Christ and thereby lose salvation. Note: many Arminians deny "conditional salvation" and instead hold to "eternal security."

Conclusion: So, in the Calvinism vs. Arminianism debate, who is correct? It is interesting to note that in the diversity of the body of Christ, there are all sorts of mixtures of Calvinism and Arminianism. There are five-point Calvinists and five-point Arminians, and at the same time three-point Calvinists and two-point Arminians. Many believers arrive at some sort of mixture of the two views. **Ultimately, it is our view that both systems fail in that they attempt to explain the unexplainable.** Human beings are incapable of fully grasping a concept such as this. Yes, God is absolutely sovereign and knows all. Yes, human beings are called to make a genuine decision to place faith in Christ unto salvation. These two facts seem contradictory to us, but in the mind of God they make perfect sense. The Scriptures teach both the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man. If you take either of these positions to an extreme, to the denying of the other, you're likely to have problems.

d. End times: the dispensational system results in a **premillennial interpretation of Christ's second coming and usually a pretribulation interpretation of the rapture.**

e. Pre-Trib rapture: Jesus promised that He would come again for His disciples so that where He is we shall be also (Jn. 14:1-3). The concept of the rapture is described in 1Th. 4:17 where the living church is "caught up" to meet the Lord in the air so that we shall ever be with the Jesus. In Jerome's Latin translation, the Vulgate, the Latin translation of the Greek *harpazo* is *raptuse* which yields our English rapture. While we recognize there are differing views regarding the timing we believe the best evidence supports a pre-Trib rapture. In essence, the church is delivered prior to the seven year Great Tribulation described in Revelation 6-19. Keep in mind the Rapture is not the same as 2nd coming (Mt. 24) at the end the Tribulation.

Date-setting: no one knows the day or the hour, however Jesus urged us to know the "Season" (Mt. 24:32-35 parable of the fig tree) or prophetic signs leading to His return. Why do we hold the view of a pre-Trib rapture:

i. The Church is not appointed to wrath (God's judgment) (1Th. 1:10, 5:1-9). God will not judge the righteous with the wicked (2Pet. 2:5).

ii. Attitude of expectancy – the exhortations to watch and be ready for His imminent return. We are told that Jesus comes as a “thief in the night” - unexpected, imminent. In the Olivet discourse (Mt. 25) Jesus told a series of parables. The moral of each is to watch and be ready for His return at any time. The theme is, “Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming” (Mt. 24:42). Paul, echoes the theme to the church at Thessalonica (1Th. 5:1-4). If the Lord would not return until the middle or end of the Great Tribulation then His return would not be unexpected. It appears to be God's plan that every generation live in constant expectation of His imminent return.

iii. Revelation 4-6: Rev.4:4 the 24 elders as representatives of the church, are present in heaven before the Great Tribulation. In Rev. 5, as Jesus receives the title deed to the earth the 24 elders sing a new song, saying, “You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; or You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation.” Only the church can sing the song of redemption. The chronology shows the church in heaven before God's throne prior to the Great Tribulation beginning in Rev. 6.

iv. O.T. Types: Lot was removed before judgment of Sodom (Gen. 18:23-19:25; 2Pet. 2:7-9); Enoch (Gen. 5:24) and Elijah (2Ki. 2:1-11) were “raptured” before judgment, and Daniel was gone as 3 Hebrews were cast into fire (Dan. 3).

f. Israel and prophecy: most end times problems occur when we replace Israel and the Church in passages. God is not through with Israel (Dan. 9-12, Romans 9-11). In 1948 the nation state of Israel was established and this appears to be a key event in Biblical prophecy. Israel (the Jewish people who have yet to receive Christ) goes through the Tribulation not the Church. Noah and Daniel's 3 friends are a picture of Israel preserved.

g. Arguments used to support the view that the church is present during the Tribulation:

i. The last trumpet: some assert the last trumpet in 1Cor. 15:51-52 is related to the seven trumpet judgments of Revelation, however the trumpet of the Rapture is sounded by God (1Cor. 15:51-52, 1Th. 4:16), whereas the trumpets of judgment are sounded by angels (Rev. 8:13).

ii. Martyrs Rev. 20:4-5: the martyrs that John sees and describes in heaven are tribulation saints not the church (Rev. 7:13-14).

iii. The gathering of the elect Mt. 24:29-31: immediately after the tribulation Jesus gathers His elect. Although the church is frequently referred to as God's elect, the Jews/Israel are also described as the elect. Here, the promise relates to Israel, not the church (Is. 11:12).

iv. Antichrist makes war against the saints Dan. 7:21, Rev. 13:7: since the Antichrist prevails against them they are not the Church (Mt. 16:18) but are tribulation saints, those who come to Christ during the Tribulation.

h. Practical implications of a pre-Trib perspective: first, the expectation that Jesus could come at any time creates an urgency for the work of ministry to reach the lost as quickly as possible. Second, it helps to create a proper perspective of material blessings. We won't cling as tightly to

the things of the world if we believe we can leave this world at any moment. Third, it helps to establish and maintain purity in our lives (Mt. 24:46, 1Jn. 3:2-3). We believe that the Lord is coming soon, “And *do* this, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation *is* nearer than when we *first* believed (Rom. 13:11).

i. Descriptive vs. prescriptive hermeneutic: there are some passages that describe how the Church functioned but they do not necessarily prescribe how the church must function. For example the church at Troas (Ac. 20:7-12) met on Sunday and they broke bread, presumably the Lord’s Supper. This describes what they did but does not necessarily mandate that the Church must meet on Sunday, as opposed to Saturday or any other day. Nor does it require the Church to partake of communion every Sunday when it gathers.

j. The negative vs. positive hermeneutic: simply because a practice isn’t mentioned in the Bible doesn’t mean the early church didn’t do it or that the church today shouldn’t do it. As long as a practice doesn’t violate a clear biblical principle then God has given you freedom to do it or not.

A pastor’s perspective: in my experience there are too many pastors who dislike systematic theology. I’m not suggesting that we reduce our relationship with God to an intellectual exercise or pursuit and neglect the spiritual essence of our relationship. However, if we are not familiar with the significant issues described in this section and able to discuss them with a relative degree of comfort it will likely undermine our credibility with any serious student of the nature of God – theology. Furthermore, those we teach will also be less equipped to discuss what they believe and why they believe it. Let us be prepared to discuss systematic theology issues with gentleness and respect with those who are curious (1Pet. 3:15), and be discerning so that we can avoid foolish disputes with those who simply want to argue or debate (2Tim. 2:23).

LIFEWOR

1. Read and reread this section on systematic theology. Be prepared to ask questions at your next meeting.
2. If you have not already read Henry Thiessen’s, “Lectures on Systematic Theology” begin to read and finish the book within four months.

10. Reaching the next generation:

a. The problem: Francis Schaeffer observed, “Not being able to change, to change under the Holy Spirit, is ugly. The same applies to church polity and practice. In a rapidly changing age like ours, an age of total upheaval like ours, to make non-absolutes absolutes guarantees both isolation and the death of the institutional and organized church.” Change and transformation are at the very heart of the gospel. Change and transformation are evidence of spiritual growth. Yet, people and organizations resist change. Too many churches yield to the pressure of the change resisters and lose their spiritual edge and ministry. Here are some ways to reach the next generation:

b. Be culturally relevant: how can the church relate to contemporary culture and contextualize the gospel in that setting? Understand the culture you are trying to reach (missional). The truth of the Bible doesn’t change but how the church communicates and implements the faith must change from generation to generation, and from culture to culture to be effective and relevant.

Every church is affected to some degree by the culture of its community. Answer the implied question, “Why would this next generation want to go to church?”

c. Continually evaluate the culture and the ministry: to remain relevant and reach each generation with the tools of that generation you must regularly evaluate. The men of Issachar who joined David in his battle with Saul were described as, “Those who understood the times and knew what Israel should do” (1Ch. 12:32). There is an ongoing need to evaluate in order to understand the times. Similarly, at Corinth, Paul sought to be sensitive to what was happening in the culture for the purpose of gaining/winning souls for Jesus [5x “I might win”]. Paul became: a servant, as a Jew, as a Gentile, as weak in the sense of willing to accommodate self to Scripture to avoid stumbling another (1Cor. 9:19-22). A healthy church is flexible in areas of culture and Christian liberty but does not compromise biblical truth. Be flexible: able to change without becoming an old wineskin, while still maintaining stability.

d. Emerging cultures: post-moderns are pluralistic but the 1st Century Roman Empire was much more pluralistic than North America today. **Characteristics of today’s post-moderns:**

i. Denial of personal objectivity: I do believe in God, but that’s how I was raised. No one can know for sure.

ii. Knowledge is uncertain: the government says smoking is bad but who really knows for sure.

iii. Absolute truth is replaced by relative truth: if religion works for you that’s great.

iv. Tolerance is the mantra: unless there is a claim of absolute truth.

v. General cynicism: the Bible will not be accepted as authority until they see how it applies to them.

vi. Rejection of meta-narratives for mini-narratives: every culture has an ideal of how things should be, that there is a problem(s), and seeks solutions.

e. Characteristics of churches that are effectively reaching post-moderns:

i. Not ashamed for passionate love for Jesus: C.S. Lewis, “the great difficulty is to get modern audiences to realize that you are preaching Christianity solely and simply because you happen to think it is true; they always suppose you are preaching it because you like it or think it is good for society or something of that sort.”

ii. Promote incarnational ministry: realize that post-moderns are on a spiritual search and go to them and engage in daily life like Jesus (enter their culture).

iii. Engage in service: serve the community, do justice.

iv. Participatory and experiential praise: model vulnerability and awareness of God.

v. Expository teaching: especially narratives.

vi. Connect with tech: stay relevant to the next generation.

vii. Live community: develop trust and intimacy over time; use small groups that stay together for years not months. Post-moderns may want to get to know the people of God before wanting to get to know God. Help people experience Christian life as a journey/process in relationship with others.

viii. Lead by transparency and team (authenticity is key) – don't seek to entertain but to engage, connect with people by letting them know you're seeking to follow Jesus too and you're not always successful.

ix. Casual and fresh style: casual atmosphere but respectful of God. Things feel fresh: change is welcomed and the organization is flexible.

x. Generation integration: balance youth and experience to create generation integration. Look for and develop future leaders who display integrity and character and challenge and empower them. Let them make a difference control their destinies and participate. Youth are not simply future leaders but are up front and behind the scenes leading and directing the church.

A pastor's perspective: Preliminarily, there is nothing wrong with focusing on an older generation. Nevertheless, I really value reaching the next generation and so our church invests time, money and vision to reaching youth and young adults. I try to avoid acting like a hipster to try to attract young people and seek to be authentic. Our staff has generation integration, and I'm regularly monitoring the demographic mix of our congregation to evaluate whether we are reaching young people. Nevertheless, I know that there will come a time when I'm unable to reach 20-somethings effectively. By raising up young men as Bible teachers and providing opportunity for them to teach regularly we are more likely be effective in reaching the next generation. Also, I've surrounded myself with leaders who I respect who I've entrusted with the responsibility to help me realize when I'm not being effective in reaching the next generation so that my role can change for the good of the church and the kingdom. It's a scary proposition but I believe it is healthy if we intend to reach the next generation.

LIFEWOR

Consider the demographics of your current church.

1. How is the next generation represented?
2. How could your current church more effectively reach the next generation?

11. Mission of outreach and evangelism:

As roses at the edge of vineyards provide insight regarding the health of vines, so do various factors reflect on health of the Church. Western Europe has gone from a primarily Christian region to less than 10% claiming to be churched today. Per Floyd Bartel in his book "A New Look at Church Growth" 95% of all Christians in North America will not win one person to Christ in their lifetime. Many Christians have no idea how to relate to the unchurched or to pre-believers. Many are isolated from, uncomfortable with, and unreasonably expect pre-believers to act like mature believers. What are some key lessons:

a. Jesus' example and mission: Jesus' mission was declared as follows, "the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Lu. 19:10). In context, Jesus was passing through Jericho when he encountered Zacchaeus, a chief tax collector who acquired great wealth by extorting his fellow Jews and was hated in his community. Remarkably, Jesus invites himself to eat at Zacchaeus' home. The religious leaders scorned Jesus, saying, "He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner." The charge was true – apparently no one is too bad for Jesus as He reaches out to the last lost and least. Jesus' understands that no one is as bad as they could be and no one is as good as they should be – all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

During the meal, Jesus declared, “Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham.” Zacchaeus had manifest a desire to repent and yield to God. Luke however does not record for us what Jesus had said during the meal or what dialogue took place between the Lord and Zacchaeus, but it is reasonable to make a few assumptions. First, Zacchaeus realized that God desires a relationship with him. Jesus took the initiative to reach out to him. Second, he understood that although God loved him and desired a relationship that his actions of exploitation and the accompanying attitudes were wrong and were an obstacle to a relationship with God, and thus he needed to repent. Third, during the course of the meal he came to the awareness that Jesus was in fact the Messiah.

Jesus commissioned His disciples with the words, “Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.” Not only were they being sent, but sent to go as Jesus.

i. Be relational: spend time with and get to know lost. It involves a sacrifice of time, listening, an awareness of another culture and likely some discomfort. It requires prayer to constantly align our heart with God’s, and certain desperation to fulfill Christ’s mission.

ii. Compassion: Jesus looked at the multitudes of people and was moved with compassion for they were like sheep without a shepherd – vulnerable, likely to get lost, and unable to adequately care for themselves in the midst of wolves. And so He began to teach them many things about God. Then he miraculously multiplied loaves and fish so that His disciples could feed the massive crowd. Prior to having the disciples feed the multitudes He instructed them to gather in smaller groups. So, the disciples were no longer serving an impersonal multitude but were engaging individuals. Compassion flows when we see people’s individual needs (Mk. 6:34-44). Care for physical needs to enhance opportunities to care for spiritual needs.

b. Paul at Mars Hill (Ac. 17:16-34) know the culture’s position on reality, underlying spiritual interest, places of connection, and encourage true fulfillment in Christ. Recognize the need to bring the gospel to Western culture, including America in a post-modern world. Avoid dangers of irrelevance and syncretism.

i. Care about spiritual need: Paul was moved by their idolatry. They were spiritual people but had no relationship with the true and living God, and Paul felt compelled to introduce them to Christ. The city’s fine art, culture, architecture and civilization could not replace the absence of God. Paul was grieved that these people would spend eternity separated from God if they did not receive Christ; and that reality motivated him to share the gospel.

ii. Meet people where they gather: Paul entered into the cultural life where people gathered at the marketplace and synagogue and sought opportunity to speak of God. The unique message of Jesus created curiosity that provided opportunities to speak to larger groups of philosophers at the Areaopagus. Paul encountered Epicureans, who pursued pleasure as the chief purpose in life, and Stoic philosophers, pantheists who put great emphasis on moral sincerity and a high sense of duty, and overcome natural desires by self-discipline. Neither philosophy can offer true fulfillment which is why people were interested to hear the gospel.

iii. Proclaim Jesus and the resurrection: The unique message of the gospel is attractive in any culture as people long for hope meaning and purpose. The evidence for the resurrection is overwhelming and beyond a reasonable doubt, and provides a sure foundation for the truth of the gospel (v.30-34).

iv. Create a bridge of common connection: Paul initially spoke of spirituality and praised them for being religious. He did not begin with the OT Scriptures as he did with Jews at the

synagogue, nor did he rebuke/criticize their pagan beliefs. He used the altar dedicated to “The Unknown God” as a nexus to reveal the true God. He speaks of God as Creator – a universal concept, rather than initially speaking of the Covenant God. Paul was familiar with their culture and quoted their poets as a means to connect with them. We need to be sensitive to the cultural values and engage the culture in dialogue. Neither Jesus or Paul built an enclave to avoid the culture nor did they affirm or approve of the cultural values opposed to the gospel; but they were aware of the culture and could dialogue with the culture.

v. Communicate the need for repentance and coming judgment: help people understand that they have a responsibility to God as Creator and the need to yield or experience judgment. “We learn from Paul that we cannot preach the gospel of Jesus without the doctrine of God, or the cross without the creation, or salvation without judgment” (Stott).

c. Authentic church is accomplished when pre-believers are reached

i. Be intentional: how will you reach pre-believers rather than attracting “disgruntled” believers from other churches? Reaching those who are distant from God requires a high level of commitment to develop relationships and reach the unchurched.

ii. Develop a culture of invest and invite: invest in the lives of pre-believers and then invite them to church and to receive Christ.

d. Salvation is a single event but coming to faith is a process:

i. The typical process leading to salvation: people move from an awareness of God to an initial awareness of the gospel. Once they understand the basics and the implications of the gospel, the next step is to develop a positive attitude regarding the gospel. Then, they count the cost – analyzing the burdens and benefits. Ultimately, a decision to act is made leading to repentance and faith in Christ. Subsequently, there is a post-decision desire to grow leading to assimilation into body life, discipleship and maturity.

ii. Answer the questions people are asking rather than simply giving answers to what you think they should ask. Take time to discover the obstacles and issues and respond with gentleness, respect and humility (1Pet. 3:15). Try to understand issues in the culture’s worldview, encourage the listener(s) to consider the truth of Christ’s claims, invite people to journey with the church community as they experience Christian life and invite them to make a commitment to Jesus (conversion by faith). Help people discover the benefits of relationship with God for today and eternity. Address felt needs from a biblical perspective. For example, distinguish God’s love and hope from the cultural norm or help people to see that God is not “a genie” to grant their wishes.

iii. Preach with an expectation that pre-believers are present: Assume that pre-believers are gathered when the assembly meets on weekends. As a teacher be careful to avoid “Christianese” without defining terms. Also, invite people to make a decision for Jesus especially weekend services so that the church begins to discover and expect that people are getting saved at the church.

e. Develop relationships in the community: model and discuss your experiences. Encourage people to actively develop relationships at work, school, neighborhood, marketplace, etc.

A pastor’s perspective: if there was one area in the life of our church that I would like us to be more effective in it is the mission of outreach and evangelism. Although we have seen many people come to Christ through the years, and do a great job hosting large-scale outreach events,

I believe we can do a better job of personal/relational evangelism. So, towards that purpose, we recently focused our vision for the church towards personal evangelism. We started with an eight week series on apologetics and then a study through the Gospel of Luke focused on Christ's mission, "seeking and saving that which was lost" [Lu.19:10] and our responsibility to live that mission. People are being equipped and encouraged for the mission.

LIFEWORK

As leaders you need to be setting the example in regard to personal evangelism.

1. Describe a recent experience in sharing the gospel:
2. This week share Jesus and the gospel with someone who is unchurched and be prepared to discuss the experience at your next meeting.

12. Equipping for the work of ministry:

a. Spiritual formation process: all of God's people are called to minister. The goal of leaders is to develop mature believers who discover their role in the body of Christ, and help to build-up the body. Paul described it this way, "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 (Eph. 4:11-12). Equipping refers to placing people in the condition they should be. Research consistently shows that the greatest need for strengthening the church is to get people involved in ministry. People want significance: they want to know that their lives make a difference; if not mobilized for ministry, they will look for significance in work hobbies recreation etc. The goal is to have an intentional process that moves people to become mature followers of Christ that contribute to their community. As believers minister it builds up the Body, helps to establish maturity, and creates unity.

Apostles refer to ones sent out cross-culturally (e.g. missionaries) and is distinct from the office of apostle held by the 12. God has gifted certain people to reach a culture of pre-believers and this gift is clearly needed. Prophets proclaim truth under God's anointing and help people distinguish the truth of God from other cultural values. Again, the gift is contrast with the office. Evangelists win souls for the Lord. But our focus is the role of the pastor-teacher who loves, cares for and feeds the Word of God, and has the express responsibility to equip God's people for the work of ministry. How do you equip people for the work of ministry?

b. Create a culture of serving: develop a congregational atmosphere in which spiritual formation is a core value, and people understand that they serve God by serving others. Expect the best from people and encourage a high level of commitment to Jesus. Set high expectations for people since they will never rise above the level of expectations. One of the characteristics of a healthy church is that people move from consuming to contributing. In that regard, people should be involved in at least one ministry appropriate to their gifts.

i. All people in a local church should participate in ministry: Gallup's research suggests that generally only 10-20% of the assembly do 100% of the ministry. This stunts the growth of the 80-90% as well as the body of Christ generally. However, Gallup's research is particularly interesting in that it indicates that 40-50% of those who aren't participating would if asked or trained. So preliminarily establish and communicate a standard that *everyone* should serve God

by serving others. Remove the myth that ministry is only the pastor's job, and remove unbiblical obstacles to serving God by encouraging all to become involved in ministry.

ii. Organized trained and mobilized: create a structure of ministries for people to become part of. Insure that each ministry leader is prepared to train and recruit volunteers. Mobilize people to volunteer and leaders to recruit. In addition to training to perform a function equip them by seeking to develop Christlike character.

iii. Make it easy for people to get information and get involved: as lead pastor you want to constantly reinforce the message of "saved to serve." We serve God by serving others. Encourage people and challenge them to take the next step by getting involved in a ministry. Make sure the process is as simple as possible: e.g. complete a card, sign-up on line, or even a sign-up table. The easier it is to get started the greater the response is likely to be.

c. Intentional leader development and mentoring: getting everyone involved in serving God by serving others is one part of equipping believers for the work of ministry. In addition, there needs to be a meaningful leadership development program.

i. School of Discipleship: The purpose of the program is to equip people to be more effective disciples who make disciples, and thus spiritual leaders.

ii. Intern program: the intern program provides an opportunity for those interested in vocational ministry to discover more about who Jesus is, who they are, and discover more of God's calling for their life through working in the ministry of the local church. A full description of our program and forms are available.

A pastor's perspective: I estimate that I spend fifteen to twenty percent of my week engaged in intentional leadership development. All of these meetings are intentionally focused on leadership development, mentoring and helping to create a culture where people learn to serve God by serving one another. Equipping for ministry should be an intentional process to move people from consumers to community. I recommend that you start to design time in your schedule as soon as possible for the purpose of equipping leaders to equip others to serve. Designate the time in your calendar and protect it – the more time generally the better.

LIFEWOR

Who are you currently mentoring? Describe how you are or have in the past developed leaders and equipped them for the work of ministry. Discuss what worked well and what seemed not to work.

Lesson 58: Calvary Distinctives - What is Our Philosophy of Ministry Part 4

What We Believe and Why

Outline:

- a. Authentic relationships
- b. Approach to giving
- c. Global missions
- d. Community service
- e. Membership

13. Developing authentic relationships:

How can a growing church remain intimate? The bigger you get the smaller you must get.

a. Small groups: the early church expanded exponentially so that thousands were gathering. Yet, smaller group gatherings in homes were an essential feature of the early church (Ac. 2:46, 5:42, 20:20). The purpose is to promote biblical community. Almost 60 times in the New Testament we read the phrase "One another." It is difficult, if not impossible, to develop biblical community until you develop authentic relationships. There are many advantages to small groups: they are not limited by facilities, can expand geographically, promote assimilation and more.

i. A church of small groups: you are either a church with small groups or a church *of* small groups. Make small groups part of the early vision/DNA of the church. Establish and communicate a goal that everyone becomes involved in small groups. Beware of offering programs and ministries that create obstacles and conflicts with small group participation.

b. Groups should include: spiritual development (e.g. Bible study, Christian living resources, devotionals, Christian history/biographies, leadership development), prayer, discussion, fellowship, and worship. Seek to develop mature disciples and leaders not just small group members. People need to have a sense of community and deeper relationships, feel appreciated and respected, feel listened to, grow in faith, receive practical help and encouragement to develop spiritual maturity.

i. The key concept is community: people know and care for one another. Groups should serve the purposes of providing care, meeting needs, and supporting ministry as they have opportunity to serve together. For example, groups can meet individual needs for prayer, emergencies, and can serve together by supporting a missionary or working as a group during a community service project.

ii. Develop assistant(s): who can become group leaders so that as groups reach a ceiling size [e.g. 16] it can form two groups.

c. A proposed model:

i. Groups tend to form re common life connections or affinity: for example, newly married, married with young kids, financial stewardship, college and career, middle-age singles, seniors, men, women, etc. **Consider encouraging intergenerational groups based on geographic proximity.** Here, people are brought together in *their* neighborhood. There are diverse life stages and interests but a shared sense of physical community that also fosters spiritual and relational community.

ii. Common resource: twice a year utilize a mandated common resource that all groups study together for about 8 weeks. Common resources help the group to identify with the larger body of the church. By limiting the use of common resources to twice a year you still provide autonomy for each group to focus on particular needs and interests.

iii. Training: each group leader should participate in training, and should intern as an assistant leader in a group.

iv. Oversight: the pastor or other leader acting as the overseer for the groups should communicate with and/or meet with leaders on a quarterly basis. The purpose of the meetings is to reinforce the vision, address issues, discuss resources and needs, provide training, encourage and answer questions.

A pastor's perspective: in the initial stages of the church try to develop multiple groups as a means to expand the core group. For example, you might teach the same study two different nights of the week at two different locations. This helps groups to become part of the DNA of the church.

LIFEWOR

Describe your experience as a participant, leader, or Bible teacher in a small group setting.

1. Why do you believe that community groups are beneficial?
2. Why might it be difficult for a lead pastor to encourage people to attend a community group rather than attending a mid-week study at the church taught by the lead pastor?

14. Approach to giving:

a. Tithing in the New Testament: the NT does not command the giving of a tenth as was required in the OT (Mt. 23:23, Lu. 11:42, Lu. 18:42, Heb. 7:7-10] but presumes people honor God by voluntarily returning some of the blessings He gives them.

b. How should we respond to the better covenant:

i. Give voluntarily: 2Cor. 8:3-4

ii. Give cheerfully not out of compulsion: 2Cor. 9:7

iii. Sacrificially: 2Cor. 8:1-5

iv. regularly and proportionately: 1 Cor. 16:1-2

v. Model generosity: You can tell where your heart is by seeing where you are putting your money. "Where you treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Mt. 6:21). As a leader you need to model generosity, and as a church be generous in giving sacrificially to advance the gospel.

c. Trust God to provide: Pastor Chuck Smith frequently shared, "Where God guides He provides." The idea is that if God is in something He will provide the resources. God will move people to support His will and vision. Therefore, there is no reason to pressure people to give. Avoid manipulation, guilt and shame as motivators. Instead, love the people and feed them the word of God. As people mature in Christ they discover the joy in giving, and their right and

responsibility to give to support God's mission. Trust that as you teach through the Bible that God will place the proper balance and emphasis on the subject of giving.

d. Reduce pressure re the offering: Don't make people feel compelled to give.

e. Building fund campaigns: in the three building projects that I've been involved in during the last seven years we never undertook a typical campaign of asking people to make pledges for contributions. We simply trusted that if we communicated the status on a quarterly basis that God would move people to respond per His will. I'm not suggesting that a campaign is wrong but it was a blessing to see God come through with the needed resources without making the money the focus.

A pastor's perspective: as leaders need to discover God's faithfulness in providing finances and learn to trust Him. Generally, when you've been on staff or worked for someone else you didn't have the sense of direct responsibility to pay the bills. However, as a lead pastor that sense becomes very real even though you know that it is God's work and His responsibility to provide. I remember when we first started renting meeting space and after a month of Sundays we were "in the red" \$1,000.00. I was afraid and wanted to contact everyone in the church and tell the need and ask for help. I remembered how George Mueller had responded to similar situations by fervently praying and purposed to do the same; and resisted the temptation to make the need known. The next day, Monday, I went to the mailbox and there was a check for \$1,100.00 from someone who didn't attend the church, and had no idea about our current situation. They included a simple note that God had put on their heart to send the check. It was the exact amount that we needed plus 10%. It was a great lesson early in my ministry experience to learn to trust God to provide. When you know that God will provide it is much easier to be generous.

Another discovery that may be helpful for you is that people are often more motivated to give to vision than to need. In essence, telling the church that, "We need a \$1,000.00 to pay the rent" is far less attractive than saying, "Your gifts to the Lord are allowing us to establish a thriving Bible teaching church that is changing our community." Communicate a compelling God inspired vision and people will support it.

LIFEWOR

Do some soul-searching about the issue of giving. Honestly examine whether you have been faithful in giving your financial resources to your local church and to advance God's kingdom. How can you expect people to do something their leaders are unwilling to do?

15. Global missions:

Develop a philosophy of ministry that supports and encourages the church to be actively involved in God's global ministry. Jesus foretold an expanding sphere of influence for His church as empowered by the Holy Spirit, "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the outermost parts of the world" (Ac. 1:8). As God is moving in the local church your ministry expands beyond your city, county, and region; and soon you are sending finances, short-term, and long-term missionaries to the field. You'll receive a myriad of requests for support, so it is necessary to have a philosophy to use as a matrix to guide decisions.

a. Support Bible teaching churches: prioritize Bible teaching churches as recipients of support. In developing countries the material needs are overwhelming. The desire to impact those needs via social programs such as orphanages, medical clinics, feeding programs, home building programs, etc. is good and noble. Yet, if those programs do not bring people into relationship with Jesus resulting in everlasting life, they miss the mark. In essence, we have minimized some physical hardship but have failed to address the greatest need – Jesus. The advantage of supporting Bible teaching churches is that they are designed to create and develop relationships with Jesus. There is no other institution that can impact a community like a church. As an ideal, the social programs flow out of the activity of a local church that you support rather than as an alternative to them.

b. Seek to create short-term mission trip opportunities for multitudes: in this facet the goal is to get as many people exposed to global missions as possible. Create opportunities to go to the mission field for the multitudes by considering logistics: cost, duration, geographic proximity, family or youth friendliness, the work(s) to be performed, etc. For example, we organize summer trips designed to reach the multitudes by traveling from Southern California to Baja Mexico. The geographic proximity of a six to eight hour drive significantly reduces the cost when compared to expensive airfare. The relatively brief round-trip travel allows the team to accomplish much even if the trip is of limited duration. We design the trip to be family and youth friendly by creating opportunities for a family or youth to serve such as a Kid's Bible Camp outreach. This would be in contrast with a trip whose only purpose was a building project that would be effectively limited to those with construction skills. By creating a positive experience for many to a short-term mission we expand the interest in the church towards global missions. The key is to find a partner church with a scope of ministry that fits this plan. Otherwise, your trip becomes a burden to the indigenous church rather than supporting their ministry. The goal is to support the indigenous church's needs not fulfill the sending church's agenda.

c. Create opportunities for short-term trips to support the churches you support in more distant areas: our approach to short-term trips to support churches in distant areas is impacted by the logistical issues. For example, the cost of travel tends to extend the duration of the trip. These factors tend to limit the number of people who can go. Our vision is to determine the needs, primarily leadership needs, of the indigenous church. Team members should be able to provide support for the lead pastor, train and develop other church leaders. For example if a church in Africa needs help with youth, women's ministry and tech send team members who can train in those areas. If the need is for construction, ideally bring someone who can do the work and help train others to do future work. The aim is to support leadership from the top down so that indigenous leaders are better equipped to carry-on the work of ministry when the team departs.

e. Leverage and influence: it is wise to invest where you believe that you are getting the best return on your investment in regard to advancing the kingdom. Invest resources in missionaries and local churches that you believe are making a recognizable difference in advancing Christ in a community. Also, it may be advantageous to invest more resources in fewer missions than minimizing resources to each recipient in an effort to "place more pins around the globe." It is the problem of an inch deep and a mile long. Also, look for places where your investment makes a difference. For example, some well-known missionary organization may not need your support since they are able to receive support from so many others, but there may be a particular work where your strategic support is significant.

i. Consider promoting a missionary: by highlighting a particular ministry each week or month you make the congregation aware that the local church is global in perspective and make the

f. Encourage staff to experience global missions: encourage lay and paid staff, especially pastors to experience what God is doing in the world. It will broaden perspective generally and help develop a missional perspective for foreign and local missions. We typically pay expenses for at least two staff members to go on every mission trip. Also if additional staff members desire to go we support them by not counting the time away from the church against their paid vacation benefits.

i. Lead pastor and global missions: I believe all lead pastors, especially church planters, should experience missions for the reasons described above and also because of the need for adventure. Most planters tend to be adventurous entrepreneurial types. Mission trips allow you to experience adventure and remain faithful to your home church.

g. Calvary Nexus missions policy manual: a detailed manual describing missions policies and guidelines is available.

A pastor's perspective: I try to take one to two trips a year. Each time I glean new perspectives on what God is doing in the world. The pastors and leaders of churches in diverse places are people that I greatly respect, and our relationship is a blessing. Many pastors I speak with in other parts of the world tell me that they seldom receive visits from lead pastors. If possible, seek to travel and strengthen other pastors in different parts of the world where you develop relationships. It will not only bless the other pastors but will undoubtedly enrich you and the various fellowships.

LIFEWOR

Consider your global missions perspective.

1. Describe your missions experience:
2. Plan a short-term missions experience. Try to visit [or return to a place] where you would like to develop or strengthen a relationship.

16. Community service and servant evangelism:

a. Purpose: to demonstrate the love of God to your community in tangible ways through acts of service, and to mobilize the local church to live their faith.

b. Large-scale quarterly projects: the goal is to mobilize large groups of people on a quarterly basis. Create projects that are suited to multitudes of people becoming involved with opportunities that do not require specialized training or expertise. If possible, the projects should be kid friendly so that families can serve together. By mobilizing large groups it helps to increase the visibility and impact to the community; and also encourages the body.

c. Smaller-scale on-going projects: these are on-going service projects that mobilize the local church to impact its community. Some potential ideas to consider include: public schools, senior centers, meals, incarcerated youth, pregnancy centers, rescue mission, food pantry, moving and home repairs, car repairs, transportation, tech support and disaster relief.

d. Engaging public elementary schools: Public schools provide an excellent opportunity to reach the true demographics of your community, and discover the actual needs of the community. A book, “Churches Loving Schools” is available as a helpful resource.

LIFEWOR

Make a list of community service projects including large-scale and smaller ongoing projects that are particularly attractive to you, and that you would like to see implemented.

17. Membership:

a. Is church membership biblical? The Bible does not specifically prescribe “membership” as we know it, other than the membership of the one Church of Jesus Christ. The scriptures never divide the local assembly into two groups, the “members” and the “non-members” or make any other distinction between believers for that matter. In the Bible, when a person believed the gospel, they were immediately baptized, and began to fellowship with the saints in their geographical region. The saints would accept them, on the basis of their profession of Christ, and that was it. The Bible speaks of no oaths, or commitments. The commitment and allegiance was to Christ, and the fellowship and commitment to other believers was a natural result of the believer's fellowship with the Lord. The assumption is that regenerate believers are the true church and are united in Christ. Nevertheless, it appears that believers are to be in relationship with other believers in a local assembly.

b. How should believers relate to a local church? The church was instituted by Jesus and although the noun is singular (ekklesia) it refers to a collected group (assembly, congregation). We are reminded that the individual Christian does not live out the life of faith alone, but as a part of that much larger Body. Although originally birthed in Jerusalem at Pentecost as a result of the Holy Spirit's work following Peter's sermon, the church quickly spread to additional cities as believers returned to their homes and continued meeting together in Jesus' name. The single Body which was first seen in Jerusalem soon multiplied into local manifestations found in numerous cities. And while initially there may have been only one church in a city, today we have multiple churches in numerous localities. The natural, automatic relationship between the individual and “the” church in his city has now evolved into a choice the believer must make as to which of many churches in her locale she will choose to associate with and make herself accountable to.

There is an expressed expectation that each individual believer will maintain an ongoing relationship with the congregation of believers with which he or she normally associates (Heb. 10:23-25). There appears to be a mutual responsibility of commitment between believers within each local Body, whether through the use of spiritual gifts (Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12:7,12,18, 27) or in the application of church discipline (Mt. 18:15-17; 1 Cor. 5:11-13). This mutual responsibility demands some sort of ongoing, mutually accountable relationship between individual believers. Lastly, the New Testament clearly states the responsibilities of leaders to the believers they serve (Jn. 21:15-17; Acts 20:28), as well as the responsibilities of individual believers to those who lead them (Hebrews 13:17). These passages express the required

stewardship of leadership and the expected submission of followers. Such responsibilities would be difficult if not impossible to fulfill outside of committed relationship among believers.

c. Is membership the means to establish and maintain the relationship? If committed relationship can be established and maintained by well fed and loved people then there would not be a need for a covenant resulting in membership status. Generally, membership requires a covenant: oath, pledge, commitment or promise addressing foundational matters such as: regular attendance, giving, service, and participation in any meetings, communion, or classes. This commitment may offer certain privileges that are not available to non-members.

d. Conclusion: we believe that the best way to motivate a healthy relationship to a local body is to love people and feed them a healthy diet of the word of God. Help people to understand what is expected of believers in authentic community. The case for membership as we use the term as a biblical concept is ambiguous at best. The tendency to abuse membership as an inappropriate means of exercising control or manipulation can be avoided by creating healthy biblical relationship motivated by fellowship in Christ, love, and spiritual maturity. Furthermore, potential legal issues creating potential liability may be avoided by simply not having membership status.

A pastor's perspective: My greatest objection to the concept of membership is the tendency of church leaders to utilize same to manipulate or control members to do something they are not feeling led by God to do, or to inhibit the exercise of Christian liberty including the freedom to select another local assembly as a place to grow. Furthermore, since the membership covenant is essentially a mutual agreement (e.g. contract) it is fair to assume that in many, if not most, cases when the member wants to leave they feel that the church has not met their end of the agreement. If the member feels that way, the church should at the very least be willing to consider and respect that they may have breached the agreement thereby excusing the member from performing their obligations. Dialogue between a leader and a member should avoid being heavy-handed. For example, a leader should generally avoid asserting that the member is "rebellious, not submitted to biblical authority, or is in sin" without a clear biblical basis beyond the member's desire to associate with another healthy local church.

LIFEWORk

Consider the above perspective on membership as well as your own experiences.

1. What is your view about membership in a local church?
2. Talk to three local pastors outside of your movement about church membership. Determine: whether they use it or not, the conditions for membership, and the reasons why. how did this impact your view about membership?

Appendix

Bibliography

a. Required reading:

1. Gayle Erwin: "The Jesus Style"
2. Henry and Richard Blackaby: "Spiritual Leadership"
3. Warren Wiersbe: "On Being a Servant"
4. Tim Jones: "Christian History Made Easy" **or** Warren Wiersbe: "50 People Every Christian Should Know"
5. John Stott: "Basic Christian Leadership"
6. J. Oswald Sanders: "Spiritual Leadership"
7. R. Kent Hughes: "Disciplines of a Godly Man" **or** Barbara Hughes "Disciplines of a Godly Woman"
8. H. Hendricks: "Living by The Book"

b. recommended reading:

1. Henry Thiessen: "Systematic Theology"
2. Charles Spurgeon: "Lectures to My Students"
3. Chuck Smith: "Harvest"
4. Henry Halley: "Halley's Bible Handbook"
5. Roy Hession: "The Calvary Road"
6. Andrew Murray: "Absolute Surrender"
7. Wiersbe & Wiersbe: "the elements of preaching"
8. William Gurnall: "The Christian in Complete Armor"
9. Kent and Barbara Hughes: "Liberating Ministry From The Success Syndrome"
10. Robert Clinton: "The Making of a Leader"
11. Norman Geisler: "Chosen But Free"

Application form

Name _____

Date of Birth _____

Mailing address _____

Email address _____

Phone number _____

1) Describe your salvation experience:

2) Describe ministry experience (where you have served at)

3) Describe why you want to attend the School of Ministry:

I have read and understand the School of Ministry vision statement.

sign: _____

date: _____

Ministry report form:

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Ministry involvement this month: _____

Where? (which ministries): _____

When? (how often): _____

What? briefly describe what you did: _____

Lessons learned: What did you learn about God, yourself and/or ministry? :

suggested action(s) to be taken: TO BE COMPLETED BY TEACHER AIDE

name of evaluator: _____