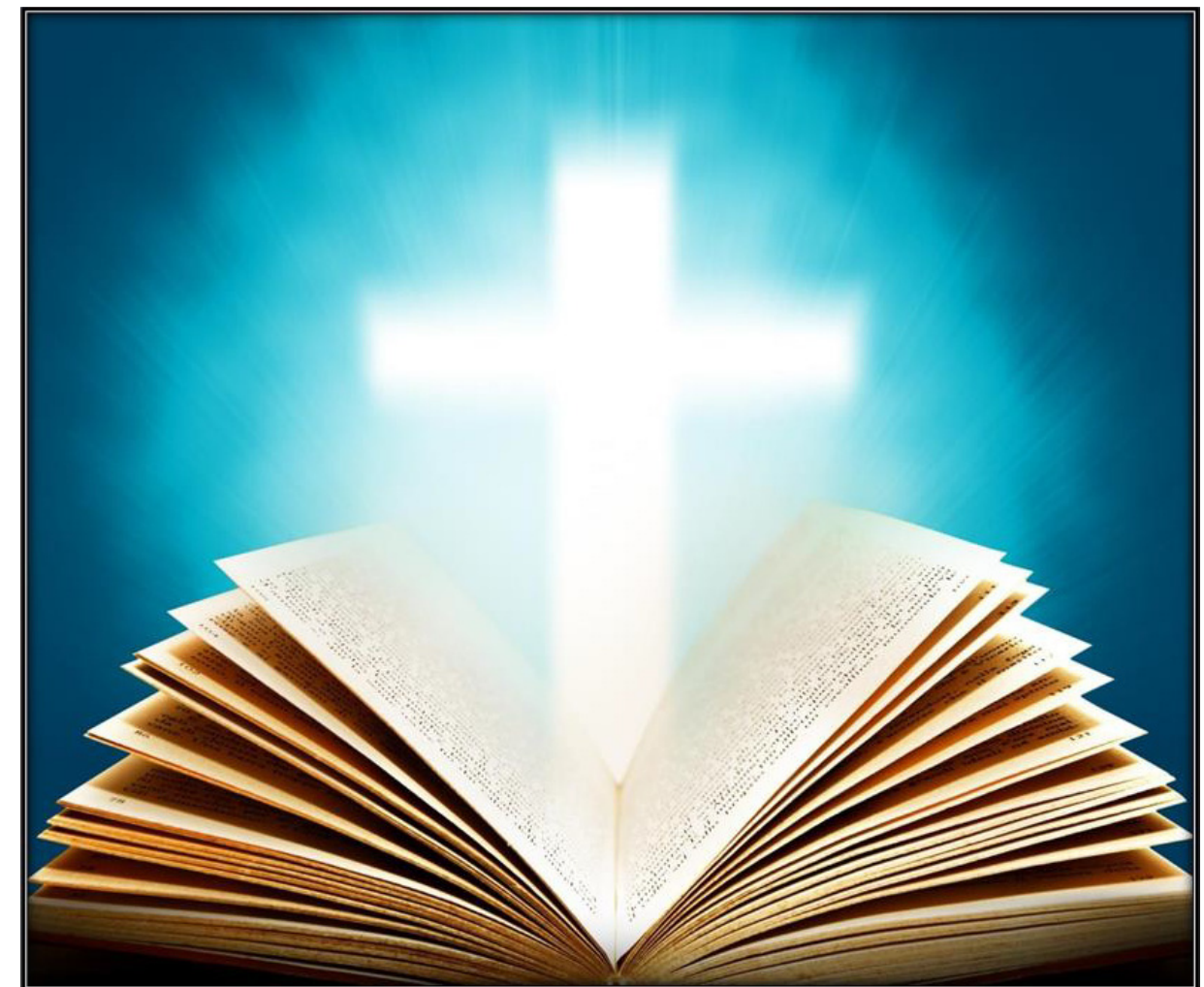


EVANGELISM AND CHURCH PLANTING MOVEMENTS



School of Global Missions

EVANGELISM AND CHURCH PLANTING MOVEMENTS

KINGDOM DISCIPLESHIP

DISCIPLESHIP 202

Biblical Leadership

School of Global Missions
Dr. Frederick Osborn, M.Div., D.Min.

The School of Global Mission course curriculum for EVANGELISM AND CHURCH PLANTING is divided into six parts. Classes will meet one evening each week for one hour. Each part will be 12 lessons. It will take two years to complete all six parts.

Students will be required to take home extra materials and class handouts to read and study on their own.

At the end of each year (36 Lessons) each student will be required to submit a written summary of what they have learned (submission must be no less than three typed pages, single space, Times New Roman 12 pt. font). However, if the student has no access to a computer, special arrangements can be made for a handwritten paper to be submitted.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Frederick Osborn traveled the world teaching and preaching the Word of God from 2005 - 2017. His first trip to South Asia was in 2001, and since 2005 he has been fully involved in ministry. His books and study guides have been used in classrooms by hundreds of students around the world.

In 2013 he earned his M.Div. from Andhra Christian Theological College in Hyderabad, India and in that same year was officially ordained into the ministry in a holy convocation administered by Indian pastors representing AG, CSA, and other non-denominational ministries. In 2017 he completed his D.Min. from Covenant Bible College & Seminary, Florida, USA.

He and his wife, Deena now live near Atlanta, GA where he continues to write, teach, and publish his books and study guides.

Evangelism and Church Planting Movements

Discipleship 202
Biblical Leadership

Copyright © Rev. Dr. Frederick Osborn, 2014, 2018, 2023

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means – electronic, mechanical, digital, photocopy, recording, or any other – except for brief quotations in printed reviews without prior permission of the author.

Unless otherwise indicated all images were obtained through Internet searches on public platforms. Copyrights are shown when included.



www.school-missions.com



www.bfaBooks.com

Course Materials for EVANGELISM AND CHURCH PLANTING MOVEMENTS

Introducing World Missions: A Biblical, Historical, and Practical Survey, Second Edition, A. Scott Moreau, Gary R. Corwin, and Gary B. McGee, © 2004, 2015, Pub. Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, MI

Encountering Theology of Mission: Biblical Foundations, Historical Developments, and Contemporary Issues, Craig Ott, Stephen J. Strauss, with Timothy C. Tennent, © 2010, Pub. Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, MI

Developing A Strategy For Missions: A Biblical, Historical, and Cultural Introduction, John Mark Terry, J. D. Payne, © 2013, Pub. Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, MI

Encountering Missionary Life and Work: Preparing for intercultural Ministry, Tom Steffen, Lois McKinney Douglas, © 2008, Pub. Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, MI

Reference Material Published by Dr. Frederick Osborn:

Church Planting Movements: India

Exploring the New Testament

Kingdom Discipleship: Becoming Like Jesus

Messiah: The Mission of Jesus of Nazareth

Reviving A Nation

The Apocalyptic Vision: Understanding the Apocalyptic Writings of the Bible

The Book of Acts: The Holy Spirit's Handbook for Church Planting Movements

The Holy Spirit in You: Nourishing the Life of Holiness and power in You

The Revelation of Jesus Christ: John the Apostle's Heavenly Vision of Christ the King

The Way, the Truth, and the Life: the Teachings and Ministry of Jesus the Messiah

This Gospel of the Kingdom

School of Global Missions

SGM BIBLICAL STUDIES: DISCIPLESHIP 201-203

COURSE SYLLABUS - PROFESSOR

Dr. Frederick Osborn, Academic Dean | Chancellor/President, SGM
678-702-1597 frederickosb7@outlook.com | SGM www.school-missions.com

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

This course in EVANGELISM AND CHURCH PLANTING MOVEMENTS is designed to teach and train three groups: (1) those who are preparing to go to unreached people groups in foreign mission fields (2) those indigenous workers who need more teaching and training for the work they are doing, and (3) to provide materials for indigenous church planters to teach and train others for evangelism and church planting.

CREDIT VALUE:

SGM uses what is known as a *Trimester Calendar* for holding classes. In a trimester system, students have three terms of 12 weeks in each school year. The students will cover a full year's worth of teaching in a normal two-semester year. This course in EVANGELISM AND CHURCH PLANTING MOVEMENTS has a 30-credit hour value (Three Terms in Evangelism and Church Planting Movements Studies in the first year and Three Terms in Evangelism and Church Planting Studies in the second year).

COURSE TEXT:

The only required text for all School of Global Mission courses is THE HOLY BIBLE. We recommend that each student has a good Study Bible, if possible.

NOTE TO STUDENTS: SGM recommends the website, www.blueletterbible.org for Bible translations and reference materials for Bible study. The site is also available on Mobile apps for your phone or tablet.

NOTE TO PROFESSORS: Additional materials are included in the teaching materials that you may or may not wish to take advantage of. Anything that is identified as HANDOUT material is NOT seen by the students unless you copy and give it to them as supplemental material. It will be up to the individual teacher to review the teaching materials and decide what to emphasize in their class time. Whatever is not covered in the class, the students will be able read and study as homework assignments.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE STUDENTS:

1. Read the required texts.
NOTE TO PROFESSORS: Because the Bible is the only required text for all BIBLICAL STUDIES classes, the students should read the relevant chapters from the Scriptures. The chapters and verses covered in each class should be given at the beginning of each lesson.
2. Attend all classes in person or online, or review recording of an excused class (maximum two per term).
3. At the end of each term (12 weeks) write a term paper of at least three typewritten pages (12 point, Times New Roman font, single space.)

EVANGELISM AND CHURCH PLANTING MOVEMENTS (SECOND YEAR LESSONS)

EVANGELISM AND CHURCH PLANTING MOVEMENTS: DISCIPLESHIP 201 LESSONS

Making Disciples

1. Introduction to Kingdom Discipleship
2. Being Salt and Light to the World
3. Making Disciples Like Jesus
4. Jesus the Teacher: Jesus Taught “Be Like Me”
5. Jesus the Teacher: Jesus Taught “Follow Me”
6. Jesus the Teacher: Jesus Taught “Be Transformed”
7. Jesus the Teacher: Jesus Taught “Remember Me”
8. Jesus the Teacher: Jesus Taught “I Am the Way”
9. Jesus the Teacher: Jesus Taught “I Am the Truth”
10. Jesus the Teacher: Jesus Taught “I Am the Life”
11. Reviving a Nation
12. Preparing Students for Revival

EVANGELISM AND CHURCH PLANTING MOVEMENTS: DISCIPLESHIP 202 LESSONS

Biblical Leadership

1. Intro The Man God Chooses to Lead
2. The Character of a Leader
3. How God Chooses a Man to Lead
4. The Commitment of a Leader
5. Ministerial Ethics
6. The Covering of a Leader: Spiritual Authority and Accountability
7. The Cooperation of a Leader: Maintaining Unity in the Body
8. The Integrity of a Leader
Encountering Missions as a Sent One and as a Sender
9. Introducing World Missions “Personal and Family Issues”
10. Introducing World Missions “Strategic and Ministry Issues”
11. Introducing World Missions “Relating to People of Other Cultures”
12. Introducing World Missions “Relating to Churches and Other Shareholders”

EVANGELISM AND CHURCH PLANTING MOVEMENTS: DISCIPLESHIP 203 LESSONS

Introducing World Missions: A Biblical, Historical, and Practical Survey

1. Encountering Mission in the Modern World
Encountering Mission in the Scriptures
2. Encountering Mission in the Old Testament
3. Encountering Mission in the Gospels
4. Encountering Mission in the New Testament Church
5. Encountering Mission Theology

6. Missions Encountering the Contemporary World
7. Communicating with People of Other Cultures
8. Missions Trends and Paradigm Shifts
9. Encountering the Religions of the World
10. Missions and the Future
11. The Task of Missions: Making Known the Kingdom of God
12. Spiritual Dynamics and Mission

SGM EVANGELISM AND CHURCH PLANTING MOVEMENTS DISCIPLESHIP 202 – BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Principles of Biblical Leadership

202-1 The Man God Chooses to Lead	12
202-2 The Character of a Leader	23
202-3 How God Chooses a Man to Lead	34
202-4 The Commitment of a Leader	45
202-5 Ministerial Ethics	56
202-6 The Covering of a Leader: Spiritual Authority and Accountability	67
202-7 The Cooperation of a Leader: Maintaining Unity in the Body	78
202-8 The Integrity of a Leader	88

Leadership in Missions

202-9 Introducing World Missions “Personal and Family Issues”	99
202-10 Introducing World Missions “Strategic and Ministry Issues”	110
202-11 Introducing World Missions “Relating to People of Other Cultures”	121
202-12 Introducing World Missions “Relating to Churches and Other Shareholders”	131

NOTE: ALL HANDOUTS FOR THIS COURSE ARE IN A SEPARATE FILE. HANDOUTS ARE NOT INCLUDED WITH THE STUDENT NOTES. THE HANDOUTS MAY BE COPIED FOR THE STUDENTS AT THE TEACHER’S DISCRETION.

NOTE TO THE TEACHER

Some of the materials for these lessons of the School of Global Mission’s DISCIPLESHIP 202 COURSE are taken from other materials written by Dr. Frederick Osborn. The source material has been edited and reformatted from the original to conform to the hour-long lessons. No part of these TEACHING NOTES may be copied and distributed to others without the written permission of the author or the School of Global Missions administration.

These special *Teaching Notes* are intended for the teachers only; they are in Times New Roman #14 for ease of reading while teaching. A separate set of notes for the students has been produced and are intended for the student to read and follow as you use the Teaching Notes.

Because this course uses the Inductive Method of Bible Study, you will notice a number of places where words, phrases, or sentences are in **bold print and underlined** these are intended for the students as fill-in-the-blank answers in their Student Notes as they follow your lesson.

In some lessons, there are more notes in the teaching materials than can be taught in the one-hour class time. So, it is best to review each lesson before you start teaching and refer to the student notes for reading and homework assignments. The additional materials in the *Teacher’s Notes* allow the teacher some flexibility in how they teach this course. The teacher may look through the HANDOUTS and select which of the additional materials they want to copy and distribute to their students.

SGM EVANGELISM AND CHURCH PLANTING MOVEMENTS DISCIPLESHIP 202-1: BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP

Note: The Primary Resource for This Lesson is *The Man God Uses* by Henry and Tom Blackaby, Copyright © 1999, Broadman & Holman Pub., USA

THE MAN GOD CHOOSES TO LEAD

Lesson Outline for the Student

- I. How We Prepare for Leadership
- II. Who is Fit to Lead
- III. How God Refines a Man for Leadership



“My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.” **James 3:1**

HOW WE PREPARE FOR LEADERSHIP

James cautioned men who sought positions of leadership in the church that spiritual leaders will be held to higher standards and face stricter judgment from the Lord for moral failures than their followers. The problem with this is the fact that (as James points out in the next verse) “...we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body...”

It may seem unfair that apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers are held to a higher standard and are publicly mocked, ridiculed, and abused for

failing to live up to an almost impossible standard of perfection, but being chosen for spiritual leadership is a great privilege and brings great blessings along with the responsibilities.

In one way or another *all* Christians are spiritual leaders. Parents must lead their children to faith in Christ and model Christlike behavior for them to follow. Christian teachers, businessmen, politicians, employees, etc. are spiritual leaders in their respective communities. Whether they like it or not, whenever a person identifies themselves as a believer, they are immediately being watched and judged by a higher standard than everyone around them. Unrealistic expectations of perfection placed upon Christian leaders often leads them to try and hide from themselves and others their struggles against the flesh. The only way to keep from stumbling is to be transparent before God, and those closest to you.

Before setting out on the path to becoming a spiritual leader, it is important to consider what it means to be a godly man. There are several steps anyone should follow as they consider what it means to be called by God to ministry.

1. **Study carefully** those passages of Scripture that relate to spiritual leaders. Spend time meditating on and discussing with others what it means to be a leader in the church, in ministry, and on the mission field.
2. **The Holy Spirit does the calling.** Having a seminary degree, or the recognition of men is not enough; to be qualified, the Holy Spirit must anoint the person for ministry.
3. **Pray earnestly and sincerely** about what you believe the Holy Spirit is calling you to do. Ask others to pray with you and for you to receive a clear vision and confirmation that you are being called.
4. **Be living-out** your abiding relationship and **growing** knowledge of the Lord openly and in front of others. Your humility, integrity, and faithful obedience should be obvious to all.

During this whole process, it would be helpful for you to keep a spiritual journal of God’s activity in your life as well as your response to what He is saying to you. When you believe that God is speaking to your spirit, or is speaking to you through a Scripture, or through another person, write it down to help you recall what was said. Remember to be humble and flexible to follow wherever God may be leading you. LeRoy Eims in his book on leadership wrote: “Leaders must be able to define and communicate their objectives and then determine the best path to follow to reach those goals. Pride is their greatest enemy at that juncture. When people are full of pride, they cannot see the best way of achieving their purposes, for they only see the way that brings *them* the most honor and acclaim. Somehow pride blinds people to finding the best path. Their minds refuse to be that discerning. They see

only what their pride wants them to see. And it has deadly consequences.” (*Be the Leader You were Meant to Be*, p.36).

WHO IS FIT TO LEAD

The qualities that make a spiritual leader are often contradictory to those qualities that make someone fit to lead worldly activities. In business and politics it is those who think they know best and decide for themselves what is the best action to take that are esteemed leaders. They want people around them who are good at taking orders and once an order is given will take immediate action. King Saul was just such a leader. He could not wait for the man of God, Samuel, to obtain God’s favor on the battlefield and took matters into his own hands (1 Samuel 13:8-13). Saul made a rash vow that almost got his son killed (1 Samuel 14:24-46). Finally, the Lord rejected Saul as King after he disregarded the Lord’s command to spare no one and nothing of the Amalekites and saved the best for himself (1 Samuel 15).

A true spiritual leader **obeys the Lord’s commands**, even if it is not in his own best interests. Spiritual leaders follow God’s commandments, not what is humanly expedient. “There is no justification for disobeying God. God seeks men after his own heart who will obey him.” (Henry Blackaby).

Men who **put limits on God** are not fit spiritual leaders. Worldly-minded leaders seek out practical solutions for the problems they face. Our God is the God of the impossible, which often means we must trust in Him to do what we cannot do in our own strength. Spiritual leaders have faith to see the unseen; they will act upon what God has spoken, even if the way seems impossible. Hebrews chapter eleven is a long list of leaders who believed God and acted upon His commands. We are unfit spiritually when we limit what God can do through us by what science, modern medicine, or physics says is possible.

Men who put conditions on **where, when, and how** they will follow God will be left behind. Luke 9:57-62 describes some who tried to put conditions on following Jesus. When Jesus calls, we should start to take immediate steps to answer that call. If answering the call to leadership requires some training, we should not hesitate to start that training. If God calls us to follow Him to another place far from home we should start making necessary preparations. When Elisha received his call to be a prophet, he immediately kissed his father and mother goodbye and sacrificed his yoke of oxen. Then he arose and followed Elijah (1 Kings 19:19-21). Elisha served Elijah and was discipled by him until the day Elijah was taken up into heaven. When the Lord’s timing was perfect, Elisha was ready to step into the leadership position vacated by his master, Elijah. “If you put limits on how God will use you, you will be used little, if at all. The man God uses abandons his life into the hands of God.” (Henry Blackaby).

Men with **divided hearts** will not make good spiritual leaders. Jesus said it clearly: “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.” (Matthew 6:24). You cannot pursue money, power, and pleasure along with a spiritual life. Leaders with a divided heart will only produce followers with divided hearts as well. The Old Testament is filled with the stories of kings and priests who ruined the spiritual lives of God’s people, quickly following them to destruction. God was especially angry when His people turned to idolatry because idolatry is self-worship. It has been said that when you look behind the mask of any idol, you will see a human face.

James said that a double-minded man is unstable (1:8), is not steadfast under trial and is easily tempted (1:10-15). Such a man is a poor spiritual leader and a bad role model for other disciples. This is why we find so many verses in the New Testament that urge disciples to live a life of **holiness, purity, and righteousness** before God and men.

“No one, when he has lit a lamp, puts it in a secret place or under a basket, but on a lampstand, that those who come in may see the light. The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is good, your whole body also is full of light. But when your eye is bad, your body also is full of darkness. Therefore take heed that the light which is in you is not darkness. If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, the whole body will be full of light, as when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light.” **Luke 11:33–36**

To be a spiritual leader, a person must walk in the light and be transparent in all that they say and do. The leader who lives a different life behind closed doors will be exposed sooner or later. Those who try to serve God and hold on to secret sins committed in the dark will almost always delude themselves into thinking they will never be exposed. But God will not allow those who live in the shadows to stay in leadership positions in His church.

The Apostles were clear in all their letters to the churches that all Christians must no longer live as unbelievers. Leaders were held to the highest standards of holiness and were warned not to lead others astray. Paul’s letters to his disciples Timothy and Titus are filled with sound instructions on how elders and other leaders in the church were to be selected. Men who were “above reproach”, who lived holy and disciplined lives in public and private were to be chosen. The Apostle Paul’s final words to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:17-38, are a testament and model for all those who seek positions of leadership in ministry.

Men who **doubt God and refuse to believe** in the absolute truth and authority of the word of God are not fit to be spiritual leaders. This selection from the “Billy Graham Library” online, says it best:

In his autobiography, *Just As I Am*, Rev. Graham recounts when a friend told him he couldn't trust the authenticity of the Bible.

“I got up and took a walk. The moon was out. The shadows were long in the San Bernardino Mountains surrounding the retreat center. Dropping to my knees there in the woods, I opened the Bible at random on a tree stump in front of me. I could not read it in the shadowy moonlight, so I had no idea what text lay before me... Now it was an altar where I could only stutter into prayer.

The exact wording of my prayer is beyond recall, but it must have echoed my thoughts, “O God! There are many things in this book I do not understand. There are many problems with it for which I have no solution. There are many seeming contradictions. There are some areas in it that do not seem to correlate with modern science. I can't answer some of the philosophical and psychological questions Chuck and others are raising.”

I was trying to be on the level with God, but something remained unspoken. At last the Holy Spirit freed me to say it, “Father, I am going to accept this as Thy Word – by faith! I'm going to allow faith to go beyond my intellectual question and doubts, and I will believe this to be Your inspired Word.”

When I got up from my knees at Forest Home that August night, my eyes stung with tears. I sensed the presence and power of God as I had not sensed it in months. Not all my questions were answered, but a major bridge had been crossed. In my heart and mind, I knew a spiritual battle in my soul had been fought and won.

Throughout the rest of his ministry, Billy Graham always pointed back to what the Bible had to say as the inerrant Word of God. He once said, “One can approach the Bible with a cold, rationalistic attitude, or one can do so with reverence and the desire to hear God speak.”

<https://billygrahamlibrary.org/blog-billy-grahams-preaching-bible/>

Throughout much of the West, Christianity is in crisis. For too many Christians, for too long, they have allowed secularism to infiltrate the church and destroy the faith of countless numbers of Christians who no longer believe God's Word. When Christians allow men's science to reduce God to our own level of understanding, they start telling us what God can and cannot do. “Too often Christians live in a world void of faith, a world limited by their own understanding

and power. Their view of God is narrow, confined, and powerless. There is no victory, no life, no joy, and no power flowing through them. Somehow, they are content with that sort of life. How sad to have so much available to them through the Holy Spirit and not access any of it. These men have become of no use to God.” (Henry Blackaby, p.62).

And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons:
 “My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD,
 Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him;
 For whom the LORD loves He chastens,
 And scourges every son whom He receives.” Hebrews 12:5-6

Those who are unwilling and unable to receive **God's correction** are unfit for leadership. Hebrews 12:5-13 may be the most difficult passage of Scripture for believers to embrace. People who have risen to positions of leadership are often the most resistant to being corrected – especially when it comes from someone who is supposed to be under their authority. But no one is immune to trials and temptations in their life. God disciplines all believers and that includes spiritual leaders.

The life of a spiritual leader involves hard work. It requires sacrifice and giving up anything that endangers our relationship with God. Leaders have to serve others with endurance, and often struggle with personal issues with family, marriage, and raising children while trying to minister to others. Spiritual leaders must fight the good fight of faith while fighting against sin with the power of the Holy Spirit. Spiritual leaders have all the same struggles as other believers and like those they lead, they must keep their eyes on Jesus, or they will stumble. The key to victory is that leaders should be **servicing Christ first** and not serving other people or themselves first. We must always keep our Lord and Savior in sight, but when we stumble, God will rebuke, correct, and put us back on the right path.

The Holy Spirit **chastens, corrects, and rebukes** God's sons to bring us to perfection in Christ. All discipline is painful, and no one wants to suffer, but we must not fool ourselves into believing that just because we are a recognized leader in the church or ministry with authority over others that we have somehow “arrived” at perfection and are no longer subject to temptations. Too many ministers have fallen into sin and temptation because they dropped their guard and believed they could never be tempted to misuse money, exploit someone for sex, or abuse their authority to crush someone who challenges their leadership. “Related to being a leader who tolerates weaknesses in followers is having the knack of admitting personal weaknesses and being open to criticism oneself. It is one thing to be big-hearted when it concerns others and another thing to not have a shriveled heart when you

bear the brunt of the criticism or hostility.” (J. David Lundy, *Servant Leadership for Slow Learners*, © 2002, Authentic Media, Carlisle, UK p.99).

The Apostle Paul is a model for us for how to handle weaknesses and being open to criticism. When we examine the book of Acts and Paul’s writings, it is clear that he was often criticized by others and had to defend himself – humbly but not defensively. Paul was transparent about his own human frailties and weaknesses; he never pretended to be some kind of superhuman being. He embraced his weaknesses, saying, “Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.” (2 Corinthians 12:9–10).

It takes a **mature, strong, and self-confident leader** to handle being corrected and disciplined. New believers and immature disciples often react to being disciplined by despising it and scorning the spiritual leader who brought it. There is a great danger to the disciple who treats lightly the discipline of the Holy Spirit; they will be headed to a great fall if they make light of it and treat the discipline of the Lord as a trivial matter. Such a person is totally disqualified to be a spiritual leader and discipler of other men. “Too often, we pay little attention to the discipline and correction of God: to the tug and pull of the Spirit of God, to the little consequences and sufferings of our hearts, to the little things that happen to us. As a result we continue right on in our little irresponsible behaviors and sins. The little flaws and sins get bigger and bigger until finally they are too big to handle. The consequences involve so much destruction and suffering that we can no longer ignore them.” (*The Preacher’s Outline & Sermon Bible* ® Volume 3: 1 Thessalonians – Revelation © 2000, Alpha-Omega Ministries, Inc. p.499).

HOW GOD REFINES A MAN FOR LEADERSHIP

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”

Ephesians 6:10–13

The spiritual warfare that all believers face is intensified when a person is **called to leadership**. God corrects and disciplines all believers because He loves them and wants everyone to experience the full benefits of walking in the light of

His love, truth, and joy. Satan seeks to destroy spiritual leaders before their ministry can grow and positively impact the lives of others needing to hear the gospel of salvation.

Satan can send temptation or trial against a leader anytime. Leaders are most vulnerable to falling when they think they are **incapable of being tempted** and put themselves in a position where temptation is possible. When they fall, the worst thing that can happen is for them to successfully **hide their failure**. Hiding their immoral behavior will only cause it to grow worse over time until their sins are exposed. And when their failure is exposed to the world, it will cause harm to a great many people. The best thing to happen is for the Lord to intervene and quickly bring correction and punishment.

Sometimes the experiences of being disciplined by God and the painful attacks of the devil are hard to distinguish because both can cause great suffering to the man of God, but it is the only way to bring **repentance and restoration** before all is lost:

“I am the man who has seen affliction by the rod of His wrath.

He has led me and made me walk

In darkness and not in light.

Surely He has turned His hand against me

Time and time again throughout the day.” **Lamentations 3:1–3**

The Bible contains numerous examples of both demonic attacks against God’s people and the discipline of God. The prototype of Satan’s attack is the temptation of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Their Fall brought God’s judgment, but not their destruction. The incident at Babel is another great example of Satan’s schemes to tempt men to sin against God and bring about their destruction. Every great leader in the Bible was tempted; some stood the tests, but most failed, received God’s rod of correction, and moved forward.

King David is an excellent example for how to admit failure, receive God’s rebuke for that failure, and humbly accept God’s punishment (2 Samuel 12:1-23). “King Saul faced the discipline of God and lost his kingdom because of disobedience and pride. King David faced the discipline of God, lost the life of his infant son because of adultery and murder, and watched as his family unraveled before his eyes.” (Henry Blackaby p.67).

Satan’s arrogance and pride made him try to tempt the Son of God, but Jesus Christ would have none of it. Satan could not separate the Son of God from the Father. The Apostles faced spiritual warfare against them and the church wherever they went. Whether they were in chains, in prison, threatened by judges, or facing hardships along their way from one place to the next, Satan was always trying to

break their wills with discouragement, loneliness, fear, and pain. Those men were tempted in every way – as all spiritual leaders are tried and tempted today.

“But now, O LORD,
You are our Father;
We are the clay, and You our potter;
And all we are the work of Your hand.” **Isaiah 64:8**

For good or bad, for victory or defeat, the Lord uses everything in the life of the leader to shape him and make him a vessel fit for the Master’s use. As long as the leader willingly submits himself to the “potter’s wheel” and lets the hands of the Master Potter build him up, and push him down, and build him up again and again until he is fit for the Master Potter’s house, then nothing the spiritual leader experiences will be wasted. The perfect image of the servant leader is that of a **fine clay pot, refined in fire, and ready for the master’s use**: “Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?” (Romans 9:21); and “...we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.” (2 Corinthians 4:7).

“God Refines for Holiness: God’s discipline is like the ‘refiner’s fire’ spoken of in Malachi 3:2. Fire can be used to refine, or purify, as when silver or gold are heated in a furnace until impurities float to the top of the melted metal and are skimmed away. When God’s discipline begins to purify you, holiness will become evident in several ways.” (Henry Blackaby p.69).

Without **holiness**, no one can claim to be a spiritual leader. All the external trappings of religious leaders (the pomp and pageantry, the regal vestments, the emblems, symbols, and paraphernalia indicative of special status) mean nothing to the Lord because the Lord looks only at the heart (1 Samuel 16:7). Biblical holiness is much more than living by a certain set of ethical behaviors found in the pages of the Bible. Ethics relate to the duties of the spiritual leader to God, to others, and to self. **Ethics are external. Holiness is internal.**

Holiness relates to the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the leader. The ethics of the leader is seen in their behavior; the holiness of the leader is seen the fruit-bearing that is the result of abiding in Christ. “Jesus made it clear that He alone is the true Vine, and that the purpose for which we have been saved is to produce the fruit of the Holy Spirit in our lives (Gal. 5:22-23; Eph. 5:9). There is a clear admonition in John 15:1-8 to bear fruit and the terrible consequences if we do not. Paul alluded to this in his words found in Romans 11:21. However this fruit is not produced by the effort of works; it is produced by abiding. As we live in Christ and Christ lives in us, the life of His Spirit flows into our spirit, producing the fruits of righteousness, love, joy, peace, goodness, mercy, forgiveness, hope, etc. Jesus

reminds us that a branch cannot produce fruit when it is severed from the vine, and neither can a Christian produce the fruit of the Spirit when they are apart from Christ.” (*The Holy Spirit in You*, © 2016, by Frederick Osborn, pp.27-28).

For all believers, the call to **“be holy”** is not an option, and anyone who is called to be a spiritual leader cannot ignore the Lord’s commandment to “Be holy, for I am holy.” (1 Peter 1:15). The spiritual leader must not only be holy in his personal life, but they must also encourage those they lead to remember their calling: “He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.” (Ephesians 1:4–6). A spiritual leader understands that God uses correction and discipline to shape him and prepare him for a life of holy ministry. The Lord shapes the leader so he may be a partaker of His holiness: “Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.” (Hebrews 12:10–11).

Holiness is not what the worldly-wise say it is. The world portrays holy people as angry, miserable people who point fingers at others while ignoring the log of judgmentalism in their own eyes. The ungodly masses scorn those who live to please God – who fear God’s punishment more than wanting the approval of men. Christians misunderstand holiness if they accept the non-believing world’s definition. But true holiness leads to love, joy and peace in the presence of the Holy Spirit. Andrew Murray said it well:

“Oh the blessedness of a life in the Holiest! Here the Father’s face is seen and His love tasted. Here His holiness is revealed and the soul made partaker of it. Here the sacrifice of love and worship and adoration, the incense of prayer and supplication, is offered in power. Here the outpouring of the Spirit is known as an ever-streaming, overflowing river, from under the throne of God and the Lamb. Here the soul, in God’s presence, grows into more complete oneness with Christ, and the more entire conformity to His likeness. Here, in union with Christ, in His unceasing intercession, we are emboldened to take our place as intercessor, who can have power with God and prevail. Here the soul mounts up as on eagle’s wings, the strength is renewed, and the blessing and power and the love are imparted with which God’s priests can go out to bless a dying world.” (*The Holiest of All*, © 1996 by Whitaker House, pp.355-356).

Spiritual leaders **model a life of holiness** and encourage those they lead to follow because, like Andrew Murray, they know that to truly experience the “steadfast love of the Lord” that is new every morning, and to experience the fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit that is indispensable for ministering to the lives of others, holiness is the essential.

Virtue is a quality of spiritual leadership. The ancient Romans used the Latin word *virtus* to refer to all of the "excellent qualities of men, including physical strength, valorous conduct, and moral rectitude." To become the leader God can use for His purposes, we must strive “press on” to the highest calling of holiness. This requires us to endure hardships, face persecution with courage, and live by the kind of faith that produces the righteousness of Christ in us: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith.’” (Romans 1:16–17).

Questions for Lesson One

1. Why does James 3:1 warn believers to consider carefully before becoming “teachers” (spiritual leaders)?
2. Why is it important for leaders to define and communicate their objectives and then determine the best path to reach those goals?
3. Consider the qualities that make a spiritual leader. How are they contradictory to those qualities that make someone fit to lead worldly activities?
4. Why are men who doubt God and refuse to believe in the absolute truth and authority of the word of God not fit to be spiritual leaders?
5. What are the differences between the spiritual warfare against Satan and the discipline of the Lord?

SGM EVANGELISM AND CHURCH PLANTING MOVEMENTS DISCIPLESHIP 202-2: BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP

THE CHARACTER OF A LEADER

Lesson Outline for the Student

- I. Characteristics of Spiritual Leadership
- II. Servant Leadership

CHARACTERISTICS OF SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP

“Leadership is dangerous. World history can best be written by studying the lives of great and terrible leaders and what they accomplished through others. We who are in leadership can on the one hand move men, women, and mountains for tremendous good. At the same time, we hold in our hands the power to do irreparable damage to our followers by the mistakes we make. The greater our sphere of leadership influence, the more our impact on the world around us. And the more people we lead, the greater the potential damage caused through our poor decisions and actions. This is one of the sobering realities we must face when we take up the mantle of leadership.” (Hans Finzel, *The Top Ten Mistakes Leaders Make*, © 1994, Victor Books, Colorado Springs, CO, p. 12).

In the corporate world, leaders are hired based upon their experience, education, and ability to influence or motivate others to meet the objectives of the organization; they are promoted or fired based upon their performance. Men and women who seek positions of leadership in business and politics want to be leaders because they see them as a means to obtain wealth and power. Executives have control over the lives of others and their decisions can drastically alter the lives of those they lead. Once worldly leaders succeed in obtaining high positions, they will do everything possible to maintain their positions. The strategy of the corporate world is to seize power and hold on to it. This is the way of the world

However, those who are in ministry must be motivated by a whole different set of values. Those who seek positions of leadership in the church ought to be



motivated by a desire to serve. Spiritual leaders are called to sacrifice for the sake of the Lord and for the edification of others. Spiritual leaders are in those positions not because they sought them, but because they were CALLED to those positions. When leaders of a church or ministry are motivated by worldly values “church politics” causes ambitious people to create dissatisfaction within the group and divisions in the leadership. Paul had to address that issue with the church at Corinth. He wrote, “Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse. For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it.” (1 Corinthians 11:17–18).

Even though spiritual leadership is a calling, it does not mean that spiritual leaders do not make mistakes or cannot fail. Simply because we have been called to a position of leadership does not make us immune to the same mistakes and failures of those in worldly positions of leadership. Effective leadership – whether inside or outside the church – requires skills and training. But many people who feel called into ministry do not prepare themselves or train themselves to take up the mantle of leadership when it is given. Lacking any training, leaders will by nature, lead as they were led; and if they were led by those with poor leadership habits, then they will most likely replicate the same poor leadership habits they have observed in others. Without any training, leaders often:

- **lack basic skills for common leadership demands**
- **lack good role models and mentoring**
- **lack practical training in leadership** (good leaders are not born, they learn by trial and error)
- **lack a basic understanding of the huge differences between non-biblical and biblical leadership values** (and this confusion will be greater for those who run their ministry like it is a family business)

Hanz Finzel pointed out in his book that untrained leaders most often will fall into the number one leadership sin: **a top-down autocratic arrogance.**

There is nothing more disturbing in the church than for a pastor, elder or any other person in authority who is:

- **domineering**
- **autocratic** (has undisputed, unchallenged authority or power)
- **dictatorial**

The top-down leader behaves more like a military commander barking orders and treating others in the church like weak underlings there to jump when he says “jump.” Finzel described what this top-down looks like in real life: “Top-down

leadership can become like a chain reaction. The boss barks orders to the employee. The employee goes home and barks orders at his spouse. The spouse barks orders at the children. The children kick the dog, and the dog chases the neighborhood cat! It all comes so natural to most of us to be autocratic, but it also happens to be a great leadership mistake.” (p.25). A simple story can illustrate how the top-down leadership model functions:

A farmer, a fisherman, a laborer, and a prince were shipwrecked together on a deserted island. The prince told the farmer to go out every day and collect fruits and vegetables. The prince told the fisherman to catch fish, and the laborer to go out and gather firewood. Every night they would bring what they had gathered, and every night the prince would take all they brought and have them prepare a nice meal for him to eat. Then he would give what was left over to the others – just enough to keep them alive one more day so they could go out again, bring him food, wood for the fire and have the strength to prepare another meal and serve him.

The top-down leader believes this is a fair system because the prince is the one who motivates and directs their work. He believes that without him, the whole system would fall apart. No one would know what to do or want to work. But is this how Jesus led? Did Jesus live to be served by others?

The church is designed to function with the **mutual edification model**. Paul addressed the Corinthians, “For even if I should boast somewhat more about our authority, which the Lord gave us for edification and not for your destruction...” (2 Corinthians 10:8). Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers are all given for the building up of the body. Gene Getz wrote, “There are varied opinions among mature Christians regarding spiritual gifts – how many are in existence, how to recognize them, and how to use them. I’m convinced that the primary reason for this disagreement seems to be that we’re misinterpreting these ‘gift passages.’ It may surprise you that these scriptural texts do not emphasize that we as *individuals* are to look for and try to discover our gifts so we can function as members of Christ’s body. Rather we’re simply to use the gifts and abilities God has given us to build up the body of Christ with a proper attitude. Paul assumed the presence of these gifts and these gifts were obvious to everyone.” (*Building Up One Another*, © 1981, 1997, 2002, Victor Publishing, pp.21-22).

The spiritual gifts, given for the edification of the body, are inseparable from the mutual submission of believers. Paul urged believers to be filled with the Spirit, “speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear

of God.” (Ephesians 5:18–21). Those who have devoted themselves to ministry should be submitted to out of respect for their “works and labors” (service) for the body of believers (1 Corinthians 16:13-16). In the same way, younger people should be submitted to their elders, “Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for ‘God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.’” (1 Peter 5:5).

Edification and mutual submission work together in every part of the leader’s life. Paul’s statement, “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.” (Ephesians 5:22) is often taken out of context with the verses that follow. Paul is clear that the Christian marriage is founded first on both the husband and wife being submitted to the Lord. A husband who is submitted to God will not harm or abuse his wife in any way. He will be submitted to his wife in that he will lay his own life down for her. In the eyes of God, husband and wife are “one flesh”. Therefore, “let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.” (5:33).

Spiritual leadership in the church reflects the same kind of selfless love and faithful commitment between the leader and the congregation as between husband and wife. All must first be submitted to Christ “the head of the church”, then to one another. The leader who feeds off of the sheep by using them for selfish purposes of creating wealth or self-aggrandizement is disqualified as a spiritual leader. However, the true, Christlike leader will feed the sheep and will lay down his life for the sheep if necessary (John 21:15-28).

Spiritual leadership extends to the family as well. “Some things only God can do in a family. God can transform relationships and link your heart with your children’s hearts (Mal. 4:6) in a way that honors him.” (*The Man God Uses*, © 1999, Henry and Tom Blackaby, p.71). The gifts and characteristics of the spiritual leader of a church or ministry that are used for edification of the body are no different for the leader and his family. The fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, etc.) is not for the members of the church only but is intended for every relationship in the leader’s life.

As the Holy Spirit works in the life of the leader, they will begin to decrease, and God will increase (John 3:30). People around you should begin to see Christ in you. The Holy Spirit will guide the spiritual leader in the conduct of everyday life. The man of God will grow in stature as a leader people can trust. This is why Paul was so grieved in his spirit when he heard that believers in Corinth were dragging other believers into court (1 Corinthians 6:1-11). Paul saw the need for a believer to take another believer to court as “an utter failure for you... you yourselves do wrong and cheat, and you do these things to your brethren! Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?”

Too often it is the case that the righteous behavior of a believer will expose the worst in others that are not making the same bold sacrifices necessary to live a righteous life in Christ. “Your commitment to God will reveal their lack of commitment. Your love for God will reveal their indifference or opposition to God. Your desire to please God will show their desire to please themselves more clearly.” (Henry Blackaby, *The Man God Uses*, p.73). The Christian should not be surprised when they receive a negative backlash from the unrighteous crowd. At the same time, they should be careful not to fall into the trap of self-righteousness and believing themselves to be better than or more superior to anyone else.

A spiritual leader acts as salt and light in the world and in the church. They understand that they are being refined – shaped and molded into the image of Christ along with the rest of the body of believers. All it takes is a willing heart and a surrendered life and the Holy Spirit will do the rest.

SERVANT LEADERSHIP

“Then He came to Capernaum. And when He was in the house He asked them, ‘What was it you disputed among yourselves on the road?’ But they kept silent, for on the road they had disputed among themselves who would be the greatest. And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, ‘If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.’” **Mark 9:33–35**

Pastors, teachers, evangelists, and ministry leaders in the church are called by God to lead, but not we are not like the leaders in this world. That means spiritual leaders are called to be like our Leader, Jesus Christ. To lead like Christ we must possess His character and lead others the way He, Himself led His disciples. So then, what was Jesus' leadership style?

There are many examples in the Gospels that demonstrate Jesus' style of leadership, and at the same time show the worldly attitudes of leadership in His disciples that needed correcting. Mark 9:33-35 and Mathew 18:1-7 are two examples of how Jesus answered the disciples’ questions concerning greatness in the kingdom of God. Jesus made it clear that greatness in the kingdom is not based upon how many people serve you, but it is measured by how many you serve.

People who have a top-down attitude of leadership will focus on questions like “Who is the greatest is of most importance?” Top-down leaders are concerned about titles, salary, who sits at the head of the table, or who gets the greatest honor. Jesus countered this attitude by using the example of a child: “Whoever humbles himself like this child is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” Spiritual leaders must be humble and have a sincere, trusting heart – like a child.

When leaders in the church become too preoccupied with the institution of the church, how it is to be organized, and structured then their own positions of authority and the power they have will cause them to lose sight of God's divine purpose for calling them in the first place, which is to build His kingdom, not their own.

In the kingdom of God, leaders must seekers of a place of service not privilege. They are not called to be like those leaders who seek a place of privilege for themselves and advantage over others. Godly leaders will keep their eternal perspective and not compete for promotion or status in the church.

“Then the mother of Zebedee’s sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him.

And He said to her, ‘What do you wish?’

She said to Him, ‘Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom.’

But Jesus answered and said, ‘You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?’

They said to Him, ‘We are able.’

So He said to them, ‘You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared by My Father.’

And when the ten heard it, they were greatly displeased with the two brothers. But Jesus called them to Himself and said, ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.’” **Matthew 20:20–28**

Matthew and Mark (10:35-45) both record the request of James and John to sit on thrones next to Jesus. Leaders with a Top-down attitude will have a “me first” mentality; for them it is all about recognition, and rewards, palaces and thrones, or stars in their crowns. Who wouldn’t follow Jesus if all it meant was wealth, and glory? But Jesus’ answer to the disciples’ request (“Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?”) Means that ministry in the kingdom is about self-sacrifice and service to God – no matter what the personal cost.

But when Jesus called the disciples to Himself and told them, “You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them.” (Mark 10:42). He was contrasting the top-down leadership model that worldly leaders use with His model of leadership that His disciples must follow: “Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:43–45). Because greatness is not measured by how many people serve you, being a spiritual leader means serving others: “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

“⁴⁹Now John answered and said, “Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow with us.” ⁵⁰But Jesus said to him, “Do not forbid him, for he who is not against us is on our side.”

⁵¹ Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, ⁵² and sent messengers before His face. And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him. ⁵³ But they did not receive Him, because His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem. ⁵⁴ And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, ‘Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?’

⁵⁵ But He turned and rebuked them, and said, ‘You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. ⁵⁶ For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives but to save them.’ And they went to another village.” **Luke 9:49–56**

In Luke 9:49-56, Jesus brings into clearer focus the kind of leaders He chooses for His kingdom. Verses 49-50 show that His disciples were still thinking like top-down leaders who want to be in control; they want no one to have a share of the glory they believe they deserve. What happens when your pride is hurt? What happens when someone else succeeds where you have failed? Are you jealous when you see another ministry prosper? Check your heart; for there is no place for such feelings in those who are in ministry. There is no room for jealousy in godly leaders. Spiritual leaders know that it is the Holy Spirit who chooses and anoints someone for ministry and will be happy that the work of the kingdom is progressing – even if they are not personally involved with it.

As the story progresses in Luke, we see another contrast between worldly leaders and spiritual leaders. Read Luke verses 9:51-54. Leaders with a Top-down attitude will want to retaliate when others scorn them or damage them in some way. Opposition will always come against the Godly, and sometimes that opposition will come from someone close to you. Vengeance and retaliation is the way godless leaders react when attacked. But spiritual leaders will resist the flesh and never seek revenge or retaliation; that is not the way of Jesus. He said, “the Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives but to save them.” And later, from the cross He said, “forgive them Father for they know not what they do.”

It is one of the hardest teachings of Jesus, but He said in His Sermon on the Mount that His disciples are not to retaliate against others:

“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.” **Matthew 5:38–42**

In Luke 9:56-62, we read about a brief succession of encounters Jesus had with those looking to follow Him. In each case Jesus showed them that there is no place in ministry for those who place self-interest ahead of following Him. Jesus wants **total dedication** from leaders in ministry because He knows that a halfhearted commitment that keeps one eye on its own while ministering to others will fail.

“These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: ‘Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, preach, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give. Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts, nor bag for your journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor staffs; for a worker is worthy of his food. Now whatever city or town you enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and stay there till you go out. And when you go into a household, greet it. If the household is worthy, let your peace come upon it. But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you.” **Matthew 10:5–13**

Jesus sent out the twelve, He gave His leaders this principle of total dedication to the ministry to guide their actions as they went: “Freely you have received, freely give.” Because God has showered us with his blessings, we should give generously

to others of our life, time, and possessions. Spiritual leaders lead by example; and that includes in the areas of giving and serving others. Leaders must be wise stewards over what God has given. They set the example for others to give generously, but wisely. The leader who is always looking to receive from others to support him – even when he is already living above the standards of those who give – is feeding off of the sheep. But Proverbs 14:35 states, “The king’s favor is toward a wise servant, but his wrath is against him who causes shame.”

In verses 9 and 10 of Matthew 10, Jesus teaches another principle of servant leadership: spiritual leaders should go out and minister unencumbered by excess material goods. God will take care of our needs, but not our excesses. It is truly sad to see how some ministers live. While the masses of people live in poverty, some false servants of God live in palaces and mansions. It must grieve the heart of God to see so many of His dedicated servants living in poverty, without electricity, clean running water, and not enough food to feed their families while others spend millions to pave their parking lots and recarpet their floors! They should heed the words of Jesus: “But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.” (Luke 6:24). True servant leaders will share with those they minister to – either in comfort or poverty, they do not live above the least fortunate among them.

Acts 4:32-47 presents a great challenge to Christians today. Many commentators on this passage will skip over it or will dismiss it as out of the norm for Christian living. Because we have no other New Testament passages on communal sharing, preachers and teachers often argue that we do not need to accept this lifestyle as universally applicable. They argue that this was a unique action, necessary only for this time and place. It’s only purpose for being mentioned in Acts is to express a general principle of sharing with others. However, three important things for servant leaders must be noted about this passage. (1) Servant leadership will **inspire believers** to be of one heart and soul. That means, those they serve will see in themselves the need for community, which involves taking responsibility to meet the needs of each other. (2) Servant leaders like Barnabas, will **take the lead and set the example** for others to follow. “We must note one thing above all – this sharing was not the result of legislation; it was utterly spontaneous. It is not when the law compels us to share but when the heart moves us to share that society is really Christian.” (William Barclay, *The Acts of the Apostles*, © The William Barclay Estate, 2009, p.49). And (3) A true servant leader will **not regard their possessions as their own**. They know that everything they have belongs to God and was placed in their hands for the Master’s use. This is the point of the parables of “The Talents” (Matthew 25:14-30), “The Ten Minas” (Luke 19:11-27), and “The Unjust Servant” (Luke 16:1-13). Jesus said it plainly in Luke 14:33, “So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.”

Finally, no other passage of Scripture better demonstrates the Character of Jesus and His leadership style that we must imitate than John 13:1-17. These verses define clearly the godly character of a servant leader. John's narrative sets the scene: it is His last night with His disciples and Jesus is about to be arrested and led off to be crucified. This is the last supper He will share with His disciples – a final Passover Celebration before He is taken from them. "After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded. Then He came to Simon Peter. And Peter said to Him, 'Lord, are You washing my feet?' Jesus answered and said to him, 'What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this.'" (13:5-7).

Everyone knew that it is the job of the household slave to wash the feet of the guests who have come to the master's table. Imagine Peter's confusion; he still had a Top-down attitude of leadership. Therefore, his expectation was that Jesus would have the house slave wash His feet first and then the feet of the others. The leader with a Top-down attitude will never understand Jesus' teaching that be a leader ministry, a person must be a servant of all.

This is not a comfortable passage for top-down leaders who find it very hard to serve those beneath them. But spiritual leaders understand that how they treat those who work with them – children, employees, or volunteers, etc. – will reveal what kind of leader they are. Character of the leader who is like Jesus, is best defined as a "Servant Leader."

Jesus' leadership style takes people where they would never go on their own. He led by example. In Mark 10:28-31, Jesus taught that servant leadership is from bottom up "the last shall be first, and the first shall be last." This is the exact opposite of the worldly leaders lead. They believe that a leader is someone who orders, directs, or commands people to go where they would never go unless he tells them. Their leadership style is by authority: because they are the "king of the hill" everyone else must submit to them. But a "servant leader" is like Jesus Christ. A true spiritual leader comes alongside people and leads them where they would never go on their own. A spiritual leader set the example, and then says, "follow me." It is **Leadership by Example**: "For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us." (2 Thessalonians 3:7-9).

A bottom-up attitude despises no one because of their position in life because that is the example that Jesus set for His apostles, prophets, evangelists, preachers, and teachers. So let the Holy Spirit shape this same character in you – the same character that is in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Questions for Lesson Two

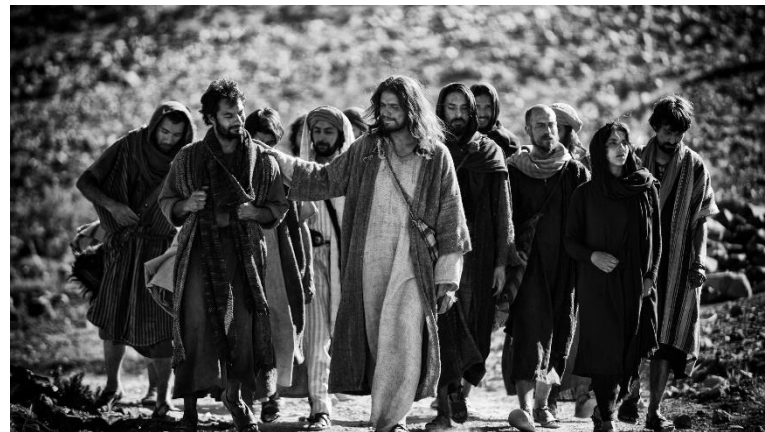
1. Explain the difference between worldly leaders and spiritual leaders.
2. What happens if leaders in the church are not properly trained for leadership positions?
3. Describe what top-down leadership looks like in a church or ministry.
4. What was Jesus' leadership style? How did He model it for His disciples?
5. What are the three most important things for a servant leader to learn from Acts 4:32-47?

SGM EVANGELISM AND CHURCH PLANTING MOVEMENTS DISCIPLESHIP 202-3: BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP

HOW GOD CHOOSES A MAN TO LEAD

Lesson Outline for the Student

- I. God Chooses His Leaders
- II. Qualities Jesus Develops in Those Chosen to Lead
 - a. Trust
 - b. Dedication
 - c. Persevere
 - d. Humble
 - e. Teachable



GOD CHOOSES HIS LEADERS

“Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles...” **Luke 6:12–13**

In John 15:16, Jesus made it clear that it is not we who choose spiritual leaders, but God is the one who chooses those He wants and appoints them to go and bear fruit for His kingdom. This has been the case since the beginning. The prophet Samuel’s anointing of David (1 Samuel 16:5-13) is a clear picture of how God calls leaders. As Samuel examined the sons of Jesse, the Lord said, “Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”

Being in ministry is unlike any other profession or job anywhere in the world. A person may choose a profession for themselves based upon their

- likes and dislikes
- aptitude and talents
- education and life skills
- expectations that they must follow their father’s career

However, when it comes to ministry, there is only one thing that is necessary: **God has called you to that ministry.** In fact, when you look at the great leaders in the Bible, you see one common theme: it is God who does the calling. Abram was in Ur, taking care of his father's flocks and herds when he heard God’s call upon his life. Joseph was a slave imprisoned in Egypt. Moses was long forgotten in Egypt and was living the life of a simple shepherd in the wilderness when God called him to lead His people out of bondage in Egypt. Gideon was a farmer; David was a youth, “small in stature, and inexperienced in the ways of politics of kings” when he was called. Elisha was out in a field plowing and preparing the soil for planting. Peter, James, and John were fishermen; and all the rest of the disciples were going about their daily lives until that fateful moment when the Lord looked them in the eyes and said, “Come, follow Me and I will make you fishers of men.” All of these men had one thing in common: none of them were seeking or expecting to be called by God to do extra-ordinary deeds on His behalf.

Exactly where, when, or why God chooses any individual to follow Him is still a mystery. Rarely does God tell us exactly why He chose a particular person to lead. Was the shepherd boy David the only person in all of Israel who was a man after God’s own heart? Was Abram in Ur the only one on earth who was able to answer God’s call to go to Canaan and receive His promises? The central theme of the book of Job is man’s struggle to understand the will of God. In a masterpiece of Jewish poetry and philosophical argument, the Lord finally answers Job. In the last few chapters of Job, God answers Job’s questions with questions of His own for Job. After asking Job a series of unanswerable questions, He asks the perplexed man, “Shall the faultfinder contend with the Almighty? He who argues with God, let him answer it.” (40:2).

“Jesus answered them, ‘Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?’” **John 6:70**

“I do not speak concerning all of you. I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, ‘He who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me.’” **John 13:18**

The Gospels never tell us the criteria Jesus used to select each of His twelve Apostles called out of the larger group of disciples who were following Him. Jesus spent the night in prayer; no doubt praying for those who would become His Apostles. John chapter 17 gives us the greatest insight into how Jesus prays for His followers. Jesus prayed to the Father, “I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours.” Then He prayed:

- that His Father would “keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are”
- that “they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves”
- that His Father “should keep them from the evil one”
- and that His Father would “Sanctify them by Your truth”.

The book of Hebrews speaks of Jesus as our great, eternal High Priest who is “able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.” (7:25). Therefore, just as Jesus was chosen by the Father (Matthew 12:18) for His mission to save out of the world those who believe in Him, so He preordained those He chooses to be His apostles, prophets, evangelists, preachers, and teachers. Men do not make others spiritual leaders; only God does: “For many are called, but few are chosen.” (Matthew 22:14).

QUALITIES JESUS DEVELOPS IN THOSE CHOSEN TO LEAD

Although the exact reasons why Jesus calls anyone to be a spiritual leader is a mystery, that does not mean once they are chosen, all they need to do is answer the call. When Jesus taught His parable of the Laborers in the Vinyard, He noted that “...the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen.” (Matthew 20:16). The Apostle Paul elaborated on this principle of God’s calling when he wrote:

“For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—that, as it is written, ‘He who glories, let him glory in the LORD.’” **1 Corinthians 1:26–31**

The Gospels reveal the fact that of every activity Jesus engaged in during His three-year public ministry, by far, His time was spent **teaching and training** His disciples. Once He chose the twelve, Jesus concentrated His ministry on preparing them for His departure. He knew they would be devastated by His arrest, trials, and execution. He knew that before His resurrection they would face their greatest crisis of faith. And He knew they would have difficulty understanding His resurrection and

all that it meant. But Jesus also knew that once they believed and accepted the reality that He was alive and had ascended to His heavenly throne, it would be time for them to put into action all that He had taught them from the beginning. When the first disciples heard John the Baptist declare “Behold the Lamb of God!” and went after Jesus, “...Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, ‘What do you seek?’ They said to Him, ‘Rabbi’ (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), ‘where are You staying?’ He said to them, ‘Come and see.’” (John 1:35–39). In the opening chapter of the classic, *The Training of the Twelve*, A. B. Bruce wrote about this encounter:

“All beginnings are more or less obscure in appearance, but none were ever more obscure than those of Christianity. What an insignificant event in the history of the church, not to say of the world, this first meeting of Jesus of Nazareth with five humble men, Andrew, Peter, Philip, Nathanael, and another unnamed! It actually seems almost too trivial to find a place, even in the evangelic narrative. For we have here to do, not with any formal solemn call to the great office of the apostleship, or even with the commencement of an uninterrupted discipleship, but at the utmost with the beginnings of an acquaintance with and of faith in Jesus on the part of certain individuals who subsequently became constant attendants on His person, and ultimately apostles of His religion.”

From the Gospels we learn that none of the disciples Jesus chose to lead were without flaws. The moment Peter realized who Jesus was, he fell on his knees and begged, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!” (Luke 5:8). But not long after Peter had boldly pronounced that Jesus was indeed, “the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16), Jesus had to rebuke Peter for contradicting Jesus’ announcement that He would be arrested, abused, and crucified for the sins of the world. Two of His disciples wanted to sit at the right hand and left hand of Jesus when He established His kingdom. This inappropriate request stirred-up feelings of jealousy and resentment with the other disciples. The disciples were often confused and in the dark concerning the Father’s plans and purposes for Jesus and His disciples.

Many times, Jesus would have to pull His disciples aside to carefully explain to them the full meaning of what He was teaching them. In Matthew 16:5-12 until he took extra time to explain it to them, the disciples did not understand what Jesus meant when He told them to “Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.” Jesus had to take extra care to correct the false expectations that saturated His disciples’ thinking about the Messiah and His coming kingdom. Right up to the very moment of His arrest, Jesus had to work with His disciples to prepare

them for what was to come. Jesus told them, “Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward.” (John 13:36).

From the book of Acts and the letters of Paul and the other Apostles, we can see that the Lord was always calling and working His perfect will, plans, and purposes for everyone. More was expected of those who were called to be servant leaders of the churches – the bishops, elders, etc. James said, “My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body...” (James 3:1–2). And Paul wrote to Timothy, “But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:14–17).

Although His apostles were specially chosen by the Lord to lead His body of believers after His departure, there was still much work for Him to do to prepare them for what was ahead. Jesus saw that these men had the same feelings of inadequacy that all leaders called by God have to overcome to accomplish what God was calling them to do. In fact, God's call to leadership is more accurately described as an “invitation” than a demand because those He calls always have the choice to say, “No thank you, but I do not want to go with You.”

After his dramatic conversion, Paul had three years to think it over before he presented himself in Jerusalem and followed Barnabas to Antioch at the Lord's invitation. Paul could have chosen to live in peace and security in his home and not taken that first missionary journey. But it was only after Paul stepped over the bow of the boat that took him, Barnabas, and John Mark to Cyprus and places beyond that Paul set out on the path that would lead him to become the missionary Apostle to the Gentile world.

There is no doubt that Paul – like Abraham, Joseph, Moses, David, and countless others who remain nameless – experienced times when he doubted his adequacy to fulfill his calling from God. He wrote: “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant...” (2 Corinthians 3:5-6). And in 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 we read, “Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

Remember that Paul was not a perfect person either. At first, he refused to forgive John Mark for having turned back halfway through that first missionary journey. Paul's lack of grace extended to the young man caused a split between Paul and Barnabas and each took their own ways on their second missionary journey. Eventually, Paul learned to forgive Mark's moment of weakness, and later, Mark became a great help to Paul when others had abandoned him (2 Timothy 4:11).

When Jesus called His Apostles, He was not looking for people who felt sufficient and confident in their own abilities to lead. Unlike picking a career in the rest of the world, confidence and self-sufficiency is a liability and not an asset when answering God's call. The truth is a person who is convinced they have all it takes to fill the role of a spiritual leader is probably not ready. Peter had to be broken of his self-confidence before he could be useful (see John 18:25-27; and 21:15-19). And why is that? Because God almost always calls the spiritual leader for something that is **far and above his own ability** to accomplish. This is His way.

The Lord wants leaders who are totally dependent upon Him because ministry is not about us. The life of a servant leader is intended to glorify God upon the whole earth – not for self-glorification. God is the only way to salvation; if we stop short of that truth and if people look to the leader and not God, then they will not find Jesus Christ who is the only way, truth, and eternal life. So, God calls us to be leaders in a ministry that is far and above our own abilities to fulfill. If the leader does not feel challenged by God to live an extra-ordinary life and fulfill a work beyond their abilities, then they should earnestly seek God to give them a vision for a life over and above their own abilities.

To follow in the footsteps of Jesus and His Apostles requires a vision for what is **beyond our comfort zone**. Think about Paul, Barnabas, and the other first generation of spiritual leaders in the church; they must have believed that God had given them a vision for something above and beyond the borders over which they exercised control. But when we join with those early apostles, and the countless others who followed after them, we discover how great is our God and how truly able He is to help us meet any test, defeat any Goliath, overcome any trial, and press on to victory (Hebrews 12:1-2).

Although those Jesus chose to be His Apostles were far from perfect, Jesus was not content to leave them as He found them. Jesus took the responsibility to identify and develop in them the essential characteristics of spiritual leadership they would need to succeed. To be a successful spiritual leader, the qualities Jesus developed in those chosen to lead – and the qualities that are needed to this day – include trust, dedication, perseverance, humility, and a teachable spirit.

Of course, Jesus' disciples were present for almost all of His public sermons, parables, teachings for individuals, and His confrontations with the religious leaders of the Jews. But there were many occasions when Jesus' words were for His closest

disciples first and above the rest. At these times, the phrase, “He said to His disciples,” is used to indicate a teaching that applied directly to His closest followers. Jesus used these occasions to build and shape the characters of the men He had chosen to lead His church after His departure to His heavenly kingdom. The times Jesus was specifically addressing His disciples, He was teaching them some life-changing truths that they needed to fulfill their calling to be servant leaders of His church.

Trust

Jesus spent a lot of time with His disciples teaching them by **word and deed** to trust and believe in Him. They would need strong faith in Him to endure the many tests and trials that lay ahead of them. Most of all they would need to keep their faith in Him after He was crucified and laid in a tomb. Some of the miracles that Jesus performed in the sight of His chosen disciples were intended to build their confidence in Him as the long-awaited Messiah were:

- The Miraculous catch of fish: Luke 5:4-11
- Calming the storm: Matthew 8:23-26 (Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25)
- Healing a woman on the way to raise a dead child: Luke 8:40-56
- Feeding five thousand with a few loaves and fish: Matthew 14:13-21 (Mark 6:30-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-15)
- Walking on water: Matt 14:22-33 (Mark 6:47-52; John 6:16-21)
- Casting out a Demon in a Canaanite girl: Matthew 15:21-28
- Feeding four thousand with a few loaves and fish: Matthew 15: 32-39 (Mark 8:1-10)
- Being transfigured on the mountain: Matthew 17:1-13 (Luke 9:28-36)

Every miracle Jesus performed in the sight of His disciples added to their belief in Him as the Messiah. Jesus also taught His disciples not to worry but trust Him to meet their every need (Luke 12:22-34). In Luke 17:1-10 Jesus taught His disciples that faith is the bare minimum of what He expects of us. Unforgiveness is a sign of lack of faith; it means someone believes they have earned the privilege of being forgiven. Forgiveness is the free gift of God; it is not earned, and we don't have any right to receive it. Jesus drove that point home when His disciples asked, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.” And then Jesus healed the man (John 9:1-7). This was a lesson His disciples learned well and applied (Acts 3:1-10).

Their trust in God would be tested to the limit when Jesus was crucified. So, Jesus had to explain to them why He must die (John 12:20-33) so that all might live.

Dedication

The time Jesus spent with His chosen disciples was also intended to reveal the total dedication they needed if they were going to complete their mission. Jesus urged the disciples to pray for more workers to join them (Matthew 9:35-38). The Great Commission they were called to (Matthew 28:18-20) would not be completed without cost or sacrifice (Luke 9:7-62). His disciples would have to remain diligent, watching and preparing for His Second Coming (Luke 12:35-59). But in the end, the spiritual harvest would be great (John 4:27-38; 11:1-16). Those who are not totally dedicated to following Jesus will fall away when the going gets too hard for them (John 6:66-69).

Perseverance

Along with being totally dedicated to the Lord and the mission they were being called to; His disciples would have to learn perseverance in the face of hardships. Jesus prepared His disciples for persecution (Matt 10:16-28). Again and again Jesus would have to warn His disciples of His coming death (Matthew 20:17-19; Luke 18:31-34). Anyone who answers the call to be a spiritual leader will have to accept the sacrifices that come before the rewards of persevering (Luke 18:28-29).

Jesus' teachings and parables about His Second Coming reveal the great need for perseverance for all of His disciples until the end of the age (Matthew 24:1-35 (Mark 13:1-31; Luke 17:20-37; 21:5-33). Jesus taught about remaining watchful for His return at any time (Matthew 24:36-50; 25:1-13; Mark 13:32-37; Luke 21:34-38). In the end, how His servant leaders invested what was entrusted to them would be judged. Therefore, His chosen leaders must persevere if they are going to reap a reward for their service (Note the Parable of the Loaned Money: Matthew 25:14-30).

Humble

Humility is another important quality that Jesus develops in those chosen to lead. Spiritual pride has no place in the heart of a servant leader. All too often leaders in the church or ministry fall because they convince themselves they are too strong to be tempted. One of the most difficult sins Jesus has to break in His chosen leaders is the desire for power and self-glory. On more than one occasion Jesus had to warn His disciples arguing over who would be the greatest that those who serve others with humility and meekness will be judged the greatest in His kingdom (Matthew 18:1-9; 20:20-28; Mark 9:30-37; 10:35-45).

Spiritual pride disqualifies leaders because they will look down on the weakest among them that they should be humbly serving and lifting up in Jesus' name (Matthew 18:10-14; Mark 10:13-16; Luke 18:15-17). It takes humility and

grace to restore a believer who sins (Matthew 18:15-20). False leaders like the Scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' day were used as examples of how Jesus' chosen servants were not to lead (Matthew 23:1-12; Mark 12:38-40; Luke 20:45-47).

Teachable

Because Jesus' chosen apostles were "diamonds in the rough" He chose those who were teachable. Being teachable may be the most important characteristic of those who are called to be spiritual leaders. Jesus never missed an opportunity to seize a teachable moment with His disciples. He had a limited time to teach the maximum lessons His disciples needed to learn. Spiritual leaders can learn from the Master Teacher how to train others for ministry.

First, Jesus taught His disciples the basics. His disciples were always part of His audience when He addressed the multitudes on the general truths of the gospel of the kingdom Jesus preached from the beginning. When Jesus taught about marriage, divorce, and children (Matthew 19:1-15), about wealth and possessions (Matthew 19:16-30, and forgiveness (Luke 17:1-4), etc., He often turned to His disciples to make sure they understood what He was saying. Jesus took the time to teach His disciples the meanings of His parables to make sure they understood the mysteries of the kingdom they needed to know:

Jesus explains parables:

- Matthew 13:36ff; and Matthew 13:51-52
- Hypocrisy and wrong teachings of the Pharisees: Matthew 15:10-20; 16:5-12; Mark 8:13-21
- The parable of the unforgiving debtor: Matthew 18:21-35
- The parable of the shrewd manager: Luke 16:1-13

Jesus' teaches on Prayer

- Jesus taught His disciples about the power of fasting prayer when He healed a demon-possessed boy after His disciples failed: Matthew 17:14-21
- Jesus taught His disciples to pray: Luke 11:1-13
- Jesus told the parable of the persistent widow Luke 18:1-8
- Jesus told the parable of two men who prayed: Luke 18:9-14
- Jesus taught His disciples about faith and prayer with fig tree: Matthew 21:18-22; Mark 11:20-26
- Jesus taught His disciples on the essentials of fervent prayer in the garden: Matthew 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:39-46

Second, Jesus taught His disciples many things in private. A significant number of things Jesus taught them in private, the Apostles shared in their Gospels. However, it is clear from John's gospel that Jesus taught His disciples a great number of things that were not intended to be shared (John 16:13-15; 21:25). By far, the most significant and the most detailed accounts of Jesus' private teachings for His chosen leaders are found in His teachings at the Last Supper.

Jesus' teachings at the last supper

Matthew 26:20-30; Mark 14:17-26; Luke 22:14-30; John 13:21 – 17:26

- Jesus teaches on who is greatest: Luke 22:14-16
- Jesus teaches on humility by washing disciples' feet: John 13:1-20
- Jesus reveals one of them is about to betray Him: Matthew 26:21-25; Mark 14:18-21; Luke 22:21-23; John 13:21-30
- Jesus predicts Peter's denial: Matthew 26:31-35; Mark 14:27-31; Luke 22:31-38; John 13:37-38
- Last Supper Memorial instituted: Matthew 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-26; Luke 22:17-20
- Final preparation for His departure: John 13:31-36; 14:1-24
- Promise of the Holy Spirit: John 14:25-31
- Jesus instructs the disciples on purpose to bear fruit: John 15:1-17
- Jesus warns of the world's hatred: John 15:18 – 16:4
- The ministry of the Holy Spirit: John 16:5-15
- Jesus teaches on His death and resurrection: John 16:16-28
- Jesus prays for Himself and for all believers: John 17:1-26
- Jesus' final prayer in the garden: John 18:1

Third, and of equal importance to His teachings, is the practical application of His teachings by His disciples:

"The twelve are now to come before us as active agents in advancing the kingdom of God. Having been for some time in Christ's company, witnessing His miraculous works, hearing His doctrine concerning the kingdom, and learning how to pray and how to live, they were at length sent forth to evangelize the towns and villages of their native province, and to heal the sick in their Master's name, and by His power. This mission of the disciples as evangelists or miniature apostles was partly, without doubt, an educational experiment for their own benefit; but its direct design was to meet the spiritual necessities of the people, whose neglected condition lay heavy on Christ's heart." A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, p.99

The synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke give the clearest descriptions of the early efforts of the apostles to apply what they learned from observing and listening to the Master (Matthew 10:1-15; Mark 6:7-15; Luke 9:1-6). Jesus sent out the twelve on their first mission with specific instructions. The mission field was marked out for them: "...go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 10:6). The time would come when His apostles would be sent to the ends of the earth, but for now, Jesus kept His disciples close:

"The work entrusted to the twelve was in one department very extensive, and in the other very limited. They were endowed with unlimited powers of healing, but their commission was very restricted so far as preaching was concerned. In regard to the former their instructions were: 'Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give;' in regard to the latter: 'As ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'" (A. B. Bruce, p.101).

A short time later, Jesus sent out a larger group of seventy disciples (Luke 10:1-24). This larger group had seen the success of the twelve and were sent out with the same instructions to heal the sick and preach the kingdom of God. However, the Lord included some words of warning that not everyone they encountered on their mission would receive them with open arms. He told them, "He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me, rejects Him who sent Me." (Luke 10:16)

The Gospels give us clear guidance on how to choose spiritual leaders. We can see from Jesus' own teaching and training of His twelve chosen apostles the character traits we must prayerfully look for in those we choose to invest our time and talents to develop into ministry. In His final hours, Jesus looked beyond the eleven surviving apostles He had chosen to spark a movement that would "turn the world upside down" and saw the countless others who would follow in their footsteps (John 17:20-26). He said:

"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word... that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me..."

"Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. And I have declared to them Your name,

and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

Questions for Lesson Three

1. Why is our choice of servant leaders in a local church or for a ministry so important? Why is prayer so important in the process?
2. Because no one is perfect and complete to serve the Lord, what are the character traits candidates for leadership should possess?
3. How did Jesus teach and train His disciples to become future leaders and Apostles?
4. Although Jesus chose men from a wide variety of backgrounds and abilities, what did they all share in common?
5. **READ John 15:16; 16:4-5; 17:2, 6, 9-11; and 17:18.** Jesus' primary criterion for choosing specific apostles was that they were all God's choice. (This is what Jesus determined during the night of prayer before naming them.) How did the knowledge that they had been chosen by God to be His apostles help the twelve to persevere through all their trials and persecutions?

SGM EVANGELISM AND CHURCH PLANTING MOVEMENTS DISCIPLESHIP 202-4: BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP

THE COMMITMENT OF A LEADER

Lesson Outline for the Student

- I. Jesus Taught His Disciples to be Dedicated to the Mission
- II. Biblical Principles of Commitment
 - a. Wholeheartedness
 - b. Singlemindedness
 - c. A Fighting Spirit



JESUS TAUGHT HIS DISCIPLES TO BE DEDICATED TO THE MISSION

“Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, that someone said to Him, ‘Lord, I will follow You wherever You go.’

And Jesus said to him, ‘Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.’

Then He said to another, ‘Follow Me.’

But he said, ‘Lord, let me first go and bury my father.’

Jesus said to him, ‘Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God.’

And another also said, ‘Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house.’

But Jesus said to him, ‘No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.’” Luke 9:57–62.

Jesus was never vague or deceitful about what it takes to be His disciple. The preaching of most modern-day evangelists is completely different from the gospel of the kingdom that Jesus preached. The most popular evangelists today promise

their listeners health, wealth, and prosperity in exchange for a simple prayer asking Jesus to take away their sins. This costless Christianity promotes a cheap grace that Jesus and His chosen apostles never preached. The great man of God and martyr, Dietrich Bonhoeffer who died April 9, 1945 (age 39 years), at the Flossenbürg concentration camp in Germany, described cheap grace this way:

“Let the Christian rest content with his worldliness and with this renunciation of any higher standard than the world. He is doing it for the sake of the world rather than for the sake of grace. Let him be comforted and rest assured in his possession of this grace – for grace alone does everything. Instead of following Christ, let the Christian enjoy the consolations of his grace! That is what we mean by cheap grace; the grace which amounts to the justification of sin without the justification of the repentant sinner who departs from sin and from whom sin departs. Cheap grace is not the kind of forgiveness of sin which frees us from the toils of sin. Cheap grace is the grace we bestow on ourselves.

Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.” (From *The Cost of Discipleship*, © 1959 by SCM Press Ltd., pp.44-45)

Jesus’ teachings about the cost of following Him are anything but a cheap grace that will draw adoring fans to beat a path to Him. Jesus’ disciples would discover that once the miracle loaves and fishes were digested, the masses would have no taste for the Blood and Body of Divine Manna who is Christ Himself. (John 6:66-69). Jesus never lowered His demands for the sake of adding followers. His time was spent with His chosen disciples teaching them about the **high cost and total commitment** necessary to stay the course all the way to the end of their lives. Jesus urged His disciples to pray for more workers to join them (Matthew 9:35-38) because the spiritual harvest is great and there was more work to be done until the end of the age (Luke 12:35-39; John 4:27-38).

Jesus set the example for them by allowing nothing or no one to distract Him from the greatest priority of His mission to seek and save the lost (John 11:1-16). He showed them who His true family is (Matthew 12:46-50; Mark 3:31-35; Luke 8:19-21) and how they must serve one another by His example (John 21:15-23). Jesus left nothing unspoken about what it would cost for them to complete their part of the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20).

The English dictionary defines “commitment” as being obligated by or emotionally driven forward by the force of a strong moral pressure. Jesus demonstrated throughout His lifetime **a zeal for doing His Father’s will**. Nowhere is this seen more clearly than the times Jesus drove out the merchants and money changers from the Temple in Jerusalem (Matthew 21:12-17; Mark 11:12-19; John 2:13-17). His disciples remembered that it was written in a Psalm of David, “Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up.”

Zeal for the Lord is commendable in His sight, but it is often scoffed at and mocked by the worldly wise. Those who are not saved are ignorant of God’s righteousness (Romans 10:1-4). Without Christ, the religious will seek to establish their own righteousness apart from the true righteousness of God. “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.”

Jesus knew that His disciples would have to be totally dedicated to Him and to His mission if they were to overcome the problems they would face. He was scoffed at, mocked, insulted, humiliated, and falsely accused. But still he prayed for Himself, His disciples, and His accusers. When spiritual leaders are completely beaten down, they will never give up and pray. The example leaders set when facing hardships will help others to stand when they are tempted to turn from God, give up, and quit trusting Him. When the situation seems hopeless, spiritual leaders will seek the Lord in prayer knowing that God will hear. The Lord will answer the prayers of His people no matter how bad things become when they are fully committed to Him.

BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES OF COMMITMENT

When asked “What is the greatest commandment?” Jesus answered to be fully committed to God. That is, “To love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind soul and strength...” (Matthew 22:34-40). Biblically speaking, to be committed to God means being wholehearted, single minded, and to keep on fighting for righteousness no matter the opposition. So the greatest thing anyone can do for God is to be **completely committed** to Him with everything they have and do.

Wholehearted

The first principle of commitment to God is wholeheartedness. Paul encouraged all believers, “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men...” (Colossians 3:23 NIV). This thought is especially applicable for spiritual leadership. God wants leaders who are eager and zealous for Him. He wants those who are wholeheartedly committed to Him and to a person or organization. Spiritual leaders are God’s servants first and in serve others in His name for His glory.

Following Jesus means doing what He does, going where He leads, and doing what He commands us to do. Leaders often want to minister to others in the power of the resurrection (Philippians 3:10-11), but they ignore the fact that the way to receive the power of the resurrected life in Christ is first to be conformed to His death “...that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.” Therefore, to be a spiritual leader requires us to be **totally committed** to following Him with **a whole heart**. We must do as Jesus commanded, and “deny yourself, pick up your cross and follow Me...”

Being a leader in God's kingdom is not an easy task; there will be many trials and hardships along the way. The Apostle Paul is an example for anyone who wants to be a leader of a church or ministry:

“Are they ministers of Christ? – I speak as a fool – I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness – besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.” **2 Corinthians 11:23-28**

All servant leaders must manifest the same spirit of wholeheartedness that Paul and the other Apostles had so that those who follow them will have their hearts in the work that is set before God’s people. The soft, easy-going way of following the path of least resistance may be the way that works best in this world; it may win you many friends and make you a popular person, but that is not God's standard for leadership. It is not the life God has called us to.

Jesus described the soft, easy believer as like a **plant without roots**; it may look good on the surface until the heat of correction or persecution comes on him like the burning summer sun (Luke 18:11-15). When trouble or persecution comes his way – when the devil comes against him – and when things do not go as quickly or easily as planned, all of a sudden, they start to feel uncomfortable. The flesh takes control and their faith in God withers on the vine.

A leader who is not wholeheartedly committed to the Lord looks strong while conditions are favorable, but when he is placed under pressure, he collapses. Because that leader is not rooted and grounded in the good soil of a heart surrendered to God,

He will not be able to stand when His faith is challenged by adversity – and it will be tested inevitably. Matthew Henry said in his commentary on this parable:

“The good ground, which brings forth good fruit, is an honest and good heart, well-disposed to receive instruction and commandment (v. 15); a heart free from sinful pollutions, and firmly fixed for God and duty, an upright heart, a tender heart, and a heart that trembles at the word, is an honest and good heart, which, having heard the word, understands it... There must be both bearing patience and waiting patience; patience to suffer the tribulation and persecution which may arise because of the word; patience to continue to the end in well-doing.

In consideration of all this, we ought to take heed how we hear (v. 18); take heed of those things that will hinder our profiting by the word we hear, watch over our hearts in hearing, and take heed lest they betray us; take heed lest we hear carelessly and slightly, lest, upon any account, we entertain prejudice against the word we hear; and take heed to the frame of our spirits after we have heard the word, lest we lose what we have gained.” (*Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume*, Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994, pp.1848–1849).

The great challenge for the spiritual leader in our undisciplined world is to keep a **biblical standard of commitment** for himself and for all who follow him. Those who lead in the kingdom of God, must keep a high standard of performance not only for themselves but also for all those who are in ministry with them. The danger for the Christian leader is in allowing a lack of wholeheartedness to creep into his life and ministry. A lack of wholeheartedness can be picked up by Christian leaders. When that happens, it spells mediocrity and failure in their work. Leaders must manifest the same spirit of wholeheartedness that Jesus had so that those who follow them will have their hearts in the work. Wholeheartedness and zeal are the outgrowths of an uncompromising love for God that burns in the leaders heart. From there it spreads to the lives of others who catch the flame of that spirit. Then lives are changed as those outside the kingdom are drawn to that spirit. “Leaders must consider the following fact. They are not only building for the present but also for the future. If their hearts are lukewarm, what will the future hold? What will the people they have trained be like? Will their hearts burn with wholehearted zeal for God? Not if the leaders’ hearts are lukewarm, for only fire kindles fire.” (LeRoy Eims, *Be the Leader You Were Meant to Be*, © 1975, 2001, Cook Communications Ministries, p.70).

Single-Minded

The second principle of Commitment to God is singlemindedness.

“Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.’”

Mark 1:14-15

“From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, ‘Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!’

But He turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.’” **Matthew 16:21-23**

From the moment Jesus began His public ministry, to the very end of His earthly ministry, Jesus stayed right on track with what He was sent here to do. He was never sidetracked by the overwhelming odds against Him:

- He was often ridiculed and was under suspicion from the authorities
- He faced opposition from the religious leaders and from the Romans

But Jesus knew what He had to do and remained single-minded in His purpose.

All those who are called to follow Jesus as leaders must remain as single-minded as Jesus was if they are going to fulfill their calling. There are **two reasons** why being single-minded is so important:

1. **Everything in this world is temporal and transient.**

2 Peter 3:10 is a reminder that “the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.” Only two things of this world transcend this world and will last throughout eternity: the Word of God (Isaiah 40:8; 1 Peter 1:25), and the souls of people who believe in Jesus Christ (John 3:16; 6:51). When leaders set their hearts on things above, they are locked on eternal values. The things of the world clamor for their attention, but they keep their eyes on the things that last.

2. Life is too short to be wasted.

James reminds God's people that everything in this life is **passing away**. He wrote in James 4:14 that no one knows what will happen tomorrow. "For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away." Spiritual leaders see this truth; it helps them remain on track despite the incessant bombardment of the world seeking to turn them aside, to get their eyes off Jesus. It is important for the leader to make disciples who see this truth also if they are going to "run the race" of faith before them with endurance: "Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hebrews 12:1-2).

The apostle Paul saw the same thing and encouraged the followers of Jesus to "be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. Therefore, my beloved brethren, we have the assurance that what we are doing counts for eternity." (1 Corinthians 15:58).

"If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory." **Colossians 3:1-4**

Jesus taught His disciples well. We have many examples to follow from the letters of Peter, James, John, Paul and the other Apostles. They all learned from Jesus what Paul put into words in Philippians 3:13-14 that to follow in Jesus' footsteps requires a single-minded purpose that is set on things above and not on the things of this world – forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead and press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God called them heavenward in Christ Jesus.

The greatest example of singlemindedness is **Jesus Christ Himself**. Jesus went with unfaltering steps straight to the cross. He knew His mission and He was set to fulfill it. So it must be the same with those who lead a church or a ministry. The world is calling us constantly; it wants to entice or seduce us to be overcome by or weighed down with earthly things. But as Jesus said, Matthew 6:24 that "No one

can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."

"Today the Lord is looking for people who care nothing for the empty praise or temporal pleasures of this world. He is seeking men and women who care that the world needs Christ and who are eager to follow Him with singlemindedness and purpose." (LeRoy Eims, *Be the Leader You Were Meant to Be*, © 1975, 2001, Cook Communications Ministries, p.75).

Fighting Spirit

The third principle of Commitment to God is having a Fighting Spirit

"Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death. Therefore Jesus no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there into the country near the wilderness, to a city called Ephraim, and there remained with His disciples. And the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went from the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves.

Then they sought Jesus, and spoke among themselves as they stood in the temple, 'What do you think – that He will not come to the feast?' Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a command, that if anyone knew where He was, he should report it, that they might seize Him." John 11:53-57

Despite the unbelievable odds against Him, Jesus pressed ahead with enthusiasm and faith. Think about all the opposition Jesus faced in His lifetime:

- Satan came against Him in the wilderness to tempt Him when He was weak from 40 Days of fasting
- The religious leaders followed Him everywhere He went. They challenged His teachings, questioned His miracles, and accused Him of using Satanic power to heal and cast out demons.
- The Roman authorities were threatened by His popularity and wanted to destroy Him before His followers could challenge Caesar's power.
- The masses followed Jesus as long as He fed them and met their needs. They wanted to control Jesus and make Him a king like Caesar. But once Jesus refused to be controlled by the masses, they turned against Him. One day they were calling out to Him, "Hosanna!" A few days later they were screaming, "Crucify Him!"

From the moment the church was born at Pentecost they faced the same kinds of opposition that Jesus faced. Peter, James, John, Paul and the others were opposed by the leaders of false religions and the demons of hell, but they would not be stopped. The early Christians faced dangers, whips, chains, and lions. They were heroes in the true sense of the term.

According to Open Doors ministry, around the world over 365 million Christians, or one in seven, face high levels of persecution and discrimination for their faith. This is the highest level of persecution ever recorded. In many places in the world today Christians face the same kinds of hardships as the first Christians faced. When we study the letters of Paul and the other Apostles, it becomes increasingly clear that anyone who succeeds in ministry must face many hardships along the way. Those who have been spiritual leaders in the most unreached areas of the world can share many stories of times when they faced hunger and need; times when they faced material loss when their church, home, or office was attacked; the heartbreak when the people they ministered to and cared for left them; or times when they were opposed by others inside and outside the church. And during those times it was not their education, or theology that kept them going. It was not their family background or denomination that kept them going. In times of great hardship it is only our God-given, fighting spirit that keeps the spiritual leader pressing forward.

“For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.” **2 Timothy 4:6–8**

It was not just words that Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 4:6-8. They were the words of a committed warrior who endured all for the Lord throughout a lifetime of being wholehearted, and single-minded as God’s chosen apostle to the Gentiles. It is the same spirit that Paul urged Timothy to copy:

“But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.” **1 Timothy 6:11–12**

All committed leaders for the kingdom of God must have these three things (being Wholehearted, being single-minded, and having a fighting spirit) if they are going to live by the “costly grace” Jesus Christ demands. It is this grace of God that makes us able to persevere as they did, to keep our commitment to leadership, and for our success at making a lasting impact for God in this world.

“Such grace is *costly* because it calls us to follow, and it is *grace* because it calls us to follow *Jesus Christ*. It is costly because it costs a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life. It is costly because it condemns sin, and grace because it justifies the sinner. Above all, it is costly because cost God the life of his Son: ‘ye were brought at a price,’ and what has cost God much cannot be cheap for us. Above all, it is grace because God did not reckon his Son too dear a price to pay for our life, but delivered him up for us. Costly grace is the incarnation of God.” (Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, © 1959 by SCM Press Ltd., p. 45).

Questions for Lesson Four

1. Why is dedication to discipleship so important for the leader?
2. Why is Wholeheartedness so important for the leader?
3. Why is Singlemindedness to the mission so important for the leader?
4. Why is having a Fighting Spirit so important to fulfilling the Great Commission?
5. Explain the difference between a cheap grace and a costly grace?

SGM EVANGELISM AND CHURCH PLANTING MOVEMENTS DISCIPLESHIP 202-5: BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP

MINISTERIAL ETHICS

Lesson Outline for the Student

- I. Ethics Defined
- II. Ethics in Ministry
- III. The 6-8-10 Principles



ETHICS DEFINED

In its broadest definition, *ethics* are defined as the moral standards by which people judge behavior. The article on Ethics in *Wikipedia* says that:

“Ethics, also called moral philosophy, is the study of moral phenomena. It is one of the main branches of philosophy and investigates the nature of morality and the principles that govern the moral evaluation of conduct, character traits, and institutions. It examines what obligations people have, what behavior is right and wrong, and how to lead a good life. Some of its key questions are ‘How should one live?’ and ‘What gives meaning to life?’. In contemporary philosophy, ethics is usually divided into normative ethics, applied ethics, and metaethics. However, exactly what constitutes ‘good ethics’ in today's global society is often debated...”

Normative ethics is the study of how we ought to act, morally speaking.

Applied ethics is the branch of ethics that deals with the practical application of moral considerations to real-world situations.

Metaethics focuses on moral reasoning and foundational questions that explore the assumptions related to moral beliefs and practice.

In the world today, numerous ethical standards are applied to a variety of real-world situations. There are ethics in government, medical ethics, educational ethics, ethics for the military, ethics in religion, corporate ethics, etc. As a branch of philosophy, metaethics involves a detailed study of the subject of ethics and where they originate either from the philosophical or religious perspective. Any serious study of ethics would have to include discussions on topics like:

- honesty
- objectivity
- integrity
- respect for others
- non-discrimination
- competence
- legal issues and basic human justice

However, this lesson will define and concentrate on biblical ethics as they relate to ministry (*deontological ethics* or the *ethics of obedience*) Throughout most of its two-thousand-year history, the subject of ministerial ethics was barely mentioned in Christian education for church leaders. The moral teachings for church leaders were drawn primarily from the Apostle Paul’s letters to Timothy and Titus. With rare exceptions, the subject of ministerial ethics was no more than what the New Testament says about the qualifications for bishops, elders, and other ministers. How the overarching ethical standards of the Bible should guide ministry leaders is a relatively new subject for Seminaries and Bible Colleges. The purpose of this brief lesson on Ministerial Ethics is to introduce *Ethics* from the Bible as the moral guidelines for the behavior of those who are full-time leaders in the church.

“How exalted and beautiful is the Ethics of Christianity --
by a few great principles
teaching us how to steer our course
amidst practical difficulties,
with equal regard to Christian liberty, love, and confidence!”
Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary

The three dominant themes of Christian ethics are

1. **Its absoluteness (Normative)**
2. **Its inwardness (Applied)**
3. **Its universality (Metaethics)**

Unlike other ethical systems in the world, the New Testament claims to be supreme in life and morals.

Because the Scriptures are ultimately from the Spirit of God and not from man, the ethical guidelines they contain must be considered over and above any man-made set of ethical standards for any other endeavor of life. In fact, because all things belong to God and all life is dominated by the Spirit of Christ, no experience that presents itself to the Christian in this life can be considered purely secular. No duty that the Christian performs can be considered too insignificant to be done apart from the highest moral standards given to us in the New Testament Scriptures. And central to everything that guides the Christian leader is what is the **inward life of the believer**.

Christian Ethical standards are different from any worldly standard of ethics because they depend upon a spiritual power above and beyond the believer to fulfil. Another thing that is different from the world's standards is that they depend upon the integrity of the inward life of the leader that is being formed by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit sent by Jesus Christ to lead, guide, convict, empower Christians to live up to those ethical standards which were established by our Father – “hallowed be thy name.”

“Jesus Christ is the full-orbed revelation of God's will and way (Heb. 1:1-2). In him the moral teaching of the Law, the prophets, and the sages find their fulfilment. In Him the Law is perfectly fulfilled (Matt. 5:17-20). To him ‘all the prophets bear witness’ (Acts 10:43). The justice of Amos, the love of Hosea, the holiness of Isaiah, the wisdom of the sages are gathered up in Christ and their divine fulness is revealed. Christ is the wisdom of God, being made our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption (1 Cor. 1:24-30).” (Henlee H. Barnette, *Introducing Christians Ethics*, © 1961, Broadman Press, Nashville, TN, p.42).

ETHICS IN MINISTRY

God searches the inward motivations of the hearts of His leaders. Ananias, and Sapphira his wife may have been forgiven for lying to the apostles, but when they lied to the Holy Spirit, it led to their destruction (Acts 5:1-11). The best example of God searching the inward motives of men's hearts is the contrast between kings Saul and David. From all outward appearances, King Saul was doing everything right and was a successful king. Saul was the kind of strong king the people of Israel wanted. But when God checked the inward motivations of Saul's heart, he was found wanting. Because his heart was full of pride, it made him unwilling to obey the spirit of the law even when it appeared he was obeying its letter. When God chose David to be king, He warned the prophet not to look on the outward appearance of the sons of Jesse, but to see them as God sees them: “But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not

look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” (1 Samuel 16:7).

It is too often the case that when selecting leaders in the church that men look at the wrong things. College degrees, executive positions in business or government, and material blessings – like houses, cars, and expensive suits – may look good on the outside, but they are not the things that confirm someone's qualifications to be a spiritual leader. James warned against making those kinds of judgments in the church:

“Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation, but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away. For no sooner has the sun risen with a burning heat than it withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beautiful appearance perishes. So the rich man also will fade away in his pursuits.” **James 1:9–11**

“My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality. For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, ‘You sit here in a good place,’ and say to the poor man, ‘You stand there,’ or, ‘Sit here at my footstool,’ have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?” **James 2:1–4**

So, to be a leader in God's kingdom requires a heart that reflects the **Christlike character of holiness** (James 2:8-13). Christian ethics depend upon a purity of life that is only possible when the heart is transformed by the inward presence of Holy Spirit in a human spirit that is truly *born again* by grace and faith in Jesus Christ. Christian leaders must set an example in their own behavior that matches the standard of Scripture. “The leader must be above reproach...” is the essence of Paul's instructions for selecting overseers and deacons in 1 Timothy 3.

More than any other worldly leader, the Christian leader whose life is set apart for the Lord has a powerful impact the people around them because God has promised to show Himself to others through His spiritual leaders: “I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Sovereign Lord, when I show myself holy through you before their eyes.” (Ezekiel 36:23).

God is looking for leaders whose lives are clean and pure. Therefore if anyone cleanses himself, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master,

prepared for every good work. This is the reason why the Lord will not allow the Christian leader to put on an outward show of righteousness with no inward fortification of purity and holiness before God. Sooner or later the Lord will put that leader to the test that will reveal his or her true nature and character. Therefore, the leader must live a **pure life in fear of the Lord.**

The example of inner purity is often illustrated by the image of two glasses. One glass is made of very expensive cut crystal glass, and the other glass is a plain glass purchased from a discount dollar store. A guest is offered muddy, filthy water from the cut crystal glass and clear, clean refreshing water from the plain glass. Which glass will the guest choose to drink from? What makes the vessel fit to offer to a guest? Paul wrote to Timothy: “But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.” (2 Timothy 2:20–21).

For the Christian leader, *ethics* are those moral principles that guide believers whose hearts are already being transformed by the presence of the Holy Spirit. Christians are mistaken if they believe their leaders automatically know the right thing to do and always choose to do it.

“As the minister develops moral sensitivity through education and experience, some think that by the time of ordination, an articulate ethical expert walks forth with credentials in one hand and resumes in the other. However, no one knows better than parsons that Solomonic wisdom is rare, even among the clergy. In order for a minister to develop skills in moral decision making, he must understand the role of virtues in character, the place of values in conduct, and the way to develop integrity through moral vision.” (Joe E. Trull & James E. Carter, *Ministerial Ethics: Being a Good Minister in a Not-so-good World*, © 1993, Broadman & Holman, p.43)

Christian ethics are not designed to “make one righteous” but are intended guide the behavior of those who have already been made righteous by faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ. Paul often tackled this difficult relationship between obedience to the law and justification by faith. He wrote in Galatians “But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for ‘the just shall live by faith.’ Yet the law is not of faith, but ‘the man who does them shall live by them.’” (3:11–12). Paul continued, “But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in

Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” (3:23–27).

“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.” **James 1:22–25**

The Bible is very specific about certain behaviors that do not belong in the life of the believer. Behaviors like lying, swearing, drunkenness, fornicating, and stealing – all these behaviors must be cut out (John 15:1-2). “In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.” (1 John 3:10).

However there are a number of things that Christian leaders encounter every day in our lives and work that the Bible gives us no clear instructions about. In those cases, the minister needs the guiding principles of Christian Ethics to help them know what to do. There are a number of issues where Paul’s instructions on Christian liberty in Romans 14 are relevant. Paul’s instructions can help the minister fulfill their Christian duty without getting sidetracked by the rigid rules of legalism on one side, or run the risk of destroying their ministry by falling into immorality on the other.

When Paul wrote, “For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. (1 Corinthians 13:12), he was expressing the feelings of most ministers. When we look closely in the mirror, we often see two images in the mirror gazing back at us: one is the man we want to be, and the other is the person we have become. Although the spiritual leader has an ideal image of himself mirrored in his mind, the face we often view in the mirror is far from that ideal. When we hold ourselves up to the highest image of Christ in us, our own failures and flaws that need to be cut off become painfully clear.

The painful process of removing from the inner man those things which are not of Christ will cause you to bleed like Christ did on the cross, but You are not the only minister who bleeds. “In one way or another, every person of the cloth has felt the weight of his or her own humanity. We have all cut ourselves – if not in the flesh, then in the spirit. The question is not, ‘Have I ever failed?’ Rather it is, ‘How do I live as a human being in the world and not be controlled by my human appetites?’ A large part of the answer is found in merging those two images in the mirror –

synthesizing the ideal person we ought to be with the real person we are capable of becoming. It all begins with the development of the inner life – something we call *character*.” (Joe E. Trull & James E. Carter, *Ministerial Ethics: Being a Good Minister in a Not-so-good World*, © 1993, Broadman & Holman, p.46).

THE 6-8-10 PRINCIPLES

LeRoy Eims in his book, *Be the Leader You Were Meant to Be* gave what he called his 6-8-10 Principles (based upon 1 Corinthians 6, 8, 10). These principles form the foundation of the *ethics* that should guide us to know right from wrong behavior. Verses in 1 Corinthians 6, 8, and 10 lead us to ask four important questions to guide our moral and ethical decisions.

The Apostle Paul was not the first leader or the last to have problems with new and unruly believers who come from non-Christian backgrounds. New Christians often test the boundaries of moral and ethical behaviors not specifically addressed in the Scriptures. A lot of “gray areas” that the first Christians were confused about were cleared up by the time the New Testament was written and standardized. However, the Protestant churches of the 21st century have – for the most part – rejected any centralized governing authority for orthodox teachings. Christian liberty is often used as an excuse to declare unconditionally that “Everything is permissible for me.”

Some preachers have gone so far as to say that there are things that are *biblical* (meaning things that the Bible specifically declares are for Christians to follow); there are some things that are *unbiblical* (meaning things the Bible specifically says Christians must not do); and then there are some things that are *non-biblical* (meaning anything that the Bible does not say one thing or another about). These preachers will say that anything that is *non-biblical* is permissible for Christians to experiment with and explore. From the beginning, this kind of teaching has opened the door for every cult, heterodox, and unorthodox teaching that has led countless Christians away from the true teachings of Jesus Christ and His chosen Apostles.

Paul’s letter to the Corinthians will help Christians to make moral and ethical choices in a world that is filled with false teachings, false prophets, and unholy characters.

1. IS IT HELPFUL?

“All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.” **1 Corinthians 6:12**

When Paul said, “All things are lawful for me,” he was not making an unconditional declaration. He immediately qualified his statement saying, “but all things are not helpful” (or beneficial). Paul added that “All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.” When Christians quote out-of-context and misapply the words “I am allowed to do anything” they will end up excusing their sins believing Christ has forgiven all so they would have complete freedom to live as they please. But Christ does not free us from the law to sin; He frees us from the law so we can live in His holy presence. Just because something is not strictly forbidden by Scripture, does not mean we are free to pursue it. Paul warned believers that some actions which may not be sinful in themselves, are not appropriate because they can control us and destroy our will to follow God. Other actions are not right because they may hurt others. A Christian may believe it is okay for them to have a glass of wine with a meal, but it may hurt someone who is struggling with alcoholism. So, anything we do that hurts rather than helps others is not right.

On the basis of this verse from 1 Corinthians, the believer should ask themselves, “Is it helpful to me?” If what they are doing is not healthy physically, not improving them mentally, damaging them emotionally, breaking them willfully or making them spiritually weaker, then they should not do them.

2. DOES IT GET ME IN ITS POWER?

On the basis of that same verse from 1 Corinthians (6:12), we must not engage in anything that will enslave us. Romans 6:16 says, “Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?” Therefore, anything that gets us in its grip – that becomes a habit we cannot break – we should leave alone. The Bible says nothing about smoking tobacco or taking drugs, but it certainly is not the will of God that any of His children should do something that will put them in bondage.

To be a spiritual leader a person must strive to be in total control of every aspect of their life: their emotions, their finances, and their behavior. Taking control of their own life will help them to act in positive ways to help others. Instead of giving their power away to something or someone else, they will be free. By this freedom, they will inspire others to strive for the freedom to rise to their greatest potential.

3. WILL IT CAUSE OTHERS TO STUMBLE?

“But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food makes my brother

stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.”

1 Corinthians 8:12-13

A person whose faith is strong may not be tempted in areas where another person might be. However, it would be impossible to count the number of times when a leader in a church or ministry believed they were invincible to temptation and ended in disgrace with a destroyed marriage or ministry. Handling money, sex, and power are strong temptations that tempt the weak, immature believers who have not reached maturity from time abiding in Christ. You sin against your brothers if your behavior – although not unrighteous in itself – wounds their weak conscience. Therefore, it is better if you do not exercise your freedom if what you are doing causes someone else to sin. You may personally feel that having a glass of wine with your dinner is not a sin, but it is better not to touch wine or alcohol of any kind if by exercising your freedom, you cause a brother who is struggling with alcoholism to fall into a life of dissipation.

There are a number of things that are not specifically prohibited by the Scriptures (going to a dance, going to see a movie, going out on a date with someone, counseling someone of the opposite sex in private, watching TV, surfing the Internet, etc.) and they may seem like harmless things but in fact, some of them, although they may be good things and will not tempt you, they may have a negative impact on others. The ethics of the New Testament instruct us to think of others before deciding on our own actions.

So, spiritual leaders must ask themselves, “Will the exercise of my personal freedom in Christ cause others to stumble?” Your years of experience, trials, and testing of your faith may mean you can handle many situations that new, untested Christians cannot. The leader must hold themselves to the highest standard in this regard. If a leader resents having to live transparently and sacrifice many of their personal freedoms to serve the body of Christ, then it is a sign that they are not ready to lead. “For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.” (Luke 12:48b).

The Apostle James (3:1) warned those who sought positions of leadership that they should think carefully, “... because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.” What a spiritual leader does is supposed to be seen and copied by others. So if a disciple wants to be a leader – someone who is able to disciple others – then they must hold themselves to the highest level of conduct, and not give anyone any excuse to question their behavior or commitment to Christ.

4. IS IT GLORIFYING TO GOD?

“Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” The spiritual leader knows that above all else, they should examine

themselves and ask, “Is what I am doing glorifying God?” No one may be watching you, and you might be far from home and in a place where no one knows you, but God is always present with you by His Spirit. (See HANDOUT “10 Ways to Glorify God”).

In His final hours, Jesus offered up a prayer to His Father. In that prayer He said, “I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do.” (John 17:4). From His prayer, spiritual leaders understand that we can glorify God even in the midst of suffering. The hour had come for the Son of God to complete His mission to be lifted up for the sins of the world (John 3:14-17).

Matthew Henry commented on these verses. He wrote, “Even in his sufferings, by the signs and wonders which attended them...when the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple rent, then the Father not only justified, but glorified the Son.” Throughout the history of the church, believers have been joined with Christ in their suffering: “Even by his sufferings; when he was crucified, he was magnified, he was glorified, ch. 13:31. It was in his cross that he conquered Satan and death; his thorns were a crown, and Pilate in the inscription over his head wrote more than he thought. But, Thirdly, Much more after his sufferings. The Father glorified the Son when he raised him from the dead, showed him openly to chosen witnesses, and poured out the Spirit to support and plead his cause, and to set up his kingdom among men, then he glorified him.” (Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume*, Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994, 2028).

Jesus spoke of glorifying God as doing the work the Father had given him to do. Therefore, we also glorify God by our obedience to the Father’s will. The Father is glorified when we obey His will.

Jesus receives glory when His chosen leaders accomplish the task that He has given them. The chief end of the “Great Commission” (Matthew 28:18-20) is to glorify God to the ends of the earth and to join Him forever. The way Jesus glorified the Father was by fulfilling His mission, and the best way we can glorify God is to fulfill our mission to make disciples of every nation.

Too often, apostles, prophets, evangelists, preachers, and teachers speak of glorifying God in abstract terms or as supernatural manifestations of signs and wonders. Instead, the primary concern of spiritual leaders ought to be to glorify the Father by our sacrifices to join Him in fulfilling His mission on the earth until the end of the age. Spiritual leaders know they have been chosen for such a time as this – that God has placed each one of them in a certain place for this time. Jesus has charged us to preach the gospel, baptize new believers, and teach them to obey His commands until His return.

Jesus could pray confidently that God the Father had been glorified by Him because He had finished the purpose for which He had been sent. In the same way, we glorify Him when our service is more than a once-a-week event that makes others feel better about themselves. Instead, spiritual leaders must exemplify the lifestyle of a servant leader who lives to glorify Almighty God. We live to glorify God who has loved, saved, and regenerated us “according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will.” When we live to serve and glorify God, everything we say and do is intended to bring glory to God. “The leader must maintain a godly walk before their people and make frequent application of 1 John 1:9” (LeRoy Eims).

It is said that *ethics* are what a man does when he knows that others are watching but *character* is what a man does when he knows no one else is watching. And for the Christian leader, their outward performance will reflect their inner life. It is the same for all believers, for Jesus said, “out of the heart the mouth speaks...” and so too the heart the man determines how the man of God behaves.

Questions for Lesson Six

1. Explain the difference between *Normative*, *Applied*, and *Metaethics*.
2. What is the difference between Christian Ethical standards ethical standards of the world.
3. What are the things God looks for in a spiritual leader He chooses? How do they differ from the way the world chooses its leaders?
4. What are the 6-8-10 principles and how are they helpful for making ethical decisions?
5. Is suffering necessary for God’s glory? Explain your answer.

SGM EVANGELISM AND CHURCH PLANTING MOVEMENTS DISCIPLESHIP 202-6: BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP

THE COVERING OF A LEADER: SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Lesson Outline for the Student

- I. Accountability and the Leader
 - a. Group Accountability
 - b. The Leader’s Accountability
- II. Authority and the Leader
 - a. Self-centered Authority
 - b. God-centered Authority



ACCOUNTABILITY AND THE LEADER

“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.” Hebrews 13:17.

Biblical authority and accountability are not one-way streets from top to bottom for Christians. The model of servant leadership that Jesus taught is mutual between believers who are all equally accountable to God. The true spiritual leader is not someone who is above everyone else and accountable to no one but God. The top-down model of leadership often leads to the downfall of leaders who are never questioned or held accountable by others. Romans 14:12 says that we are all personally accountable to God. God is looking for the consistency, integrity, and responsibility that are the end result of the fruit of the spirit.

Jesus taught in His sermons and parables that everyone will have to appear alone before God to give account of their actions. The parables of the sheep and the goats (Matthew 25:31-46), the minas (Luke 19:11-23), and talents (Matthew 25:14-30) are clear examples to show that we will all stand alone before God. Everyone – believer or not – is accountable to Christ.

Spiritual leaders must be uncompromising in their stand against activities expressly forbidden by Scripture (idolatry, adultery, homosexuality, murder, theft, etc.) and must not tolerate those who openly engage in immoral behaviors without

repentance. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian church, “But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person.” (1 Corinthians 5:11). At the same time, leaders must recognize their responsibility is to restore those who repent and seek forgiveness. “This punishment which was inflicted by the majority is sufficient for such a man, so that, on the contrary, you ought rather to forgive and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow...” (2 Corinthians 2:6–7).

Spiritual leaders are accountable to God first to keep their hearts pure. The Bible contains more than 4,000 verses that refer to the heart. Psalms 24:3-5 says, “Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive blessing from the LORD, And righteousness from the God of his salvation.” The lessons from the history of Israel is that the people will follow as they are led. When a good king ruled the people, the people would strive for righteousness. When their spiritual leaders were corrupt – like the High Priest Eli and his sons – the people followed them into sin. If a leader is corrupt, they may cause tremendous harm to God’s people.

Spiritual leaders are accountable to other leaders to receive correction when it is necessary. No one is above correction. King David was not above correction by the prophet Nathan (2 Samuel 12:1-15). Even the Apostle Peter had to be corrected by Paul (Galatians 2:11). The church leader who surrounds himself with men who are there only to agree with them and do whatever they ask without question, that person is a weak leader, and the leadership of the church or ministry will only suffer. Without mutual accountability, it is too easy for the leadership of the church or ministry to drift into corruption.

Spiritual leaders are also accountable to those they lead to give loving correction when and where it is needed. Any correction or discipline should be based clearly on biblical teachings and not on manmade rules and regulations. Church rules or religious preferences should not be given equal standing with God’s law. Some denominations, or leaders of a church or ministry base their moral judgments on opinion, disputable interpretations of Scriptures, personal dislikes, or cultural bias rather than on the Word of God. When leaders do this, they show that their own faith is weak. The more leaders try to control the behaviors of those they lead, the more they show that do not think that the Holy Spirit is powerful enough to guide His children. If we refuse to bring correction where needed and that believer is pulled down to hell, the leader will be held accountable by God (Ezekiel 3:16-21).

One of the most difficult concepts of biblical accountability for modern day Christians to grasp is the concept of **Group Accountability**. Most Western nations are individualistic – that is, they think that their personal choices have no effect on others. However, according to God’s word, individual choices can affect a group of people for good or evil. The Old Testament is filled with examples of how the sins of a few affected the entire nation. Joshua chapter 7 describes how the sin of one man, Achan brought judgment on the entire nation. Although it was only one man that had broken God’s commandment not to take any of the “accursed things” of the idol worshipping inhabitants of Jericho, God saw his disobedience as a threat to the entire nation and dealt harshly with those who sinned. The book of Judges describes Israel’s downward spiral into national sin. By failing to root out every vestige of idol worship from the people, the Israelites suffered defeat and bondage time and time again. It was not until one of the Judges arrived on the scene the people were forced to acknowledge the fact that they had brought calamity upon themselves by disobeying and neglecting God. As the stories of Israel’s kings progress, we read example after example of the disasters brought upon the inhabitants of the kingdoms of the north and south by the unrighteous deeds of the few. Their rebellion spread and infected the entire nation until it brought God’s judgment.

In the book of Acts, the Holy Spirit deals swiftly with the sins of pride and selfishness of Ananias and his wife Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11). The Lord protected the early church by striking down the husband and wife after they were given the opportunity to confess to God their sins and repent. It would have been easy for the Apostles to overlook the need for personal accountability from Ananias, Sapphira, and other members of the church. But rebellion and tolerance for sins for the sake of keeping and adding more members of the church only leads to greater problems of backsliding and unholiness in the church. It is for this reason that the spiritual leader must hold everyone in his care to be accountable to God for their actions.

The accountability of the leader to others is his covering. Philippians 2:5-7 says, “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.” Spiritual leaders are not above Christ and are not above other believers either. In Ephesians 5:21, the Apostle Paul instructed everyone to **submit to one another** out of reverence for Jesus Christ, the head of the church. Even though we may be in a position of authority, submitting to others who depend upon our leadership will not undermine our calling (1 Corinthians 13:16). In fact, when it’s done with reverence to God, it will cause those who serve with us to trust our leadership and respect the position we hold. There may be those who attempt to take advantage of our willingness to submit to one another, but their hearts and deeds will be exposed to all, and God will protect the righteous leader.

The very essence of a servant leader is humility. Mutual Submission is the way the church was designed to function "...speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God." (Ephesians 5:19–21).

Jesus was submitted to the Father; husbands are directed to love their wives "... just as Christ loved the church" (Ephesians 5:25-33); wives are to be submitted to their husbands (Ephesians 5:22-24); and children are submitted to their parents (Ephesians 6:1-3). Fathers are directed to be sensitive to their children, understanding their vulnerability and meeting their needs as God commands (Ephesians 6:4). Servants are to be submitted to their masters (Ephesians 6:4-8). Masters are to love their servants as brothers and sisters in Christ (Ephesians 6:9). Elders and pastors are commissioned to serve the body and not lord over them like dictators (1 Peter 5:1-4). The members of the church are to be submitted to their God-given leaders; and *all* are submitted to Jesus Christ.

"Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for

'God resists the proud,
But gives grace to the humble.'

Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you." **1 Peter 5:5–7**

Being able to submit to one another no matter what our position of authority, is a distinct concept made possible by Jesus Christ. This is what makes Christian leadership unique in all the world. Jesus Christ introduced to the world a whole new approach to leadership. There was no concept of mutual submission in all the world that functioned with a top-down pyramid structure of leadership. In fact, apart from the Spirit of the living God working in and through His chosen leaders, our best efforts of obedience and submission will be tainted. When in-fighting, power struggles, and church politics dominate a church or ministry with selfish ambition, hidden agendas, and self-interest Christlike character will be absent in its leaders. (1 Corinthians 1:10-17). But in Christ, all believers are given the command and the potential to be of one heart and one mind, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Jesus is the only perfect demonstration of submission for us. Jesus showed us the way when He, the Lord of the Universe, humbled Himself and became a servant to all men. There is no place for selfishness and insecurity in the heart of a ministry

leader. As we carry out our God-ordained roles as leaders and, at the same time, serving one another, we learn humility and obedience to Christ. Of course, we all know that none of us are perfect examples of Christlike character, which is why being submissive to one another is essential. "But what about those who are not part of our ministry? Are we to submit to those who are not mutually submitted to us?"

Some disciples of John the Baptist came to him because they were concerned that Jesus' ministry was becoming greater than John's. John replied, "He must increase, but I must decrease." (John 3:30). The will for our mutual submission must be rooted in the authority of Jesus Christ and His Word. Those who are submitted to Christ will have the heart to find unity in the Spirit and will overcome the sinful flesh. Paul understood this and wrote:

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.

Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.

Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to

men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. Colossians 3:16-24 (NKJV)

God honors the leader whose heart has learned how to submit first to God and then to others because in the kingdom of God, he that is the greatest of all will be the servant of all. Therefore, Paul also said,

"Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others." **Philippians 2:1–4**

AUTHORITY AND THE LEADER

Accountability and Authority seem to be two separate issues for ministry leaders. However, in the kingdom of God, they go together hand-in-glove. **Accountability is a choice** – it involves the voluntary submission of the will not in slavish devotion to another person, but in a mutual relationship of *agape* between persons who are equally submitted to God. **Spiritual authority is a calling** that comes from God. Spiritual leaders, like the prophets of old, have to be specially selected and called to an office. The calling to be an apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, or teacher comes with an authority to complete the work of the office. When Jeremiah was called, he quoted God as saying to him:

“Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you;

Before you were born, I sanctified you;

I ordained you a prophet to the nations.”

Then said I:

‘Ah, Lord GOD!

Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a youth.’

But the LORD said to me:

‘Do not say, “I am a youth,”

For you shall go to all to whom I send you,

And whatever I command you, you shall speak.

Do not be afraid of their faces,

For I am with you to deliver you,’ says the LORD.” **Jeremiah 1:5–8**

After calling him, the Lord then prepared Jeremiah and sent him to proclaim His words to the backsliding nation. This kind of spiritual authority comes from God alone; it is unlike any authority that the world gives.

Leading without accountability is the way most worldly leaders want to lead. In fact, those are the kinds of leaders that are most often found throughout history; they are called “Dictators”, “Caesars” or “Tzars.” But followers of Jesus are not called to spiritual leadership if they cannot be accountable to God first and others second. In order to be effective leaders, they must not only be called by God, but they must also be willing to lay down their lives for others. Jesus told His disciples, “You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.” (John 13:13-17).

Jesus Christ, who had all authority in the earth, never exercised dictatorial power over His disciples or over anyone else who came to Him. Today, there are those who abuse their authority and run their church or ministry like a dictatorship. The leader, claiming special authority from God (sometimes calling themselves an Apostle) exercises supreme power over others who are not allowed to question their decisions. **The characteristics of a false spiritual leader:**

- The false leader says, “I know the answers, because I have been given special insight, knowledge, and position from God. Therefore, I will determine our direction, for I am the leader, and I know best.”
- The leader runs his church or ministry like a corporate dictator, making sure that every decision, large or small, is made only by him – down to how the last dollar is spent
- The leader surrounds himself with “yes” men who submit to his domineering style and will never question any of his decisions. Anyone who does question his decisions is removed.
- One of the favorite phrases of a false spiritual leader is: “It has been decided...” He keeps others in the dark until the final decision has been made and once his decision has been made, there is nothing anyone can say or do about it; no input is allowed from others
- The leader treats everyone around him as “subordinates” and not as partners in ministry
- The leader thinks the bigger and richer they are, the more they know and the more they should control everything.

This dictatorial style of leadership is totally contrary to the Leadership style that Jesus modeled for His disciples and that we must model if we are to be like our Master. Mark described Jesus’ leadership model in these words recorded in his Gospel:

“But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, ‘You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.’” (10:42-45)

The dictator sets his own agenda and everyone else must follow it, either by direct command or by the force of his personality. By direct or indirect means he makes sure his orders are always carried out. But Jesus was not like that. He was on a mission and that mission was given to Him by His Father. Jesus never used His

mission as a means to run over people on His way to fulfill it. In fact, on more than one occasion Jesus put aside His own plans and submitted Himself to the desires of others. Mark 7:24-30 describes a time when Jesus took his disciples out of Galilee for a time of rest away from the crowds that followed them everywhere. They went to the region of Tyre and Sidon. "And He entered a house and wanted no one to know it, but He could not be hidden." A woman whose young daughter had a demon heard about Him. She fell at His feet and begged Jesus to cast it out. Although, He was not there to minister to the Syro-Phoenicians, Jesus interrupted His time with His disciples to heal the daughter.

The Gospel of Luke (7:1-10) describes another time when a Roman centurion came to Him and asked Jesus to heal his servant. Although Jesus had said He came exclusively to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," He stopped and ministered to him. In the end, Jesus marveled at the centurion's faith, "and turned around and said to the crowd that followed Him, 'I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!'"

Another example of how Jesus often set aside His own needs and agenda for the sake of others is found in Matthew 14. After hearing the news of John the Baptist's death He wanted to be alone to pray and mourn for the loss of the great man. He traveled to a deserted place to be by Himself, but when the multitudes discovered where He went, they followed Him. Jesus turned and minister to the crowds and fed them before sending them on their way. It was only after the needs of others were fully met that Jesus sent His disciples away and went up the mountain by Himself to pray. When evening finally came Jesus was alone to commune with His Father and mourn John's death.

The dictatorial leader uses the top-down leadership style that looks like a pyramid with the leader at the top, giving commands to those below. Jesus used the Servant-Leader model, which is 180 degrees opposite. It is represented by an inverted pyramid where everything rests on the shoulders of the leader. The leader gives direction, empowers and supports those he has chosen to be a part of his ministry team but He allows them the freedom and responsibility to fulfill their part of the overall mission. We can see this model perfectly demonstrated in Luke chapter ten:

VERSE 1: Jesus "appointed" seventy-two members of His team and sent them ahead of Him...

VERSES 2-16: Jesus gave them specific instructions about their mission.

(Without specific direction from the leader, chaos will be the result. Therefore, the leader casts the vision and defines the mission.)

He defines the core values that guide the ministry. (NOTE verses 5-7)

VERSES 17-22 The seventy-two report their success.

Their success was not by their own efforts alone, but they had the power, presence, and support of Jesus by the Holy Spirit.

The leader's influence was felt by those who were performing their assignments.

VERSES 23, 24

Jesus affirmed the Individual Dignity and Corporate Creativity of the seventy-two.

- Individual Dignity - The dignity and worth of each individual was affirmed in His words. "People with the proper sense of spiritual and emotional well-being are freed for productive ministry that is committed to goal-oriented planning and team accountability." Hans Finzel
- Corporate Creativity- By releasing them and sending them ahead of Him, Jesus allowed His ministry team to be creative and develop innovative strategies on where, when and how to complete their assignments all under the direction of the Holy Spirit. Jesus' model of servant leadership created an atmosphere of confidence, mutual trust and cooperation between Himself and these seventy-two.

Ministries run by the dictatorial leadership model may become very successful by the world's measure of success (and certainly they will have fewer problems) if a competent dictator controls everything and everyone involved. However, the independent, gifted, and creative individuals under that dictator will quickly lose their joy and enthusiasm for ministry or they will quickly grow weary of the leader's domineering behavior and leave. All who will be left in that ministry will be the blind followers and indecisive, "yes men" who are afraid to make their own decisions and who move only by the Dictator's direct order. The Servant Leader, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, will cast the vision for the ministry, and will gather together a team of gifted and creative individuals who share that vision. The Servant-Leader defines the mission of the ministry; he encourages, empowers, and supports those God has chosen to help fulfill the mission.

Self-Centered Authority is the result when the leader thinks they always know best and can do what seems right to them without submitting to God's moral law. That was the condition of God's people described in the book of Judges. "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes." (Judges 21:25). Self-centered authority defies God and always ends in open rebellion against Him. During the time of the judges, the people of Israel experienced trouble because everyone became his own authority and acted on his own opinions of right and wrong. This produced a horrendous downward spiral that ended in gross immorality and civil war.

Things have not changed since the time of the Judges. The world has fallen into a similar pattern of immorality and self-destruction. Whenever individuals, groups, and societies make themselves the final authorities without reference to God, sin overcomes them. When people selfishly seek to satisfy their personal desires at all costs, everyone pays the price.

When the spiritual leader possesses **God-centered authority** it is normal for them to submit all their plans, desires, and motives to God before acting. Psalm 37:5-6 says,

“Commit your way to the LORD,
Trust also in Him,
And He shall bring it to pass.
He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light,
And your justice as the noonday.”

God does give divine authority to those who abuse it. When Eli the high priest and his sons abused their spiritual authority, God acted swiftly replaced them with Samuel. Eli may have been older and more experienced than Samuel, and he held the proper position. But God-given authority is based on faith and obeying God when He has spoken. God-centered authority is not based on age, position, or human credentials. God seeks faithful followers who will persevere under pressure. Therefore, God often uses unexpected vessels to give His authority.

The self-centered religious authorities of Jesus’ day did not understand His authority because it did not come from them (Matthew 21:23-27). And they did not understand where Jesus’ disciples got their authority (Acts 5:33-42). Because Jesus spoke with real God-centered authority (Matthew 7:28-29) His words were not mere opinion but had power behind them.

Where does the spiritual authority of the believer come from? Jesus is the source of all authority. Colossians 1:15-20 states clearly that everything has been created through him and for him.

“This is one of the strongest statements about the divine nature of Christ found anywhere in the Bible. Jesus is not only equal to God (Philippians 2:6), he is God (John 10:30, 38; 12:45; 14:1-11). He not only reflects God, but he reveals God to us (John 1:18; 14:9). He came from heaven, not from the dust of the ground (1 Corinthians 15:47), and is Lord of all (Romans 9:5; 10:11-13; Revelation 1:5; 17:14). He is completely holy (Hebrews 7:26-28; 1 Peter 1:19; 2:22; 1 John 3:5), and he has authority to judge the world (Romans 2:16; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 2 Timothy 4:1). Therefore, he is supreme over all creation, including the spirit world.” (Neil S. Wilson, *The Handbook of Bible Application*, Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2000, 45-46)

The authority that God gives to His people is not unlimited. No one should assume they have the same authority that the Son of God has. Spiritual leaders may have the authority to “trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy” (Luke 10:19) But they should never delude themselves into thinking they have authority over God’s will – not even the Holy Spirit speaks on His own apart from the Father’s will (John 16:13-15).

“Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God.” (2 Corinthians 5:20). The spiritual authority that believers have is **ambassadorial authority**: (1) Ambassadors live in a foreign land but keep the citizenship of their homeland. Christians live in the world but are not of it. (2) Ambassadors speak for their country’s leader. They do not speak for themselves. The ambassador is an agent; his duty is to deliver a definite message, to carry out a specific policy of the leader. (3) The honor of a country, and how it is perceived by the foreign country where he serves, is determined by the behavior of the Ambassador. “Here is the Christian’s proud privilege and almost terrifying responsibility. The honor of Christ and of the Church are in the hands of each one of us. By every word and action, we can make others think more – or less – of our Church and of our Master” (William Barclay, *The Letters to the Corinthians*, © The William Barclay Estate, 2009, p.250).

Questions for Lesson 6

1. To whom are spiritual leaders accountable?
2. Explain how the accountability of the leader to others is his covering.
3. Explain the relationship between accountability and authority in spiritual leadership.
4. What are the characteristics of false spiritual leaders?
5. What is the difference between self-centered and God-centered authority?

SGM EVANGELISM AND CHURCH PLANTING MOVEMENTS DISCIPLESHIP 202-7: BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP

THE COOPERATION OF THE LEADER: MAINTAINING UNITY IN THE BODY

Outline for the Student

- I. The Four Pillars of Christian Unity
 - a. Put God and His Word First
 - b. Put Others Ahead of Yourself
 - c. Live In Complete Harmony with Others
 - d. Accept One Another

- II. Four Steps to Accepting One Another
 - a. Accept Him Whose Faith Is Weak
 - b. Evaluate Your Own Standards
 - c. Examine Your Own Prejudices and Favoritism
 - d. Eliminate Anything That Is Legalistic and Prejudicial



THE FOUR PILLARS OF CHRISTIAN UNITY

“We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification. For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, ‘The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me.’ For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.” Romans 15:1-7

In this passage of scripture from Romans, Paul reveals the *four pillars* upon which Christian unity must stand: put God and His Word First, put others ahead of ourselves, being like-minded, and accept one another as Christ also accepted us.

1st Pillar – Put God and His Word First (verse 4 & 6b)

It is the responsibility of the leader to encourage **a spirit of Cooperation** between different ministries, churches and denominations and to encourage believers to maintain unity in the body. Everything that was written in the Scriptures was written to teach us that through endurance and the encouragement of God’s Word, we might have hope. And in this hope that all believers share, we glorify God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul said it another way in Ephesians 4:1-6:

“I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”

The only way Christian leaders can hope to promote true unity among believers is to teach in word and deed that there is only one Gospel, and we must all preach the same Gospel. Spiritual leaders understand that not everyone is going to do things our way or as a part of our ministry (Mark 9:38-40; Luke 9:49-50). Worldly-minded leaders want total control over others. They want everyone to be under their authority and to do everything the way they think it should be done down to the last detail. This was the disciples’ motivation for stopping someone who was not part of the group from ministering to others in Jesus’ name. But Jesus’ answer was, “Do not forbid him, for he who is not against us is on our side.”

The most important thing is that we put God first; and as long as we are true to His word, unity will follow. Satan’s strategy throughout church history has been to destroy the unity of Christ’s body. He knows if he can destroy our unity, he has eliminated the most powerful means we have to communicate that Jesus Christ is God:

“And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.” **John 17:22-23**

Christian disunity dooms more people to eternal death and despair than any other thing in this world because no one can come to know God apart from coming

to know Jesus Christ, the Son of God. And when Christians are fighting one another, the world cannot see Christ in us. The message of salvation is lost in our fighting. When we are of one mind with one another (Romans 15:5), the Holy Spirit causes the message of salvation to come alive in the hearts of unbelievers, which all can see.

A faith that is based solely upon the Scriptures without any legalism (manmade laws for righteousness), tends to draw Christians together and unify them. The extrabiblical rules and regulations that some Christians use to define “right” from “wrong” behavior and evaluate a person's relationship with Jesus Christ tend to divide believers and force them apart. Non-essential things in our man-made rules and regulations are legalistic. Legalism puffs up leaders because it feeds their pride and egos as they use their own rules to control others. It causes those who are under the leaders’ control to judge as being “unworthy” Christians those on the outside who do not follow the same rules.

Legalism creates lots of internal division and strife. It substitutes an in-depth relationship with our merciful God with religious fervor and replaces a living faith with a false spirituality that “cleans the outside of the dish” but leaves the inside untouched. Christian leaders must be on constant guard against allowing any legalistic attitudes in their hearts and in the hearts of those they lead. **Unity is impossible where legalism rules.**

2nd Pillar – Put Others Ahead of Ourselves (verse 1-3)

In the first three verses of Romans 15, Paul expresses the importance of putting others ahead of ourselves to maintain **unity among believers.** The servant-leadership style that Jesus modeled taught His disciples to bear with the failings of the weak in the same way that Jesus patiently worked with the failings of His chosen disciples. Jesus taught His disciples that they should help their neighbor and do good deeds for them, to build him up. One of the most beloved parables of Jesus is that of “The Good Samaritan” which was told in response to someone asking Jesus “who is my neighbor?” (Luke 10:25-37).

Christ did not promote Himself by avoiding sinners, but He sought them out, forgave them, and healed them (Luke 5:29-31; 19:10). Jesus often accepted their hospitality and was criticized by the self-righteous religious leaders who treated sinners as outcasts (Matthew 9:9-13; Luke 7:36-50). So, spiritual leaders who follow Jesus’ example on the mission field often feel that “The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me...” when they minister to the outcasts of any society.

Jesus said, “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends...” (John 15:13). So, it requires a laying down of one’s life to leave home and travel to a strange place with unfamiliar customs, food, clothing, etc.. To answer God’s call often means the spiritual leader must put the interests of others ahead of

themselves. In the world, the leader comes first, and everyone serves the leader; the leader has the power. But Jesus said, it is not so for those who are leaders in God's kingdom: “And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, ‘If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.’” (Mark 9:35).

No doubt, the Apostle Paul (one of the greatest of the early leaders of the church) understood this and encouraged others to follow the Lord's command. He told the Corinthian church that nobody should seek his own good but seek the good of others (1 Corinthians 10:24). And he said to the church at Philippi:

“...fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.” **Philippians 2:2-4**

There is nothing more out of place in the kingdom of God than the leader who puts his own interests and ambitions ahead of others, who thinks more highly of himself than others, who always wants to sit at the head of the table, who always expects to be waited on hand and foot by others, and who never has the time for anyone except for those who he considers “important” enough to meet with him. That kind of leader has lost the vision for the mission he was called for by Jesus Christ.

Jesus never discriminated because of someone's race, sex, financial status or appearance. He was comfortable in the presence of fishermen and tax collectors. He was at ease with men and women, or with the rich and poor. No one, not even the smallest child, was beneath Him or unworthy of His attention. He treated them all the same. The only ones Jesus showed no tolerance for were those religious leaders who used their status and authority to exclude others and drive away from God those who needed His salvation the most.

Jesus did not set up His throne in the Temple in Jerusalem or in some king's palace and expect the people to come to Him; He went where the people were. The Gospels describe Jesus going through all the towns and villages, teaching and preaching to others along the way. Jesus taught in their synagogues and preached to them in public places. Everywhere Jesus went He proclaimed the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. He did all of it because when He saw the crowds, He had compassion for them. Jesus saw how the people were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. (Matthew 9:35-36).

Spiritual leaders who are like Jesus will be **accessible to people.** They will not be secluded in paneled offices, sitting behind big desks, and only come out when it is time to stand behind a pulpit and preach down to the congregation. Jesus was reachable. The people could reach out and touch the hem of His garment, wash His

feet with their tears, anoint Him with oil, share a meal with Him, dip their bread in the same dish with Him, rest their head upon His breast, or anoint Him with oil.

Jesus went where the people were hurting. He went to the blind and the lame, to the rich and the poor alike; to the Publican and the sinner; to the Roman or the Pharisee. It made no difference to Jesus who the person was as long as they were hurting and seeking a touch from God. He took equal time to talk with the learned, the ignorant, the wealthy, or the hungry: no one was too unimportant for Jesus. He closed no one out who was poor in spirit, mourned over their sins, came to Him with meekness, hungered for righteousness, sought mercy from God with a pure heart, and came to Him to make peace with God and others. (Matthew 5:3-12). Paul wrote to the Romans, “Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.” (Romans 12:16).

If you want to be a leader like Jesus, not only must you put others first, but you must be of the same mind toward one another in Christ.

3rd Pillar – Being Like-minded (verse 5, 6a)

Paul urged the church to be of the same mind with one heart and mouth: “May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus...”

The Holy Spirit gives His leaders the patience, steadiness, and encouragement they need to live in complete harmony with each other. When godly leaders exhibit the attitude of Christ towards each other, the rest of those under them will follow. And then all can praise the Lord together with one voice, giving glory to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul, Peter, James, John, and the other Apostles all worked very hard to build unity and keep peace in the body of believers. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 1:10, “Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” Key to being joined together in the same mind is keeping our focus upon God and upon His Word and avoid disputable matters. Paul instructed Timothy and Titus to ignore fables and endless genealogies, stupid disputes, arguments over words or legal issues which cause disputes rather than godly edification of believers in faith (1 Timothy 1:4; 6:4; 2 Timothy 2:23; Titus 3:9). Paul noted how the Greek intellectuals loved to debate and dispute over different philosophies (1 Corinthians 1:20). However, it is not to be so among believers who ought to “Do all things without complaining and disputing” (Philippians 2:14).

Those who follow the behaviors and customs of worldly-minded leaders will fail as spiritual leaders of the church because the Holy Spirit must quicken God's

Word in them and lead them to be of one mind with one another. By focusing on God's word, it allows the author of the Word to transform His people to be a new and different kind of leader than the rest of the world. The Spirit of God in us works through the Word of God to change our thought processes. The Holy Spirit will give us fresh and new insights to help us to be the kind of leaders God wants us to be:

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” **Romans 12:2**

“For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?”
But we have the mind of Christ.” **1 Corinthians 2:16**

The word of God is **the mind of God**. Therefore, the Scriptures tell us what He thinks about us. Psalms 92:5 and 139:17-18 praise the works of God and how vast and profound God's thoughts are towards mankind, “Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand.”

The key for leaders of different churches and different ministries to be single-minded is to focus upon **God and His Word**, and how to interpret His word properly: in context of its historical setting and linguistic forms without forcing their own theological bias into their interpretation. If they will do that - as they meditate upon the Word of God – it will allow His Word to shape their thought processes in the same way and they will become single-minded. This may seem like an impossible task because of the fallen human condition, but it is clearly God's will for us:

“And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever – the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you” **John 14:16–17**

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

“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you...” **John 16:13–15**

“These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but I will tell you plainly about the Father...” **John 16:25**

“For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me.” **John 17:8**

“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.” **John 17:20–21**

Being single-minded does not mean all leaders will think exactly alike, act exactly the same, or have the same gifts and callings in ministry. What it does mean is that all will be moving in the same direction in **the unity of the Spirit**. It means that all leaders will be working to fulfill the will of God revealed in the Word of God without all the distractions and conflicts that hinder the ultimate plan and purpose of God for His church (Hebrews 3:1). When leaders are of the same mind with one another, the Holy Spirit causes the message of the love of God for His people to come alive in the hearts of His people. And this will be recognized by unbelievers who will then be drawn to Christ. When the church is united, people will listen to Christians because all people everywhere are searching for the same thing: the true love and acceptance that can only be found in the heart of God.

4th Pillar – Accept One Another As Christ Also Accepted Us (verse 7)

Paul’s instructions were clear: **accept one another**. In order to bring praise to God, Christians should accept one another just as Christ accepted them. In his book, *Building Up One Another*, Gene Getz gave four practical steps for accepting one another. Following these steps should guide leaders on how to encourage others and build unity in the body.

STEP 1

Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters. Romans 14:1-4 is Paul’s guidance for living in unity with believers who feel the need to follow religious restrictions to keep from falling into sin and temptations. Those who live free of religious dos and don’ts must not look down on those whose faith is so weak that they do not believe they can stand the test of their faith. (Note: Paul was not referring to commandments related to holiness, moral decency, and sound doctrines.) When Paul asked, “Who are you to judge someone else’s servant? To his own master he stands or falls.” He was not promoting a “hands off” policy for those who shamelessly lived contrary to God’s moral law. Paul trusted the Holy Spirit to make them able to stand by convicting them of sin (John 16:7-15).

Volumes have been written on these verses of Romans 14, and many great sermons have been preached on this subject of Christian liberty. However, at the same time, this passage is all too often the cause of disputes and arguments over what exactly Paul intended to say. The misinterpretation and misapplication of this passage can cause some leaders to be legalistic in their approach to sinners, demanding a strict adherence to religious creeds or codes that severely restrict the freedom of the believer. Others react in the opposite way, allowing believers to behave how they choose, thinking it is okay for Christians to live without legal or moral restraints on their behavior.

It is important to understand Romans 14:1-4 in context of everything Paul wrote about Christians’ behavior. Paul said Christians should accept one another in spite of their different ways of living, but when it comes to moral behavior, they should all obey the Lord’s teachings. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Paul and the other Apostles expressed a balanced and godly understanding of how the believer can live without going to extreme of legalism or the other extreme of licentiousness. Paul was not talking about the essential doctrines of our faith. He was not referring to righteous or unrighteous behavior, but only about those things that are not essential to our salvation.

STEP 2

To accept one another, Christians must **evaluate the standards** that have been set up to guide their attitudes and actions. Asking questions can lead us to evaluate extra-biblical standards and rules that are being required for some Christians but not all. Christians should ask if they are accepting or rejecting others based upon standards that seem spiritual but are really being imposed because of weak consciences.

A few examples of non-essential things Christians may have differences of opinions on:

- Music in church
- Hair styles and make up
- Jewelry
- Dancing
- Movies
- Food and drink
- Days of worship

What about those things the Bible clearly defines as sin? To accept others unconditionally doesn’t mean accepting what the Bible clearly defines as sin. Paul said in Romans 15:14 that he himself was not convinced that all believers are full of

goodness, complete in knowledge and are competent to instruct one another. Therefore, spiritual leaders must encourage, admonish, and instruct everyone in all things that lead to righteousness in Christ Jesus.

STEP 3

Evaluate your attitude toward other Christians concerning **prejudice and favoritism**. Prejudice is very subtle, but it can be very destructive to unity in the body. In the beginning the church had to overcome prejudice against the Gentiles. In America, white Christians had to overcome prejudice against blacks. In India there are class and caste barriers that must be overcome. What about you? A person is not able to be the leader God wants them to be if they cannot truly accept all other believers as brothers and sisters in Christ.

STEP 4

Take effective action to eliminate anything that is **legalistic and prejudicial** in your life and in your church. If prejudice is happening in your church, the leaders must take action to stop it.

Not only must the leader take action to stop prejudice, but they must also take action to stop anything that is legalistic. (See HANDOUT “3 Types of Legalism”). Legalism is defined as an attempt to secure righteousness in God’s sight by good works. Legalists believe that they can earn or merit God’s approval by performing the requirements of religious law. A legalist is someone who believes that their good works and obedience to God affects their salvation. Therefore, the legalist focuses on God’s laws more than on their relationship with God. Legalism causes the believer to obey external laws without being truly submitted to God in their heart. As Jesus said, they clean the outside of the cup but inside they are full of sin (Matthew 23:25-26). Legalism adds human rules to divine laws and treats them as divine.

To stop legalism, the spiritual leader must first acknowledge it as sin because “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9). Second, they must identify those areas where change is needed. The leader asks God to help them overcome any legalistic behavior in themselves before accusing others of being legalistic (Matthew 7:1-6).

The final step to take to accept one another as Christ also accepted us is to **take action**. One way of doing that is to select someone who is a member of the body who you have difficulty accepting and do something for that person that reflects true Christian love. Maybe invite that person to your home for lunch or dinner, for example. “Remember, Christian love acts on what is the right thing to do.” Gene Getz

And where there is Christian love there is unity.

Questions for Lesson Seven

1. What are the four pillars of Christian unity?
2. Why is Christian unity so important?
3. What does like-mindedness mean in the Christian context?
4. What are the practical steps Christians can take to accepting one another?
5. Does accepting one another mean we must accept false teachers and unrepentant sinners?

SGM EVANGELISM AND CHURCH PLANTING MOVEMENTS DISCIPLESHIP 202-8: BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP

THE INTEGRITY OF A LEADER

Lesson Outline for the Student

- I. Integrity in the Private Life of a Leader
- II. Integrity in the Public Life of a Leader



INTEGRITY IN THE PRIVATE LIFE OF A LEADER

“Who can understand his errors?
 Cleanse me from secret faults.
 Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins;
 Let them not have dominion over me.
 Then I shall be blameless,
 And I shall be innocent of great transgression.
 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
 Be acceptable in Your sight,
 O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.” **Psalms 19:12–14**

It has been said that *integrity* is what a person does when **no one else is watching**. It may also be said that integrity is what a person meditates upon when they are alone. In His humanity, Jesus was a man who was always in control of His emotions, His feelings, and His thoughts.

In His sermons, Jesus was more concerned about the **heart conditions** of the people than their sins. Jesus saw how the impure thoughts and unholy attitudes of the inward life of a person led them to stray from God and fall into sin and temptations. In His Sermon on the Mount Jesus taught how it was the lust in the heart that led to adultery; how hate led to violence and murder; how greed and covetousness caused the person to steal. Therefore, the spiritual leader must constantly perform a heart “checkup” with our Great Physician.

“When Jesus talks about the pure in heart, He does not mean one who is sinless as much as one who has a single-mindedness or sincerity. Purity is a passionate aspiration toward holiness. As Jesus shared His insights with His disciples, He made it clear to them that it is not what

is outside of us that makes us pure, it is what is within. Jesus was interested in our thoughts, and wants them to be pure. We accept the saying, ‘as a man thinks, so he is’... As we think, so is our purity of heart either enhanced or diminished.” (Tom Bruno, *Jesus, Ph.D. Psychologist*, © 2000, Bridge-Logos Publishers, FL, pp. 84-85).

Jesus knew that the pure in heart have greater spiritual vision. He said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” And “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” (Matthew 5:3, 8). A pure heart is critical to our spiritual well-being. When a person allows themselves to be controlled by impure thoughts such as jealousy, greed, anger, or lust, their judgment becomes poor, and they walk around in a dense fog that hides the devil’s traps and snares that surround them.

Spiritual leaders will face many enemies along the way. King David was a leader who faced many enemies in his lifetime. He prayed often, “Let not my enemies triumph over me.” He declared in Psalm 25, “Good and upright is the Lord; Therefore, He teaches sinners in the way” and “My eyes are ever toward the Lord, for He shall pluck my feet out of the net.” David also said, “Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, For I wait for You.” As long as David walked in the integrity of his heart, he prospered, but whenever his actions strayed from what he knew in his heart was right, he suffered loss.

King David, like so many other leaders of God’s people, had to learn the hard way that **integrity begins in the heart**. Every leader will be tested and without integrity (dependability, honesty, and trustworthiness) in the inner man, they will almost always end up falling from grace and into the schemes of the enemy. “If ever we needed two powerful forces to preserve us along life’s way, we need integrity and honesty. The psalmist asks for these to protect him step-by-step. Honesty makes us learn God’s requirements and strive to fulfill them. Integrity—being what we say we are—keeps us from claiming to be honest while living as if we do not know God. Honesty says, “This is the Shepherd’s way,” and integrity says, “I will walk consistently in it.” (Neil S. Wilson, *The Handbook of Bible Application*, Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2000, p. 332).

Proverbs 11:3 says that “The integrity of the upright will guide them, but the perversity of the unfaithful will destroy them.” The Bible teaches us that to be effective, integrity must be **a long-term character trait**. Men like Moses, Joshua, Caleb, and Daniel were faithful from the start and remained so all their life. Although no one is perfect and all have sinned and fallen short of God’s perfect Son, those who are faithful and full of integrity will live victoriously.

Honesty in the inner man is essential for the spiritual leader if they are going to be consistent in their faith and unwavering in their commitment to disciple others.

Others will follow when they see the integrity of the spiritual leader. They must be faithful to God, not only in their walk with Him, but in their prayers and thought-life. Leaders must never deceive themselves into thinking that because their thoughts cannot be seen by others, it does not matter. However, the inner life of the believer will arise and affect those around them for good or ill. James said, “The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much...” (5:16). And Psalm 78:72 says that God chose David to shepherd his people “...according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them by the skillfulness of his hands.” **That means the private, inner life of a spiritual leader will impact for good or bad those who are under their leadership.**

“The Lord shall judge the peoples; Judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness, and according to my integrity within me.” (Psalms 7:8). God is interested in the condition of the leader’s heart. Therefore, His Holy Spirit works in the heart to develop strong a godly character to make His chosen leaders men like Him. Building character is not something that happens overnight. It takes time spent with God, meditating upon His word, pouring your heart out to Him, confessing your sins, and asking God to make you into the leader He wants you to be.

Psalm 139 is a perfect example of how character is built in the man of God. David saw that God had searched him and known him from his mother’s womb. He acknowledged that God knew everything about him from his sitting down and rising up. He saw that nothing about him was hidden from God’s sight, and it was wonderful. There was no place where he could hide from His Spirit – not even in the darkest night because “The darkness and the light are both alike to You.” David confessed to God that he would have nothing to do with the wicked and he hated those who rebelled against the Lord, “Do I not hate them, O LORD, who hate You? And do I not loathe those who rise up against You? I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them my enemies.” In the end, David requested:

“Search me, O God, and know my heart;
Try me, and know my anxieties;
And see if there is any wicked way in me,
And lead me in the way everlasting.” **Psalm 139:23-24**

Unless the spiritual leader is faithful to God in their thought-life, they cannot be **faithful in their actions**. If they attempt to hide their sins from God – even a “little one” – it will fester and grow like a cancer and before long, they will die spiritually. This is why transparency, confession, and honesty are critical for all believers, but especially for spiritual leaders who are on the frontlines of the warfare Satan wages against the people of God. Without the breastplate of righteousness and the belt of truth, the leader will be vulnerable to the attacks of the enemy (Ephesians 6:10-17).

Light is the best antiseptic for the contamination of sin in the private life of the leader:

“For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light.”

Ephesians 5:8–13

Many people are disappointed and complain that God never makes Himself known to them. They say that they prayed to God believing He would answer them because He promised “ask whatever you want, and I will give it to you” (John 14:13; 15:16) but that their prayers went unanswered. However, they ignore the fact that if they are a person of little or no integrity before the Lord, He will not reveal much of Himself to them.

God will not give to people what they will waste or spend on their fleshly appetites (see the parables of the Talents and the Minas). There will always be those who succeed based upon their own talents and hard work, but their hearts are not right before God. Christian leaders are not to make their own judgments about them, but they should be careful not to get too close to them and associate their ministry with them simply because they are successful in worldly pursuits. Proverbs teaches us not to fret because of evildoers: “Nor be envious of the wicked; For there will be no prospect for the evil man; The lamp of the wicked will be put out.” (Proverbs 24:19–20). Proverbs also says, “Better is the poor who walks in his integrity Than one perverse in his ways, though he be rich.” (28:6).

One of the greatest tests of integrity is **how we handle wealth**. In ministry, the personal integrity of the leader is often challenged in money matters. Honesty in our finances begins in the heart. Jesus was clear: no one can serve two masters. Love of money may cause the leader to try and rationalize away what seem to be insignificant details in how funds are distributed for personal needs or ministry needs. If funds are donated for a specific purpose, they should be used for that purpose. If the suffering and needs of others are used to raise funds that are then diverted for the leader’s personal needs, when it is discovered, the minister will be judged as unfit to handle the vast riches of God’s kingdom. Therefore, the spiritual leader must not let their integrity slip in small matters, so it will not fail them in major financial decisions either.

INTEGRITY IN THE PUBLIC LIFE OF A LEADER

No one can have a heart that is not right and produce the good fruit of the Spirit. A bad heart is like a bad tree; it only produces bad fruit (Matthew 7:17). The condition of your heart will affect your actions, and your actions will reflect the condition of your heart.

King David faced many enemies that challenged his leadership. Kings and kingdoms that coveted the land surrounded Israel. David also faced men inside his kingdom that wanted his throne. And in the end, David faced those inside his own family that wanted to replace him as king. Early on, the Lord showed David that as long as he walked in integrity, the Lord would protect him. David wrote:

“Vindicate me, O Lord, For I have walked in my integrity. I have also trusted in the Lord; I shall not slip.” **Psalm 26:1**

Ministry leaders often discover to their shock and disappointment that their position of leadership will be challenged and threatened by others who covet their ministry. Attacks from non-believers are to be expected when on the mission field, but attacks from those inside their organization may take them by surprise. The only defense against those seeking to destroy their ministry is to always conduct oneself with integrity. “He who walks with integrity walks securely, but he who perverts his ways will become known.” (Proverbs 10:9).

Paul urged his young disciples, “in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility...” (Titus 2:7). Integrity in the conduct of their ministry is the best defense of the spiritual leader. **Honesty, transparency, and holiness** in all things and in all relations will protect the minister if any charge is ever brought against them. If the minister is able to swear to God, “As for me, You uphold me in my integrity, And set me before Your face forever.” (Psalm 41:12).

Because no one is perfect in all their ways at all times, the more transparent the spiritual leader is, the less likely they are to fail in the face of temptation. But if they fall short, they can turn to the Lord and find redemption in the same way that David did: by **confession and contrition**. “But as for me, I will walk in my integrity; Redeem me and be merciful to me.” (Psalm 26:11).

Ministry leaders – missionaries, evangelists, pastors, etc. – must never forget that the purpose God chose them to be leaders is to live their life in such a way that it will bring others to salvation in Christ and Christ alone. All the clever church planting strategies, the sacrifices of time and money, or the pleadings for God to bring revival will not move a single mountain or molehill until all those involved take seriously the call to be holy.

The word “holy” appears more than 2,300 times in the Bible in more than 900 passages. The specific command for God’s people to “be holy” is given six times:

Leviticus 11:44-45:	Commands people to be holy because God is holy
Leviticus 19:2:	Commands the congregation of Israel to be holy
Leviticus 20:7:	Commands people to be holy because God is holy
Leviticus 20:26:	Commands people to be holy because God is holy
Numbers 15:40:	Commands people to be holy
Ephesians 1:4:	Commands people to be holy
1 Peter 1:15-16:	Commands people to be holy because God is holy

Therefore, it is beyond question that to be effective in ministry, the leader must live a life that is free of sexual immorality, violence, drunkenness, theft, lies, and cheating. “God knows just where and when he needs us to be a godly influence. He chooses and prepares us, equips and empowers us. Then God works in the outcomes to bring glory to himself. When we enter into a relationship with God and act in obedience to him, we impact eternity. God’s primary activity today is to reconcile man to himself so man will not have to spend eternity separated from him.” (© 1999, Henry and Tom Blackaby, *The Man God Uses*, Broadman & Holman, Nashville, TN, p.37)

“Incline your ear, and come to Me.
Hear, and your soul shall live;
And I will make an everlasting covenant with you—
The sure mercies of David.
Indeed I have given him as a witness to the people,
A leader and commander for the people.
Surely you shall call a nation you do not know,
And nations who do not know you shall run to you,
Because of the LORD your God,
And the Holy One of Israel;
For He has glorified you.” **Isaiah 55:3–5**

In Isaiah chapter 55, the Lord reminds us that the ways of the world are not the same as His ways (verses 8-9). The spiritual leader does not rely upon the wisdom of the world to guide their actions. The world teaches its leaders to follow the concepts of “the highest good” and to draw men to their cause by appealing to the wants, needs, and desires of whichever group they are trying to influence. If motivated by self-interest, the ways God influences men to follow Him are given a low priority. It is much easier to persuade men to join a cause when they promise tangible rewards for joining up. However, the promises of God for those who choose to follow Him are the **intangible rewards of His invisible kingdom**. “Therefore if

there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.” (Philippians 2:1–4). God promises wisdom, power, grace, patience, and daily provision for all those who pick up their cross and follow Him. God wants men who are able to persuade people using divine wisdom and power to follow Him:

“For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ. But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.” **Galatians 1:10–12**

Almost every Doctor of Ministry program in established Bible Colleges and Universities requires a course in management of the local church. Despite the many resources and training available to them, one of the major complaints of pastors and ministry leaders who suffer from burnout is that they have been overwhelmed by the amount of administration that is required of them. To avoid the dangers of stress, fatigue, and exhaustion that lead to ministerial burnout, the leader needs to keep their priorities in proper order.

To be a spiritual leader requires a mind that thinks in terms of **eternity**. The vision of the leader must rise above the busy schedules, the daily struggles of raising finances, keeping records, and working for the rewards this world has to offer. God’s leaders will think and act differently from the world. The carnal mind is always thinking about the immediate circumstances and how to meet the demands of each day. The apostles faced that challenge early on. They were being overwhelmed with taking care of the needs of a growing congregation (Acts 6:1-7). So, others were chosen to help carry the load. The apostles gathered the disciples and selected from among them “seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom” who could be relied upon to take care of the daily needs of the people while the apostles concentrated on prayer and ministry of the word:

“Realizing that different situations and changing needs require different styles of leadership also tells us that leadership needs to be shared. A team approach to leading enables the total needs of the church or the organization to be addressed adequately... The fact is that virtually every group of peoples, whether they live in a mission compound at a Bible College in Africa or form an inner city church in a world class

European city, needs the same rage of personalities, spiritual gifts, and leadership styles. The leader with a driving vision needs the stability and patience of the administrative leader; the friendly elder needs the analytical business acumen of the deacon; the emotional entrepreneur needs the quiet helpfulness of the follower. Plurality in leadership is a biblical concept...” (J. David Lundy, *Servant Leadership For Slow Learners*, © 2002, Authentic Media, U.K., pp.36-37)

Another important aspect of the leader’s public life is how they interact with the **governing authorities**. Paul instructed believers to be subject to the governing authorities. Except where the laws of the land directly contradict the commandments of God, Christians should obey all reasonable ordinances. Christian leaders should be humble and respectful of those who are in positions of authority. It sets a bad example when spiritual leaders are rebellious and antagonistic towards people in government:

“Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God’s minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God’s minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience’ sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God’s ministers attending continually to this very thing. Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.” **Romans 13:1-7**

The book of Acts shows how Paul and the other missionaries interacted with the Roman governors and civic leaders. Because they understood that “there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God” the apostles did not want to bring judgment upon themselves by defying established authorities. As long as believers proved to be good citizens, they could go about their ministry without fear. Unfortunately, obeying the laws and respecting earthly authorities is not a guarantee against persecution. There will always be those who will act as the devil’s ambassadors and bring false charges and accusations against God’s anointed ministers.

The question many Christians have who are living or ministering in countries hostile to Christianity is, “When, if ever is it right for Christians to resist unjust governments?” The following is an excerpt from *Christian Ethics: Options and Issues* by Norman Geisler (Copyright © 1989, Baker Publishing Group, Grand Rapids MI, pp.251-253):

Obey its Laws under God

The first and foremost responsibility a Christian has to any government, just or unjust, democracy or monarchy, is to obey its laws (Rom. 13:1; Titus 3:1). Peter wrote, “Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every authority instituted among men” (1 Pet. 2:13). For “it is God’s will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men” (v.15). Civil disobedience is a bad testimony for a follower of Christ. Christians should be known as law-abiding citizens, not rebels. The best way to effect lasting change in an unjust government is by being a spiritual example, not by revolution. Only when it takes the place of God should we refuse to obey government, and even then we should not revolt against it.

Pray for Oppressive Governments

Paul urged Christians that “entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity” (1 Tim. 2:1-2 NASB). One of the most effective ways to change an unjust government is to pray for it. Prayer is the slender nerve by which the muscles of omnipotence are moved. God heard the cries of his oppressed people in times past (Exod. 2:23) and he will hear and answer them again today.

Work Peacefully and Legally to Change It

Politically, there was very little Christians could do to change the Roman government in the New Testament. This is not true for most Christians in the West today. We can not only pray for Caesar, but we can elect him. We can not only resist political evil, but we are free to do political good. And, as James said, “to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin” (James 4:17 NASB). Therefore, to quote Paul, “as we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith” (Gal. 6:10). We should fight oppression in our government with the ballot, not the bullet. It should be resisted with good, not with guns.

Disobey Oppressive Commands

As was previously noted, Christians can do something else about oppressive commands – they can disobey them. No human can compel us to disobey God. He is the highest authority, and his Word alone binds our conscience absolutely. This kind of biblical and courageous refusal to do evil will itself have a good effect on evil government. The refusal to do evil will itself have a good effect on evil government. The kings of Babylon were significantly affected by the courageous disobedience of both Daniel and the three Hebrew children (Dan. 3, 6).

Flee Oppressive Governments

Christians do not need to be passive targets of tyranny. We need not be dart boards for despots. When oppressed we should flee to freedom. The prophets fled from Jezebel (1 Kings 18), Israel fled from Egypt (Exod. 12), and even Jesus’ family fled from Herod (Matt. 2). So while not using force against unjust governments, we should at least flee their force against us.

Patiently Endure Suffering

Admittedly, fleeing is not always possible, or successful. Sometimes Christians must suffer patiently for Christ’s sake. Peter wrote, “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing; so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation” (1 Pet. 4:12-13 NASB). Sometimes we must simply suffer oppression for Christ, or even martyrdom. John said, “if anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity he will go... This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of the saints” (Rev. 13:10).

If a missionary is called to serve in an area of the world where persecution of Christians is taking place, it is important for them to be sensitive to the indigenous believers who live and work there. It is especially important for short-term missionaries to respect the indigenous church leaders’ instructions on where to go and what is proper to say and do. There are numerous instances of a backlash against Christians after overly-aggressive proselytizing by short-term missionaries who are unfamiliar with or insensitive to the local customs. If they are not properly prepared to minister as a foreigner in a place where local government and religious leaders are not receptive to foreign incursions, then it can cause severe damage to the local Christian community. One foolhardy missionary can come into an area and undo years or even decades of work by the local church. As Proverbs 19:1 says, “Better is the poor who walks in his integrity than one who is perverse in his lips and is a fool.”

It is important for the spiritual leader of a short or long-term mission to be **teachable**. They may be a leader of a church, ministry back home; or they may be a recognized leader of their short-term missions team, but when they enter a foreign mission field, they should be humble enough to listen and learn from the local leaders they have come to serve.

Cross-cultural, foreign missionaries should remember that they are ambassadors for Christ, “Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God.” (2 Corinthians 5:20). And as an ambassador, they not only represent the kingdom of God, but they also represent the church, ministry, or country where they came from. In some of the most remote villages and unreached people, the missionary may be the first and only person they will meet from that country. Therefore, as a

representative of King Jesus and His kingdom, they must be like Him. And as a representative of their homeland, they must behave towards others with the highest degree of integrity.

Questions for Lesson Eight

1. How do you define integrity?
2. How does the private, inner life of a spiritual leader impact others?
3. Why is how we handle wealth one of the greatest tests of integrity? What are some of the other tests of integrity?
4. Why does the spiritual leader need a mind that thinks in terms of eternity?
5. Review Norman Geisler's list of how Christians should respond to governments that persecute them. Can you find examples from this list in the book of Acts?

SGM EVANGELISM AND CHURCH PLANTING MOVEMENTS DISCIPLESHIP 202-9: LEADERSHIP IN MISSIONS

PERSONAL AND FAMILY ISSUES

NOTE: The primary source material for this lesson is *Introducing World Missions: A Biblical, Historical, and Practical Survey*, © 2004, 2015, A. Scott Moreau, Gary R. Corwin, and Gary B. McGee, Pub. Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, MI

Lesson Outline for the Student

- I. Assimilation
- II. Enculturation
- III. Lifestyle
- IV. Special Challenges

ASSIMILATION

In missions, life as a new team member presents new challenges for the ministry leader. Missionary life is not an easy life, and the leader of a church or ministry may also need to fulfill the leadership role in the family that joins him on the mission field. The single missionary that ministers alone and is not part of a team often faces the challenge of overcoming loneliness. Being far from home and having to adjust to a different culture and facing language barriers to communication can cause the missionary to return home before their mission is complete. However, the married missionary that brings his family with him, will face the same adjustments to culture and language while having to help his family adjust to their new life as well. "The hard news is that the new missionary family needs to learn not only the culture and cues of the host culture but also about their new teammates. Sometimes the resulting tensions can be enormous, and with the internationalization of teams becoming more and more common, both the blessings and the tensions are multiplied." (*Introducing World Missions* p.193).

My experience in the mission field was much the same as Scott Moreau's. Although we went on missions at different times and different places, our first two years of missionary service were in many ways, the same. The first years on the mission field are usually the most difficult years in the lives of most missionaries. Sometimes missionaries are separated from family and friends by a distance of thousands of miles and have to leave behind an important relationships. Like Scott

and me, almost all new missionaries have wrestled with and have to overcome the same loneliness and culture shock that so many other missionaries experienced. (Note: one important step of preparation that the missionary can make is to read the biographies of famous missionaries – especially of those who ministered in the same country where they plan to live.)

It is in times of emotional and mental crisis on the mission field that the missionary learns to keep their focus on Christ rather than on his circumstances. They will often discover others who are going through similar difficulties who will provide mutual emotional support at this critical time. As the missionary learns to trust and God and seek His comfort, it will slowly dawn on them that being on mission with God is as much about what the Holy Spirit is doing in the missionary as it is about what the missionary is doing for God.

“Choosing to lean of God at this time is perhaps the most foundational decision in avoiding burnout and early attrition. It is important to enter the field knowing that ordinary stresses in your home culture will be magnified because life in general is a stress when culture shock hits. If you know from the outset that your teammates will be different from you, it can make it easier to handle things when the differences seem larger than you ever imagined possible.” *Introducing World Missions*, p.194.

Leadership in the ministry or in the mission field often involves team-building skills. Whether one forms a team at home prior to departure or puts one together on the field, intense feelings may surface when differences arise or conflicts between team members go unresolved. The potential for conflicts to disturb the unity and effectiveness of the team will only increase with international or multicultural teams. The spiritual leader should quickly recognize internal stresses and differences between team members when they rise. There are, of course, practical methods, and psychological training that may be applied by the leader, but it must never be forgotten that intense spiritual warfare surrounds any effort to build the kingdom of God by seeking and saving the lost. Satan’s strategy is to destroy the cohesion and unity of the team so that more effort will be spent on solving internal conflicts between team members than evangelizing the lost. This is why teaching clearly the necessary Christlike character of those who have been called to follow Jesus into the mission field.

This is why the spiritual disciplines of prayer, fasting, Bible study, and daily devotions are essential to maintain the unity and single-minded purpose of the team. It should be made clear to all team members to be on guard against the schemes of the devil to create conflicts and destroy the unity of the team. It should also be made

clear to them that it is expected of them to participate in daily prayer, Bible study, and team devotions that build the unity of the team.

ENCULTURATION

Enculturation (or *inculturation*) is defined by sociologists as the process by which people learn the dynamics of their surrounding culture and acquire values and norms appropriate or necessary to that culture and its worldviews.

From the moment faith in Jesus Christ slipped its bonds to Judaism and entered the Gentile world, missionaries faced the problem of how to present the Jewish Messiah to the non-Jewish audience. Paul, the one chosen by the Lord to be the first and most important apostle to the Gentiles had to overcome the resistance of the Jewish leaders of the church and deliver the Gospel of salvation by grace alone, by faith alone, by Christ alone, by the Word of God alone, and for the glory of God alone to a world saturated with idol worship. Paul’s sermon delivered to the Greek scholars in Athens is a clear example of how the gospel was being preached to the Gentiles.

Over centuries, as Christianity grew to dominate Western culture, Christian missionaries felt less and less motivated to discover new ways to reach the unreached. The great age of discovery and colonialization brought with it a cultural bias that believed all things from the Christian West were superior to the rest of the world. From Christianity to gunboats colonized people were expected to adapt to and adopt Western ways – including religion.

In the post-colonial world, Christian missionaries slowly began to understand that because of the way Christianity had been presented to the non-Western world, many of the emerging former colonies were hostile to the faith that they saw as foreign interference to their traditions and religion. Hudson Taylor (China), and William Carey (India) were pioneers in modern missions. They were among the first missionaries who believed that *enculturation* was the answer to reaching the unreached people. Taylor and Carey learned the languages, religions, and customs of the people. They encouraged other missionaries to do the same. Taylor even went so far as to adopt the Chinese style of dressing. (See HANDOUT, “Theology of Inculturation”).

By the late 20th century, missionaries generally adopted the strategy of adapting Christian teachings and practices to indigenous languages and cultures. *Enculturation* (or *contextual theology* as most Protestants prefer to call it) has become an almost universal tactic for missionaries. In its most conservative form, *enculturation* involves learning the local language and respecting the customs of the

people group targeted for gospel outreach. In its more radical forms, *enculturation* involves syncretizing the gospel message in the forms of the religion, mythology, and beliefs of the people the missionary is working with. Examples of *enculturation* include incorporating traditional tribal music and dance into worship services, using local languages in the church liturgy, incorporating traditional signs, symbols, and artistic styles, establishing Christian places of worship that copy the style and architecture of the indigenous people, allowing certain spiritual practices that do not directly contradict Christian teachings, and adapting Christian teachings to address social issues affecting the community, all without contradicting the core tenets of Christian faith.

At the very least, those preparing for long-term missions are encouraged to learn the language of the people group they intend to live and work with. “Learning a language and culture through relationship in a community requires a tremendous commitment to the people of the new language... If your goal is to live with people, to love and serve them, and to become a believer in your new community, then learning the language will prove to be a great means to that goal. And learning the language will probably become quite manageable!” (*Community Is my Language Classroom!* Tom and Betty Brewster, © 1986, p.4)

In the chapter addressing this issue, *Introducing World Missions* (pp.196-197) lists several steps that can be taken to prepare the cross-cultural missionary for mastering a language on the field:

Take a course in the language of the people group you are planning to evangelize. (Taking a Second Language Acquisition course before entering the mission field saves time and makes *enculturation* easier to achieve).

Find a native speaker to begin practicing with for at least two hours a week.

Gather as many language resources as you can before going on your assignment. (Textbooks, Dictionaries, newspaper and magazine articles, and especially a Bible).

Find audio and video resources that teach your target language. Listening to any program that helps your listening and comprehension skills will help you master the language.

It is also important for the missionary to keep in mind that intercultural communication is more than just learning to speak the language. To successfully communicate across cultures requires integrating knowledge of the language and the culture.

LIFESTYLE

“Few things are as heart-wrenching as coming to terms with one’s own relative wealth in a context of overwhelming poverty. If it were simply a matter of a poor person or family in your midst, they could be cheerfully assisted and their woes ameliorated to the greatest extent possible. But when the vast majority of people in a culture are in some type of significant need, one’s inability to respond meaningfully can be most disheartening.” *Introducing World Missions*, p.197

Life as a rich person among the poor is not something that most Westerners think about. Outside of the developed Western nations, almost all countries have a much lower standard of living. Almost all of the unreached people groups where missions are focused live in developing countries with a remarkably low income. Unstable political and economic conditions often keep citizens of these countries in great need. Someone coming from the United States may not feel that the median household income is excessive, but to most people living in Third World developing nations, the typical US lifestyle is considered extravagant.

The missionary may discover quickly that how to respond to the needs around them will present one of their greatest challenges. Foreign missionaries are often bombarded with requests for large sums of money to build church buildings, fund social programs, or provide financial assistance for dozens – if not hundreds – of people in need. If the Western missionary is not careful, they will be treated as a walking ATM machine by indigenous Christians who believe they have an endless supply of cash to distribute. There is no perfect formula for how to respond to those with desperate physical needs.

“Only a community of believers who themselves have chosen to reject the materialist spirit of the age can stir its members to pursue genuine self-sacrifice abroad.” Jonathan Bonk

The issues that arise from working and ministering among the needy are complex and vary depending upon the circumstances. The missionary should have a clear understanding of what their mission is to be and how their resources are to be used once they arrive on the field. They should be firm, but flexible if a crisis like a natural disaster, war, or social unrest requires a change in how funds are spent. “...larger and more systemic issues arise that relate to this problem as well. These include the relational, communication, and strategic consequences of missionary affluence, as well as the more basic theological, ethical, and biblical considerations

that should guide every Christian in assessing personal behavior and lifestyle.”
Introducing World Missions, p.198

SPECIAL CHALLENGES

Life as a displaced person or family presents unique challenges for the long-term missionary to a foreign culture:

“Growing out of life in a new cultural context are several issues concerning the sense of disruption that is part and parcel of such a change. Five that bear most significantly on new missionaries are issues of security and significance, singleness and mission, loneliness and romance, educating kids, and home assignment and reentry.”
Introducing World Missions, p.199

1. Security and Significance

Those who study missions and the lives of missionaries often observe that the initial concerns of men differ from those of women. Once the basic needs of shelter, food, and security are met, the greater issues of finding a sense of belonging in the new community and the need to feel that the work they have come to do is significant will become top priorities. A period of adjustment to the new lifestyle of the missionary is normal and natural. It is also normal that women and men face different issues relating to their new way of life.

The authors of *Introducing World Missions* point out the fact that the most difficult period for women is usually the first few months. “...the primary issue seems to be one of belongingness. They have after all, left their homes, friends, and extended family – in short, most of the relationships and familiar things that heretofore provided stability, comfort and predictability to their lives.” (p.199). Once they are settled into their new environment and have been able to establish new relationships, most women are able to adjust to their life on mission with their husband and family.

Men often experience a different kind of adjustment when they are faced with reordering their expectations of what they had hoped to achieve to fit the realities they face in their first few months on the mission field. For many men, the crisis centers more on feelings of significance. It is often the case that what the missionary hoped to achieve takes far more time than expected. This will raise questions in the mind of the missionary about the wisdom of the strategy they planned to implement.

“We are convinced, therefore, that it is crucial for husbands and administrators to be especially vigilant and sensitive in their ministry to wives and other women during those highly vulnerable first couple

of months. Likewise, wives and administrators need to be vigilant and sensitive to the vulnerability of men as they come to terms with the new realities. When they come to realize that their ‘Eight-Point Plan to Complete World Evangelization,’ or whatever their particular vision is, many not be achievable in the way they had projected, it can come as quite a blow. And they will especially need encouragement when it really hits home that the life in their new culture is going to require some new coping skills, including large doses of patience, flexibility and perseverance.” (*Introducing World Missions*, p.200).

2. Singleness and Mission

“But I want you to be without care. He who is unmarried cares for the things of the Lord—how he may please the Lord. But he who is married cares about the things of the world—how he may please his wife. There is a difference between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman cares about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But she who is married cares about the things of the world—how she may please her husband. And this I say for your own profit, not that I may put a leash on you, but for what is proper, and that you may serve the Lord without distraction.” **1 Corinthians 7:32–35**

In the Protestant tradition, singleness is not associated with being celibate for life. From the 1800s forward, singleness in Western culture has become more common. In the last one hundred years singleness has increased for a variety of reasons and single men and women missionaries from the West to unreached nations are now commonplace.

There are advantages and disadvantages to being a single missionary. The Apostle Paul – a single man – did not forbid married missionaries. He did state that being single has the advantage of allowing the minister to be totally devoted to the work of the spreading the gospel. But he was happy to work alongside the husband and wife team of Priscilla and Aquilla (Acts 18:1-3, 18). Obviously, the single missionary can accomplish more in a shorter period of time simply because the entire focus of their time and effort will be on ministry. The single missionary can be more flexible regarding their missionary assignment, and they can be more mobile when they do not have a wife and children to move with them. “Uprooting families is usually more traumatic than uprooting singles. Singles can adjust to harsh conditions more quickly than whole families can.” (*Introducing World Missions*, p.200).

A third, and important consideration, is that single missionaries are much cheaper to support than a couple or an entire family. World travel is expensive and

relocating a family to another country requires a lot more finances than a single person who often travels light. The single missionary will not require a large house to live in and can live with a host family, making it less expensive to live abroad and easier to intermingle with those they have come to serve.

3. Loneliness and Romance

However, not everything is advantageous for single missionaries. In many cultures, singles are not received with the same respect as married people. Couples with families are generally more stable and are not shifted around the way singles are. Singles tend to be more short-term in their commitment to a particular mission field. Therefore, married couples are better candidates for long-term commitments. Without the companionship of a spouse and children, the single missionary often experiences loneliness and therefore, need special care to ensure that their emotional needs are being met while on the field.

By far, the most critical issue for young singles is dealing with unfulfilled sexuality. “This is potentially a dangerous area. The fact that every normal, healthy single missionary will face sexual tension. Finding appropriate, creative, and helpful ways to recognize and relive the tension will be a long-term issue for the single missionary.” (*Introducing World Missions*, p.201).

Spiritual leaders on the mission field often make the mistake of thinking that their drive and commitment to the mission will help them overcome the natural biological urges of human sexuality. They may feel they have failed in their walk with God if they are unable to repress sexual thoughts or feelings. But they must face the reality that only in very rare cases does God give the single person the gift of total celibacy. The vast majority of single missionaries will have to be strong and be wise in avoiding situations that will put them face-to-face with temptation.

Having someone of the same sex who can be a trusted and faithful prayer partner is one of the best ways to handle the challenges of singleness on the mission field. Know that God is for you and will help you overcome every trial and temptation is also a great comfort: “Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” (Hebrews 4:14–16).

Loneliness is not an issue that is exclusive to singles. J. David Lundy wrote in his book, “Related to facing higher expectations from others, leaders find themselves isolated from their colleagues oftentimes. Lonely indeed it can be at the top. There are several types of loneliness peculiar to the leader. One is physical. That

is to say, generally speaking, at least in parachurch ministry, considerable travel is part of the job description. For 21 of my thirty years in the ministry, I have had to be on the road (as measured by being away from home overnight) 20-25 per cent of the year. This can take its toll on marriage and family life, although I have been blessed with a wife of like-mindedness and tremendous love for me so that these absences have not hurt our marriage. Whether visiting Canadian missionaries on the field, attending international leaders’ meetings, or speaking in churches and schools around the world, I have faced many a sleepless or lonely night” (*Servant Leadership for Slow Learners*, © 2002, by J. David Lundy, Authentic Media, U.K. p.11-112)

Those who are single but are open to being married may turn to cross-cultural courtship leading to marriage. However, major adjustments almost always present themselves because Western culture, African, and Asian cultures differ greatly in regard to such matters. The single missionary must tread carefully and follow the cultural norms of the host country. If a romance leads to marriage, then many other issues must be considered if the cross-cultural marriage is to succeed in the long-term (See HANDOUT “Thinking of Marrying Someone from Another Culture?”)

4. Educating Kids

As the education of the children of missionary families evolved, parents have been given greater flexibility and better options for assuring their children’s learning will not be neglected. Mission-sending churches and organizations have shifted from a one-size-fits-all option that depended upon boarding schools away from parents. Today, mission families are allowed to explore other options for schooling children.

In recent years homeschooling has become a popular alternative to the traditional classroom settings. The quality of the resources available to parents to teach their children – especially in the early years – has grown. Homeschooled children are tested and advanced along with those who learned in the classroom. Homeschooling may open possibilities for educating indigenous children who do not have the resources that expatriate missionaries have to educate their children.

Before departing for the mission field, parents need to settle the issue of their children’s education. They need to know what the policies are for the education of children with the missions-sending organization and in the country where they will be living. “...many traditional mission boarding schools have reengineered themselves to become highly desirable options for private education in their local context. They minister more effectively now not only to the children of missionaries but also to the children of national and international church, business, and government leaders. They have become in many cases not just support ministries but true outreach ones.” (*Introducing World Missions*, pp.203-204).

5. Home Assignment and Reentry

Missionaries rarely consider the challenges that will face them when they return from the field after years or decades of serving in another country. After living in one of the poorer nations of the world and growing accustomed to what was once a totally foreign and unfamiliar environment, missionaries have forgotten the initial culture shock they felt when they left home and were immersed in a foreign country. “To the extent that they have adapted well to their new environment, learned the language, and identified with its people and culture, the reentry challenge is that much more severe. Suddenly, people and contexts whom a missionary has known for decades seem out of touch and quite foreign to the person he or she has become.” (*Introducing World Missions*, p.204).

On the other hand, people who have served many years as a missionary often return home totally changed people. Being a missionary is not only about what the missionary does but is also about what the Holy Spirit does in the missionary. Family members and friends who knew them before they went on their mission may find it difficult to relate to the person they became while serving God. “Often the reunion with family and friends that has been fondly anticipated for a long time is a disappointment because it has become so idealized in their minds. The things and activities that meant a great deal to the missionaries in earlier days, including the pursuit of personal peace and affluence, may suddenly seem trivial and mundane.” (*Introducing World Missions*, p.204).

Children too young to remember their home country, or who were born on the mission field, often experience a sense that they left their “home” and are not “back home.” It will take them some time before these “third-culture kids” are adjusted to their parents’ birth country.

Money is another important issue for returning missionaries. While on the field, they relied upon the donations and support from home. Their living expenses were often a fraction of the cost of living back home. Shortly after their return home, most missions support will dry up quickly. People who once supported them because they were doing important work for the Lord, will no longer want to support them because they are home and can fend for themselves. After many years, or decades on the mission field, very few missionaries return home with plenty of savings and a good job waiting for them. Giving gifts and donations to missionaries while they were serving overseas may seem like a noble cause, but once the missionary is home, they will seem like beggars if they need more time and money to resettle. “Salaries that were quite adequate to sustain the family back in the ministry culture may be quite insufficient to deal with the inflated prices and expectations for behavior that they now face back in the sending country. Things such as higher housing costs, dining out, various kinds of lessons for the children, youth retreats, and keeping up

with clothing styles can very quickly make a family budget look minuscule. And overhanging this challenge is what generally is considered to be the least favorite missionary task: receiving and, even harder, asking for money from others.” (*Introducing World Missions*, p.204)

One final consideration the returning missionary must face is their changing status. While on the mission field, the spiritual leader is often looked up to and given honor as someone who made great sacrifices to leave home, family, and everything they owned to come to a strange land and culture to share the gospel of salvation with them. Their communications with home are often met with great interest and appreciation, and people genuinely seem to want to hear about their mission. Once their mission is over and they return home, the missionary often experiences the feelings that their mission may not have been as fully appreciated by those churches and individuals who were once their supporters. The missionary often discovers that once they are home, few if anyone wants to hear about their work. Those who spent years of the field preaching and teaching hungry seekers come home only to find that what they have to say is not wanted or needed. In countries that have been over-saturated with the gospel and where there are more preachers than pulpits, the missionary is brushed aside for the established pastors, and dynamic preachers that compete for Sunday audiences. “As churches have tended to become larger and more diverse in their functions, fewer opportunities seem available for missionaries to address congregations as a whole. The task then becomes one of determining which subgroups within congregations to target and finding appropriate opportunities for communicating with them.” (*Introducing World Missions*, p.205).

Questions for Lesson Nine

1. Review this lesson on “Personal and Family Issues” for the leader preparing to depart for the mission field. What steps are most important for a leader to take?
2. Review this lesson on “Personal and Family Issues” for the leader on the mission field. What are the most important issues for a spiritual leader to address?
3. Review this lesson on “Personal and Family Issues” for the leader returning from the mission field. What are the important issues for the leader to prepare for?

SGM EVANGELISM AND CHURCH PLANTING MOVEMENTS DISCIPLESHIP 202-10: LEADERSHIP IN MISSIONS

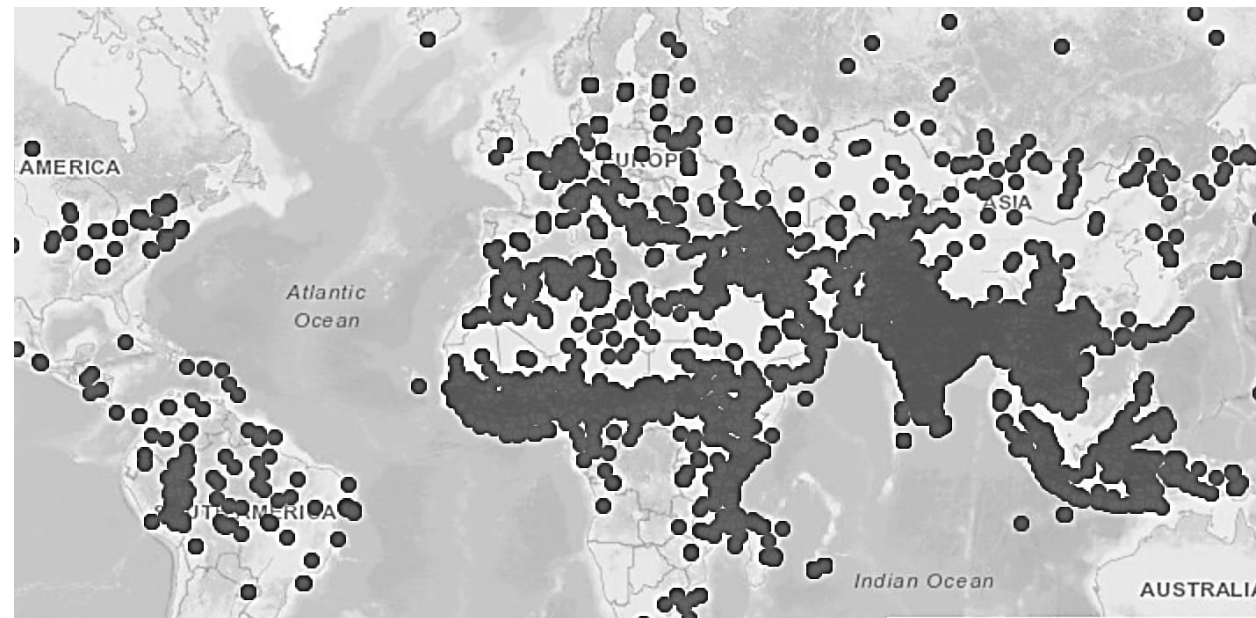
STRATEGIC AND MINISTRY ISSUES

NOTE: The primary source material for this lesson is *Introducing World Missions: A Biblical, Historical, and Practical Survey*, © 2004, 2015, A. Scott Moreau, Gary R. Corwin, and Gary B. McGee, Pub. Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, MI

Lesson Outline for the Student

- I. Peoples or Places?
- II. It's Not Your Church
- III. Money as a Burden
- IV. Leadership as a Bad Word
- V. Women in Mission

PEOPLES OR PLACES?



The question is often asked by missions sending organizations, “If the great commission is about people, why do we represent it with geographic maps?” It is true that geographic maps can skew our perception of the task of reaching the unreached because large sparsely populated areas of the map may look like a priority, but the geographically small regions with huge populations (like

Copyright © 2023 School of Global Missions. This material is not to be copied for any purpose without written permission of Dr. Frederick Osborn and the School of Global Missions. All rights reserved, printed in the U.S.A.

Bangladesh and Java) are overlooked. By looking at the task of world evangelism using the diverse populations of a single but large country (like India and China) unreached peoples may be under-represented compared to the whole. Missions organizations often attempt to remedy this by creating a world map cartogram like the one above (See HANDOUT “Cartogram”).

The Lausanne Congress on World Evangelism (1974) launched a new emphasis on a global mission strategy of prioritizing the evangelization of unreached people groups over pinpointing a place on the map and making it a home base. “Even in contexts dominated by a particular people group, there is often a question of which subgroup to address. Likewise, in major cities in all parts of the world, new identifications of various sorts (e.g., work related, neighborhood, religious, student groups, and associations of different kinds) often are in the process of displacing the relative significance of one’s ethnolinguistic identity. What all this means is that decisions or commitments already made to focus on a particular people or people group sometimes can be challenged by the circumstances one faces on-site in a particular location.” (*Introducing World Missions*, pp. 209-210).

The widespread trend in the new millennium towards Globalization has complicated the strategy of targeting a single unreached people group or geographical nation-state. Before the end of the twentieth century, the strategy of missions to unreached people in the 10/40 Window (the peoples living between 10 degrees and 40 degrees north of the equator and from the west coast of Africa to the eastern limits of Asia) became less relevant. The 10/40 Window strategy did not take into account the fundamental changes of strategy made necessary by the effects of globalization. World migration, rapid air travel, the Worldwide Internet that now reaches practically every village and interior region of the world, plus the effects of multinational or transnational corporations bringing industrialization and modern technologies to multicultural workforces around the globe have opened up new opportunities for missionaries to reach the unreached that require new strategies.

Today, the 10/40 Window has come to North America. World migration has brought millions of Muslims, Hindus, and people of various religions and nationalities to college campuses and workplaces. From 2020 to 2024, the floodgates of immigration were opened up and more than 10 million illegal, undocumented migrants poured into the United States and Canada. Similar migrations have occurred across Europe as well. Instead of the church having to “go” and reach the world, the world has now come to our doorstep. The big question facing the church in the West today is, “Are we up to the challenge?” If anything, the task of reaching the unreached people groups around the world has not gotten any easier. Spiritual leaders need to carefully consider what their particular strategy should be to reach the people and place the Lord has called them to share the gospel with.

Copyright © 2023 School of Global Missions. This material is not to be copied for any purpose without written permission of Dr. Frederick Osborn and the School of Global Missions. All rights reserved, printed in the U.S.A.

IT'S NOT YOUR CHURCH

For the leaders of Church Planting Movements, defining the church and its role in spreading the gospel is one of their great challenges. When and how to let go of a church they planted is important for the success of their church planting strategy. The first priority of the church planter after evangelizing the people and place where they plan to establish a church, is to teach and train indigenous leaders that are able to minister once the church planter moves on. The Apostle Paul is the prototype and inspiration for modern day apostles (“sent ones”). Paul never claimed ownership over any church he planted. He recognized that, first of all, every church he planted was Christ’s church and a part of His body – both locally and universally.

From the beginning Christ promised to build His church and He is the head of it. “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.” (Matthew 16:18–19). “And He put all things under His feet and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.” (Ephesians 1:22–23). It is critical that the spiritual leader of a CPM understands the Lord’s claim to ownership of His church and that he passes that knowledge on to those who will lead the church after him.

Those who are involved with a ministry that does not include planting new churches will usually be drawn to a church that shares their language, doctrine, style of worship, and meets the needs of their family (if married). In most urban and suburban settings, such a church will not be too hard to find. But if the ministry is in a rural area far from any major city, then it is unlikely that if a church exists, it will not meet their needs. “One of the dangers, however, of finding a church in which you feel comfortable is that new Christians in the culture likely will not feel comfortable in that church. Since it offers familiarity to you, it probably will not offer familiarity to them.” (*Introducing World Missions*, p. 210).

The primary responsibility of a church planter is to quickly place that church under the stewardship of local leadership. Christian leaders in the local culture ought to be free to make the final decisions on the conduct of their services that are conducted in accordance with sound biblical practices and appropriate cultural traditions. “Such decisions should not be made by the missionary, and the church should never be referred to by the missionary as ‘my church’... With rare exceptions, the missionary should not be the pastor but rather the coach of the pastor and/or elders. From the very beginning local leaders should take the lead publicly, with the missionary functioning at most as part of a leadership team. This is a crucial element to the church becoming truly indigenous in its worship and ministry life.” (p.211). This same principle should be applied to church planting by indigenous missionaries.

MONEY AS A BURDEN

“Money is to mission what fire is to the human condition...”

I will never forget the moment when I was about to go to the train station in the northern State of West Bengal in India. Our team included several short-term missionaries from the USA and team leaders from India. As we stood in the living room (hall) packed with baggage of the team, it was a somewhat chaotic scene. Everything had to be checked and double-checked to make sure we had everything because once we loaded the vehicles and started on the trek to the train station, there could be no turning back. I overheard the Indian ministry leader of our entourage, going over the checklist with his wife – counting bags, making sure they had all the train tickets in order, and all the ministry materials needed at our final destination properly packaged and labeled. Then he casually asked his wife, “Did you bring Satan?” I was stunned for a moment, and the leader looked at me with amusement, and told me that “Satan” was his name for money. At that moment, my entire attitude about money and ministry changed.

Unfortunately, money is a necessary evil for ministries. It makes perfect sense that Jesus would give responsibility for the money purse to Judas. After decades of full-time ministry, I have seen many instances when the abuse and mishandling of money has destroyed the work of God and brought down an otherwise godly leader. Almost every time that money – fund raising – becomes the central focus of a mission, it damages it. Short-term Western missionaries from affluent countries often do not realize how their generosity with money and materials can negatively impact an indigenous evangelist, pastor, or ministry leader who is poor and inexperienced at handling money. The task of raising and handling money is often what makes it a burden.

“The ways that money impacts world mission, both good and bad, are almost too numerous to count. It is the sustenance that sends missionaries cross-culturally to places where the gospel has not yet taken root. It is the fuel that keeps the organizational machinery of missions running, which sustains those who are working cross-culturally. It is the bricks and mortar for new urban church facilities or leadership training centers. It is the seed that enables an expatriate or national church planter to begin a new work or a Bible translation to go forward. Unfortunately, it is also sometimes the addictive foreign drug that keeps indigenous church members from learning the joys of Christian stewardship. It may also be the conscience-disturbing sand in the gears of effective ministry decisions, just as it is in personal ones.” (*Introducing World Missions*, pp.213-214)

Organizations like the World Mission Associates and Alliance for Vulnerable Mission have caused many missionaries to reconsider how they handle money and the power that comes with it. Here are some observations and suggestions from their chapter on “Strategic and Ministry Issues”:

1. *Money is no substitute for passion, but it can be an effective expression of it.*

In his book *Serving as Senders Today*, Neal Pirolo noted the need for supporters for frontline missionaries. “In secular war, there is an acknowledged ration of support personnel to frontline soldiers. In World War II, the military ratio was generally 15 to one. In more recent conflicts, that ratio was expanded to 50 support workers per frontline soldier. Spiritual warfare, which encompasses all true missionary work, demands no less an emphasis on support personnel.” (Copyright © 2012, Emmaus Road International, Inc., p.171).

When the missionary’s vision for reaching the unreached is effectively communicated, they will inspire others who cannot go to the foreign mission field to participate in the mission by supporting the work with their financial resources.

2. *Money ought to be used only where clear and justifiable ends and means are plainly in view, and when even in a worst-case scenario the money will not hinder the ultimate ends of developing healthy indigenous churches and ministries.*

In his chapter on “Financial Support” Pirolo observed that one of the problems with short-term mission teams in particular, is making sure that their service is yielding “fruit that remains” and is not treated more like a Spring Break or Summer holiday of fun in the sun. “... if they are really hitting a decisive point of battle for the souls of mankind, there will be a line of correlation that can be traced to ‘fruit that remains.’ Remember, a *decisive point* answers two questions in the affirmative: Is it worth doing? Do we have the resources to do it?” (p.78)

3. *Money ought never to be used as a power wedge for one part of God’s family to enforce its will on other members of the family.*

The best way to avoid this leadership mistake is to include in any cross-cultural training the need for the missionary to adapt as much as possible to the lifestyle of those they are planning to minister among. This means that the Western missionary to a people with a much lower standard of living must be prepared to lower their standard of living and embrace a simpler lifestyle. By keeping their consumption of goods about the same as those around them and

making-do with less, they can avoid any perception of using their financial resources to manipulate others to accept their plans or follow their lead.

4. *Stewardship of financial resources is for everybody.*

The biblical principle of stewardship can be summed up in the words of Jesus, “For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.” (Luke 12:48).

The Western missionary often has to walk the line between sharing finances with those who need them and not creating dependency. Neal Pirolo had much to say about giving, tithing, spending, and finances to those who send and to those who are sent. He said in one paragraph, “If you are in a position to formulate policy or financially support missionaries, be a wise and faithful steward. Study and network with mission strategists about wise financial policies. Don’t establish a ministry that must forever be subsidized by Western money after being turned over to the nationals. Don’t teach nationals discipling methods that require anything not easily accessible in their culture – big buildings or perhaps any buildings, expensive books, sound systems, video equipment, vehicles, etc. Do let the simplicity of the Gospel be clothed in the national’s own cultural garb.” (*Serving as Senders Today*, Copyright © 2012, Emmaus Road International, Inc., p.85).

5. *Those who will not work should not eat.*

As a general rule, 2 Thessalonians 3:10 is an excellent guide to help the ministry leader decide on who should receive some of the limited financial resources available for them to share. However, people should be judged individually, and no one should assume because they are not working, they are not ready, willing, and able but are refusing to work. Conditions vary from country to country and even within countries. Rural and urban populations have different challenges for survival and cannot be judged by the same formula of “those who will not work should not eat.”

On the other side, the rule “those who will not work should not eat” should be applied to the missionaries and ministry leaders. Those who rely upon the sacrificial giving of people back home have a responsibility to work hard to make that financial investment in their ministry worth the sacrifice. Living on a foreign mission field should not be filled with months or weeks of little or no activity for advancing the kingdom of God. Short-term or long, a mission is not for pleasure or site-seeing. The focus of every missionary must be upon fulfilling the Lord’s command: “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 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.” (Matthew 28:18–20).

LEADERSHIP AS A BAD WORD

The words of Hans Finzel in the introduction to *The Top Ten Mistakes Leaders Make* cannot be overemphasized: “Leaders have incredible power for good or ill in people’s lives. A few control the destiny of many. But how many of us start out with lofty ideals and dreams, only to be soured by our experience with leaders? Before we know it, people lose trust and the trench warfare begins. Or, nothing is said but confidence in our leadership begins to erode quickly. People resign and walk. Leaders are fired. Division, strife, and backbiting reign. The work, whatever it is, is slowed, damaged, or comes to a screeching halt.” (p.15).

Numerous books have been written, and many seminars have been held on the subject of “servant leadership.” However, what is often overlooked when teaching what it means to follow Jesus’ example is this: *You can exercise and sustain personal leadership only to the extent of your capacity to bear pain.*” To be a servant leader like Jesus, requires the leader to be willing and able to bear the pain of those around them. One of the early fathers of the church, Ignatius of Antioch, wrote in a letter to Polycarp, another leader:

“If you lovest the good disciples, no thanks are due to thee on that account; but rather seek by meekness to subdue the more troublesome. Every kind of wound is not healed with the same plaster. Mitigate violent attacks by gentle applications. Be in all things ‘wise as a serpent, and harmless as a dove.’ For this purpose thou art composed of both flesh and spirit, that thou mayest deal tenderly with those [evils] that present themselves visibly before thee. And as respects those that are not seen, pray that [God] would reveal them unto thee, in order that thou mayest be wanting in nothing, but mayest abound in every gift. The times call for thee, as pilots do for the winds, and as on tossed with tempest seeks for the haven, so that both thou [and those under thy care] may attain to God. Be sober as an athlete of God: the prize set before thee is immortality and eternal life, of which thou are also persuaded. In all things may my soul be for [that] thing, and my bonds also, which thou hast loved.”

True spiritual leadership is more than casting a vision and organizing others to carry it out. There is a kind of leadership that inspires others to get on board with

a program or strategy that leads to church growth or a building project. But that is a far cry from the kind of leadership Jesus modeled for us. “To be sure, there is a kind of leadership that can rouse people to action for a short time, but enduring leadership invariably will be built on a confidence that those whom you call ‘leader’ would sacrifice themselves not only for the cause they share with you but even for you yourself.” (*Introducing World Missions*, p.215).

Spiritual leadership does not come without a cost. Read carefully the letters of Paul and the other Apostles and you will discover how often they felt the pains and burdens of caring for God’s people. No better statement can be made about the cost of spiritual leadership than Paul’s statement in 2 Corinthians 11:16–33:

- **Fatigued** – Like the first Apostles, spiritual leaders often minister in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness, hunger, thirst, cold and nakedness. They are often the ones who lead others in fasting and other spiritual disciplines. Leaders need the support of others to carry on. Although he was often alone, Paul had Timothy and others who helped him carry the load.
- **Overwhelmed** – The demands of spiritual leadership and the burdens of ministering unselfishly to others is a daily concern. Paul felt it: “...besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation?”
- **Criticized** – Being a leader means taking the heat whenever anything does not go as well as planned. Success is no guarantee that the leader will not face criticism. Even when they succeed, there will be those who will criticize the methods. The Apostle Paul was criticized almost everywhere he went and was often forced to defend himself for the sake of those who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ because of him. He was called a fool by the Greeks, a false apostle by Jewish believers who wanted the Gentiles circumcised followers of Mosaic Law before they could be saved. Paul was considered a threat to civil law and order by the Roman governors. In 2 Corinthians 11:16–33 and in other letters, Paul was not afraid to answer his critics.
- **Rivaled** – Paul had rivals to his leadership. There were people inside the church who opposed him and sought to bring him down. Leaders can learn from Paul not to retaliate against others, but will be prepared to defend their leadership by their unwavering faith in God even in the midst of trials and tribulations: “Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I. Are they ministers of Christ?—I speak

as a fool—I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren...”

- **Pressured** – *Babysitting the self-centered while bearing the burden of decision making in times of crisis* place different kinds of pressure on the spiritual leader. Immature Christians will act more like those who are of the world than of the kingdom of heaven. Spiritual leaders will have to show patience towards those who are acting like children. The Apostle John showed leaders how to respond to the pressure:

“I write to you, little children,
Because your sins are forgiven you for His name’s sake.
I write to you, fathers,
Because you have known Him who is from the beginning.
I write to you, young men,
Because you have overcome the wicked one.
I write to you, little children,
Because you have known the Father.
I have written to you, fathers,
Because you have known Him who is from the beginning.
I have written to you, young men,
Because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you,
And you have overcome the wicked one.” **1 John 2:12–14**

- **Pained** – Spiritual leaders must not only bear the pain of the many personal sacrifices they must make on mission with God, but they must also bear the pain of others who have been put under their leadership. When others are hurting and tears need to be wiped away, the Christlike shepherd of the sheep must put aside their personal feelings and show them compassion. Jesus went through this after He heard of John the Baptist’s death (Matthew 14). Jesus wanted to be alone to grieve over John’s loss. But the crowds followed Him. “And when Jesus went out, He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them and healed their sick...” (vs.14). Jesus would not send the multitude away hungry, so He fed them with miracle loaves and fishes. It was not until everyone was taken care of that Jesus could finally go in peace and seek solace in His Father’s presence.

WOMEN IN MISSION

The role of women in ministry is often controversial. In more liberal Western nations, women are accepted in leadership roles in the church. However, in many Eastern cultures and in more conservative churches, women are excluded from leadership. There are those who take Paul’s prescription for the unruly Corinthian church as a universal command for the church: “Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says. And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church.” (1 Co 14:34–35).

Strong arguments for and against women being recognized as leaders in the church exist for both sides. And few, if any of those who are entrenched strongly in their position can be moved from it. However, if any common ground can be found between the opposite hardline positions on the role of women in leadership positions in ministry is to be found, it must begin with humble hearts willing to let go of their selfish demands to be right absolutely about their beliefs.

Regardless of what one believes about the role of women in ministry, the biblical and historical records of faithful women in ministry – especially on the mission field – cannot be ignored. On the mission field, “...women have been effective and fruitful in spiritual endeavors traditionally reserved for men. At the same time, they would honestly acknowledge that this has been more the exception than the rule.” (*Introducing World Missions*, pp.216-217). Most would agree that certain functions named in the Bible are reserved for men who are set apart for ordained office. On the other hand, the functions of persons in lay ministry may allow a greater freedom for women to operate as leaders.

In the end, how a missionary organization, church, or denomination determines the proper roles for women in ministry must be based upon sound Biblical exegesis of all verses of Scripture that speak about the roles of women. No rewriting or mistranslating of the Bible to support their point of view will only undermine their arguments. If any consensus can be found, “...it will be characterized by (1) faithfulness to the teaching of Scripture without recourse to translation tampering or ‘escape hatch’ cultural hermeneutics; (2) a recognition and celebration of the essential and varied ministry gifts of women, as seen both in the Scriptures and in history; and (3) a renewed sense of the dignity, uniqueness, and irreplaceability of all God-ordained roles.” (*Introducing World Missions*, p.217)

The real issue at stake here is the recognition of each person’s calling to the work of the harvest. As Jesus said, “Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and then comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.

For in this the saying is true: ‘One sows and another reaps.’ I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors.” (John 4:35–38). God is calling as many of His people who have ears to hear and hearts to receive to “go” and to seek and save all those who are lost.

Keeping in mind the cultural context of the people they have been called to serve, men and women missionaries can find their proper roles in ministry. It may require some women from Western cultures to humble themselves and take a more subservient role than they might be comfortable with at home, but what is more important is that missionaries “live lives faithful to the message of the gospel and walk humbly in the knowledge that God extends salvation to and values equally all of humanity.” (*Introducing World Missions*, p.217).

Questions for Lesson Ten

1. Why is it important to consider both people and places when answering the call to missions?
2. What is the proper frame of mind the church planting missionary should have towards the churches they plant?
3. What are the positives and negatives concerning money and ministry?
4. Why do some people consider “leadership” a bad word?
5. What do you believe is the proper role of women in ministry? How does it conform to the culture where you are ministering?

SGM EVANGELISM AND CHURCH PLANTING MOVEMENTS DISCIPLESHIP 202-11: LEADERSHIP IN MISSIONS

RELATING TO PEOPLE OF OTHER CULTURES

NOTE: The primary source material for this lesson is *Introducing World Missions: A Biblical, Historical, and Practical Survey*, © 2004, 2015, A. Scott Moreau, Gary R. Corwin, and Gary B. McGee, Pub. Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, MI

Lesson Outline for the Student

- I. Culture Shock and its effects
- II. Developing Relationships

CULTURE SHOCK

Culture shock is defined as an experience someone may have when they move to a place which is significantly different from one’s own culture and lifestyle. No matter how much preparation the missionary makes, they will feel some degree of disorientation when they move to a new country. Missionaries often have to make a major shift from their own social environment to another totally different environment. Transitioning to another type of life will involve a major disruption for the missionary and their family.

Sociologists often describe *culture shock* as consisting of at least one of four distinct phases: honeymoon, transition, adjustment, and adaptation.

“Common problems include information overload, language barrier, generation gap, technology gap, skill interdependence, formulation dependency, homesickness (cultural), boredom (job dependency), ethnicity, race, skin color, response ability (cultural skill set). There is no true way to entirely prevent culture shock, as individuals in any society are personally affected by cultural contrasts differently.” (From Wikipedia article)

Culture shock is often experienced by short-term missionaries who believe because they will return home quickly, they do not need to prepare themselves the same way that a long-term missionary does. By pairing experienced missionaries with short-term teams, they may assist them in overcoming the challenges and phases of *culture shock*. However, the long-term missionary is likely to experience the longer lasting effects of living abroad in a new and strange environment. The more the missionary is able to prepare beforehand, the more they can alleviate challenges posed by *culture shock*.

Experienced missionaries will recognize the phases of acculturation that most foreigners experience after they arrive in their new environment: (1) a honeymoon period, (2) a transition period, that is, cultural shock, (3) adjusting, and (4) returning to their own places and re-adapting to the old culture.

During the **honeymoon period**, the differences between the old and new culture are seen in a romantic light. The new missionary often arrives on the field full of excitement and anticipation of quickly adapting to the new culture, experiencing new food, a different lifestyle, and learning their neighbors' habits.

It is totally normal that during the first few weeks, foreign missionaries are fascinated by the new culture around them. They often associate with nationals who speak their language, and who are polite to the foreigners. However, like most honeymoon periods, this stage eventually ends, and the glow of new beginnings wears off.

Transition period: After a few weeks or months, the stress caused by leaving the old, familiar patterns of living and encountering on a daily basis, new and strange ways of living will create greater anxiety (*culture shock*). Simple tasks like shopping for food, cooking, securing steady supplies of power and water, and disposing of garbage are often complicated by not knowing how things are done in the new environment. Communications back home via cell phones and the Internet are often interrupted. By this time, the excitement of living in a new environment usually gives way to unpleasant feelings of frustration and anger as one continues to experience complications made worse by misunderstandings caused by not being fluid in the local language and not knowing the complex cultural norms without offending anyone. Other complications that add to *culture shock* include:

- Stark differences in public hygiene
- Traffic safety
- Poor food variety and quality
- Disruption of the old patterns of day-to-day living that often leads to insomnia and daylight drowsiness
- The adaptation of gut flora to different bacteria levels and concentrations in food and water
- Difficulty in seeking treatment for illness and finding the right prescriptions (medicines may have different names from the native country's medicines, making the same doses of active ingredients hard to recognize).

Still, the most important change in the period is communication: People adjusting to a new culture often feel lonely and homesick because they are not yet used to the new environment and meet people with whom they are not familiar every day. The language barrier may become a major obstacle in creating new relationships: special attention must be paid to one's and others' culture-specific body language signs, linguistic faux pas,

conversation tone, linguistic nuances and customs, and false friends. Such cultural adjustments may also cause a sense of identity confusion as individuals try to balance their original cultural identity with the pressures of assimilating into a new one. Having to preserve one's identity while adhering to new standards may be psychologically taxing, which can result in emotional tiredness or even despair." (From *Wikipedia* article).

Adjusting period: The feeling of *culture shock* usually begins to pass as the missionary grows accustomed to the culture and the daily routines of ministry. The time it takes to *adjust* to the new culture depends upon a number of factors, but missionaries committed for the long-term usually settle into their work within 6 to 12 months. Except in extreme cases of war, civil unrest, or natural disaster, by this time the missionary should know what to expect living in the host country. Their surroundings start to be familiar, and they learn the ebb and flow of life in their place of ministry. As the culture begins to make sense to them, and negative reactions and responses to the culture are reduced, missionaries will be able to develop relationships with other people around them.

Once they are completely adjusted, the missionary can start to look beyond their immediate circumstances and see their mission in the light of the greater mission of God. Their interaction with other believers will grow and so will their understanding of the culture. As they develop lasting relationships with indigenous believers, they will learn more about what the true needs are for reaching the unreached people around them. The missionary leader can start using their problem-solving skills and church planting strategies for addressing the needs of the believers around them in a way that respects the culture and people. It may take years to reach the **mastery stage** (often referred to as the **bicultural stage**) of enculturation, characterized by missionaries who are able to participate fully and comfortably in the host culture.

Of course, not every missionary goes through the same stages of enculturation. Depending upon their personalities and life experiences, missionaries will feel *culture shock* differently. Some missionaries discover they cannot accept the foreign culture they have entered and will not be able to integrate. This often leads them to cut their mission short or leave the ministry without ever achieving what they set out to do. Unable to integrate with the culture, these missionaries tend to isolate themselves from the host country's environment. Isolation may cause the missionary to treat the indigenous people as hostile and resistant to receiving the gospel. In the end, missionaries who isolate themselves from the host culture will see a return to their own culture as the only way out. Sometimes these "rejectors" will have more problems re-integrating back home than those who were able to integrate fully with the host culture before ending their time of overseas ministry.

Some missionaries – for good or ill – will totally integrate themselves with the host culture to the point of losing their original identity. This is called ***cultural assimilation***. These missionaries normally remain in the host country for the rest of their lives and will feel like foreigners in their home country. Adopting the culture of the host country can be beneficial to the missionary, however, if done without maintaining strong ties to their own culture, it will create major problems for them if they ever have to re-enter their original home.

Cultural assimilation can help some people manage and adapt to the positive aspects of the host culture. For example, many Eastern and African cultures have much stronger families, fewer divorces, and are less consumption driven than most affluent Western countries where divorce is common-place. By using their God-given wisdom, missionaries can adopt the good things of their host country, while keeping the good of their own – thus creating a unique blend of cultures. If they are successful, they will have no major problems returning home or relocating elsewhere.

Spiritual leaders have an important role to help short-term missionaries navigate the host culture that few will understand upon their arrival. They will also help the new long-term missionaries overcome the initial *culture shock* by helping them to understand as quickly as possible the host culture and settle into their new environment. Leaders should be aware of the fact that *culture shock* has many different effects, time spans, and degrees of severity. Leaders should be sensitive to those who join them on the field and understand that many people are hampered at first by the anxiety it creates.

Missionaries reacting to the presence of culture shock may not understand why they are bothered. Sociologists who have studied the effects of *culture shock* have gathered evidence to suggest that it has psychological as well as physiological effects including:

- Anger
- Boredom
- Compulsive eating/drinking/weight gain
- Desire for home and old friends
- Excessive concern over cleanliness
- Excessive sleep or trouble falling asleep
- Feelings of helplessness and withdrawal
- Getting "stuck" on one thing
- Glazed stare
- Homesickness
- Hostility towards host nationals
- Impulsivity
- Irritability

- Mood swings
- Physiological stress reactions
- Stereotyping host nationals
- Suicidal or fatalistic thoughts
- Withdrawal

Spiritual leaders overseeing other missionaries need to be watchful for any of these symptoms of culture shock and not automatically address them as the results of a spiritual attack. Knowing these symptoms and how to communicate to the person who is experiencing one or more of these symptoms is critical to the success of the mission. The leader is not immune to the effects of culture shock either. So, be aware of the symptoms and be transparent with others if you are feeling any of them.

One final kind of shock to address is ***reverse culture shock*** (also known as *re-entry shock*). *Reverse culture shock* may happen when the missionary returns to their own home culture after a long period of growing accustomed to the one where they lived and ministered. Reverse culture shock can produce the same effects as the shock of entering a new and unfamiliar culture.

The returning missionary should not be surprised if it is more difficult to return to the life that they left behind than they thought it would be. It has been said that life on the mission field is not only about what the missionary does for God as it is about what God does in the life of the missionary. The missionary will return home a changed person. And depending upon how long they have been away, they may find it very difficult if not impossible to return to their old lifestyle – even if they wanted to.

Another important aspect of reverse culture shock is the idealization of expectations of how they will be treated by others after they return home. The missionary who was in great demand as a minister on the field often discovers when they return to their home church that there is no place for them to minister. Churches and individuals that supported their work while they were on the mission field will quickly abandon their support of the missionary because they will think once the missionary returns home they can find a job and support themselves.

The missionary often discovers on their return home that many things have changed, and that their old friends and even their family have changed. Friends move on, and family members grow, change, and move away. The realization that life back home is different, that the world they once knew changed and continued without them may be hard to understand at first. The process of readjusting to new people and situations, as well as coping with new perceptions about the old world often causes disappointment and anxiety in the returning missionary. It is as important for the returning missionary to have a strong support group to help them re-assimilate

to home as it was for them to have a strong support group when they first arrived on the foreign mission field.

Another aspect of *culture shock* that missionaries rarely think about is the question, “Do missionaries shock indigenous culture?”

Christian missionaries are often criticized because they are perceived by non-Christians as damaging and disrupting native people groups. The question is rarely asked by missionaries, “Do missionaries destroy cultures or do they only change them for the better?” Christian missionaries sincerely believe that changing a culture by preaching the gospel and making converts is always a good thing. This may be true only as long as they are operating as Christian missionaries and not as “Western” missionaries. Western culture is not superior in all things; in fact it can be argued that in many ways, liberal Western culture is harmful to the more conservative cultures of Asian and African peoples. However, the holiness, righteousness, and values that are found in both the Old and New Testaments will always bring about positive change in a culture. Christian missionaries should never apologize for the positive changes Jesus Christ makes in the hearts of those who receive Him as their Lord and Savior.

During the age of Colonialism, the period of world history when European nations colonized and exploited the natural resources of other parts of the world to enrich themselves (from the 15th century until after World War I) the efforts of Christian missions were commingled with geo-political power struggles. Westerners believed that their ways were always superior to the people they were exploiting. So they always tried to make local customs and cultures conform to Western standards, destroying indigenous cultures in the process. Colonialism left a stain on many of the emerging nations of the 20th century. Unfortunately, in many places around the world, Christianity is perceived as a bad foreign influence that must be resisted.

Today, most Christian missionaries understand that Christianity is distinct from Westernization and globalism. The particular cultural standard that Christians apply are based solely upon the teachings of Jesus. Their standard is simply Christ. The goal of Christian missionaries is to change individuals to be like Christ, and let culture change naturally. Of course where there is a culture that allows evil and destructive behaviors, change is needed. But when a cultural belief is not directly counter to the Word of God, or a poison to a society and its individuals, our mission is not to cause culture to change, but to allow changed people – new believers – to change the culture without replacing it for ours. This requires patience, flexibility, and cultural sensitivity.

DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS

“One of the distinct pleasures of being a cross-cultural missionary is meeting numerous people with backgrounds radically different from one’s own. It is also one of the frustrations. Developing relationships with people of other cultures takes a long time, and negotiating relational waters that are filled with eddies and undertows can be tricky. At the same time, developing close relationships with others can bring a foretaste of heaven.” (*Introducing World Missions*, p.221)

Developing meaningful relationships with people of other cultures does not happen overnight. It is a process that takes time; how much time depends upon the cultures involved and the personalities of the individuals involved. A person who is generally shy at home and does not make friends easily will not find the task of making friends any easier if they move to another culture. On the other hand, an outgoing and charismatic individual may encounter a culture where people are more reserved and are not welcoming to foreigners in their midst. The culture of the place where the missionary intends to minister should be studied carefully. Also, the missionary should be aware of the different personality traits of people. Generally speaking, children and youth up to their early twenties are more open to foreigners and to learning about them. In our global, internet connected world, young people are particularly interested in developing relationships with people from the West.

In their chapter on relating to people of other cultures, Moreau, Corwin, and McGee noted three general phases that may be seen in relationships across culture: (1) initial acquaintance, (2) developing friendships, and (3) growth in intimacy.

(1) Initial Acquaintance: “The first stage of relationships is characterized by the simple fact that two potential friends do not know each other.” (p.221). People who grew up in Western cultures are strongly individualistic and are more open to making friends with strangers. In collective cultures, people are not as open to strangers being accepted into family groups that have developed special friendships for life.

Sarah Lanier’s innovative book, *Foreign to Familiar: A Guide to Understanding Hot – And Cold – Climate Cultures* (McDougal Publishing, 2000) has been described as “a helpful little book for anyone involved in cross-cultural ministry.” Lanier’s book helps missionaries understand why people from different cultures (described as “hot-climate” or “cold-climate” cultures) react to people and situations in different ways. However, in the interest of brevity, Lanier tends to over-simplify cultural differences and makes too many generalizations about cultures in her book. Despite the generalizations, the book is a good introduction to understanding the differences between people from different

kinds of culture for those who have not had much exposure to people from other cultures.

(2) Developing Friendships: “The second stage of relationships requires both parties to consider the risks of changing enough to accommodate each other. Both must make some compromises if the friendship is to be mutually valued.” (p.223). All relationship-building involves certain risks. Beyond the obvious risk of being rejected, there is the emotional risk of becoming an unequal partner in the relationship. Developing a friendship requires more and deeper interactions with another person. If the relationship is going to be meaningful to both partners, there must be a greater investment of time and emotional commitment that leads to a sense of interdependence. “Close friendships are characterized by a heightened sense of caring, commitment, trust, and emotional attachment to the other person, so that the people in a friendship view it as something special and unique.” (p.223).

(3) Growth In Intimacy: “This last stage is reached in a relationship only when one party or the other chooses to focus on developing the friendship.” (p.225). Intimacy involves a level of transparency and vulnerability that is often complicated in cross-cultural relationships. Missionaries should be aware of the fact that different cultures define what constitutes a close friendship and what the boundaries are in that friendship. Besides the differences in personalities, different cultures make people respond differently to crisis and tragedy, or the important rites of passage like the birth of a child, marriage, graduation from college, etc. By sharing in these events, the relationship grows more meaningful.

Cross-cultural missionaries have the added responsibility to evaluate their decision to make intimate friendships in relation to the purpose and goals of their ministry. Intimacy requires a narrowing of the numbers of people the missionary is able to interact with. Less intimacy allows for a larger number of acquaintances and friendships, but decreases the time needed to nurture longer-lasting and deeper friendships. Every missionary should reflect upon how their ministry will be helped or hindered if they choose to concentrate on developing only a few intimate relationships.

Introducing World Missions notes that cross-cultural missionaries today are less likely to live in a missionary compound than were the missionaries of previous eras. “This is an important and positive development. Though they may have less contact with other missionaries, they have more opportunity for contact with people in the community and thus more opportunities for witness in the context of real life.

At the same time, this can bring added strain, as the ‘strangeness’ of everyday life can be pressing.” (p.227)

One of the great flaws in the way missions were done in the past was the bent toward isolating missionaries from the people they were sent to minister to. Living in separate quarters, often surrounded by walls and enjoying a higher standard of living than the general population around them, limited their contact with people where they lived in the surrounding neighborhoods. Centering their ministry on a school, hospital, or church compound meant the local people had to come to them for help. New missionaries are breaking this mold but creating new challenges to discover the qualities of neighborliness valued in the context of the people they have come to minister to.

Missionaries will discover that social interactions with indigenous groups vary not only from country to country, but their interactions with people will vary from urban to rural settings even within cultures. “One of the early adaptations that missionaries must make is learning what the new ‘neighborology’ is – what makes for good neighbors, what bothers people in the neighborhood, and what roles there are for the stranger who comes to a new neighborhood.” (p.228).

Before the rolling up their sleeves and going to work in one of the many almost totally untouched harvest fields around the world today, the modern-day missionary will have to learn how to relate to the culture and the people they want to reach. Oftentimes the missionary will discover that untold damage had been done by missionaries in the past that did not respect the people or their culture. India is one example of this.

Before the British colonized the Indian sub-continent, missionaries from the West insisted that anyone trading with the Westerners or anyone participating in the governing of their tiny colony had to convert to Christianity. Once the British East India Trading Company took over the administration of large regions of the sub-continent, they discouraged Protestant missionaries from having direct contact with the people because they did not want any disturbances to their system of exploitation of the Indian people and their raw materials for the benefit of the British Empire. Just before and immediately after India (along with Pakistan) became independent of British rule, missions flourished in India, but with very little cross-cultural understanding. The vast Hindu and Muslim populations of the region saw “Christians” behaving with unrighteous and offensive manners. Because Hindus are born Hindus, they did not understand that just because a person was born in a Christian country, and had Christian parents, that did not make them a Christian – that to be a Christian meant to be “born again” and to be truly a Christian, one had to behave in a Christlike manner. So when Hindus saw “Christians” drinking, swearing, behaving in promiscuous ways, etc. they associated such behavior with all Westerners whether or not they were truly Christian. This impression of Westerners

has only gotten worse as more and more Westerners travel to India in search of adventure and exploration. Westerners tend to impose their beliefs on others because they believe in the superiority of Western technology and culture. Christian missionaries to India today have to overcome centuries of damage that has been done to Indian culture by contact with the West.

Modern day missionaries can overcome much of the wrong impressions of Christians and their motives by building healthy relationships in culturally sensitive ways before diving into converting and making disciples of them. “Discipleship is built on relationships. Relational values and skills are culturally learned, and the wise cross-cultural worker will invest significant time in learning how friendships are developed in that culture so that he or she can disciple well. Indeed, developing deep relationships in the host culture is not optional for missionaries who want to faithfully call others to worship Christ. The question is not *whether* missionaries develop significant relationships; the question is *how well* they do it.” (*Introducing World Missions*, p.228).

Questions for Lesson Eleven

1. Can culture shock be experienced by both long-term and short-term missionaries?
2. What are the best ways to alleviate challenges posed by *culture shock*?
3. Describe the four phases of acculturation that most foreigners experience after they arrive in their new environment.
4. What is reverse *culture shock*?
5. Describe the three general phases that may be seen in relationships across culture.

SGM EVANGELISM AND CHURCH PLANTING MOVEMENTS DISCIPLESHIP 202-12: LEADERSHIP IN MISSIONS

RELATING TO CHURCHES AND OTHER SHAREHOLDERS

NOTE: The primary source materials for this lesson are:

Introducing World Missions: A Biblical, Historical, and Practical Survey, © 2004, 2015, A. Scott Moreau, Gary R. Corwin, and Gary B. McGee, Pub. Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, MI
Serving As Senders Today, by Neal Pirolo, © 2012, Emmaus Road International, Inc., USA

Lesson Outline for the Student

- I. Churches as Senders
- II. Agencies as Senders
- III. Individual Senders
- IV. The Challenges

“The goal is for the missionary to develop a partnership team who share the same vision with him, who have an equal commitment to their God-given task, and who focus their energy on that area of care, and who will share the joy of victory through Jesus Christ. For, after all, it is Jesus Christ who will build His Church (Matthew 16:18).” Neal Pirolo

“When we speak of shareholders in the missionary enterprise, we note a primary division between the sending and the receiving functions, though any particular geographic entity can and should be participating simultaneously in both.” A. Scott Moreau, Gary R. Corwin, and Gary B. McGee

CHURCHES AS SENDERS

“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?” **Romans 10:14–15a**

Whether you call them “Shareholders” or “Senders” the role of those who offer support for the ones who are on the frontline of missions is a critical one. The task of taking the gospel of Jesus Christ to all peoples and making disciples of them

requires **the mobilization** of the entire body of believers. From the beginning, churches (gatherings of believers for worship and fellowship) have been the primary senders. The New Testament makes it clear that God created His church to be His primary instrument for accomplishing His purposes on earth: to seek and save the lost, to make disciples, and to glorify the Lord to the ends of the earth (Matthew 28:19-20).

The proclamation of the church that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God is the foundation upon which all missionary activity rests.

There are two types of churches that exist today: one type of church is the **“sheep pen”** and the other is the **“training ground”**. The leaders of churches who believe it is their task to bring in as many people as possible Sunday mornings by giving them a seeker friendly atmosphere with contemporary music, and entertaining children’s programs see success by how many people attend Sunday services. Leaders with a “sheep pen” mentality will come up with church growth programs designed to boost attendance, knock down walls and build bigger, more comfortable pens to house more people. They see success as growth in numbers: the bigger the better, the more, the happier.

The leaders who believe the church is supposed to be a “training ground” will concentrate their efforts on **discipling believers**. These leaders are not entertainers but trainers who prepare others to be fully engaged in the Lord’s command for His people to “go” and make disciples of all nations, glorifying God to the ends of the earth. These leaders are more concerned with the spiritual growth of their people than with numbers. For them, success is measured by how many people in their congregation are becoming mature, Christlike believers. Leaders who are disciple makers will “stir up the nest” and encourage the entire congregation to press on together towards the highest calling of God: “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. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 2:12-14).

AGENCIES AS SENDERS

Throughout most of Christian history, churches have had the greatest role in sending missionaries. Churches commissioned, provided the necessary resources, selected the places where missionaries would go, and what would be the primary

purpose of their mission. However, in recent times, with the explosion of non-denominational, independent churches, churches are generally unable to provide all the specialized services and training necessary to send and sustain well-prepared missionaries in difficult places where most of the unreached people groups are found. This has led many missionary candidates to turn other shareholders (missionary sending agencies, trainers, and mobilizers) that are focused on equipping and sending out people who are totally committed to the task of completing the Great Commission.

Missions organizations can provide a variety of services for those individual pastors and churches that have a passion for world evangelism but lack the ways and means to train and send out missionaries. As a spiritual leader, the Christian pastor can influence and mobilize those under him to get involved with the task of world evangelization. Without the help of pastors, members of their church will not be inspired to pursue missions. “Pastors set the direction that their congregations follow. Pastors are the teachers, models and leaders. The fire of missions and evangelism will be kindled throughout the congregations when pastors are on fire with a passion to reach the lost.” (Copyright © Roger S. Greenway, *Go and Make Disciples*, Authentic Books, p.137)

Missions organizations, working alongside churches, can provide the necessary training and teaching that missionary candidates need. Because many of them already have established works in regions where missionaries are needed most, the home church can quickly establish a relationship with the local church or ministry. Knowing exactly where to go and what is needed when they arrive on the field will remove much of the anxiety they feel before they depart, and calm some of the *culture shock* the missionary experiences when they arrive.

By partnering with missions organizations, spiritually weak pastors can have their eyes opened to the missionary message of the Bible and function as true ministers of the gospel:

“Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.” (1 Peter 1:10–12 NIV)

Spiritual leaders who possess the fulness of the Spirit of Christ, understand that the primary work of the church is **to make Christ known to the world**. And He

said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.” (Mark 16:15–18). And “...you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” (Acts 1:8). Churches that lack a vision for evangelization of the nations will lose the power of the gospel message and missions suffer.

INDIVIDUAL SENDERS

The support offered by individuals is no less important than support that comes from whole congregations or from missions sending organizations. What sets the individual sender apart from the others is the fact that the individual usually has **a more personal stake** in the missionary. Because they are likely to know the missionary they support, the individual sender is equipped to offer focused moral support when it is needed most. An example of this from one of my own experiences on the mission field in India happened only three weeks into my mission. I had an unexpected back injury that I feared would end my mission before it started. I was down and out and had not had time to develop many relationships with other Christians in my neighborhood who might help me. My back pain immobilized me and as fate would have it, a massive monsoon was bearing down on my city. As I lay in my bed in pain, the full force of the monsoon hit my neighborhood. Rain was forcing its way into my room, but I was unable to stop it. After a sleepless night, and in my deepest despair, I got a call from a friend and supporter back in the US. He prayed with me and for me and encouraged me to persevere through the crisis. This is the kind of moral and prayer support that individual senders can give.

Individual senders can provide **logistics and extra financial support** to the missionary by mobilizing their home church to be a missions center for reaching the unreached where the missionary they support is working. They can do this by displaying literature and posters prominently that encourage reaching the unreached. On their church’s map of the world, trace the 10/40 window. Highlight on a map, the missionary that the individual is supporting and encourage others to join in support of the missionary. They can also plan a visit to the missionary and encourage others to join them on the short-term visit.

Prayer is another important way the individual can support a missionary. Communicate with the missionary on the field on a regular basis to find out what their needs are and where they need prayer. Then organize a prayer support team at home to lift up the missionary in prayer on a regular basis.

Personal involvement with the missionary from the time they are on the field to their reentry when the mission is over, and they return home is valuable and greatly appreciated by the missionary. “Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.” (Colossians 4:2–4).

THE CHALLENGES

“As they are faithful to their God-given responsibility of taking the lead in the sending function of mission, churches invariably face many challenges... No task related to the sending function is more important or foundational in the local church setting than keeping the vision of outreach and mission before the congregation. Unless there is zeal fed by knowledge in the hearts of the people, you can say good-bye to the vision of being an effective sending church.” (*Introducing World Missions*, p.233).

A. Scott Moreau, Gary R. Corwin, and Gary B. McGee noted four things that are necessary for this vision of all nations worshiping God in eternity to capture the hearts of believers and propel them into effective participation in the task of worldwide missions:

1. *It takes a tight balance of **information with inspiration**.* Both the heart and the mind must be moved before the will is engaged. Churches and missionary organizations play an essential part in informing and motivating God’s people to know the facts concerning the people and places yet to be effectively reached with the gospel. The terrible conditions of oppressed people who live without God’s love can move hearts. Sharing the stories of great missionaries from the past and present is an effective means to motivate others who will be inspired by their stories to follow in their footsteps.

Only lukewarm or coldhearted Christians can remain unmoved by the plight of the unsaved masses. Without browbeating them, it is the task of spiritual leaders to inform and inspire the congregation to join with them on God’s mission to seek and save the lost.

2. *It takes good pathways for gaining experience in service to the task.* In the second half of the last century, **short-term missions** gained popularity. Cheap and easy world travel made short-term trips financially viable. However, the efficacy of short-term missions was called into question. Churches and Missions organizations began to ask serious questions about the cost versus results of sending teams to foreign countries for a few days or a couple of weeks to work to work with indigenous Christians on some project.

Twenty-first century travel has changed the size and scope of short-term missions. Air travel has become far more expensive, and it is far more difficult to navigate through airports and immigration. Churches are reluctant to cover any costs for short-term missionaries, so they are required to pay their own expenses. This makes it impossible for many Christians to consider foreign travel for a short-term mission. All things considered, does that mean short-term missions are not worth it? The answer is: Yes, if they are done correctly and for the right reasons.

Short-term missions should be **strategic and targeted**. Is it worthwhile to spend many thousands of dollars to send a team to paint a church or missions school, or do some simple construction or remodeling when locals can do it much cheaper? Is it not better to provide work for locals with good pay? Are the team members truly motivated and equipped for ministry? Or are they only along for the ride, for an adventure, or vacation? The point of the mission must be to help the local ministry team to advance the gospel in their area. If the team members are not truly interested in the people and place they are visiting, few, if any, long-term results will be seen.

However, if the short-term missionaries are truly considering a life-long commitment to ministry, but need some experience before taking the next step, short-term missions are an effective means to build experience and confidence to move ahead. "Regular and faithful ministry in the local church and community context is an even more fundamental avenue for gaining experience. The biblical model of the older people mentoring the younger in ministry is really hard to beat. And rarely is a young person permanently damaged from being overchallenged. Young people thrive on challenges. Unfortunately, many of them seem to have suffered the effects of being underchallenged." (*Introducing World Missions*, p.234).

3. *It takes the reinforcement of targeted and effective teaching and training.* If the leadership of the home church understands that the church is not supposed to be a sheep pen to house and feed an ever-growing flock of dependent, self-absorbed sheep, they will take up the mantle of the Master teacher, Jesus Christ and turn sheep into lions, able to go and save the lost. "For I am God, and not man, The Holy One in your midst; And I will not come with terror. They shall walk after the LORD. He will roar like a lion. When He roars, Then His sons shall come trembling from the west; They shall come trembling like a bird from Egypt, Like a dove from the land of Assyria. And I will let them dwell in their houses, Says the LORD." (Hosea 11:9b-11).

Examine the Scriptures carefully and you will discover that the command to **"go and make converts"** does not exist. Followers of Jesus are never called "converts" but are "disciples". The noun *convert* is not used for believers. The verb

convert is used only to refer to someone who becomes a believer, but followers are always called, "disciples." This is important to understand because "converts" do not reproduce; only disciples reproduce to make more disciples. The leadership of the congregations must start teaching their members that from the moment of their conversion to Christ, they must become disciples (followers) of Jesus in all that they do. Disciples are not passive, but they are **being transformed** by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit to be like Christ – in other words, to be a *Christian*. "The teaching and training, therefore, must continue and accelerate. Pastors, especially, must be energized with the message so that they can energize others with their preaching and teaching. Though a minority of the pastors do eventually become energized, this is seldom caught in seminary, so the challenge to the mobilizers remains large." (*Introducing World Missions*, p.234)

4. *It takes resources that make a difference.* Without a doubt, there is no shortage of resources available to church missions leaders in the West today. Christian bookstores and online sites specializing in Christian books have a wide variety of books covering practically every aspect of missions, including training, cross-cultural ministry, and reentry. However, the home church that is going to be an effective sending church should also be prepared with a wide range of resources. ONE: to prepare them for their mission; TWO: resources while they are on mission; and THREE: resources at home.

ONE: PREPARATION

Travel: In most cases, missionaries will need help with booking International Travel, navigating embassy red tape and obtaining a Visa. Emergency evacuation plans should be set in place along with any safety warnings from their home Embassy. Health and travel insurance should be obtained for the missionary. Missionaries should have a health checkup before leaving and be aware of the medical care available to them on the field.

Research and Information: Language Learning may be necessary if the mother tongue of the missionary is not known where they will be ministering. The missionary will probably need to study maps and country information (fact sheets, country profiles, regional and world maps, etc.). Other helpful research information includes: Evangelical Statistics, Online Directories, People and Unreached Group Profiles.

Transitioning from Home: Missionaries should study the issues that arise from transitioning from one country to another. Be aware of cultural differences and the challenges they will present, as well as the potential for *culture shock*. Missionaries should also think ahead about the challenge they may face upon reentering their home country.

TWO: ON MISSION

Care and Support for the Missionary: Missionaries need encouragement, and sometimes Counseling. Thanks to the Internet, missionaries can join the Community of missionaries around the world and with the sending church's support groups.

Church Planting: Missionaries who are focused on planting new churches will need resources to help setting up a church.

Community Development: Missionaries who work in closed countries where Christians face the worst persecution, often use development projects as a means to share their Christian faith. These missionaries should have special training before entering the field, but will need resources for their work. For example:

- Economics & Agriculture
- Healthcare
- Solar Technology

Ministry Partner Development: While on the field, the missionary often benefits from shared experiences with other missionaries. Helping the missionary to attend regional Mission Fests and Conferences will help the missionary build a network of people with shared experiences. Even while on the field, there will be a need for fundraising and prayer support.

Ethnic Resources: While on the field, the missionary may discover they will need more help with resources for Contextualizing the gospel and new Culturally Specific Tools:

- Ethnomusicology
- Media Ministry Tools
 - Audio Scriptures
 - Conceptualized Bible Pictures
 - Downloadable Media
 - Media & Movies
 - Mobile Ministry Tools
- Missionary Books
- Homeschooling

- Third Culture Kid Resources
- Missions for Kids
 - Global Crafts & Games
 - Mission Focused Fun
- Teaching Resources

Technical Support: Few missionaries are experts on computers and software. The missionary may run into all kinds of issues setting up their PC, Internet, and email. Having someone on the home front who can walk them through some of the problems is a great help to those who may not have good technical support where they are ministering.

THREE: FURLOUGH NEEDS

Missionaries often find it necessary to return home for a few days or weeks because of Visa requirements, or to attend conferences, or to raise funds. Sometimes a medical issue requires them to return home. When they return home, they will have some practical needs that the local church should help them with. Upon their return home, the missionary will most likely need transportation, clothes and personal items. When their visit home is over they may have international shipping needs as well.

NEEDS FOR SHORT-TERM MISSIONARIES

Not everyone can make a short-term mission to a foreign country. But those who want to go and can go should go through a vetting process to find out their qualifications, motives, and abilities. Missionaries on the field will need help from the home church finding qualified short-termers. Once the short-term team arrives, they will need time for orientation, housing, and meaningful times of ministry. Upon their return home, the short-term missionaries should be debriefed, and given the opportunity to share their experiences with the home church.

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

An important part of preparation for both short-term and long-term missionaries is teaching and training in spiritual warfare: "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." (Ephesians 6:11-12). Spiritual leaders understand that there is a

supernatural element to the work of ministry. Satan can and will work through humans to attack God's people. Missionaries often face spiritual battles against the spiritual hosts of wickedness that wants to keep people in the darkness. Therefore, they must be prepared to resist the devil in the full armor of God whenever he attacks.

MISSIONARY TRAINING

Although many missionaries are willing to pick up their Bible and fly away to some missions frontier to work in some distant harvest field, it is important that they receive some intensive training for the work if they want to avoid many of the mistakes and pitfalls of working as a missionary far away from home. Many churches and missionary sending organizations offer Discipleship Training, and training specifically for missionaries. The person who has a desire to become a missionary should choose carefully the training they want to pursue. They should avoid training for missionaries that are so expensive that it will leave them deep in debt for years paying it off. They should also avoid training that will keep them off the mission field for years before they move out. They should seek out training that is practical for missions, flexible, and will not leave them broke or in debt for years.

TRANSITIONING HOME

Sooner or later, most missionaries return home. Some missionaries work on the field until retirement age. Others depart for the mission field with a specific purpose to fulfill and once it is accomplished, they return home. Still other missionaries have a specific time-frame to devote to being on the foreign mission field. Anyway they plan it, the time will come for them to return home and they will need some assistance when they make that transition back home.

The effects of culture shock in reverse were mentioned in a previous lesson. So, it only needs to be stated here that the returning missionary should be prepared to some level of readjustment to home. Having a strong network of friends, family, and the home church will help the smooth reentry of the missionary upon their return from being on mission with God.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The challenges of ministry in one of the harvest fields of the Lord that exist to the very ends of the world should not deter anyone who has a passion for ministry and a heart's desire to serve the Lord by seeking and saving those who are lost and without hope for eternal life in Christ Jesus. At the same time, those who are ready and willing to take the first steps of faith that will lead them to follow Christ to the

place of ministry He is calling them to, should do all they can to prepare themselves for the work ahead of them. Therefore, receiving the right kind of teaching and training will help them avoid mistakes, not be blindsided by some of the obstacles to missionary life, and to be better equipped to face those challenges.

As important as the right teaching and training is, by far the most important thing to know is that the person has been called truly by God for the mission field. It is God who calls; God who sends who He will, where He wills, and no one should stand in their way once that calling has been confirmed. Although not everyone is called to "go", all are called to participate in the sending. Those who are home will share in the blessing if they share in the sending and supporting of the missionary in the harvest of the Lord.

Questions for Lesson Twelve

1. Why is it important for churches to partner with missions organizations?
2. What roles do individual senders fill in the missions enterprise?
3. What four things are necessary to motivate believers to participate in the task of worldwide missions?
4. To be effective, a sending church should provide a wide range of resources to prepare them for their mission and to resource them while they are on mission. Name some of those important resources.
5. What are some of the resources missionaries need when they return home on furlough or permanently?



Frederick Osborn traveled the world teaching and preaching the Word of God. His first trip to South Asia was in 2001, and since 2005 he has been fully involved in ministry. Currently he volunteers his time on the mission fields of South Asia and around the world as a speaker and lecturer, distributing Bibles and biblical resources to pastors, evangelists, and ministry leaders. His books and study guides have been used in classrooms by hundreds of students.

In 2013 he earned his M.Div. from Andhra Christian Theological College in Hyderabad, India and in that same year was officially ordained into the ministry in a holy convocation administered by Indian pastors representing AG, CSA, and other non-denominational ministries. In 2017 he completed his D.Min. from Covenant Bible College & Seminary, Florida, USA. He and his wife, Deena, now live near Atlanta, GA where he continues to preach, teach, write, and publish his books and study guides.

Books Written by Frederick Osborn

1. *Church Planting Movements – India*
2. *Daniel: Kingdoms in Conflict*
3. *Deceived! Overcoming the Age of Mass Deception*
4. *Disciple-to-Disciple: Making Disciples Like Jesus*
5. *Disciple- to-Disciple: Making Disciples Like Jesus, Study Guide*
6. *Exploring the New Testament*
7. *Exploring the Old Testament: Vol. One – The Pentateuch*
8. *Following Christ on the Indian Road: A Missionary's Story of Discipleship*
9. *From Genesis to Revelation: Interpreting the Book of Revelation Through the Old Testament Scriptures*
10. *Healing Miracles of the Bible*
11. *Jesus Over India: A 52 Week Spiritual Journey Through the Heart of India*
12. *Judges: A 21st Century Prophetic Commentary*
13. *Keys to Effective Faith: Living by a Faith that Can Move Mountains*
14. *Kingdom Discipleship: Becoming Like Jesus*
15. *Kingdom Discipleship: Becoming a Disciple Like Jesus, Study Guide*
16. *Kingdom Economics*
17. *Living in Dystopia: A Christian Guide Victory in an Orwellian World*

18. *One Holy Passion: A Daily Devotional Guide for 40 Days of Prayer and Fasting for the 1040 Nations*
19. *Our Jehovah Rapha: A Christ Centered Holistic Approach to Wellness*
20. *Reviving A Nation*
21. *Seven Laws of Dying to Self*
22. *Spiritual Lessons for the Grafted-In*
23. *The Apocalyptic Vision: Understanding the Apocalyptic Writings of the Bible*
24. *The Blood*
25. *The Book of Acts: The Holy Spirit's Handbook for Church Planting Movements*
26. *The Book of Acts: The Holy Spirit's Handbook for Church Planting Movements- Study Guide*
27. *The Gospel of John: Speaking Truth to Power*
28. *The Gospel of Salvation*
29. *The Gospel of Salvation: Study Guide*
30. *The Healthy Heart*
31. *The Holy Spirit in You: Nourishing the Life of Holiness and power in You*
32. *The Keys to Effective Prayer*
33. *The LGBTQI Community and the Church*
34. *The Legacy of Women in the Bible – Study Guide*
35. *The New Reformation: An Assessment of the New Apostolic Reformation from Toronto to Redding*
36. *The Physics of Heaven: The Theology of the New Apostolic Reformation*
37. *The Revelation of Jesus Christ: John the Apostle's Heavenly Vision of Christ the King*
38. *The Spirit of Religion*
39. *The Way, the Truth, and the Life: the Teachings and Ministry of Jesus the Messiah*
40. *This Gospel of the Kingdom*
41. *This Gospel of the Kingdom – Study Guide*
42. *To the Heart of the Nations – Prayer Journal*
43. *Twelve Woes*

Supplemental Handout Materials

HANDOUT DISCIPLESHIP 202-1

Recommended Supplemental Reading for Discipleship 202 Lessons

Barnette, Henles H., *Introducing Christian Ethics*, © 1961, Broadman Press, Nashville, Tennessee, USA

Blackaby, Henry and Tom, *The Man God Uses*, © 1999, Broadman & Holman Publishers, Nashville, Tennessee, USA

Eims, LeRoy, *Be The Leader You Were Meant To Be*, © 1975, 2001 by Cook Communications Ministries, Colorado, USA

Finzel, Hans, *The Top Ten Mistakes Leaders Make*, © 1994 by Victor Books / SP Publications, Inc., Colorado, USA

Getz, Gene, *Building Up One Another*, © 1981, 1997, 2002, Cook Communications Ministries, Colorado, USA

Lundy, J. David, *Servant Leadership for Slow Learners*, © 2002, Authentic Media, Carlisle, UK

Pirola, Neal, *Serving as Senders Today*, © 2012, Emmaus Road International, Inc.

HANDOUT DISCIPLESHIP 202-5

10 Ways to Glorify God (Session 2 – 1 Corinthians 6:12-20)

<https://explorethebible.lifeway.com/blog/adults/10-ways-to-glorify-god-session-2-1-corinthians-612-20/>

March 5, 2018 by Mike Livingstone

We all have the same calling: to glorify God in everything we do. This is why we are here. Scripture says God created us for His glory (Isa. 43:7) and instructs us to “do everything for the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31).

But how? How can we give glory to “the King of glory” (Ps. 24:8)? Glory belongs to God (John 17:5; Acts 7:55). God reveals His glory (Ex 24:17; 40:34; Ps. 19:1). We can observe His glory (John 1:14). But how do we give Him glory?

To glorify God is not to bestow glory on God or add to His glory, but to recognize and acknowledge His glory. The basic meaning of the word *glory* is “heavy in weight.” It is the “weighty importance and shining majesty that accompany God’s presence.”* The verb *glorify* means “to give weight to” or “to honor.” Thus, to glorify God is to recognize God for who He really is and to respond appropriately.

Here are 10 scriptural ways we can glorify God:

1. Praise Him with your lips.

“My lips will glorify you” (Ps 63:3). The noblest use of our tongues is to give praise to God.

2. Obey His Word.

To the corrupt priests in Malachi’s day, the Lord said: “If you don’t listen, and if you don’t take it to heart to honor my name, . . . I will send a curse among you” (Mal. 2:2). How had they dishonored God’s name? They had disobeyed God’s Law by presenting defiled food on the altar (Mal. 1:6-7; see also Deut. 15:21).

3. Pray in Jesus’ name.

“Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it so that the Father may be glorified in the Son” (John 14:13). To pray in Jesus’ name is to align our prayers and desires with God’s purposes.

4. Produce spiritual fruit.

Copyright © 2023 School of Global Missions. This material is not to be copied for any purpose without written permission of Dr. Frederick Osborn and the School of Global Missions. All rights reserved, printed in the U.S.A.

“My Father is glorified by this: that you produce much fruit and prove to be my disciples” (John 15:8). The fruit that issues out of our union with and obedience to Christ brings God glory. The Bible names several kinds of spiritual fruit, including: the fruit we bear when we win others to Christ (Rom. 1:13), the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23), and our good deeds (Col. 1:10).

5. Remain sexual pure.

“Flee sexual immorality! . . . glorify God with your body” (1 Cor. 6:18-20).

6. Seek the good of others.

“So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God” (1 Cor 10:31). The context is Paul’s discussion of whether it was right for believers to eat meat offered to idols. He stated the guiding principle in verse 24, “No one is to seek his own good, but the good of the other person.” When we make lifestyle choices for the good of others, we glorify God.

7. Give generously.

The result of the Corinthians’ giving to the poor believers in Jerusalem would be that “they will glorify God for your obedient confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity” (2 Cor. 9:13).

8. Live honorably among unbelievers.

“Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that when they slander you as evildoers, they will observe your good works and will glorify God on the day he visits” (1 Pet. 2:12). Jesus said, “let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven” (Matt. 5:16).

9. Be faithful when persecuted.

“But if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed but let him glorify God in having that name” (1 Pet. 4:16). If we want to glorify God, then we’ll not be ashamed of the name of Jesus.

10. Face death with faith.

Jesus predicted Peter would die as a martyr and “would glorify God” in his death (John 21:19). Paul hoped Christ would be glorified in his death (Phil. 1:20). We can show God to be great in the way we approach death because we know “to live is Christ and to die is gain” (Phil. 1:21).

**Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Revised and Expanded*, p. 647.

Mike Livingstone works at Lifeway Christian Resources as content editor for Explore the Bible materials.

Copyright © 2023 School of Global Missions. This material is not to be copied for any purpose without written permission of Dr. Frederick Osborn and the School of Global Missions. All rights reserved, printed in the U.S.A.

HANDOUT DISCIPLESHIP 202-7

<https://learn.ligonier.org/articles/3-types-legalism>

3 Types of Legalism R.C. Sproul

Have you, as a Christian, ever been accused of legalism? That word is often bandied about in the Christian subculture incorrectly. For example, some people might call John a legalist because they view him as narrow-minded. But the term legalism does not refer to narrow-mindedness. In reality, legalism manifests itself in many subtle ways.

Basically, legalism involves abstracting the law of God from its original context. Some people seem to be preoccupied in the Christian life with obeying rules and regulations, and they conceive of Christianity as being a series of do's and don'ts, cold and deadly set of moral principles. That's one form of legalism, where one is concerned merely with the keeping of God's law as an end in itself.

Now, God certainly cares about our following His commandments. Yet there is more to the story that we dare not forget. God gave laws such as the Ten Commandments in the context of the covenant. First, God was gracious. He redeemed His people out of slavery in Egypt and entered into a loving, filial relationship with Israel. Only after that grace-based relationship was established did God begin to define the specific laws that are pleasing to Him. I had a professor in graduate school who said, "The essence of Christian theology is grace, and the essence of Christian ethics is gratitude." The legalist isolates the law from the God who gave the law. He is not so much seeking to obey God or honor Christ as he is to obey rules that are devoid of any personal relationship.

There's no love, joy, life, or passion. It's a rote, mechanical form of law-keeping that we call externalism. The legalist focuses only on obeying bare rules, destroying the broader context of God's love and redemption in which He gave His law in the first place.

To understand the second type of legalism, we must remember that the New Testament distinguishes between the letter of the law (its outward form) and the spirit of the law. The second form of legalism divorces the letter of the law from the spirit of the law. It obeys the letter but violates the spirit. There's only a subtle distinction between this form of legalism and the one previously mentioned.

The legalist isolates the law from the God who gave the law.

How does one keep the letter of the law but violate its spirit? Suppose a man likes to drive his car at the minimum required speed irrespective of the conditions under which he is driving. If he is

Copyright © 2023 School of Global Missions. This material is not to be copied for any purpose without written permission of Dr. Frederick Osborn and the School of Global Missions. All rights reserved, printed in the U.S.A.

on an interstate and the minimum posted speed is forty miles per hour, he drives forty miles per hour and no less. He does this even during torrential downpours, when driving at this minimum required speed actually puts other people in danger because they have had the good sense to slow down and drive twenty miles an hour so as not to skid off the road or hydroplane. The man who insists on a speed of forty miles per hour even under these conditions is driving his car to please himself alone. Although he appears to the external observer as one who is scrupulous in his civic obedience, his obedience is only external, and he doesn't care at all about what the law is actually all about. This second kind of legalism obeys the externals while the heart is far removed from any desire to honor God, the intent of His law, or His Christ.

This second type of legalism can be illustrated by the Pharisees who confronted Jesus over healing on the Sabbath day (Matt. 12:9–14). They were concerned only with the letter of the law and avoiding anything that might look like work to them. These teachers missed the spirit of the law, which was directed against ordinary labor that is not required to maintain life and not against efforts to heal the sick.

The third type of legalism adds our own rules to God's law and treats them as divine. It is the most common and deadly form of legalism. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees at this very point, saying, "You teach human traditions as if they were the word of God." We have no right to heap up restrictions on people where He has no stated restriction.

Each church has a right to set its own policies in certain areas. For example, the Bible says nothing about soft drinks in the church's fellowship hall, but a church has every right to regulate such things. But when we use these human policies to bind the conscience in an ultimate way and make such policies determinative of one's salvation, we venture dangerously into territory that is God's alone.

Many people think that the essence of Christianity is following the right rules, even rules that are extrabiblical. For example, the Bible doesn't say that we can't play cards or have a glass of wine with dinner. We can't make these matters the external test of authentic Christianity. That would be a deadly violation of the gospel because it would substitute human tradition for the real fruits of the Spirit. We come perilously close to blasphemy by misrepresenting Christ in this way. Where God has given liberty, we should never enslave people with man-made rules. We must be careful to fight this form of legalism.

The gospel calls men to repentance, holiness, and godliness. Because of this, the world finds the gospel offensive. But woe to us if we add unnecessarily to that offense by distorting the true nature of Christianity by combining it with legalism. Because Christianity is concerned with morality, righteousness, and ethics, we can easily make that subtle move from a passionate concern for godly morality into legalism if we are not careful.

Copyright © 2023 School of Global Missions. This material is not to be copied for any purpose without written permission of Dr. Frederick Osborn and the School of Global Missions. All rights reserved, printed in the U.S.A.

HANDOUT DISCIPLESHIP 202-9

Theology of Inculturation

<https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/inculturation-theology>

The term "inculturation," as applied to Christianity, denotes the presentation and re-expression of the Gospel in forms and terms proper to a culture. It results in the creative reinterpretation of both, without being unfaithful to either. Evangelization respects culture as part of the human phenomenon and as a human right. The manipulation or oppression of culture is, therefore, an abuse. Culture is a coherent system of meanings embodied in images and symbols that enables the individual to relate cognitively, emotionally, and behaviorally to the world and to communicate this understanding to others. It is the prism through which a human society views the whole of its experience, domestic, political, social, economic, and political. Culture is learned by the human being through socialization and is developed throughout life. It gives identity to a human group and controls its perception of reality. For the purposes of theology, it is at once more positive and more precise than the term "context." Syncretism denotes an anomalous conflict of meaning when, in the process of evangelization, cultures "domesticate" the Gospel and distort its meaning. No culture is deemed to be unfailingly Christian, since inculturation is a constant call to conversion and renewal.

Evangelization must enter into dialogue with cultures if it is to produce any effect on human beings. Cultures are empirically diverse; therefore, evangelization leads to culturally diverse ways of living the Gospel. Inculturation, opposed to uniformity, demands the legitimization of diversity. There can be no monopoly of cultural forms in a truly Catholic communion. This is true in spite of the mutual influence of evangelizing and evangelized cultures ("interculturalism") and of the accumulation by the Church of current, but contingent, cultural elements as an inherited patrimony. Until the realization in the 20th century that culture is a plural phenomenon, the Church took it for granted that there was a single, universal culture of humanity, the perfection of which was deemed to be Christianity in its western, Latin form. No allowance was made for factors of cultural diversity in theological controversy, and the Church was unable to accommodate the initiatives of early Jesuit missionaries, such as Mateo Ricci, Roberto de Nobili, and Pedro Paez, when they tried to evangelize foreign cultures from within. In the 20th century, particularly at the Second Vatican Council, and in the subsequent assemblies of the synod of bishops, [cultural pluralism](#) has been accepted, together with inculturation as a demand of evangelization. However, an influential minority in the Church still claims that western culture possesses a universal significance for evangelization, in spite of its technocratic nature, its secularizing influence, and its tendency to undermine the religious values of indigenous cultures.

Christological Basis for Inculturation. Among the Christological bases for inculturation, the doctrine of the world-seeding Logos as God's agent in creation goes back to Justin Martyr and the

second century apologists, typified by Clement of Alexandria. It has reappeared in the missionary decree of the [Second Vatican Council](#), *Ad gentes*, and in modern creation theology. The Logos, the Divine Truth or Divine Reason, exists in disseminated form throughout creation, and every human tradition perceives it darkly, before it is enlightened for them by the proclamation of the Word incarnate. This proclamation does not outmode these traditions, but gladly recognizes the elements of truth they contain. Another Christological approach is the analogy with the incarnation of Jesus Christ and the parallel between his cultural education in Palestine and modern missionary evangelization. The parallel demonstrates that Christ is the subject of inculturation and that the incarnation inserted him into the intercultural dynamic of human history. However, it plays down the challenge that Christ offered to his own culture, and suggests that the Gospel, like the divine pre-existence, comes to a culture in a culturally disembodied form. The most fruitful Christological approach is to compare inculturation with the Paschal Mystery, to which it is linked causally as well as analogically. Through his passion, death and resurrection, Christ became universal Lord and made himself available to people of every culture. The Paschal Mystery also offers an analogy for the conversion of culture, which dies and rises under the impact of evangelization, thus becoming more authentic and more faithful to its underlying truth.

Ecclesiological Approaches to Inculturation. Ecclesiological approaches to inculturation include first the logic of the Church's universal mission. That mission is the continuation of the *missio Dei*, God's loving dialogue with the world, and the fulfilment of the great commandment of universal love that is logically prior to the great commission to teach all nations. This love is a perfect communion of differences and, therefore, liberating. In this area the theology of inculturation encounters the theology of liberation. The second ecclesiological basis of inculturation is the authentic tradition of the Church and the role of the Church's magisterium. The primary reality of the Church is local: the particular church and the socio-cultural region within which its witness takes place. Its primary task is to reconcile local culture to the Church's tradition, which is centered on the interpretation of the Christ event. This interpretation is based on a trajectory of meaning that ascends to the outlooks of the [New Testament](#). Sacred tradition, with its growth of insight, passes organically from culture to culture and from clarity to clarity throughout history. Although the Bible occupies a privileged position in this tradition, together with the sacramental and hierarchical ministry that derives from the actions and commands of Christ witnessed by the [New Testament](#), and although the meaning of faith-statements made by the Church's magisterium is not open to contradiction, all these can only be understood today with reference to their historical and cultural contexts. Reformulation in accordance with the Church's lived cultural plurality is strictly necessary, if they are to be taken seriously.

The concept of inculturation seems to carry certain consequences for the shape of the Church to come, among them the abandonment of a preference for western culture and a greater diversification in Christian life and practice. The fields of inculturation include: theology, catechesis, liturgy, religious life, marriage and family life, health and healing, secondary ecclesial ministries and structures. Inculturation would therefore assume a relative pluralism in all these fields. Since inculturation cannot be imposed, but depends on the experience and initiatives of the local community, the concept seems to envisage ecclesial structures that favor increased participation and collaboration.

Bibliography: m. amaladoss, *Beyond Inculturation: Can the Many Be One?* (Delhi 1998). d.s. amalorpavadass, "Theological reflections on inculturation" *Studia Liturgica* 20 (1990) 36–54 (Pt. I) and 116–136 (Pt. II). g. a. arbuckle, *Earthing the Gospel* (London 1990). m. dhavamony, *Christian Theology of Inculturation* (Rome 1997). a. e. shorter, *Toward a Theology of Inculturation* (New York 1992); *Evangelization and Culture* (London 1994). p.c. phan, "Contemporary Theology and Inculturation in the [United States](#)," in *The Multicultural Church: A New Landscape in U.S. Theologies*, ed. w. cenkner (New York 1996) 109–130. j.a. scherer & s.b. bevans, eds., *New Directions in Mission & Evangelization Vol 3: Faith and Culture* (Maryknoll 1999).

HANDOUT
DISCIPLESHIP 202-9

Thinking of Marrying Someone from Another Culture?

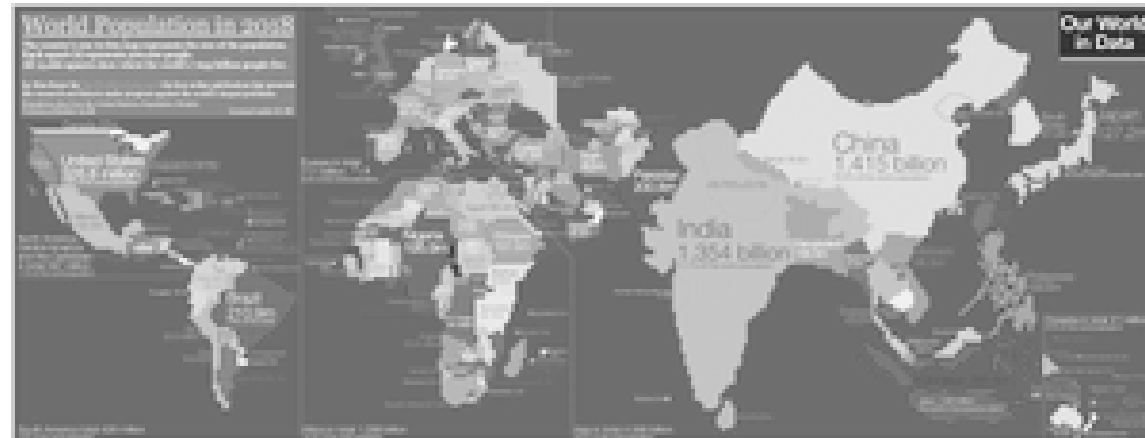
Cross-cultural marriages offer significant advantages and disadvantages. But before you cross cultural boundaries in marriage, you should carefully consider the following set of questions written by Bill and Carol O’Hara, missionaries in Latin America.

Are you willing for your children to not really know your Parents?	Marrying someone from another culture means that one of you will be living outside of your home nation permanently... which means that...your children will see very little of one set of grandparents.
Are you willing for you family members to not be able to communicate well with your children?	No only will your children not have the opportunity to know one set of grandparents very well, if there is a language barrier, one set of grandparents will not be able to really communicate well with your children.
Are you willing to take the time to explain why something is funny to you? ...Are you ready to just accept the fact that you won’t be able to share each other’s humor?	Marrying someone from another culture means that you will have a hard time understanding each other’s humor.
Are you willing to let your children to grow up with a different set of family traditions than your own?	Marrying someone from another culture means that you of you must be willing to not give your children the cultural traditions and national heritage that you have.
Are you willing to live in your spouse’s home country indefinitely?	You need to be aware that the day may come when you may need to move to your spouse’s home country.
Are you willing to lose your place in society?	You may need to consider that the socioeconomic class one holds in one culture may not cross over in another culture.
Are you willing for you children to grow up with gender role models you don’t approve of?	Growing up in another culture means that the gender role models for you children may not be wheat you would consider to be good role models.
Have you considered how the “home court advantage” may affect you marriage relationship?	You may need to consider the effect of the “home court advantage” on you marriage. If a foreign man marries an American woman and they live in the United States, she would be cast in the leadership role in some aspects of their relationship... Whereas if they lived in his nation, he would be able to lead out more effectively in their marriage.
O’Hara and Ohara (2002) from <i>Introducing World Missions</i> , p.202).	

HANDOUT DISCIPLESHIP 202-10

Cartogram

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia



Mosaic cartogram showing the distribution of the global population. Each of the 15,266 pixels represents the home country of 500,000 people – cartogram by Max Roser for Our World in Data

A *cartogram* (also called a *value-area map* or an *anamorphic map*, the latter common among German-speakers) is a thematic map of a set of features (countries, provinces, etc.), in which their geographic size is altered to be directly proportional to a selected variable, such as travel time, population, or gross national income. Geographic space itself is thus warped, sometimes extremely, in order to visualize the distribution of the variable. It is one of the most abstract types of map; in fact, some forms may more properly be called diagrams. They are primarily used to display emphasis and for analysis as nomographs.

Cartograms leverage the fact that size is the most intuitive visual variable for representing a total amount. In this, it is a strategy that is similar to proportional symbol maps, which scale point features, and many flow maps, which scale the weight of linear features. However, these two techniques only scale the map symbol, not space itself; a map that stretches the length of linear features is considered a linear cartogram (although additional flow map techniques may be added). Once constructed, cartograms are often used as a base for other thematic mapping techniques to visualize additional variables, such as choropleth mapping.

Proof