

Mentoring Makes a Difference

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Timothy Mentoring Program

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IntroductionBecoming A Protégé

The purpose of this program is to impart wisdom for ministry leadership! This program is based on the biblical model of Paul and Timothy, Jesus and His disciples, Elijah and Elisha, Moses and Joshua, and finally Barnabas and Paul.

You will find Godly wisdom to deal with people and fulfill your Kingdom assignment. As you study this book God will put His good hand upon you to help build the kingdom and serve in the church. Be diligent in the process and God will add to your influence and give you many ministry opportunities! These principles will work in all areas of your life but we hope they will especially assist you in ministry opportunities you are given in your future!

Why should you become a protégé? Why should you be mentored?

To get to the next season with more potential and greater success you will need a mentor. So I welcome you to the next season! Your future has joy all over it! Why? Because you are pursuing God's will and looking into God's word for instruction! You have just stepped into a wonderful next season! Knowledge moves you into your next season. You are accelerating into your future! Those willing to be mentored are expressing a great level of wisdom, understanding, and competence. To learn from worthy mentors is a great choice!

The mentor and protégé relationship has wonderful benefits.

For the protégé the benefits include:

- Saves you time on getting to your goal
- Saves you pain because the mentor can help you avoid pitfalls
- Equips you for a level you normally wouldn't have reached for many years.
- It makes accomplishing the vision so much more enjoyable.
- It will give you tools for the next level of influence.

The pitfalls to avoid and be on guard against as a protégé include:

- Laziness
- Pride
- Jealousy
- Disinterest
- Lack of goals
- Un-thankfulness
- Contempt
- Disrespect

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The mentoring relationship can break down in a few different ways. It can break down on the mentor's side or on the protégé's side. Work to keep a healthy perspective and a healthy goal in the mentoring process. You may see your mentor's flaws. You may see your mentor's weaknesses. But don't discount the gift of God in them because of their weakness. That goal can be to prepare for ministry, to get more effective at ministry, to be a better leader, to invest in the next generation, etc.

Things to keep in mind during this process:

- Always appreciate those willing to care and invest in your life!
- Understand that great wisdom is just a question away! Ask questions.
- Knowledge is overwhelming our culture however accomplishments are dwindling. Many think they know but they are not truly effective. Don't get caught in the trap of saying oh I know. If you know then produce!
- Learn these keys and be ready to teach others!
- A short pencil is better than a long memory!
- God is a great mentor! God is an awesome professor for life! He speaks through people! Find out who He is speaking through and listen.
- Give your all in this process. You can't get a miracle being half committed!

The most powerful way God prepares leaders is through mentoring!

Do you remember Jesus and the disciples? Do you remember Elijah and Elisha? Do you remember Moses and Joshua? Do you remember Paul and Timothy? These are some examples of scripture. One point I would like to add before you go to lesson 1 is that Elisha had many opportunities to leave Elijah. But Elisha knew his fate was wrapped in Elijah. Elisha's determination to stay close to Elijah was rewarded with a double portion anointing. That anointing allowed Elisha to work 14 verified miracles and to become one of the greatest prophets of bible history.

If you stick it out God will do something great in your life! You will go much further than your mentor if you stay the course!

What do you want to get out of this mentoring program? What are you willing to sacrifice to see it come to pass?

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Lesson 1 Valuing the secret place

Do you value the meeting place with the Holy Spirit? Do you value the talks you have with God? Do you really understand that you have access to the God who created all things, can deliver from lions, opened up the Red Sea, raised Jesus from the dead, and has the salvation of multitudes in His heart and mind?

*Take a few minutes as soon as you can and read Psalms 91. It will amaze you! God does so much for those who dwell in His presence. He provides a blessed place for those who make it a priority to spend time with Him. The secret place with God is a time when divine ideas are relayed to your heart. **Being in the secret place with God is conversing with the King of Glory!** It should be dignified. It should be valued. Recognize with whom you are conversing. You're talking to the one who can change everything in one minute. He is the one who can open up blessings in your life for the rest of your life. He is the one who has no lack. He is the one who heals sickness in one moment. He is the one who with one word can change a wayward heart. He is the one with whom you have received favor. The King can change everything with His word and you have His ear!*

***Communication with God is essential as we do His work in this adversarial world.** We are in a world that has fallen. We are encountering evil. We are dealing with people God wants to save. We are His representative on this earth. We need His wisdom and involvement in all we do. Prayer has a simple definition. Prayer is a conversation with God. God speaks to us in many ways. Sometimes it is audible. Sometimes it is an impression in your spirit. Sometimes it is feeling His presence. Sometimes God speaks to us through an opportunity. Think about David and Goliath. The bible never says God told David to kill Goliath. It was an opportunity that David seized upon that gave him many benefits for advancing his life and the nation of Israel.*

Also the widow woman that fed Elijah never states that God told her to feed Elijah yet she saw the opportunity and when she fed Elijah she was blessed with flour that never ran out. So she fed a man of God a meal and she ate for the rest of her life! Wow! What a return!

***The secret place is the place you set aside to meet with God.** It can be very detailed such as having an altar, nice décor, etc. Or it can be a walk by the ocean every morning. Your secret place with God is very valuable. Make an appointment with God every day and keep it! Don't get too regimented in how much time you spend there as to feeling your conversation with God was received and your heart was impressed by God's presence.*

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Here are some reasons to spend time in the secret place.

1. **Your God consciousness increases** - Anyone who comes to God must believe that He is. Hebrews 11:6
2. **Your heart is synced with God's heart.** Paul was going to Asia but God interrupted him and redirected him to Macedonia.
3. **Your weaknesses die.** Just think if Sampson had been with God in the secret place instead of on Delilah's lap. That story would have turned out so much better! Judges 16
4. **God can give you wisdom for battles you're facing.** Like a commander looking at the big screen God sees our battles. We are in the middle and cannot see the big picture at times. If you communicate with your commander, he can give perspective and wisdom that you may be lacking.
5. **Your strength can be renewed.** Isaiah 40:31 - There is nothing like God's presence. It reenergizes you. It heals you. It will restore you. God gives us that supernatural power that will sustain us for the battle.
6. **Hopes are reignited and dreams are revived in God's presence.** God reminded Abraham many times about the dream of being a father of many nations. Every time we see God meeting with Abraham we see God laying out the vision again for Abraham of God's plan for his life. Some days we may take a hit. It may seem that our dreams are lost. One moment in God's presence and the vision will be clear again.
7. **God can reveal secrets of heart.** God will reveal things to you concerning people with whom you are working. Sometimes you may be moving towards a decision that could detriment your ministry or put you in a painful scenario. The Holy Spirit may warn you of things you do not see.
8. **God can reveal scenarios, events, purposes to you.** Abraham - God revealed what was happening in Sodom and Gomorrah. Some of my greatest experiences with God have included a revelation about a coming event. One morning I had been praying and I laid down for further sleep. I was immediately taken into a prophetic dream. The dream consisted of me playing ball at first base. The ball was hit directly to me hard. I grabbed it and got the person out. I was very decisive in the dream. After I woke up I was contemplating the dream. I received a call about 8am that morning. The call was someone connected with our

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church. They were connected through a member but had been manipulating people for years. This person was asking for \$1500.00 dollars for their daughter. Their story was very concerning and these folks had a reputation of manipulating people without ever truly taking responsibility and changing. I had only been the pastor at that church for about 6 months. I called my board and discussed the matter. Then the dream came to my mind. I felt God say if you don't stop this situation immediately they will be pulling you into their game. I immediately called my board and stated we would not be helping with the money.

My Church board agreed with me and felt peace from the Lord on the decision. Needless to say I was a little unpopular. However, I would rather be unpopular for a few minutes than stand before God because I let garbage happen to our church for months that destroys our witness as a church.

9. Healings can happen in God's presence. When you're in God's presence anything that Jesus did in the New Testament can happen. Jesus healed the leper, the blind man, raised the dead, and so much more. When you feel and know you're in God's presence, believe for those miracles!

10. God can correct you if you are in error or in folly. If we will come to God with a heart that can be instructed He can help us adjust a wrong perspective. I believe this is how God wants to deal with us the most. This adjustment in God's presence can help avoid so many painful situations. As we grow we can learn to be adjusted in God's presence instead of in our painful reaping of the harvest of wrong choices. Ask God today if there is anything that you are not recognizing. Ask the Holy Spirit if there is anything He would like to share with you. Ask the Holy Spirit if there is a blind spot in your life that He wants to reveal. This can be so powerful. One instance in my life was my anger about a situation. I was very upset and every time I thought about the person and the situation I would rise in anger. As I took it to God I learned that the person was not doing what they were doing on purpose. They were very naive to the things they were doing and were causing. When the Holy Spirit taught me this I was able to forgive and look at the challenge with a fresh perspective.

11. God can give you strategies for prosperity. We know God's greatest desire is for us to prosper. III John verse 2 states this for us. God can give ideas and wisdom about your financial life. Ask God to help you in your finances.

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12. **Your boldness and confidence is strengthened.** I believe David's response to Goliath was indicative of David's time in God's presence compared to the other Israelites who were not in God's presence worshiping Jehovah. Watch David enter this situation with clarity and boldness. He had experienced God's presence and strength that comes from Knowing God!

One last story I will share with you in closing this lesson. A few months ago I heard my cousin praying in his room. He has come to live with us and work with the youth at our church. He was praying and I could hear him. It was in the afternoon. Suddenly his door opened wide and he walked out. He looked and felt like superman. He stated that he was charged by God's presence. I have noticed this in my life and many others lives. The presence of God will charge you! The presence of God will transform you! The presence of God will make you powerful against your foes! We are people of God's presence! May you see the blessings of God's presence in your life every day from now on!

Lesson 2 The Characteristics of a fool.

The bible has much to say about fools. This is worth noting since God gives it so much attention. As you study these characteristics you will learn if you have foolish ways. You will also know how to recognize foolish behavior and fools. If you see these characteristics in yourself, take time and repent of them and begin to transition to have the character and actions of a wise person.

Knowing these scriptures will help you avoid much pain and suffering. A foolish person can introduce a lot of trouble. You should avoid foolish people. Some people who have foolish tendencies can be taught. Ask God to help you discern who you can help and who should be avoided. **Let's look at the 37 Characteristics of a Fool: Look up each scripture.**

The FOOL

1. Despises wisdom and instruction (Prov.1:7)
2. Hates knowledge (Prov 1:22)
3. Grieves his mother (Prov 10:1)

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4. Uses his tongue to destroy others (Proverbs 10:18)
5. Enjoys devising mischief (Prov 10:23)
6. Right in his own eyes (Prov 12:15)
7. Quick to anger (Prov 12:16)
8. Hates to depart from evil (Prov 13:19)
9. Deceitful (Prov 14:8)
10. Mocks at sin. Laughs at it and thinks it's a sport. (Proverbs 14:9)
11. Arrogant and careless (Prov 14:16)
12. Rejects his father's instruction (Prov 15:5)
13. Feeds on foolishness (Proverbs 15:14)
14. Despises his mother (and/or father) (Prov 15:20)
15. Does not respond well to discipline (Prov 17:10)
16. Does not understand wisdom (Prov 17:16)
17. Has a worldly focus (a carnal value system) (Prov 17:24)
18. Grieves his parents (Prov 17:25)
19. Hurts his parents (Prov. 17:25)
20. Will not discuss any view point but his own (Prov. 18:2)
21. Talks too fast and doesn't listen. (Proverbs 18:3)
22. Provokes others to strife and anger by his words (Prov. 18:6)
23. A smart mouth usually gets him in trouble (Prov. 18:7)

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24. Is quarrelsome (contentious) gets in other people's business (Prov. 20:3)
25. Is an impulsive spender (Prov 21:20)
26. Repeats his folly (foolishness) (Prov. 26:11)
27. Trusts in his own heart, self- confident (Prov. 28:26)
28. Cannot resolve conflicts (Prov. 29:9)
29. Gives full vent to his anger (Proverbs 29:11)
30. The fool says there is no God (Psalms 53:1)
31. Dishonest (Jeremiah 17:11)
32. Hypocrisy (Luke 11:39-40)
33. Foolish will be evident to others. (Proverbs 12:23, II Timothy 3:9)
34. Many words (Ecclesiastes 5:3)
35. Calls everyone else a fool (Ecclesiastes 10:3)
36. Doesn't value or listen and obey God's word. (Matthew 7:24-27)
37. Is presumptuous about their well-being. Nothing will happen to me. (Luke 12:20)

Do you see any of these in yourself? If so, don't get discouraged. Go to God and repent and ask Him to take foolishness out of your heart. Then cultivate wise living. Also view others through these characteristics. Don't get pharisaical and judgmental of people when you see foolish actions. Just use your new wisdom to pray for others, mentor others, or just avoid certain people. God will give you the wisdom on how to respond to your own foolishness or to others foolishness.

Lesson 3.....Get Wisdom!

What is wisdom? To start I will explain wisdom in the simplest form concerning life. Wisdom is seeing a balding tire on your car and understanding soon I will have a flat if I don't change that tire. Then going and buying a new tire so you are not in an accident or left on the side of the road with a flat. Wisdom goes to McDonalds but does not expect to get

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pizza. Wisdom understands that a 4 year old cannot drive a car. Wisdom understands that I should wear a jacket or a coat in colder weather so I don't get sick. Wisdom is needed in every area of our lives.

Let's read 2 scriptures concerning wisdom. Proverbs 2:1-7 and Proverbs 4.

According to these scriptures there are some characteristics of wisdom.

- Wisdom will protect you
- Wisdom will watch over you
- Wisdom will promote you
- Wisdom will cause you to be honored
- Wisdom should be cherished
- Wisdom will crown you with a glorious crown
- Wisdom will keep you on a straight path
- Wisdom will cause your path to grow brighter and brighter
- Wisdom will cause you to understand how others are perceiving you.

Wisdom is something we can obtain Also our Wisdom can increase.

Look at these additional explanations of wisdom:

The Wise Man Has Respect for God and His Word

Proverbs 1:7 says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; but fools despise wisdom and instruction."

Notice wisdom and knowledge begins with fear and respect for God. If you don't have respect for God and His Word, you are not wise and you will not reap the benefits of wisdom. You must have the willingness to receive instruction from the Word of God.

The Wise Man Listens and Learns

Proverbs 1:5 says, "A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsel."

The wise man is the one who listens instead of talking. He is the one who hears what is being said. A wise man will listen, hear, receive, and is always learning.

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When the Word of God is being taught, there is always something for you to learn, no matter what your level of knowledge. People are at different levels of understanding, but when the Word of God goes forth and the anointing is present, it will feed people at any level.

The Wise Man Values And Controls His Words

Proverbs 10:19, "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise."

Control your lips, tongue and words if you want to be wise. People get into the habit of saying things without really thinking, and that is dangerous.

The wise man values and controls his words. We have to feed the Word of God into our hearts, and then learn to talk out of our hearts instead of just off the top of our heads. Too often people just let every thought that comes through their minds be turned loose on the world. The wise person's heart instructs his lips.

Your lips should be reserved for what flows out of your heart, down there where the Greater One is, where the Word is, where the wisdom is. Stop and think about what you are going to say instead of just spouting out something. Control of your words is important, and is an element of wisdom.

The Wise Man Prepares For the Future

Wise people don't just stumble around with the idea that whatever the day brings is okay. The wise man looks ahead and prepares. There is a harvest time and the wise man will keep this in mind.

Even in the life of faith, people who know how to believe God recognize there are cycles in life. Everything operates in cycles. So, when things are going good, that is the time to lay something aside for the future.

For instance, I know several men who have yard maintenance businesses. In the summer they work from daylight to dark and beyond because that is when the grass is growing. They have a season of about six months when the grass grows. In the winter there are other things going on. They have leaves to blow, gutters to clean and other things to maintain.

There are all kinds of things to do, but in the lawn maintenance business, summer is the time

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to really get after it. That is when the work is there and the money will be made. The wise man will recognize this and bank some because winter is coming.

A wise man will increase his savings, increase his assets, and prepare for the time when he may need to draw from them. Become as strong as you possibly can when the opportunity is there.

Just recognize that everything operates in cycles. There is daytime and nighttime, cold and heat, seed time and harvest. If you fail to plan for the future, you will miss God's best.

The Wise Man Associates with The Wise

Proverbs 14:7 says, "Go from the presence of a foolish man when you perceive not in him the lips of knowledge."

Are you hanging around with someone and hearing unwise things come from his mouth? Then, go! I didn't say it; God said it.

Make sure that your companions, those you choose as friends, are wise. Look for these characteristics of wisdom being manifested in their lives. And if you are wise, adopt these characteristics for yourself.

What is wisdom?

1. Wisdom is the ability to recognize the difference in something's value.
2. Wisdom is the ability to apply knowledge at the right time.
3. Wisdom is the ability to connect appropriate resources to the need at hand.
4. Wisdom is the ability to discern the true issue or problem at hand.
5. Wisdom is the ability to know when to talk and when to listen.
6. Wisdom is the ability to understand a consequence or result of a decision.
7. Wisdom is the ability to apply the right words to a situation.
8. Wisdom is the ability to know who to honor.

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9. Wisdom is the ability to know who and what to avoid.
10. Wisdom is the ability to know who is responsible for what.
11. Wisdom is the ability to perceive trouble and plan for it.
12. Wisdom is the ability to make wise decisions with your resources.
13. Wisdom understands the most important things to do and the timing of when to do them. Prioritizing is wisdom's secret to success. When do you need to focus on what? When do you need to push something to the back burner for later? When do you need to give undivided attention to something?

Let's talk about what wisdom looks like in action.

What is wisdom for a 23 year old girl looking for a boyfriend to be her future husband? For her to be wise she should look for qualities in the man she will marry. Such qualities are needed: wise eating habits, wise money use, and passion to accomplish something, good relationships, personal hygiene, and etc.

Write out what wisdom would do in these situations: Write out what would be the result of not doing the wise thing in these situations as well.

The mother of a 2 year old child who just saw her child climbing on a chair:

A parent who sees his son pushing down other kids all the time:

A person who cooked a meal and has food left on the counter before bed:

A wife who sees a tendency in her husband to lie:

A husband who sees a guy friend of his wife being flirtatious:

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A person who owns a car and hasn't changed the oil in over 5000 miles:

Wisdom is needed in every area of our lives. Work to walk in wisdom. God gives wisdom.

God's greatest encouragement about wisdom is in James 1 :5

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. KJV

Lesson 4.....Responses that reveal character

Character is not revealed by time, by outward appearance, by decision or by family lineage. Character is revealed by our heart attitudes and reactions. Let's look at things that reveal the character of a person.

How a person responds to _____.

1. **Those in authority over them.** This starts with a person's parents. How a child responds to their parents reveals character. Then as a person matures it moves into how we respond to our bosses, our pastor, our government officials, and etc. Note that if a person in authority is evil or doing something illegal or immoral we can rebel. We should go to that person's superior to handle it. Otherwise we should obey those in authority as unto the Lord.
2. **Other people's success.** Do you get envious and begin a tactic to bring them low? Or do you celebrate with them realizing that your efforts will soon pay off.
3. **Change or opportunities.** When situations are presented do you adjust and adapt well or are you hard to deal with. Are you willing to learn new things or do you reject things? I'm not saying you should accept anything that is unbiblical or goes against your convictions. However you do have to learn and adapt in some situations to continue to be part of a team and grow in your leadership and influence.

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4. **Borrowed stuff.** Do you return things broken down, worse than when you were loaned the item. When you're out of their presence how do you act? When I return a truck I have borrowed I fill the tank up and clean it to look better than when I borrowed it.
5. **Those who have helped them in life.** Do you take advantage of them and use them as a stepping stone or are you appreciative?
6. **Someone in authority that brings correction to them.**
7. **Things not going their way.** How do you respond? Pout, Stomp, Adjust, recognize maybe I have to go about this a different way. Or do you respond graciously.
8. **An assignment or instruction from God or a superior.** Is it tossed aside and forgotten? Are you indifferent to the instructions? Or is it on the back burner? Are you attentive to the assignment and give it your all until it is done?
9. **God's word** - If God's word is not a focus of your life this will reveal your character. When you allow God's word to be less than important you will slowly deteriorate in character.
10. **Someone else's sin-** Do you laugh at others' sin? Do you laugh with them? Do you recognize it is opening a door for Satan to destroy their lives? Or are you willing to confront them in private to help them see their folly and hopefully change. Do you tell everyone when you see a sin in someone's life? Noah's son's had a situation like this. The one son who laughed at his dad received a curse.
11. **Found money or items.** Do you do your best to get it back to a person? Or put it in a person's hands with potential to give it to the right person? Or do you just say, "Whatever it's their fault they lost it!"
12. **Financial struggles** - Do you cheat, steal, lie, or do you seek God and then take steps to handle the situation with integrity?
13. **Someone else in need** - There are definitely times when we cannot help others. But when it is in our power to help, do we help them or do we overlook them?

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What else reveals someone's character?

1. Do they keep their word?
2. Who are their heroes?
3. How do they treat those who have helped them?
4. Are they blaming everyone for their situations or are they taking responsibility?
5. Do they make God's word a priority?
6. Are they a casual pursuer of God's wisdom?
7. Are they living for immediate pleasure only?
8. Are they willing to learn from others?
9. Do they seek the right mentors in areas they need growth? Do they go to someone who has 4 divorces to get marriage advice?
10. Do they laugh at sin? Or does it break their heart?
11. Do they talk excitedly about their sinful life?
12. Are they loud and obnoxious or are they kind and considerate?
13. Are they discreet? We should be discreet with money, others struggles, our past mistakes and failures, your dream, your goals, etc.
14. What are they reading? Is it something that is taking them further and growing them?
15. Are they vengeful? Trying to get back at someone directly or indirectly?
16. Do they finish what they start?
17. Do they repent and ask forgiveness when they make a mistake?

Lesson 5 Understanding conflict and its causes

5 reasons conflict usually occurs

1. Role confusion - This is where someone doesn't understand their authority or someone else's authority and steps over it. Such as a friend, gets between a husband and wife when they are arguing and takes sides. A Friend tries to discipline someone else's child. A guy on your job acts like your boss but actually has no authority to do so.
2. Unmet expectations - This is where someone was expected to do something and another didn't fulfill this expectation. Often it's an unwritten expectation or an unclear expectation which ends up being an argument or a conflict. Often this will not be revealed until late into the conflict. Listen for dissatisfaction and you may be able to curb this conflict early.
3. Personality Clashes - When we understand people and their personality it can help us to value people's personality instead of always feeling at odds with those we are not getting

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along with in our life. Understanding the difference in personalities can be a blessing but when misunderstood can be a great source for conflict.

4. Independent spirit- This is a person or people who think they do not need anyone else's input. This can cause leaders to lose a lot of people because people want to feel involved and like they are contributing. This can cause people to shut out the God ordained voice in their lives which God has given to protect them. This person or group will suffer much because they have silenced the voice that could save them a lot of pain and move them towards blessings!

5. Inflexibility - This is (my way or the highway) mentalities. This can be a source of conflict when people need to work together but one person is strong-willed and shoots down other people's viewpoints and suggestions without giving them proper consideration.

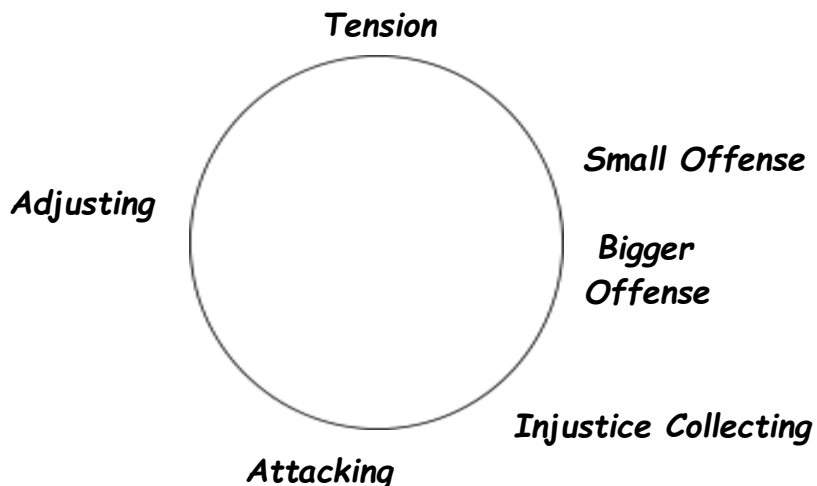
Behaviors that indicate conflict is likely:

Hostility
Ungratefulness
Distrusting
Anxiousness
Negativity

Inexpressive
Oversensitive
Overcompensating
Codependency

- *Next let's look at stages of conflict. Usually conflict has a process. It is not usually a one moment event. It usually builds from small issues that turn into something bigger.*

Here is a circle that connects the cycle of conflict. Just like a clock.



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Tension - Tension is sensed yet often ignored. A sense of turmoil is in a person's soul. This is where something happens that gets someone upset.

Role Confusion - Because of confusion or discomfort the person attempts to identify the source of tension. What is happening? Why is there tension? Who is in charge?

Offense - This is when it becomes something someone cannot overlook and possibly feels there is a brewing situation. Something in someone's heart is in turmoil.

Injustice collecting - This is when someone cultivates the actions and begins to build their case.

Attacking - A person decides to address the issue in some way. Most of the time it is in a way that is offensive because of previous tensions.

Adjustment - After the conflict has occurred there is an adjustment of some sort. It could be a friendship breakup. Leaving a church. Avoidance and a breaking of fellowship.

Paul's pattern for conflict resolution.

1. Affirmation - Begin with positive words Philemon 4-7
2. Negotiation - Find middle ground Philemon 8-13
3. Options - identify possible solutions Philemon 14
4. Clarification - Clarify your intentions Philemon 15-16
5. Decision - Ask for a decision or response Philemon 17
6. Expectation - Share positive expectations of the person or situation Philemon 21-22

As a leader you will deal with conflict often. It can be very stressful if you don't have these understandings. We all could use more wisdom in dealing with people.

- If you can stop the progress of the conflict cycle you can salvage the relationships. Usually after it has hit the injustice collecting stage it is hard to resolve the relationship to the original relationship. An adjustment in the relationship will have to happen to move forward.
- There are always opportunities to be in conflict. A wise person can avoid unnecessary conflict. Conflict isn't always a bad thing. Sometimes conflict is very necessary. However, at times we can get involved in things which we should avoid. Also some

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people desire to have conflict all the time. That is a contentious person which I teach about later in this book.

- When you have conflict you will need God's wisdom to bring resolve and healing.
- A scripture that really helped me concerning conflict is Proverbs 29:9 which indicates that a fool cannot resolve conflict. God wants us to be able to bring resolution to conflict. If the wisest man of the Old Testament needed wisdom we needed it as well. Take a moment and read Solomon's story in I Kings chapter 3. It is worth the read.
- As Moses in the wilderness realized we will realize quickly in ministry that people, even God's people, are not always mature or honorable. Stay honorable always when you deal with people. What you say will always be remembered. Even though others may provoke you they will remember how you responded forever.

Lesson 6 The Most important book on earth is the Bible.

Let's listen to the testimonies about the bible given in these scriptures. These will reveal the power of the word of God.

Power of the Word of God

1. The Word is Spirit and Life to the hearer. John 6:63
2. The Word is sharper than a two edged sword. - Hebrews 4:12-13
3. The Word is absolute truth - Proverbs 30:5
4. The Word is inspired by the Holy-Ghost - II Peter 1:21
5. Will bring a harvest when used and spoken. I Peter 1:23, Luke 8:11
6. Good fruit bad fruit - Matthew 7:18
7. Obeying the Word will assure a person's success. Joshua 1:6-8
8. The Word will keep a person from sin. Psalms 119:11

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9. Defeats Satan Matthew 4 - Jesus said it is written 3 different times to defeat the devil.
10. When obeyed brings blessings Deut. 28:1-2
11. When the Word is disobeyed it brings curses. Deut. 28:15,
12. Hearing the word will build faith. And Faith pleases God! Romans 10:17, Hebrews 11:6
13. The Word brings freedom from bondage. John 8:32
14. The word will equip you for every good work. -- II Timothy 3:16-17

God gives us ears to hear so we can live. Read Isaiah 55:1-7 and Proverbs 2:1-5 and recognize what happens if we hear God's instructions.

11 Reasons the bible is the most important book on earth!

1. *It is the wisdom of God. Proverbs 2:6*
2. *It is a book revealing God's love to a lost world. John 3:16 , I John 3:16, I John 4:8*
3. *It is a book that teaches the right order of things. I Chronicles 12:33, Ephesians 4 and 5.*
4. *Reveals the laws of the universe. Matthew 13 law of seed time and harvest, Law of truth Malachi 2:6, Ezekiel 44:4-5 Law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, Law of Sin and death - Romans 8:2 , and many more!*
5. *Relationship handbook - How to keep good relationship with God - I John 1*
6. *It is a worship encyclopedia! John 4:24 - God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. How to worship God is revealed Psalms 100:2*

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7. *Teaches Spiritual conduct. How to act in Church. How to act in God's presence. Ephesians 4: 1-32*
 8. *The bible is a problem solving handbook -- Financial problems, Sin problems, marriage problems, church problems.*
 9. *Deliverance handbook - Contains stories about deliverance. Paul and Silas, David and Goliath, Gideon, Paul, Israel out of Egypt.*
 10. *Creates conviction that will bring change. It puts steel in your convictions. Will give you power to stand against sin. Jesus said it is written. Matthew 4, Psalms 119:11*
 11. *Book of Divine secrets - Psalms 25:14 , Genesis 18:17-18, Proverbs 22:29*
- *Fall in love with the Word of God and the Person it leads us too!*

Study to show yourself approved. There are wonderful nuggets of wisdom in God's word. There are keys to victory. There are principles to guide your life. Read Joshua 1:1-8. Do you see the connection between success and God's word? If you will make God's word a priority. If you will let the word of God adjust your path. If you will become a doer of God's word you will walk victorious and see success in your life!

Lesson 7 Enemies of Your Growth

God calls us to love Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength! As we pursue Him we can find ourselves in situations that could stymie our growth.

Let's consider 4 main reasons we stop growing.

1. Offended - In the battle of our Christian life we are always a target of the enemy. Paul told us in Ephesians 6 to make sure we put on the whole armor of God. He also tells us that we do not wage war against flesh and blood. However, some of our most deadly attacks from Satan will come from people. People who we trusted. People we thought could never do something like that. People who are closest begin to disrespect us. Etc. WE can get hurt. Think about Jesus and Judas. Judas was in training. Judas was going to carry the gospel to

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some part of the world and start the church in that region. However we do not hear about Judas any longer. I know there are people saying there is a gospel of Judas but don't get deceived. Judas backslid and hung himself. Judas betrayed Jesus. Jesus was of course affected by this event. At that point Jesus could have given up and said well it's over because one of my best friends turned their back but Jesus stayed the course. Also we see Demas leave Paul. Paul doesn't give up. Paul doesn't get so offended that he stops the plan of God for his life. No, he keeps pressing towards the mark. We cannot stop because of offenses. We may have expectations that others do not meet. We may have scenarios that unfold that totally cut us deep in the heart. God is healer and God knows how you feel. Keep your love for Jesus and people! God loves people and Jesus's prayer on the cross can become our prayer with God's grace. (Father, forgive them, for they know not what they are doing.) Allow God to enter your bitter time with His healing solution. God can make it up to you!

2. Fear - We can look at the giants in the land and begin to whence and shrink back. There is a lot of resistance to God's will getting accomplished. There is a lot of hindrance to the plan going forward. However, with God all things are possible. Don't lose your vision! Don't fear the worst. God can do great things in and through you! The fear you may have can be overcome! God gives us several promises that start with these words: DO NOT FEAR! There are 365 times when God says do not fear! That's one for each day! So I encourage you to lay your fears at his feet and receive his power! Receive his strength! Just think about Moses standing before Pharaoh. Pharaoh being the most powerful leader on the earth at that time. But Moses knew God was with him! He was able to stand when others would have shuttered in fear! You can know God is with you! Even though all hell comes against you God is with you and God will deliver you! Think about Elijah and Jezebel. That story gives one many reasons to fear if they are Elijah! But Elijah calls for a showdown and God shows up to validate Elijah! God will validate you if you trust in Him!

3. Loss - Sometimes we will suffer great losses in doing the word of God. This can cause us to slow our progress. If we feel God is allowing bad things to happen and many things are falling apart we could stop trying to serve God! Don't stop. If God is eliminating things in your life it is for your best interest. If the devil is stealing from you. God can teach you how to protect your garden. Don't shrink back and lose your soul. Get before God and learn His ways!

4. Cold hearted-ness - The heart can grow cold in the battle for God. If we don't keep our relationship with God intact but we keep fighting we will soon feel very empty and even start moving away from God. Cold heartedness is sneaky. It slowly progresses against us and soon we will find ourselves totally cold towards God. Sampson's life is a good example. He started judging Israel but he began to compromise. As He compromised his relationship

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with God was damaged. He ends up breaking all the Nazarite vow requirements. Then one day he shakes himself expecting God to show up and He is given a huge wake up call. God isn't anywhere around him. Sampson had decided to go his own way, live his own life. He was expecting God to be the genie in the bottle when Sampson wanted him. God is not our Santa Clause.

God is our Father and He wants that relationship intact at all times. Don't let the little foxes kill the vine. Watch Jesus' admonition to the church of Laodicea. He told them they had lost their first love. Then He tells them how to get it back. Read the story now in Revelation 2:1-7.

Here are a few indicators that your first love is waning:

1. When my delight in the Lord is no longer as great as my delight in someone else, I have lost my first love.
2. When my soul does not long for times of rich fellowship in God's Word or in prayer, I have lost my first love.
3. When my thoughts during leisure moments do not reflect upon the Lord, I have lost my first love.
4. When I claim to be "only human" and easily give in to those things I know displease the Lord, I have lost my first love.
5. When I do not willingly and cheerfully give to God's work or to the needs of others, I have lost my first love.
6. When I cease to treat every Christian Brother or Sister as I would the Lord, I have lost my first love.
7. When I view the commands of Christ as restrictions to my happiness rather than expressions of His love, I have lost my first love.
8. When I inwardly strive for the acclaim of this world rather than the approval of the Lord, I have lost my first love.
9. When I fail to make Christ or His words known because I fear rejection, I have lost my first love.
10. When I refuse to give up an activity which I know is offending a weaker brother, I have lost my first love.
11. When I become complacent to sinful conditions around me, I have lost my first love.
12. When I am unable to forgive another for offending me, I have lost my first love. Read Proverbs 12:16 about how we should respond to offenses.

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Now as a leader you also must be aware of what stymies other people's growth. Paul dealt with many things in His ministry that would try to stop the growth of the church. As you help a church grow, be aware of what may hurt the flock. Be part of the solution working to rid your church of these issues. Working with souls is delicate business!

Think of these resisting forces and people Paul dealt with in his ministry.

- Immorality - fornication and adultery
- Divisions which include clicks, divisions, and competitions in the body.
- Un-forgiveness
- Talking and gossiping about others in the body of Christ.
- Having a pharisaical spirit
- Jewish Law promoters - Bringing everyone under the law instead of grace.
- Alexander the coppersmith

Also remember Moses as he dealt with many issues as He led the Israelites through the wilderness. He dealt with:

- Insubordination
- Grumbling and complaining
- Rebellion
- Presumptuous people who thought they could replace Moses.

Also remember John who dealt with a man named Diotrephes in III John 1:9-10. He caused much pain and brought resistance to John's ministry.

And finally we must always recognize the epitome of evil, Satan himself, and how he resists the saints. Satan works the antichrist spirit which wears down the saints. Daniel 7:25

These all hinder the church from going forward! However we can trust God and stand on the promise in Matthew 16:18 which states: ***And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.***

Jesus promised that He would build His church. The rock is not Peter but the rock is the revelation of the knowledge that Jesus is the Son of God. As you read that story you will see Peter recognized Jesus as the Son of God. The ones who recognize Jesus as the Son of God are part of this great Church of Jesus Christ!

Lesson 8 Suffering

Perhaps you have seen the bumper sticker: "When life hands you a lemon, make lemonade!" It is easier to smile at that statement than to practice it, but the basic philosophy is sound. In fact, it is Biblical. Throughout the Bible are people who turned defeat into victory and trials into triumph. Instead of being VICTIMS, they became VICTORS.

The Epistle of James tells us that we can have this same experience today! Whether we are dealing with trials on the outside or temptations on the inside through faith in God and Jesus Christ we CAN experience victory!

Read James 1:2-8 now:

From this scripture we see that the KEY to turning trials into triumph is to obey four imperatives:

- a. COUNT - 1:2
- b. KNOW - 1:3
- c. LET - 1:4
- d. ASK - 1:5-8

Let's look at each one:

I. **"COUNT IT ALL JOY WHEN YOU FALL INTO VARIOUS TRIALS"** (1:2)

A. NOTICE THAT JAMES ASSUMES THAT WE WILL EXPERIENCE TRIALS...He doesn't say "if" but "when"
This is because Christians must expect trials.

So said Jesus – Write out John 16:33 here:

Also Paul said we would suffer. Write out Acts 14:22:

The natures of these trials are "various". Some trials come simply because we are human

- 1) Sickness, accidents
- 2) Disappointments, death
- b. Other trials come because we are Christians.

Write out I Peter 4:12

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Another reason we suffer is because Satan fights us.

Why do bad things happen to good people?

1. We are in a fallen world.
2. We are ignorant at times.
3. We have an enemy that resists us.
4. We are suffering because of others' decisions.
5. We suffer because of our decisions.

If we live in the world we can expect trials!

What is the world's response to trials? Usually it doesn't include God. People run to the bottle, drugs, anything else they fill will relieve their pain. Some go into deep depression. Some move into bitterness and blaming. The list goes on and on. We have a dear friend who wants to help us in our trials! That is Jesus! Do you turn to God when things get rough? We can look to God and He is a very present help in our time of trouble!

WHAT IS TO BE THE CHRISTIAN'S RESPONSE? "COUNT IT ALL JOY!"

1. This was the attitude of:
 - a. The apostles in Acts 5:41 - Take a moment to read this scripture.
 - b. Paul in Romans 5:3 – Take a moment to read this scripture.
 - c. Paul also in Philippians 2:17-18 – Take a moment to read this scripture.
 - d. Other Christians I Peter 4:12-14

Wow what a perspective. Of course, we are not thankful for the trial, but we should be thankful for what the trial produces in us. Let's look at James' next advice. In James 1:3

"KNOWING THAT THE TESTING OF YOUR FAITH PRODUCES PATIENCE"

THE RIGHT KNOWLEDGE CONCERNING THE VALUE OF TRIALS MAKES IT POSSIBLE TO HAVE A JOYFUL ATTITUDE...

We are to understand that trials test our faith. When our faith is tested it can produce something wonderful in our lives and for God's kingdom! Just as fire purifies gold our faith is purified. – Read 1st Peter 1:7 now. This is the same principle as an athlete in training. They get more and more in shape as they go through rigorous training! With this understanding, we can have joy in trials because we know that testing works FOR us, not AGAINST us.

Write out II Corinthians 4:17 here: _____

FAITH TESTED PRODUCES "PATIENCE" Write out Romans 5:3-4 here:

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James 1:4 tells us another powerful principle to overcome suffering!

"LET PATIENCE HAVE ITS PERFECT WORK"

TO TRULY TURN TRIALS INTO TRIUMPH, WE MUST LET "PATIENCE" DO IT'S WORK. Too often, we want to get our trials or difficulties over with quickly. But there are times when the best course is to bear up under the trial. Instead of grumbling and complaining, take time to pursue God. He will help you patiently endure the trial, doing good despite the trial.

WHEN PATIENCE HAS HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO WORK, IT PRODUCES

"MATURITY"! The word PERFECT doesn't mean you never make a mistake or you are not flawed or subject to failure. It means "completeness, wholeness, maturity" In the New Testament, it is used of those who: Have attained to spiritual manhood in Christ, have reached full maturity and understanding in spiritual matters. These are no longer "babes" and immature persons in Christ. Such maturity comes only when patience has had time to work! Consider, for example, an endurance runner in his training. To be a mature runner requires letting patience do its job. That is, patiently running mile after mile in training. If we wish to run the race well spiritually speaking, we need to develop patience. Patience comes only through a form of spiritual "resistance training".

This brings us to the fourth imperative necessary to turn trials into triumph. This is found in James 1:5-8.

"LET HIM ASK OF GOD"

IF WE LACK WISDOM, ASK FOR IT FROM GOD! He has promised to give it liberally and He will not be angry at us for making such a request. Even as Solomon's request for wisdom was well-pleasing to God. Reference I Kings 3:7-12.

WHAT EXACTLY IS THIS "WISDOM"?

Wisdom is recognizing the difference in things, people, and situations. Wisdom is the key to overcoming suffering. If you are suffering financially, ask God for wisdom. If you are suffering physically, ask God for wisdom. If you are suffering in relationships, ask God for wisdom. If you are suffering for Christ, ask God for wisdom to win souls through this suffering!

Wisdom is applying knowledge correctly. I don't go to a hamburger restaurant to get my car worked on. I don't have my 6 year old drive my truck to work for me. Applying knowledge correctly is what God wants to help show us! So turn your suffering into opportunities to pray. I watch movies sometimes when people are going through the worst plight of life. They never show the person bowing to pray to God. This is a major problem in our culture. People do not seek God. He is a very present help in our times of trouble. However, not many know how readily available God is to and for us. Seek God! He will help you through this trial! Wisdom from God can help you turn this trial into a triumph! I know many people that have testimonies of terrible events and occurrences in their life. They could have committed suicide, turned to drugs, turned to living KnowledgeBase and perspective that adversity can accomplish much

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good. Then letting the patient enduring of adversity, accomplish its work. All the while using the wisdom God gives in answer to prayer to help put it all together. When this is done, even trials can be a source of joy for the Christian! Have we learned to make lemonade out of our lemons in life?

Lesson 9 Attentiveness/Promptness

This key is essential in leadership and in success. Many people are not genius or overly talented however they are succeeding immensely. This is because they are attentive and prompt.

Define attentiveness:

Define promptness:

Are you an attentive person?

Do you recognize what people like or dislike?

Do you notice when someone's countenance is different?

Do you recognize when you should change a lightbulb?

Do you pay attention to small details?

Do you pay attention when your car engine light has come on?

Do you recognize when someone desires your attention?

Do you recognize when people are listening?

Do you know when people have stopped listening?

Attentiveness will cause people to know you care about them. Attentiveness will help you be ahead of situations and issues that arise. Attentiveness can put you in the right position to reap a great harvest financially. Attentiveness is one of the greatest lessons I learned in life.

If I care about someone I should be attentive to their needs. If I care about someone I should be attentive to what they care about.

Instances where attentiveness helped me:

I don't care much for pets. However, my wife loves animals. When I began to value that she cares about pets our relationship changed. I don't mean just a common recognition of

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her care for pets, but a true valuing of what she values. If she is trying to get my attention about our dog I pay attention now. Before it was terrible how I just looked over her concerns for our dog. I recognized I was losing a lot of favor in my wife's life because I didn't value what she valued.

Another instance is about those in my congregation. When they have a birthday it is a discipline of attentiveness to connect with people on their birthdays. I had to work to get their birthdays but each time I give a little gift or call on people's birthday's it really is responded to with appreciation. It lets them know I really care about them.

Another instance is a countenance. I learned my dad's countenance early. I knew when he was mad or happy. I could tell on his countenance what kind of day it was going to be. I see my children looking at my countenance to see how I feel and they adjust to that accordingly.

Think about some of these stories in the bible.

Nehemiah and the king is one story that shows attentiveness. Nehemiah was sad in the king's presence. If you know the eastern monarch culture you know that showing sadness in front of a king was an indication you were unhappy with his leadership. Nehemiah quickly responded to the king that the reason for his sad countenance was not the king's leadership but Nehemiah's feelings about his people back in Jerusalem.

These scriptures talk about seeking the face of the Lord and having His countenance to shine on us. So we can get a glimpse of God's countenance and we all want His face to shine on us.

Let's highlight some things that we should be attentive about in our life and ministry.

- Be attentive when you are writing a letter/email/text/ or etc. Attentive to how it will come across. Attentive to communicate something that concerns them back to them in that letter.
- Be attentive when you are talking to someone. You can be attentive and even use some of those things you have recognized when you have a conversation with them. If they told you 1 week ago that their family member was having surgery you could ask them how that surgery went and if they need anything.

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- Be attentive when someone says they like something. If you are attentive you can always use that in your gift giving. You hear someone say they like milkshakes from a certain store. You could buy them a gift card from that store. That will go a long way.
- Be attentive to instructions. Most leaders do not waste many words. If you do what people ask you it will move you to the top of the ladder so quickly your head will spin. People in leadership are looking for people who listen and follow directions.
- Be attentive in your finances. Keeping accurate records will save you time and money.
- Be attentive in recording things that you are learning.
- Be attentive to the voice of God. If you will honor and respond immediately to His voice you will see tremendous growth and blessings come into your life!

When inattentiveness has hurt me:

I was working at the front desk of a well-known organization. Our organization was hiring a new director over the entire branch of our organization. The job candidate came in and was trying to talk to me. I was stressed and busy and I didn't give him much of an answer. A few days later he became the branch director. He never said anything but I had an opportunity for a raise a few months later and I didn't get it. I believe it was because I was not attentive and kind in my dealings with him on that first encounter. I could have made a terrific impression but I blew it. It cost me and my family thousands of dollars over the next two years of our lives.

Wise and wealthy people are attentive to details and reactions!

If you have ever worked with kids or with elderly people you know you must be attentive to the environment. I have forgotten to put things away and I have left rugs scrunched up that ended up causing someone to trip. I left a few things out when my children were small that ended up in their mouth with me trying to fish them out. Attentiveness is important for every part of life.

As a leader you must be attentive. If you see someone has sticky fingers you must deal with it. If you see things in your organization happening you must pay attention. If you

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have people being pulled by wrong people you must step in and try to stir them clear of danger. As a leader your attentiveness to detail and to danger can be life or death.

A parent who is not attentive will not see the tail tail signs of an addiction, or a sexual encounter their child is involved in. So many parents are not attentive. Their kids are doing who knows what while they are on the computer or sleeping or working. The kids are involved in terrible things and the parents are absent.

If you are more attentive you can put yourself in great financial positions. If you own a store and you are attentive that people bought 30 glasses that I had in stock at thanksgiving because they had turkeys on them. You can set yourself up for the next year to have 100 in stock and watch the money flow.

Jesus was attentive. Jesus knew the woman touched the hem of His garment.

Jesus knew what Peter was getting ready to go through.

Jesus was attentive concerning the scriptures. He constantly referred to them in his conversations with Satan, His disciples, and the Pharisees. Jesus was attentive about the right things. This is another landmine Satan has sucked people into. Being attentive about the right things at the right time. Some can major on something that is not even needed at this point. Some can focus all their attention on something that will not help solve the most pressing issue. Learn to be attentive to the correct things at the correct time! If you want to increase your salary, be attentive to what your boss is attentive too. If you see him focusing on something and desiring help, apply your effort to the current pressing issue of your boss's heart! He will see that you are attentive to his needs and watch what he does! You will get more opportunities and He will reward you!

Will you make it a priority to be attentive?

I am very attentive to words. I hear every statement and I use words very precisely. You will very rarely hear an idle word come out of my mouth. When I say something it has a purpose behind it. I don't waste words. I also know being attentive to people's words reveals their heart. So I listen closely and am able to tell where people are spiritually because of those words quite often.

If I hear someone saying they are nothing but a loser. I know they haven't been convicted about God's opinion of them.

If I hear someone saying that certain sins aren't that bad I recognize they do not believe God's word and they are misled about the character of God.

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If I hear someone talking evil of those over them I recognize that loyalty is not in their heart and they will soon suffer because of it.

If I hear people discussing the scriptures I realize they are trying to grow and God's blessings will soon show up in their life.

If I hear them making excuses, being vindictive, being snide, and being trivial about God's word I realize they are beginning to backslide.

So much in life is revealed by words. God listens to our conversations. He is very attentive to our conversations. Look at Malachi 3:16-18.

Lesson 10 Satan's and his tactics

We have a real and vicious enemy. He hates God and anything that glorifies God. He can't come against God because he has been cast out of heaven. However he attempts to get back at God by hurting God's creation! That's us. All that glorifies God, Satan is trying to wound and pollute. Satan is described in I Peter 5:8-9. Write that scripture out here:

Satan's tactic against Jesus was to question who He was. Satan's tactics are the same against us. Satan raises questions that can cause doubt to enter your heart. You may hear the enemy bring thoughts or questions like this:

- God doesn't love you.
- God is doing more for them than you.
- Your sin is too much for God to let you go to heaven.
- You're too far lost.
- If you were really a good Christian you would
- That church doesn't love you. Those people are looking down on you.
- When you did that it was just emotion. It was just your own plan.
- When that person died it was God's judgment on you.

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How many times does the enemy come to us and say the same thing? You're not really a good Christian.....You are not doing all you should be doing to serve God.....There are definitely opportunities for us to do better for God. If we have failed Him we should repent. However once we repent we need to be aware the enemy will try to keep us under guilt. God is not going to guilt us. God will convict us but will not keep condemning us about our mistakes after we have repented. That is the enemy's tactic. Know who you are in Christ.

There are times we can do better. There may be sins, which you need to repent. However, the Devil is the accuser of the brethren. He is always trying to bring up doubt in your heart. He is always working hard to get our faith weakened. However, our relationship is not severed because of our sin. Our relationship with God is intact. We should be aware of Satan's tactics so we can refute them and stand by faith until the answer comes.

These are the deadly D's that Satan uses against Christians.

1. **Disappointment**: All disappointments are His appointments. *And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.* **Romans 8:28**
2. **Discouragement**: The second stage of disappointment. Do your actions and countenance look as if "God is dead?" Ask forgiveness. *Moreover David was greatly distressed because the people spoke of stoning him, for all the people were embittered, each one because of his sons and his daughters. But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God.* **1 Samuel 30:6**
3. **Despair**: The third and final stage of disappointment. *We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing;* **2 Corinthians 4:8**
4. **Doubt**: The first tactic Satan used with Eve was to doubt God's Word. *Has God really said? Also with Jesus in Matthew 4 Satan said to Jesus " If you're the Son of God."* Satan will try to get you to doubt God's character and also Satan will try to get you to doubt who you are in Christ!
5. **Disbelief**: The final form of doubt. Satan finished tempting Eve by denying the command of the Lord. *Take care, brethren, lest there should be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living God.* **Hebrews 3:12**
6. **Distraction**: A very subtle tactic of our enemy. Distractions from God's will can be wholesome activities. Such as doing things with the family or your job. The real

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enemy of the best is not the worst, but the good. Do not forget to use Peter's words in a difficult situation: *But seeing the wind, he became afraid, and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!"* **Matthew 14:30**

7. **Double-mindedness:**

"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. **Matt 6:24**

A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways. **James 1:8**

Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. **James 4:8**

8. **Dishonesty:** *Don't let the enemy fool you. We don't have to lie, cheat, and step on others to get what we need. That is not how God works, and those types of actions have consequences. Instead, serve the Lord faithfully, and He will provide.* Dishonesty may give an immediate reward however in the long run dishonesty will destroy you and your reputation. Many feel they can manipulate situations with dishonesty but God wants truth in your inward parts. Read these two scriptures for God's opinion about this matter: Proverbs 11:1, Proverbs 20:23, Proverbs 51:6. Is there an area that you are deceiving others in? Are you honest in dealings? Are you giving your days' work for a day's pay? Are you being fair in transactions? Are you recording the facts correctly or do you fudge the numbers? Be honest and trust the Lord. He is the one who gives the increase. If God cannot trust you He won't bless you! *We have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.* **2 Corinthians 4:2**

9. **Deceit:** *Cults add to God's Word and liberals take away from it. For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.* **2 Cor 11:13**

10. **Dullness:** *Affects the listener that prevents stemming the tide of iniquity and apostasy. Concerning Christ we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.* **Hebrews 5:11** This subject gets my attention because Satan has used it on many. Let me explain it the way God shared it with me. Dullness is not recognizing something. In the Revelation Jesus addressed a church about their condition. He expressed to them that they were thinking wrong about a lot of things in their lives. Read this scripture: Revelation 3:17 This church as a group thought

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they didn't need anything and that they were wealthy. Jesus gave them a different diagnosis. He told them they were wretched, miserable and poor. What a difference. He talks to them on a few occasions.

11. **Deadness:** Unchecked dullness. We are to be dead to *sin* and alive to *righteousness* **Rom 6:1, 2, 11**. But some Christians have allowed Satan to twist these two facts. *'I know your deeds, that you have a name, that you are alive, but you are dead. Revelation 3:1*
12. **Delay:** Many men meant to get saved at the 11th hour, but died at 10:30. *Do not boast about tomorrow, For you do not know what a day may bring forth. Proverbs 27:1*
13. **Discord:** Trouble in the church can more likely begin with discord rather than doctrine. *There are six things which the Lord hates, yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that run rapidly to evil, a false witness who utters lies, and one who spreads strife among brothers. Proverbs 6:16-19*
14. **Defilement:** God does not require gold or silver vessels, only clean ones. God can never use a believer who defiles himself with the things of this world, regardless of his education, ability, energy, or experience. *Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are. 1 Cor. 3:16-17*
15. **Defame:** Criticizing or belittling others. *Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor, him I will destroy; No one who has a haughty look and an arrogant heart will I endure. Ps 101:5*
16. **Disobedience:** There are two very different men named *Saul* in the Bible. What made the difference between them? Obedience. *Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice,..."For rebellion is as the sin of divination, And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He has also rejected you from being king." 1 Samuel 15:22-23*

In the bible there is a story about a man named Benaiah - I Chronicles 11:22

Benaiah killed a lion on a snowy day in a pit. Now many would wonder why Benaiah would need to kill a lion in a pit on a snowy day. Just let the lion stay in the snowy pit.

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However, the pit that the lion was in would be considered the army refrigerator. It was Benaiah's refrigerator and Benaiah's entire lively hood. This is a great story for us. There is a lion who wants to steal your lively hood. Satan would love nothing better than to destroy your life, your potential to be thwarted, and many souls that you were going to save are lost because he destroyed you.

- ***So what is this lion? It is Satan.***

Satan doesn't come and say hello I'm a lion I'm going into your pit to destroy you. No the devil comes in sneaky. He will come in through a drug problem and get you hooked. He is now destroying your lively hood. He will come in through flirting with someone else's husband or wife. He just sneaked in to destroy your life. He sneaks in through a lie on your taxes. He sneaks in through stealing money from the offering. He sneaks in from telling your boss you worked more hours than you really did. He comes in your heart trying to get you to deceive others by living a double life of some sorts. Don't let the devil deceive you! Don't let him make you think you're above the rules. Don't let him persuade you that God's word isn't going to work for you fast enough so you have to make other plans.

- ***All sin is not trusting God.***

The thief doesn't trust God to provide. The liar doesn't trust that telling the truth is better than a lie. The adulterer doesn't trust that the spouse they have is what they need. The murderer doesn't let God heal their heart and forgive others. The fornicator doesn't think there will be penalties for playing with sex outside of the boundaries God created.

All sin is not trusting God and all sin is giving an opportunity for the lion to get in your pit!

How do we defeat Satan? Write out your steps to defeat Satan here:

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This scripture is essential in your battle against our adversary the devil!

Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. 1 Peter 5:8

For extra wisdom look up and meditate on these scriptures:

- **James 4:7**
- **2 Corinthians 2:11.**
- **Ephesians 6:10-17**
- **Revelation 12:11**

Lesson 11 Striving for excellence

Excellence is presenting yourself at the best possible level with what you currently own.

Daniel had an excellent Spirit! Read scripture in Daniel 5:12 and Daniel 6:3.

What does it mean to have an excellent spirit? What does it mean to live in excellence? Does it mean you're better than others? Does it mean you can look down on others because you got it together and they don't? NO!

An excellent spirit is something that must be taught and learned. It is something that you can grow into.

The best definition of excellence I have heard is this one. **Excellence is presenting yourself at the best possible level with what you currently own.**

- So if you only have one set of clothes make sure they are ironed, clean, and crisp.
- So if you only have this car you can make sure the trash is cleaned out, the tires are shiny, the windows inside are clear.
- So if you only rent a room from a family you can make sure that the room is presentable and the floor is vacuumed.
- So if you are only a sophomore in college you can still communicate with letters that are neat and spelled correctly.

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- So if you don't have confidence you still shake someone's hand and work to make an interesting conversation.
- So if you live in a bad neighborhood, your house doesn't have to be broken down.
- So if you're a 6th grader you can take great notes and keep your book bag clean.

Living out the spirit of excellence has many rewards.

1. Leaders choose you for more opportunities
2. Leaders will invest more training in you.
3. Leaders will connect you with other opportunities.
4. Leaders will give you a financial raise.
5. Others will immediately follow you because you have things in order.

Your life is a conversation. If you have wrinkled clothes what is that conversation? If your car is un maintained and dirty inside and out what is that saying about you? If your house has grass so high it looks like a jungle what is being said to others? What's being said to those who follow you?

One of the major points to keeping things excellent is ORDER!

Being ordered in your files can save you time and money.

Being ordered in your garage can keep you from buying a tool you have already.

Being ordered in your closet can save you time on Sunday morning when you may be running a little late.

Being ordered in your taxes can help you write off some of the expenses which could give you an extra thousand dollars back on your refund.

Being ordered in your work and job can save you from an accident. Just think about coming on your construction job that is very messy. What are the potential problems? Nail in the foot or tripping over a cord. Or maybe you can't find the board you already purchased. Etc. Etc.

- **When I took a ride through different towns and communities I began to recognize something.**
- **In the poverty stricken areas with a lot of welfare and unemployment I saw a tendency. That tendency is wasting time and disorder.**

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- When I rode through middle class neighborhoods I saw a well-groomed lawn. I saw cars kept up. I saw flowers and things growing and looking great.
- When I rode through rich neighborhoods I saw an even greater order in their dealings. The back yards were clean. I saw a person raise their garage door and it was gorgeous! I mean I saw tools in place, even things stored neatly that were for the next seasons such as Christmas décor. It was amazing.
- This was not a race issue but a choice. Those well-ordered people were of all cultures including white, black, Mexican, Indian, Asian, and even Jamaican man! HAHA

I pondered on this. Was this choice to have an orderly life something that just happened once they became rich or was it what helped them get there? I believe it was what helped them succeed. The bible states something awesome about wisdom. In Proverbs 4:8 wisdom will promote you! You want a raise. You want blessings/ Get things in order. God blesses order!

Look at creation. This indicates God is an orderly God. Order is essential in all areas of life. Think about it. When something is out of order in your body you get sick. When something is out of order in the church people are lost or wounded. When something is out of order in the family the family misses some of the blessings God intended. Paul wrote to Timothy and talked about the order of the family. He explains the husband's duties and role, then he explains the wife's duties and role, then he explains the children's role in the family. Obeying this would bring order. Think about a home that is out of order. Maybe the 12 year old son is running the home. Is this going to work well? No. There must be order in every area of life.

My wife and I spent some time in China doing mission work. The nation has made much advancement in technology and industry since we have been there. When living there we had a few experiences with chaotic traffic situations. We were very concerned for our safety. Living in the USA we were used to people staying on their side of the road and people giving you a signal if they were turning. In China it was much different. It was a free for all. We did see several wrecks and many injuries that could have been avoided with a little bit of order.

When you come to your church on Sunday morning you will experience order immediately. Look at the parking lot. Just think if people were not accustomed to parking in an orderly way. We would lose probably about 20 parking spaces if we didn't do it orderly.

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Order always brings peace. Just think how you feel when you walk into your bathroom, garage, and bedroom. When things are out of order how do you feel? How do you feel when things are in order? Just think how you feel when your workspace is out of order and chaotic. I get a little stressed when things are out of order.

Practice ordering your life. Just small steps will make a huge difference.

How to order your life:

Make a place for everything.

Create organized processes for your life.

Look at those who are well organized and learn from them.

Your productivity will multiply when you become well ordered.

Stay on top of the clutter.

Purge things that have not been used for the last year.

Purge clothes that you haven't put on for years.

Pull together pictures.

Just take small steps towards order. It will bless you!

Lesson 12Ministering Unto The Lord

Your first assignment is unto the Lord! He is your maker, your healer, your provider, your strength, your hope, etc. We were created for Him. We were created to bring joy to His heart. One of the greatest blessings to our heart is ministering to Him. He gets a lot of joy from us! We were created for it so we get the most joy when we have pleased God.

One way we can bring joy to the heart of God is to Worship, praise, and honor Him! There is a focus we all should make to spend quality time in the secret place with Him! When we do this it will keep our heart in tune with God. He can speak to us, impress upon us, show us things, readjust our priorities, and so much more!

Take time to minister to the Lord each day! Don't think this is the only thing you have to do. Some people pray all day and let all other responsibilities fall to the wayside. God knows you have other responsibilities on this earth He created this opportunity for us. However we should get in God's presence each day to commune and fellowship with Him!

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When Joshua ministered unto the Lord he saw God get involved in the battle He was facing! This is a promise for you as well. When you minister unto God He comes close and gets involved in our lives! Read this story in Joshua chapter 5.

What is "Ministering to the Lord?"

The phrase that is sometimes heard among those leading worship is that we must come and "minister to the Lord," and since the word "minister" can bring to our minds the idea of "meeting needs," we need to think seriously about what we are saying. This is particularly interesting since God is self-sufficient and needs nothing.

To be able to talk about the subject, I'll list the more prominent passages that deal with ministering to the Lord as well as ministering before the Lord, which is similar. The goal here is not to provide commentary for each passage, but see the common elements that exist.

Old Testament:

Psalm 101:6 My eyes will be on the faithful in the land, that they may dwell with me; the one whose walk is blameless will minister to me.

Isaiah 56:6 And foreigners who bind themselves to the LORD to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD, and to be his servants, all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to my covenant—

Judges 20:28 with Phinehas son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, ministering before it.) They asked, "Shall we go up again to fight against the Benjamites, our fellow Israelites, or not?" The LORD responded, "Go, for tomorrow I will give them into your hands."

1 Samuel 2:18

But Samuel was ministering before the LORD—a boy wearing a linen ephod.

1 Chronicles 16:1

[Ministering Before the Ark] They brought the ark of God and set it inside the tent that David had pitched for it, and they presented burnt offerings and fellowship offerings before God.

Jeremiah 33:21

then my covenant with David my servant—and my covenant with the Levites who are priests

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ministering before me—can be broken and David will no longer have a descendant to reign on his throne.

While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

Acts 13:2 New International Version (©1984)

Numbers 18:2

Bring your fellow Levites from your ancestral tribe to join you and assist you when you and your sons minister before the tent of the covenant law.

1 Samuel 2:30

"Therefore the LORD, the God of Israel, declares: 'I promised that members of your family would minister before me forever.' But now the LORD declares: 'Far be it from me! Those who honor me I will honor, but those who despise me will be disdained.

1 Samuel 2:35

I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who will do according to what is in my heart and mind. I will firmly establish his priestly house, and they will minister before my anointed one always.

1 Chronicles 15:2

Then David said, "No one but the Levites may carry the ark of God, because the LORD chose them to carry the ark of the LORD and to minister before him forever."

1 Chronicles 16:4

He appointed some of the Levites to minister before the ark of the LORD, to extol, thank, and praise the LORD, the God of Israel:

1 Chronicles 23:13

The sons of Amram: Aaron and Moses. Aaron was set apart, he and his descendants forever, to consecrate the most holy things, to offer sacrifices before the LORD, to minister before him and to pronounce blessings in his name forever.

2 Chronicles 29:11

My sons, do not be negligent now, for the LORD has chosen you to stand before him and serve him, to minister before him and to burn incense."

Jeremiah 33:22

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I will make the descendants of David my servant and the Levites who minister before me as countless as the stars in the sky and as measureless as the sand on the seashore."

Ezekiel 40:46

and the room facing north is for the priests who guard the altar. These are the sons of Zadok, who are the only Levites who may draw near to the LORD to minister before him."

Ezekiel 43:19

You are to give a young bull as a sin offering to the Levitical priests of the family of Zadok, who come near to minister before me, declares the Sovereign LORD.

Ezekiel 44:15

"But the Levitical priests, who are descendants of Zadok and who guarded my sanctuary when the Israelites went astray from me, are to come near to minister before me; they are to stand before me to offer sacrifices of fat and blood, declares the Sovereign LORD.

Ezekiel 44:16

They alone are to enter my sanctuary; they alone are to come near my table to minister before me and serve me as guards.

Ezekiel 45:4

It will be the sacred portion of the land for the priests, who minister in the sanctuary and who draw near to minister before the LORD. It will be a place for their houses as well as a holy place for the sanctuary.

Joel 1:9

Grain offerings and drink offerings are cut off from the house of the LORD. The priests are in mourning, those who minister before the LORD.

Joel 1:13

Put on sackcloth, you priests, and mourn; wail, you who minister before the altar. Come, spend the night in sackcloth, you who minister before my God; for the grain offerings and drink offerings are withheld from the house of your God.

Joel 2:17

Let the priests, who minister before the LORD, weep between the portico and the altar. Let them say, "Spare your people, LORD. Do not make your inheritance an object of scorn, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'"

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There is an interesting addition in two passages in 1 Chronicles 16:4 and 1 Chronicles 25:6-7. The first passage was to lead the praising of God through music, while the other describes their particular work as that of leading, being "trained and skilled" in music.

Old Testament Summary:

1. It was restricted to the priesthood.
2. It was tied to the carrying out of their responsibilities to offer sacrifices on behalf of themselves and the people.
3. It was done in recognition of who God was and what He had done for them.
4. It was done in obedience to what God had commanded.
5. It was tied to worship.

New Testament:

The passages related to "ministering to the Lord" in the New Testament are limited.

The Acts 13:2 passage ["While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." NASB ©1995] might equally be translated "while they were worshiping the Lord" [NIV, NLT, ESV].

There are few instances where Jesus is "ministered to:" the first is after the temptation account in the wilderness and he was ministered to by angels [Matthew 4:11]. Another is Jesus being anointed in the house of Simon the leper by the adulterous woman [Matthew 26:6-13], and a general reference to the women that offered help to Jesus and the disciples [Matthew 27:55-56] and the anointing of the Lord's body after the crucifixion might be considered in this same light [Mark 16:1]. With the possible exception of the adulterous woman, which might be considered worship as well as service, the instances revolve around meeting the physical needs of Christ. The motivation for doing so was no doubt out of love.

In the Apostle John's Revelation, the idea of ministering seems to center around a constant recognition of the character and nature of God, from the angelic beings that proclaim His holiness [Revelation 4:8-11], and His work of salvation, who in response bow down before the throne saying "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain" [Revelation 5:12-14].

General Summary and Conclusions:

The common thread seems to be an awesome recognition of the greatness and majesty of the character of God and the recognition of His gracious redemption of His people through His great acts. Ministering to God would then involve an obedient response to God's

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character and work, or how worship itself may be defined: "The obedience response to the revealed nature, character, and work of God." As we worship God then, we are ministering to Him. The more that we understand about *who* God is and *what* He has done, the more that we can allow Him to renew and remold our minds and our thinking, the more that we will be better able to minister or worship Him.

God needs nothing, so there is no need in Him that we might possibly meet. However; God does have desires: He desires to have a relationship with us. He knows that the most satisfying relationship that meets our inmost needs is found in our recognition of who He is, and in our submission to the plan that He has for us. We can only come to that relationship through the confession of our sins and recognition of God's saving act of redemption through His Son, Jesus. We must come to realize the absolute power and authority of God over everything, and begin the process of grasping the depth of His love for us in what He did through Christ in redemption.

Our submission and obedience are tied to our understanding of who God is and what He has done. As we live our lives allowing His love and work as our point of reference, we joyfully submit our wills and lives to the One who loved us enough to give His own life to reclaim us, rising from the dead, showing His power and authority over even death itself. We respond in obedience to His nature and work. We can do nothing less than worship Him.

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Lesson 13Clean hands - Holiness matters!

One day the Holy Spirit spoke to me, and said something to the effect of, "How are you representing me?" God's Word tells us that we are the body of Christ, and sent forth as His ambassadors, or representatives. However, many in the church today believe that because we are saved by grace, it means we don't have to keep the rules. They say that it is our heart that matters, but God's Word is clear that whatever is in our heart, will determine our actions and words. We need to draw a line between legalism, and God's ordained righteous living that He requires us to walk in. I believe this teaching will shed some light on how important it really is to live a holy and Godly life here on earth.

Let's look at these scriptures to inspire holiness:

Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. 2 Corinthians 7:1

For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

Ephesians 5:8-11

But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation [meaning behavior]; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. 1 Peter 1:15-16

God wants us to live holy and godly lives as we represent Him by our actions here on earth:

Now then we are ambassadors [representatives] for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

2 Corinthians 5:20

After all that He has done for us, the least we can do is be good and worthy representatives of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. 1 Thessalonians 4:1

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How we live our lives down here on earth does matter! For God has not called us to uncleanness, but to holiness:

For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. 1 Thessalonians 4:7

Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. 1 Timothy 4:12

I will therefore, that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.... Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety. 1 Timothy 2:8,15

Christlikeness results in holiness

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.
Romans 8:29

If a man therefore purges himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work. Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. 2 Timothy 2:21-22

Take a moment and read Psalms 15.

Write your answers in the space provided:

According to Psalm 15 what are the conditions of those who can be closest to God?

Take a moment and read Psalms 24.

According to this psalm who can ascend into the hill of the Lord?

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Take a moment and read II Timothy 2:20-26
This analogy is powerful.

Do you want to be a vessel of honor?

According to II Timothy 2:20-26 what must you do to be a vessel of honor?

Lesson 14Dealing with Contentious people.

First let's consider what a contentious person looks like:

- They will not obey a leader's instruction.
- They have their own agenda.
- They will not assist in the vision.
- They speak behind people's backs.
- You cannot solve arguments with them.
- They always find that it's not their fault and someone else's fault.

Goal of this Lesson: To provide you with Godly discernment to recognize argumentative spirits, protect your ministry assignment, and follow the biblical protocol for separation.

Main Key: Your assignment requires your undivided focus! Contentious people aren't looking for God's wisdom—they just want your time and energy. As a leader, managing your focus is just as vital as shepherding people.

Part 1: Identifying a Contentious Spirit

In your journey as a leader, you will deal with many personalities. You must learn to see the difference between a person who is truly broken and someone who is inherently quarrelsome. Look for these four characteristics:

- **The Constant Questioner:** They ask for counsel week after week but never obey the instructions. They return with the same problem.
- **The Excuse Maker:** Every time you share God's word or give direction, they have an exception or a "yeah, but" response to justify their actions.
- **The Sneaky Whisperer:** They won't challenge your authority to your face. Instead, they plant seeds of doubt and gossip in the hearts of others under the guise of being "concerned."

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- **The Joy Stealer:** After spending only a few minutes with them, you feel drained, irritated, and distracted from the work God has for you.

Scripture Foundation: *"As charcoal to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife."* - **Proverbs 26:21** (Note: A spark needs wood to grow. Don't let your emotions be the fuel for their fire!)

Part 2: Pitfalls for the Developing Leader

Argue-prone individuals often target those in training because they want to test your limits or use your desire to be helpful against you.

There are specific dangers here:

1. Trying to Win Them Over

- **The Trap:** You might think you can prove your leadership by "fixing" a difficult person or making them like you.
- **The Truth:** A contentious spirit cannot be loved into submission. Trying to persuade them to respect you will only kill your focus and hurt your confidence.

2. Polluting Your Environment

- **The Trap:** If you let them vent their complaints to you, their critical nature will eventually get on you.
- **The Truth:** Strife is a contagious disease. If you allow it in your presence, you will soon start viewing your own leaders with suspicion.

3. Wasting Your Best Strength

- **The Trap:** You spend all your time dealing with fake crises created by one person.
- **The Truth:** You will fail at the actual assignments God has given you, and your growth will stop.

Scripture Foundation: *"For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work."* - **James 3:16**

Part 3: Biblical Protocol for Handling Strife

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Conflict requires two people. If you refuse to participate, the argument dies! Here is your step-by-step protocol:

Step 1: Lower Your Voice

When someone comes at you with a loud or angry tone, slow down your speech and speak softly. Never let their volume dictate yours.

- **What to do:** Keep it short, factual, and calm. Don't get defensive.
- **The Word:** *"A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger."* - Proverbs 15:1

Step 2: The Two-Visit Rule

Give people your best attention the first time. But if they come back a second time without doing what you suggested, change your response.

- **What to say:** "I want to see you succeed, but we can't move forward until you finish step one. Let me know when you've done that, and we will talk."
- **The Principle:** Your words are only for those who value them enough to obey.

Step 3: Strategic Withdrawal

If someone keeps rejecting your leadership or causing trouble, you must stop giving them access to your life.

- **What to do:** You don't need to fight them. Just stop inviting them into your inner circle or your counsel.
- **The Word:** *"Cast out the scorner, and contention shall go out; yea, strife and reproach shall cease."* - Proverbs 22:10

Step 4: Inform Your Leaders

You don't have to carry the burden of removing people from a team alone. That's why God gave you leaders!

- **What to do:** Record the behavior, stay unemotional, and talk to your supervising pastor. Let them handle the discipline.

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- **The Word:** "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses... and avoid them." - **Romans 16:17**

Self-Reflection & Action

1. **Fear of Man:** Are you allowing bad behavior because you want people to think you are "nice"? Does God's word in **Proverbs 22:10** adjust your thinking?
2. **Locate the Drainers:** Do you have a "Loop Questioner" in your life right now who is exhausting you?
3. **Next Action Step:** Using Step 2, what boundary are you going to set this week to protect your time and focus?

Lesson 15How to shepherd to people.

True shepherding is never about having a title of power; it is a life of sacrifice! To lead the flock of God effectively, you must have a heart to care for them, protect them, nourishing them, and being an example for them to follow.

Part 1: The Spirit of a True Shepherd

Godly leaders do not try to control people through force, but they serve with a willing and passionate spirit. This kind of leadership requires God to transform your inward motives.

Scripture Investigation & Fill-in-the-Blank

Take a moment to read **1 Peter 5:2-3** and fill in these blanks:

"Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but _____ [willingly], not for dishonest gain but _____ [eagerly]; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being _____ [examples] to the flock."

Keys for Growing Leaders:

- **Willingness to Serve:** Never serve out of a sense of mere obligation or because you feel forced. Your work must come from a heart that truly desires to be there.
- **Right Motives:** A true shepherd doesn't look at people to see what they can get from them. They look to see what they can pour into them!

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- **The Blueprint Life:** You cannot ask others to have character that you do not possess yourself. You must live it out first!

Part 2: Three Assignments of a Shepherd

God's word gives us three distinct responsibilities that every leader must fulfill to care for His people correctly.

1. Feeding them with Truth

Your primary job is to make sure the people are spiritually fed. You cannot feed them on philosophies or opinions; you must give them the Word of God!

- **Scripture Proof:** Look at **John 21:17**. Jesus asked Peter if he loved Him, then gave this command: "_____ [**Feed**] My _____ [**sheep**]."
- **Applying this key:** Your main focus when talking to people is to point them to the Word. Without the Word, you are starving them.

2. Guarding the Flock

The church faces constant attacks from the enemy, false doctrines, and strife. A leader must stay attentive and alert!

- **Scripture Proof:** Read **Acts 20:28**. You must take heed to yourselves and all the flock that God purchased with His own blood!
- **Scripture Proof:** Look at **Acts 20:29** and fill in the blanks: "For I know this, that after my departure _____ [**savage**] _____ [**wolves**] will come in among you, not sparing the flock."
- **Applying this key:** Protecting people means having the boldness to confront gossip and division immediately before it spreads.

3. Hunting for the Lost

Good shepherds don't just watch the healthy ones. They go after those who are hurting or wandering away!

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- **Scripture Proof:** Read **Ezekiel 34:4** and fill in the blanks: "The weak you have not strengthened... nor _____ [*sought*] what was _____ [*lost*]; but with force and cruelty you have ruled them."
- **Applying this key:** Notice who isn't there! Don't wait for them to call; reach out and help them!

Part 3: The Great Shepherd

We must look exclusively at Jesus to learn how to treat people.

Scripture Investigation & Fill-in-the-Blank

Read **John 10:11-12** and fill in these missing words:

*"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd _____ [*gives*] His _____ [*life*] for the sheep. But a hireling... sees the wolf coming and _____ [*leaves*] the sheep and _____ [*flees*]."*

Shepherds vs. Hirelings:

- **The Shepherd:** When trouble arrives, a true shepherd steps in front of the danger to take the hit for their people.
- **The Hireling:** They are just there for status. The moment a crisis hits, they run away ("*flees*") to stay comfortable.

Personal Reflection & Talk

1. **Look at yourself:** Do you ever serve because you feel forced? How can you get back to serving "willingly"?
2. **Wolf Watch:** In your area of training, what do "savage wolves" look like? (Think about toxic attitudes or gossip).
3. **The Hunt:** Who is one "weak" person in your life right now that needs a shepherd to reach out to them this week?

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Lesson 16 Failure is not final, it's essential!

As the Lord works in our lives and we mature into His divine plan, we often uncover areas where we have stumbled. This is simply part of the process! Instead of dwelling in a state of gloom, we must ask ourselves: What is this mistake trying to teach me? How do we move beyond the weight of regret and into a heart of thanksgiving?

One of the most powerful examples of this is King David's situation with Bathsheba. It might seem that his transgression was far worse than that of Saul, his predecessor. However, the difference was that David possessed a heart willing to own his mistake and turn back to God. Saul simply wanted to justify his actions. Failure only becomes permanent when we refuse to repent! In my own circle of fellow pastors, a leader fell into an adulterous relationship. While many were gracious and offered a path for his restoration, he eventually rejected the process and gave up on his calling. If you are willing to rebound, God will ensure that this isn't the final round of your fight! Hallelujah!

I often think about Peter and Judas and their experiences as disciples. I truly believe that if Judas had only recognized the depth of mercy available to him, he could have stood in that upper room and helped Peter minister on the day of Pentecost! Sadly, he allowed the enemy to flood his mind with despair until he could no longer see a way back.

It is true that failure can hinder our momentum and bring us low. But if we stay close to Christ, He will help us navigate our journey so that our corrections happen in His presence rather than before the whole world. If we remain pliable and keep our fear of the Lord, the Holy Spirit can mold us even after a great fall.

If you have missed it, do not throw in the towel. God is the master of picking up broken pieces and setting you back on the right path. Many things like wrong thinking, laziness, or unhealthy expectations can derail us. But when we repent and return to trusting Him, He is faithful to get us back on track for His purpose!

For those in ministry who experience a moral crisis, it is vital to submit to spiritual authority and a restoration program. There is supernatural safety when you surround yourself with a multitude of wise counselors. Without that submission, you are simply setting yourself up to repeat the same cycle of failure.

What can we learn through our failures?

- We discover what strategies didn't work.
- We identify where our beliefs were out of alignment.
- We find who truly cares for our spiritual wellbeing.

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- We realize the impact our choices have on others.
- We learn the true availability of God's grace.
- We experience the fact that He will never leave us.

I want to warn you about a dangerous trap. I knew a minister who failed and, although he initially tried to move toward reconciliation, he eventually changed his theology to justify his sin. He now teaches that sexual immorality is acceptable. Do not let your lack of victory cause you to restructure the truth! Jesus died to redeem us from sin, not to make it okay for us to dwell in it. If you struggle, go to Him weeping and fall upon His grace for the power to overcome. II Peter warns us about those who make allowances for the flesh. We must subdue our old nature and renew our minds daily!

People often say that everything happens for a reason. Well, that is true—but usually, the reason is that we made a poor choice! Those decisions can cost us dearly, so do not try to blame God for your own lack of wisdom.

I love you! Keep pressing toward the high calling in Christ Jesus and offer Him a holy life. Even if you have endured major setbacks, you can learn to depend on the Spirit's strength. God rewards a consecrated life!

Lesson 17 Protocol and Order

In every setting, there is a specific way of conducting business. Each place possesses a designated leader and a set of sanctioned behaviors. If you enter a mechanic's garage and begin barking commands at the workers, your vehicle will remain broken. You must consult the individual holding the authority to schedule your repairs. Likewise, if you burst into a team dressing room shouting defensive plays to the athletes, you will be completely disregarded. You lack the standing to lead there; only the head coach determines the strategy for the game.

Our Creator is the architect of structure. The Holy Bible serves as much more than a collection of theology; it is a practical guide for the framework of your life and your service to the Lord. The Apostle Paul emphasized this principle with great clarity: **"Let all things be done decently and in order."** (1 Corinthians 14:40) This is far more than a simple piece of advice; it is a divine requirement for every follower of Christ and every ministry team.

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Stepping into a neighbor's house to discipline their offspring without being asked is crossing a major line. Every environment has someone in charge. In some seasons, you will be the one holding the reins, while in others, you must follow the lead of another.

The Scriptural Blueprint for Proper Conduct

Under the Old Covenant, the Lord was extremely precise about maintaining structure. Consider the construction of the Tabernacle. Moses received exact blueprints, specific duties were assigned to the Levites, and there were rigid rules for entering the Holy Place. Why? Because the King of Glory is holy, and we cannot enter His presence with a casual or sloppy attitude.

We observe this same arrangement in the realm of leadership. When the burden on Moses became too heavy, his father-in-law, Jethro, imparted this wisdom: **"Moreover you shall select from all the people, able men... and place such over them to be rulers..."** (Exodus 18:21). Moses required a system of organization to survive his assignment.

Identifying Authority Within Your Circle

I have encountered people in my own pulpit who were ignorant of basic protocol, and they damaged their future prospects by overstepping their bounds. If a visitor enters my sanctuary and tries to book a revival through a childcare worker, they are talking to the wrong individual. If someone approaches the worship singers to critique the youth leader's methods, they are operating out of place.

Learn to identify who holds the keys in every situation. When young folks ignore the commands of a law enforcement officer, they invite unnecessary trouble. That officer represents the power of the state. When they speak, it is your job to pay attention and comply.

Discern the voice that carries weight in each setting. A wedding has a coordinator. A job site has a supervisor. If your manager instructs you to fabricate a part a certain way, yet a coworker tells you to disregard it, you are headed for a pitfall. Your paycheck comes from the employer, not your peer. Your ability to honor the one in charge determines your advancement and the level of favor you enjoy.

Organization and Your Promotion

There is a powerful flow of divine favor when we follow the right order. One morning, a faithful sister in our congregation noticed I was in deep preparation to minister. A stranger arrived, loudly insisting on an immediate meeting. My observant friend stepped in and said, "I hope you understand, but I've instructed her that the Pastor's focus shouldn't be broken before the service. He will gladly speak with you once we are finished."

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That encouraged my heart! Finally, someone understood the value of the secret place! If I had allowed a casual visitor to distract me for twenty minutes, I would have stepped into the pulpit with a cluttered mind. I had to be prepared to deliver a word from the Throne for the faithful who had been praying. Because she couldn't get her way right then, that woman walked out. Why? Because honor is a dying art. Hear me well: if people do not value the rules of the house, they are not entitled to the rewards of the relationship.

How to Keep Proper Order:

1. Honor the established hierarchy: If a challenge arises, talk to your direct leader. Do not bypass them unless there is an issue of sin or unlawful behavior.
2. Value the leader's goal: As part of a team, your mission is to see the ministry's vision come to pass, not to push your own interests.
3. Stay steady: Whether it involves your appearance, being on time, or how you talk, order requires consistency. Do not be diligent today and sloppy tomorrow.
4. Seek approval, don't just act: If you believe a change is needed, consult with your leader first.

You must implement these principles in your private life as well. It is perfectly fine to tell folks not to ring your phone after 9:00 PM except for a crisis.

Setting boundaries for your children, your schedule, and your wallet is a sign of wisdom. God always pours His blessings into containers of order.

Study Questions

1. Based on **1 Corinthians 14:40**, what is the required standard for activities within the church?

2. In **Hebrews 13:17**, what are believers told to do regarding their spiritual leaders?

3. According to **Exodus 18:21**, what strategy did Jethro suggest to Moses to manage the burden of the people?

4. True or False: According to **1 Corinthians 14:33**, God is the one who creates confusion.

Lesson 18 Proofs of love

Love is much more than our society defines. Love is much more than words. Love in our culture could be better called lust. Let's look at scriptures and find God's definition.

1. Love will result in a passion to give. John 3:16

2. Love will desire to protect.

You can see love in its passion to protect. Watch a mother goose if you get close to her young. Jesus said to Israel I wish I could bring you into my brood as a hen does its chicks. Someone who loves you will never ask you to do something that degrades you. Someone who loves you will never ask you to do something that causes you to break the law or lose your integrity.

3. Love will adapt and change to the needs of who is loved.

God adapted to our needs when the fall occurred. He provided a seed of Eve to crush the head of Satan. Genesis 3:15 Husbands and wives adapt to the needs of a spouse if there is sickness or infirmity. The family will work to make adjustments to work together more effectively. Believers in church will adapt and change to work with others.

4. Love will define its expectations. God gave the ten commandments. Jesus told the disciples His expectations. Husbands and wives define their expectations in relationships. And so on.

5. Love will give the gift of correction. The word of God says speak the truth in love. Ephesians 4:15 If we see someone doing something wrong that may be life threatening or dangerous or causing pain to themselves or others it isn't love to leave them alone and let them continue. It is love to confront the issue to help them change.

6. Love forgives quickly. Jesus while they were crucifying them said, " Father forgive them, for they know not what they are doing."

7. Love will obey requests and commands. John 14:15 Jesus said if you love me you will keep my commandments. Love is more than lip service.

8. Love hopes the best for others. I Corinthians 13

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Are you showing love? Where has love been modeled before you? Where is deception happening around you? Are people saying they love but their actions are much different?

Here are some additional facts about love from I Corinthians 13.

1. Love is the most excellent way, 1 Corinthians 13:1

- a- Spiritual gifts without love are nothing.
- b- The most excellent way is to exercise spiritual gifts with love
- c- This is the only way we can fulfill God's will
- d- Pagans use gongs and symbols in their worship.
- e- Without love we are just like them

2. Without love I am nothing, 1 Corinthians 13:2

- a- Gifts without love are just religious activities
- b- Then I am not a real Christian
- c- Tongues, prophecy, knowledge, supernatural faith alone cannot please God
- d- Unloving people have no place in God's kingdom

3. Self sacrifice cannot replace love, 1 Corinthians 13:3

- a- Many Christians were martyred in Paul's day.
- b- Corinthians were used to do many charitable works like giving to the needy
- c- But self sacrifice without love is useless

4. Love does not envy

- i. Be content with what you have, [1 Corinthians 3:3](#)
- ii. List your blessings, [Exodus 20:17](#)
- iii. Be happy for the other persons' well being, [Philippians 4:11,12](#)

5. Love is patient

- i. Be willing to wait for God's perfect timing, [Isaiah 40:31](#)
- ii. Have self restraint, [Romans 15:1](#)
- iii. Control your impulses, [James 1:4](#)

6. Love is kind

- i. Ask yourself, "What would this person like me to do to him?", [Proverbs 25:11](#)
- ii. "What does he/she need?", [Isaiah 58:6-7](#)
- iii. Speak softly and be caring, [Ephesians 4:32](#)

7. Love does not boast

- i. Be humble, [Psalm 49:6,7](#)
- ii. Don't brag, [Psalm 34:2](#)
- iii. Give credit to others, [Philippians 3:1-8](#)

8. Love is not proud

- i. Don't think you are better than other people, [1 Corinthians 8:1](#)
- ii. Be modest, [Philippians 2:2,8](#)
- iii. Don't be arrogant or overbearing, [John 13:14,15](#)

9. Love is not rude

- i. Be courteous and kind, [Numbers 12:3](#)
- ii. Be gracious, [1 Peter 4:9](#)
- iii. Use good manners, [1 Peter 5:5](#)

10. Not self seeking

- i. Think of others first, [1 Corinthians 10:24](#)
- ii. Give someone else first choice, [Acts 20:35](#)
- iii. Don't be greedy and selfish, [John 15:13](#)

11. Not easily angered

- i. Think the best of people, [Matthew 5:22](#)
- ii. Don't jump to conclusions, [Romans 15:2](#)
- iii. Ask questions and listen, [James 1:19](#)

12. Keeps no record of wrongs

- i. Forgives, [Galatians 6:1](#)
- ii. Remember the rights, [Matthew 6:12](#)
- iii. What did Jesus do? [John 8:11](#)

13. Does not delight in evil

- i. Don't watch or read evil things, [Matthew 5:29](#)
- ii. Turn away from gossip, [Proverbs 11:13](#)
- iii. Don't gloat when others fall, [Galatians 6:1](#)

14. Rejoices with the truth

- i. Be happy about good things, [Philippians 1:18](#)
- ii. Spread good news, [Isaiah 60:1](#)

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iii. Tell the truth to yourself and others, [Galatians 6:1](#)

15. Always protects

- i. Protects the helpless and weak, [James 1:27](#)
- ii. Protects self against temptation, [Proverbs 4:14,15](#)
- iii. Defends the name of Jesus. [1 Peter 3:15](#)

16. Always trusts

- i. Trusting is believing God's promises, [Isaiah 14:24](#)
- ii. Pray about everything and trust him, [Philippians 4:6](#)
- iii. Believe that all things work for good, [Romans 8:28](#)

17. Always hopes

- i. Never give up, [Ephesians 6:13](#)
- ii. Remember God doesn't give up on you, [Romans 5:10](#)
- iii. Expect good things from God, [1 John 3:3](#)

18. Always perseveres

- i. Be persistent. Keep on praying, [James 5:16](#), [Matthew 5:44](#)
- ii. If God is for you, who can be against you? [Romans 8:31](#)
- iii. Be faithful to God and others, [1 Peter 4:8](#)

19. Never fails

- i. Love never fails, [1 Corinthians 13:13](#)
- ii. God's love never fails, [John 15:9](#)
- iii. Pray for a loving heart like his, [John 13:35](#)

Do you think your love for God and others meet the above criteria?

Lesson 19 Loyalty

In the dictionary, the word loyal means 1.) Unswerving in allegiance 2.) Faithful allegiance to one's country or government, 3) faithfulness to a person to whom fidelity is due, 4) faithful to a cause.

What are some things people are loyal to in our culture? Example: NFL Football team, Ford or Chevy, etc.

What does the Bible have to say about loyalty and being loyal?

1. Loyalty is unwavering in good times and bad. (Proverbs 17:17)
2. Loyalty is what you do, not what you say. (Matthew 26:33-35 and 26:69-75)
3. Loyalty is in your heart. It is willing and not reluctant. (Psalm 78:8)
4. Loyalty can be demanding. (Exodus 17:8-13)
5. Loyalty may involve sacrifice. (2 Chronicles 11:13-16)
6. Loyalty to the Lord will be rewarded. (Psalm 84:10-11) When this psalm says "those whose walk is blameless" it refers to Genesis 17:1 when the Lord appeared to Abraham and said to him "walk with me and be blameless" meaning that Abraham would receive the Lord's promises if he was faithful and obedient.
7. Disloyalty will be punished. Because Edom deserted Israel in its time of need, "I will bring you plummeting down," said the Lord. (Obadiah 1:4-14, especially verses 4 and 11)

Take a moment and read about loyalty in the scriptures. Let's go to Ruth Chapter 1. Now look especially at Ruth 1:16-18. What did Ruth say to Naomi?

This statement from Ruth was a seven fold act of allegiance. It basically said this, "Naomi, I place myself under your authority and therefore under the authority of your God. So don't ever ask me to leave you. Wherever you go, I assume your God is sending me. Wherever you stop, your God is saying to me, 'Ruth, stop here.' I have a new family, Naomi, it is your family. I now belong to your God. Where you die, when you die, and where you will be buried, I will die and be buried there too. The Lord can take my life if anything short of death interrupts our fellowship."

That is loyalty. Ruth was totally loyal to Naomi, therefore, Ruth was totally committed to Naomi. Therefore, Ruth was totally faithful to Naomi. That is the logical progression of

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loyalty. It is a quality we need to recapture in our age. WE are more committed to our internet company than to each other. We are so committed to things that do not matter yet we have no loyalty to our children, parents, pastors, bosses, etc. Especially to our God! We are a disloyal generation!

Define loyalty- It is an "attitude of allegiance that defies obstacles to remain faithful". An attitude of loyalty usually leads to an act of commitment. Commitment is "the act of professing allegiance to a relationship or a responsibility". But a commitment should result in faithfulness. Faithfulness is "the activity of remaining in place to fulfill a commitment". So loyalty is the attitude that results in the act of commitment which should result in the activity of faithfulness. Ruth adopted an attitude of loyalty. Her loyalty led her to make a commitment. Her commitment resulted in faithfulness. So loyalty, then, is a basic attitude of the heart that chooses to remain in place, no matter what.

Let's look at these portions of scripture and discern the heart of loyalty.

David (I Samuel 24,26)

Uriah (II Samuel 11)

Ittai (II Samuel 15:21)

Hushai (II Samuel 17)

David's soldiers (II Samuel 18)

Joab (II Samuel 19)

Jehoiada (II Kings 11)

Mordecai (Esther 2)

Questions to reveal your level of loyalty:

- 1. Is there anything I am valuing more than God's word?*
- 2. Is there anything getting between God's will and me?*
- 3. Am I viewing God's care for me as something valuable or do I take it lightly?*
- 4. Do I recognize what sin cost Christ? Or am I playing with sin?*
- 5. Do I cover people when they make mistakes or do I expose them?*

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6. *Do I value those who have invested in me?*
7. *Do I recognize those who have done the most for me?*
8. *Do I have a correct understanding of who loves me?*

Now let's do some work. Write out what loyalty looks like for each of these situations.

What does loyalty look like for.....

- *For a husband towards his wife.*
- *For an employee to his company.*
- *For a disciple of Jesus.*
- *For a wife towards her husband.*
- *For an American to their country.*
- *For a child to their aging parent.*

Lesson 20 Time Management

Your time is the legal tender of your Kingdom assignment. How you steward your days heavily determines your success in the work of the Lord. Learning to manage your schedule is more than just a skill for your organization; it is a vital spiritual discipline of divine stewardship!

Part 1: The Hidden Benefits of Biblical Time Management

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When a leader for God masters their own schedule, the rewards go much further than just having a clean list of things to do. Managing your time properly unlocks supernatural advantages for your life!

1. Protection of Divine Focus

- **The Benefit:** Keeping structure prevents you from being reactionary. Instead of spending your energy putting out fires others have started, you can focus exclusively on building exactly what God has told you to build!
- **The NKJV Word:** *"The plans of the diligent lead surely to plenty, but those of everyone who is hasty, surely to poverty."* - **Proverbs 21:5**

2. An Atmosphere of Peace and Order

- **The Benefit:** Our God does not operate in the midst of chaos. When you manage your hours with intention, you remove the frantic stress of last-minute prep. This creates a peaceful spirit in you that is ready to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit!
- **The NKJV Word:** *"For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints."* - **1 Corinthians 14:33**

3. Increased Spiritual Authority and Trust

- **The Benefit:** Being reliable builds confidence in others. When you value your own time and the time of those around you, God can trust you with even greater levels of influence in ministry!
- **The NKJV Word:** *"He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much."* - **Luke 16:10**

Part 2: The Physical & Biological Health Benefits

God designed your physical temple to function within certain rhythmic boundaries. Managing your time with wisdom is a divine requirement for your physical well-being over the long haul!

1. Regulation of the Body's Stress Response

- **The Benefit:** Living in chronic disorganization keeps your nervous system in a state of "fight-or-flight." When you map out your days, you kill the panic that comes from unexpected deadlines. This lowers stress hormones like cortisol and adrenaline.

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Keeping these in balance protects your heart and helps regulate your blood sugar and pressure!

- **The NKJV Word:** *"A sound heart is life to the body, but envy is rottenness to the bones."* - Proverbs 14:30

2. Restoration of Life-Giving Sleep

- **The Benefit:** Laying down for rest with a racing mind full of unfinished tasks causes severe insomnia. Effective time-blocking makes sure your core work is done while it is still light out. Setting this boundary signals safety to your brain, lowering anxiety and giving you deep, sweet sleep that strengthens your immune system!
- *"When you lie down, you will not be afraid; yes, you will lie down and your sleep will be sweet."* - Proverbs 3:24

3. Sustained Vitality and Prevention of Disease

- **The Benefit:** Constant, hurried exhaustion weakens your body's defenses, leaving you open to digestive problems, headaches, and chronic burnout. Budgeting your hours lets you deliberately include margin for exercise, good nutrition, and true rest.
- *"Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh, and strength to your bones."* - Proverbs 3:7-8

Part 3: The Severe Costs of Poor Time Stewardship

Failing to steward your time is not just a personal flaw. In the ministry, poor time management is like a slow leak that drains your divine potential. Look at what you lose:

1. You Lose Your Divine Moments (Opportunities)

- **The Cost:** God sets specific windows of opportunity for your life and work. If you are too distracted, disorganized, or focused on trivial things, you will miss the moment of His visitation!
- *"See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil."* - Ephesians 5:15-16

2. You Lose Your Mental Clarity (Burnout)

- **The Cost:** When you fail to schedule rest or say "no" to unauthorized demands, you will reach emotional and physical exhaustion. A burned-out leader cannot receive fresh revelation from God.

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- *"It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows; for so He gives His beloved sleep." - Psalm 127:2*

3. You Lose Your Credibility with the Flock

- **The Cost:** Always being late, forgetting what you promised, and giving rushed, half-prepared lessons will cause people to lose respect for your leadership.
- *"He who is slothful in his work is a brother to him who is a great destroyer." - Proverbs 18:9*

Part 4: Scripture Fill-in-the-Blank Questions

Instructions: Use your Bible to fill in the missing words below.

1. **Psalm 90:12**

"So teach us to _____ our _____, that we may gain a heart of wisdom."

2. **Mark 1:35**

"Now in the morning, having risen a long while _____, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed."

3. **Matthew 6:33**

"But seek _____ the _____ of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."

4. **Exodus 20:9**

"Six days you shall labor and do _____ your _____."

5. **Ecclesiastes 3:1**

"To everything there is a _____, a _____ for every purpose under heaven."

6. **Proverbs 6:6**

"Go to the _____, you _____; consider her ways and be wise."

Lesson 21.....Listening

Mastering the art of communication is the most significant factor for your prosperity and your divine destiny. If you refuse to engage in effective communication, you will never reach the heights of your ministry call. Too often, people confuse communication with merely talking. I want to be clear: the foundation of all powerful communication is found in listening.

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Listening is not just sitting back; it is active labor. When you give someone your undivided attention, you are practicing the protocol of honor. Genuine listening brings forth understanding, which then prepares you for a wise response. If you are attempting to multi-task—glancing at your smartphone, scrolling through emails, or getting pulled by the latest tech-savvy distraction—you are not truly listening; you are simply waiting for your moment to speak. While technology is a great tool, it becomes a destructive force when it steals your focus from the precious souls God has put in your hands.

If you desire to be a leader that others seek out, you must learn the value of listening. When you listen, you are telling the other person, "I value your words, and I value you as a person."

What are you listening for?

When you hear another person speak, do not just perceive sounds. Filter their conversation through the spirit of wisdom. Here is what you should be searching for in every encounter:

- **Listen for Instructions:** Discern the commands or the guidance being relayed.
- **Listen for Viewpoints:** Keep an open heart for fresh perspectives that might adjust your path.
- **Listen for Pain:** Recognize the cry of the heart so you can show compassion and bring healing.
- **Listen for Needs:** Identify a specific problem that God may want you to solve.
- **Listen for Wisdom:** Pick up nuggets of truth that you can apply to your own growth.
- **Listen for Opportunities:** Hear the open doors God is providing for you or for those you lead.
- **Listen for Belief Systems:** Spot any wrong thinking and use the Word to gently correct it.
- **Listen for Honor and Passion:** Discern who is truly loyal and committed to the cause.
- **Listen for Rebellion and Foolishness:** Stay alert for words that defy order or celebrate folly.
- **Listen for the Heart:** Hear the underlying anger, stress, or discouragement you can help resolve.
- **Listen for the Spirit:** Always be sensitive to a need for a moment of prayer.

Listening as Protocol

Listening is an essential act of order. **Proverbs 18:13 (NKJV)** declares, "*He who answers a matter before he hears it, It is folly and shame to him.*" When you interrupt others, tune

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out their voices, or presume you already have the answer, you are operating in pride. You are communicating that your own voice is more valuable than their contribution.

In the ministry, listening is the primary tool for shepherding. If you do not hear the flock, you cannot lead them because you are ignorant of their location. **James 1:19 (NKJV)** gives us this instruction: *"So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath."*

Notice the divine order established in that verse: "Swift to hear" is the first requirement. "Slow to speak" is the second. If you reverse this order, you will find yourself in constant conflict. Decide today to be a leader who hears before they give their word.

Study Questions

1. According to **Proverbs 18:13 (NKJV)**, what is the consequence of answering a matter before you have truly listened?

2. In **James 1:19 (NKJV)**, what is the three-step divine order revealed for successful communication?

3. Why does constant technical distraction hinder your effectiveness in ministry and leadership?

4. True or False: Listening is a passive state that requires very little effort.

5. How does being "swift to hear" strengthen your ability to shepherd those God has entrusted to your care?

Lesson 22 God's View of Wealth

Many people view money as a means to personal comfort or security. If you are going to be a leader in the Kingdom of God, you must renew your mind. Wealth in the hand of a believer is a tool for the harvest. If you cannot manage your finances according to biblical protocol, you will never be trusted with the "true riches" of ministry.

The Steward's Mindset

The first thing you must understand is that you own nothing. Everything you have—your salary, your assets, and your resources—belongs to God. You are merely the manager, or the steward, of His property. Psalm 24:1 (NKJV) declares, "The earth is the LORD'S, and all its fullness, The world and those who dwell therein."

When you grasp this, giving stops being a burden and becomes a responsibility of management. You are simply returning a portion of the Master's resources to fund His work.

1. The Protocol of the Tithe

The tithe is the first, holy portion. It is not an "offering"—it is the baseline of obedience. In the Old Testament, the tithe was the tenth part of the increase that belonged to the Lord. This principle did not pass away; it is a spiritual law of recognition. When you tithe, you are saying, "Lord, I recognize that You gave me the ability to earn this income, and I honor You first."

- Malachi 3:10 (NKJV): "Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this," Says the LORD of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it."

2. The Heart of an Offering

If the tithe is the "protocol," the offering is the "heart." The offering is where you demonstrate your generosity. God does not need your money, but He wants your heart, and your heart follows your treasure (Matthew 6:21). When you give an offering above the tithe, you are planting seeds for a harvest.

- 2 Corinthians 9:6-7 (NKJV): "But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver."

3. The Law of the Harvest

You cannot expect a harvest if you do not plant seeds. Many people want God to bless their finances, but they are eating their seed instead of planting it. God's Kingdom operates on

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the Law of Seedtime and Harvest. If you are tight-fisted with your resources, you are effectively closing the doors of your own harvest.

- Luke 6:38 (NKJV): "Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."

Keys to a Generous Life:

- Give First, Spend Later: Do not wait to see what is left over at the end of the month. Honor the Lord from the first of your income.
- Give with Expectation: When you sow, you should expect God to multiply it. That is faith.
- Give to the Soil: Sow into ministries that are feeding you and where the Word is preached with power.
- Be Consistent: Generosity is not a reaction to a crisis; it is a lifestyle.

Study Questions

1. According to Malachi 3:10 (NKJV), what is the specific promise God makes to those who bring the full tithe into the storehouse?
2. In 2 Corinthians 9:7 (NKJV), what type of giver does God explicitly state that He loves?
3. According to Proverbs 3:9-10 (NKJV), what are we instructed to honor the Lord with?
4. In Luke 6:38 (NKJV), what does Jesus teach about the "measure" that is used when we give?
5. According to Matthew 6:21 (NKJV), what is the direct connection between your treasure and your heart?

Lesson 23.....Your imagination

A person's imagination is essential to their life. We are constantly using our imaginations throughout our day. Every time we come up with an idea we can walk through the scenarios in our imagination. If I think about ice cream I can then see in my imagination the chocolate 2 scooped cone starting to melt that I must keep up with or I'm going to get it all over my hand.

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If I say a big mean brown dog with sharp teeth and a long tail you have just pictured everything in your mind. That's your imagination.

I believe the world and Satan has tapped into this power better than the church on most occasions. The television and internet keeps people's imagination active and moving at a rapid pace.

I want you to notice a statement from Jesus in John 5:19.

Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

I believe this is a reference to Jesus using His imagination. Faith is connected to our imagination. If you need healing I believe you can see yourself healed then have faith for that healing.

Jesus laid down His divinity to live on this earth as a man and He submitted to life just as we have to live it. Jesus was experiencing something just as we must experience it. When we want a ministry that heals people we should meditate and imagine for hours God healing people through our hands.

Jesus saw the Father doing miracles. Jesus saw the Father raising the dead. Jesus saw the Father using Him to open blind eyes. Jesus saw the Father using Him to teach the disciples.

How are you using your imagination?

Let's look at what God attributes Israel's failure to in the book of Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 16:12 And ye have done worse than your fathers; for, behold, ye walk every one after the imagination of his evil heart, that they may not hearken unto me:

Jeremiah 7:24 But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward.

Jeremiah 9:14 But have walked after the imagination of their own heart, and after Baalim, which their fathers taught them:

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God equates their backsliding with their imagination.

One scripture that I love to quote is Psalms 19:

Psalms 19:14 ¹⁴ Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.

What really disappointed God with Israel was that their imaginations were vain. Let's look at a few scriptures.

How can you make sure your imagination isn't vain? By controlling what you are letting into your heart and into your mind. Your mind and heart is a seed bed. What you let in your eyes and ears will influence your thoughts. Then your thoughts will begin to touch your imagination.

Many today think it's ok to play with witchcraft or to watch it. Many think it's not hurting anything to watch murder shows, listen to music that doesn't honor God. This is an area that you will have to get under control and do a house cleaning or it will keep you from being used for the greater purposes of God.

No person who meddles in evil imaginations can be used for a great purpose in God's kingdom!

Clean up your imagination!

God gives us instruction to cast down vain imaginations.

Look at 2 Corinthians 10:5 (NKJV)

⁵ Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

You can control your thought life. Some people do not believe they have that power. But you do. Think of your mind like a room. It has one doorway in and out. Any thought that comes in must come in by that door. If you don't guard the door, anything can get in. But if you guard it you can ask every thought if it is submitted to Christ.

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Wow! What a powerful weapon. When something pops into your mind to do evil to someone you can capture it and make it submit or kick it out!

What happens if you let your imagination get vain? I believe it's as God told Jeremiah. Their hearts became stone. Our hearts will become hard and will not be good soil for God's will to be accomplished. Our imaginations will turn vain and we will think more about evil than good. We will even know how to do evil more than doing good. How many people know how to kill someone because they have seen it done on a show? How many know how to cheat their neighbor? How many really know how to pray for someone? Most of the time our imagination is used for evil and it is a stretch for us to believe God for miracles. We are far from believing in God because we are so vain in our imaginations. Let's clean up our imaginations!

Like Christ we can see God moving in our imagination. See God healing the sick. See God setting drug users free. See God raising up a mighty generation of people serving God alongside you. Can you see God giving you ideas that will bless others and make you wealthy? Can you see yourself giving \$1000.00 to a church need that comes up? Can you see your son or daughter attending a bible college? Can you see God sending you onto the mission field and leading thousands to Christ? See God doing those things and watch how He will move right in! Imagination is a powerful tool in your life. An imagination submitted to God can be the seedbed for the miraculous!

What you think about yourself is also very important. If you think you are trash you will act like that!

Lesson 24.....Perseverance and endurance

Persevere: To continue to do something in spite of difficulty; refusing to give up; persist.

In life we will have adversity and resistance. When we have adversity it is important to ask: "Why am I experiencing this trouble?" Sometimes it's the Devil. Sometimes it's someone against us. Sometimes it's because of our own bad decision(s). Sometimes it's because we failed to prepare.

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Sometimes it's because we have made the right choices and an enemy has arisen. But you must be honest with yourself when you are going through adversity. Some people chalk it up to the devil when it is their own choices. Some people say it must be God's will when God had nothing to do with it. For whatever reason you are experiencing adversity you will still need to persevere to overcome! You may have to persevere and begin making better choices. You may need to persevere and keep trusting God as you go through the trial. Perseverance is a must!

1. What does God say about perseverance?

a. According to Job 17:9 what will the righteous do?

_____.

Then what do the righteous not do? _____.

b. According to Psalm 84:7 what should we go from and to?

_____.

What is the opposite of this? _____.

c. According to Luke 9:62 what are people not fit for if they do not persevere?

_____.

2. Consider what we are if we do not persevere in the things of God.

a. According to Ephesians 4:14 what are people called by God if they are unstable in their walk with the Lord? _____.

What will these types of people give in to in their lives?

_____.

Can you think of any teaching or scheming that you have given into in your life?

_____.

b. According to James 1:8 what will a man be if he does not persevere in the Lord?

_____.

How will he behave in his life? _____.

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3. What does the Bible have to say about why people do not persevere?

a. According to 1 Kings 13:7-9 how was a man tempted not to carry out what the Lord had told him to do?_____.

What was his response to the temptation not to persevere in the command of the Lord? _____.

b. According to Hebrew 13:9 what are people sometimes carried away with?

Can you think of a time when a strange teaching or false concept caused you to turn away from what you knew was right?
_____.

c. According to Revelation 3:11 what happens to those who do not persevere and hold on to the Lord? _____

4. Sometimes people follow the Lord carefully for a period of time and then give up.

We need to see how we can continue to persevere in our walk with the Lord.

a. According to Joshua 23:8 what do we need to do to continue to persevere in the Lord?_____.

b. According to Job 23:11-12 what are four things Job did so that he continued to persevere? _____
_____.

c. According to Daniel 3:17-18 three young men continued to follow the Lord even though their lives were being threatened. What did they know that God was able to do? _____.

What if God chose not to do that, what did they say they would do anyway?
_____.

Why do you think they were able to persevere under such circumstances?
_____.

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d. According to John 15:9 what did Jesus say that we need to remain in?

_____.

How would you do that? _____.

e. According to Acts 20:24 what did the writer consider as nothing?

_____.

What did he need to finish? _____.

What was that task? _____.

This shows us what priorities we must have in order to persevere in the

Lord? What are those priorities? _____.

f. According to 1 Corinthians 15:58 what do we always need to do?

_____.

g. According to Hebrews 3:6 what are two things we need to hang on to if we are going to persevere? _____.

h. According to Hebrews 4:14 what do we need to firmly hold on to?

_____.

Why should we do this? _____.

i. According to Hebrews 10:23 what can we count on when we hold to the hope that we have? _____.

j. According to Hebrews 12:1 what do we need to throw off in order to persevere?

_____.

What do we need to do? _____.

According to verse 2 how do we run the race?

_____.

k. According to 1 Peter 5:8-9 what do we need to do to persevere?

_____.

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According to verse 10 what will God do?

5. Finally we need to look at what the rewards will be if we persevere.

a. According to Matthew 10:22 what will there be for those who stand firm to the end? _____.

b. According to Galatians 6:9 what will be the benefit for those who persevere? _____

c. According to James 1:12 what do people receive who have persevered for the Lord?

d. According to James 5:11 what are people considered who have persevered?

6. When given a task do you quit or do you persevere until it is finished? _____

Lesson 25.....Vision: The Power of Focus

Get a vision that is birthed out of your assignment. For instance, if you have an assignment from God to serve teenagers, build your vision focusing on teenagers. If you are called to serve seniors, develop the vision for what you want to accomplish with that ministry. If someone has been ministered too by your ministry for 4 years what would you say the results would be? If you're called to serve your pastor. Make a vision that engulfs that assignment. Such as: I will help my pastor by providing water for him before every speaking engagement he has. I will serve the Pastor by handling research and doing office work that will minister to all those whom he is serving. God my passion is to make his job easier anyway possible. If you are called to 3 foster children, your vision would encompass the work you do with those 3 foster children. Where will they be after being with you for 2 years?

Write out Hab. 2:2-3 from the bible.

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All good leaders are driven by a vision. They have a call from God to accomplish something. They cannot solve every problem but they are called to solve a few problems.

Definition of Vision: Vision is a preferred future you would like to see. This is based on a belief that God can help you accomplish it and get you there!

Things your vision will reveal if it's from God!

1. A Beneficial Change Nehemiah 1:2-3
2. A Focus on future growth and development of people. Nehemiah 1:8-9
3. A specific need and its solution. Nehemiah 1:11, 2:6
4. A mental blueprint of how to get there. Nehemiah 2:3-5, 7-9
5. It comes from the heart of God to bring people closer to Him. Nehemiah 1:4-7, 11

The vision of a leader and organization is like the life of a person.

It has a conceiving stage. Genesis 12:1-5

It has a birthing stage. Genesis Genesis 22:9-10

It has a growing and testing stage. Genesis 21:1-3, 17:19

It has a fruitfulness stage. Genesis 35:23-26

It has a reproductive stage. Think about husband and wife having children. Think about pouring your teaching and ministry into the next generation.

It has a death stage. This is when the vision you had or the organization had must give way to the next leader and organization's vision. This will become a death for what was

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previously used by God but will be the launching pad for the next season of vision. Read Joshua chapter 1

Death has to occur like Moses leaving so Joshua could arrive. Just like Jesus leaving so the disciples could rise to be leaders in this generation. Read Acts chapter 1

Lesson 26Connecting People/Opportunities

Putting people in position - building your team.

Matching their passion with the need of your ministry.

Watching out for red flags. Those who you put in leadership are going to need to be mature. They cannot be quick to speak and slow to listen. They need to be slow to speak and quick to listen. They must be willing to take correction. They must be willing to work with you. If you have to walk on egg shells with them before they are on your team you will need to walk on egg shells forever.

Matching giftings

I like to use an acronym from Rick Warren when it comes to finding someone's place in the body of Christ! It is S.H.A.P.E.

S = Spiritual gifts. - Are you an encourager? Are you a server? Are you a pastor? Are you an exhorter? Are you an administrator? Are you an intercessor? The things you have been gifted by God for is where you need to focus your attention. You will see God's grace flow and use you for His great purpose of saving souls for Him.

H. = Heart - What are you passionate about? Are you passionate about youth? Are you passionate about senior citizens? Are you passionate about numbers? Are you passionate about order? Are you passionate about helping people get healed? Are you passionate about seeing injustice resolved? Are you passionate about families being whole? Are you passionate about God's word? What you are passionate about points you towards your assignment.

A. Abilities - What are your abilities? If you do not have the wisdom to be a pilot we shouldn't put you in that seat. If you are not skilled to do brain surgery we shouldn't let you operate on someone's brain. The same in ministry or serving in church. If you are not

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skilled at speaking in front of people you should only have small assignments until you are more skilled to handle an entire service. Also if you are not skilled to work with handicap children you can assist but you should not be in charge of that area. Someone's assignment should match their ability and skill level.

P. Personality - A person's personality should be considered when they are placed in an assignment. If you need someone to be a greeter yet you put a person in that position who doesn't talk and only gives you one word answers every time you may want to reconsider. If someone is very brash in their statements you shouldn't put them handling phone calls for your church. If someone is not willing to grow and learn you may not want to put them in an area that will be growing or it will stifle the church.

E. Experience - A person's experience should be considered when they are placed in an assignment. One of the greatest blessings is to find out about people's experience. If someone has served in an outreach program that could indicate they would do well in that ministry. This is not fool proof and sometimes our experience doesn't necessarily lead someone to our assignment but it should be considered when placing someone. Think about the person who is an accountant on their job. They may be a great candidate to assist the church in that area as well. If someone is a plumber you may want to consider them for that same role if the church needs repairs.

When you are placing people in positions make sure you recognize areas they are already showing passion, interest, willingness, and so on. If you see someone who loves to clean up after special events and an opportunity comes for a church housekeeping position they could be your answer. They are already showing interest and possible passion to help in that area. Consider this: If you have a person in your church, and every time you see them there are 8 kids around them talking and looking up to that person. That could be a person who would help in the youth area of your church. Sometimes we put a title on someone that has no giftedness in that area. It's like fitting a square block in a round hole. Pay attention to what God's grace is already on and begin to guide the people in the way God is already blessing and using people.

If you are building a team make sure each member of that team has a different set of responsibilities. When people on the team have the same assignments sometimes it can create an uneasy and rival spirit. However when each person on the team has a different set of responsibilities there is a safe zone and people are focused on their own tasks and accomplishing those instead of looking at everyone else's shortcomings.

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My own experience as an assistant pastor moved me into a stressful scenario. I did not have clearly defined assignments and it caused a rival for authority and was almost like a two headed monster. Two leaders create division. The alternative for this would be to avoid assistant pastor and move into Pastor of discipleship. Or Pastor of mentoring. Family life pastor or etc. You can define the role a little clearer and it helps functionality in a church setting. So if you are building a youth board you could have a person over crafts, person over games, person over discipleship, person over student life challenges, a person over drama development. These are just ideas that may help in the process of building a team around you. You don't need someone who is doing exactly what you are doing. Function is more important than title.

Lessons from Barnabas

Acronym from the name Barnabas

B

A

R

N

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S

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Lesson 27.....Handling Prodigals

When someone doesn't want your presence any longer it hurts.

Pastor's especially deal with divorce every week. People come and go on a consistent basis. You are their hero one minute and failure the next day. It can destroy your mind if you don't prepare emotionally for people leaving.

If you are doing something wrong that drives people out of your life you will need to repent and get that part of your life worked on. Sometimes we can be smothering which can cause people to leave our life. But I am not talking about a few weaknesses in your leadership that could be done better. I am talking about prodigals. A prodigal heart is not doing what they are because of you but because of their hearts rebellion.

But I am talking about prodigals that you can't really change what's in their heart. They are rebels and they have stopped appreciating you.

Some do not recognize your accomplishments and what you have done for them so they are willing to leave your life and your influence is diminished in their life.

Sons and Daughters that have eaten at your table for 20,000 meals, you have bought their clothes, you have provided a bed, a dresser to put clothes in, etc.

How do you handle the prodigal?

As a Christian we struggle to keep people loving us. We try to understand human behavior.

The prodigal is someone who wants recognition, being different, they get pleasure out of stepping out.....Distinction is not a problem. Being different is not a problem, it's just how we get it. The prodigal brings pain to those who care for them. The prodigal hurts those who care.

Prodigals can become prodigals when pride has entered their heart. When they have become indifferent and lost respect for those who have supplied for them.

Prodigals do not understand how much effort it takes a leader to supply for them.

You will have to process people leaving your life in a proper way.

How do you handle a prodigal who stops enjoying you?

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How do you handle someone spitting in your face and declaring your work irrelevant and unneeded to them? When you were their source for so long and now you are a zero?

How do you handle the prodigal son? The prodigal daughter? The prodigal church member? The prodigal family member? The prodigal friend? How do you handle someone who has stopped enjoying you and actually has become irate against you?

What happens when the people you love stop finding you enjoyable? Stop finding you interesting? Stop celebrating you, honoring you? Appreciating you? It can be very tormenting?

I want to address this to help you deal with it and try to process it with some understanding that will keep you emotionally sane and not let your heart become embittered, enraged, hurt, etc.

I take a moment now to speak to the heart of the parent, leader, caregiver etc. Your heart can be deeply wounded or heavily impacted by others' bad decisions. Keep these things in mind as you deal with prodigals.

1. God permits decision making

2. God has many who will not obey His instruction just like you are having right now. So He knows how to comfort you!

3. It's possible for wrong desires to grow in those we have tried to teach right. Just because you're saved, close to a preacher, or etc. It doesn't mean that wrong desires don't grow. People have choices to make and all of us have to weed our garden. We can join in praying for our closest loved ones to deal with those wrong desires.

4. Some are going to resent the authority in their environment. Some may say, well they are just trying to fly like an eagle, they are getting out of the nest, they are just spreading their wings. However, nowhere is rebellion acceptable. God wants us to grow and mature and get out of the nest. God understands that need. It doesn't have to include rebellion to authority. This is taught.

5. **Some are not going to value the right things.** Character is revealed by what we admire. Character is revealed by what we value. Who's been talking to the prodigal. Who's been stirring up the prodigal? Who are their friends? Who are their idols? What wrong influence gets to them?
6. **You cannot make people love you.** They either have it or they don't. They either develop it or not. If they don't have it, the only thing you can do is maintain the relationship as much as possible and care some but understand they are on their way out of your environment.
7. **The drive to break out is a healthy desire.** However the desire needs to be matched with skills, abilities, wisdom, and capacity to fly. If the baby bird jumps out of the nest without any understanding of the reality of life it becomes easy prey to the vultures, rodents, snakes, etc.
8. **The prodigal spirit is a spirit of unrest.** The prodigal spirit begins to show up with ingratitude. Ingratitude plays a great part and you feel worth more. Not recognizing the price others pay for you will cause ingratitude. Then rebellion and pride can enter.
9. **You can't tame the prodigal spirit.** You can't control or stop it.
10. **The prodigal can come to himself.** - That would be my prayer consistently. God cause them to come to themselves.
11. **Prodigals don't come to themselves until they have lost everything.** Prodigals usually have to experience some severe pain before they change.
12. **God loves prodigals. And you love your prodigal.**
13. **God doesn't chase prodigals! He prayerfully waits for the prodigal.**
14. **God has a pigpen for the prodigal!** God can orchestrate situations that will work to break the wild nature in prodigals. Hopefully the person will learn before they are detrimentally affected. Like Jacob God can make that conniving, manipulative, wild natured person a person of highest character and honor! If the prodigal will let God touch them in the sensitive place they will see God transform their life!

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15. God shows mercy to prodigals when they turn back to Him! Be ready to show mercy when they come back to you.

Take a moment now and write out a prayer for the prodigals in your life:

Lesson 28.....Things Ministers Will Experience

As a believer and then as a minister you will experience the same things Jesus experienced. It is exciting to know there are miracles in your future! It is exciting to think you are going to impact lives for eternity. It is exciting to know that people are going to follow you and desire to hear your wisdom from God! These are some of the joys you will experience. However, I want you to know the whole story. I believe God wants us to count the cost. I believe God desires that we be fully informed when possible. Jesus went through some ups and downs.

Let's see what you will experience that Jesus experienced:

1. People thinking you are special!
2. People following and supporting you.
3. Betrayal like Judas.
4. Un-thankfulness like the 9 out of 10 lepers.
5. Miracles where God changes someone's life in a matter of minutes.
6. Hate from Religious Pharisees.
7. Followers who are really too weak to follow you.
8. Mistakes of those you lead. Peter cutting off the ear but Jesus fixed the mistake.
9. Those who don't understand at first but get on board later in the game like Nicodemus.
10. The Garden of Gethsemane times. Where you have to lay down your will.
11. Dark nights of the soul where you will not be able to see any hope.
12. Deaths of friends like Lazarus. Power to raise the dead!
13. Criticized by people who have no qualifications to critique you. People thinking they could do it better but won't pay the price. They will just run their mouth and never fully dive in for God.
14. Crucifixion -- When God allows bad things to happen but His purpose is being accomplished.
15. Resurrection -- When victories will be relevant to all and God's power will show up.
16. People who loved you last week will hate you this week.
17. The potential for pride to get into your heart. Satan tempted Jesus with all the kingdoms of the world. Satan tried to tempt his pride and get him to take short cuts to God's plan.
18. The attempts of Satan to get you to doubt God's promises. Adam and Eve and Jesus.

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19. The attempt of Satan to get you to tempt God. This is a presumptuous temptation that Satan tries to get us to fall into. Satan will try to get us to think we are overly special and God will look past our wrong decisions and not hold us accountable. God will not be tempted. What a man sows he will also reap. Don't believe the lie.
20. The temptation to think you don't need to come under spiritual authority. Jesus needed to be baptized by John. John even resisted this desire from Jesus. However Jesus didn't let Satan use anything to get Him to step out of order with the spiritual authority God had over John. To fulfill all righteousness we must come under authority. God has a blessing when we come under authority. The enemy loves disorder. He can get into your life if there is disorder.
21. People pulling your flock away from your leadership.
22. People who think they are

Can you stay honorable in every situation as Jesus did?

That's God's request!

Knowing these things are in your future, how do you feel? Are you ready to be honorable in every situation? Are you ready to love people who hate you? Are you ready to have long nights of a burdened heart? Are you ready to see miracles? Are you ready to see the reward when you have stood in prayer until the answer comes? This is the abundant life God will give you if you are His minister! Are you ready to lay it all down for those you may feel are unworthy? Are you ready to endure attacks on your character? Are you ready to be misunderstood? Are you ready to have to choose between God's will and friends? Whew! This is the real deal! But if I haven't shaken you it probably indicates there is a calling on your life! Your desire to please God no matter the cost is why you're going through this program! You are counting the cost! God will do miracles but realize the enemy will also be against you even more because of your stand for God!

How can you overcome this?

1. Stay Connected -- You stay connected to God. When people are hooraying you stay steady. When people hate you, stay steady.
2. Stay sober-minded - You have to take every statement into your heart and mind and allow the scenarios to play out. The people's reactions to your teaching, life's issues, and more will tell you where they are with you. Paul said I have learned to be content in every scenario.

3. Keep your heart. Guard your heart from all the wrong words and attitudes you may see. Also constantly be reminded of God's words to you through the years. He will give you those words to hang onto for those trying times. Keep them before you and hope in them!

4. Self -Talk Practice positive and biblical self-talk when you are going through the fluctuations of the Christian life and the minister's life. You must continually remind yourself of God's word to you, God's love towards you, your need for God's mercy and God's perspective in the process.

Lesson 29..... The Anointing

What is the anointing? Many people speak of it, but few understand the weight of it. The anointing is not just a feeling, a goosebump, or a badge of self-importance. The anointing is the divine, enabling power of the Holy Spirit resting upon a believer to perform a specific task for the Kingdom of God. It is the "burden-removing, yoke-destroying" power of God.

Isaiah 10:27 (NKJV) says, "It shall come to pass in that day That his burden will be taken away from your shoulder, And his yoke from your neck, And the yoke will be destroyed because of the anointing oil."

Without the anointing, you are just another person with a good idea. With the anointing, you are a vessel through which God flows to change lives.

What does the anointing do?

1. **It empowers you for service:** The anointing provides the supernatural ability to accomplish what you could never do in your own strength (Acts 1:8).
2. **It breaks yokes:** The anointing is what brings deliverance to the captives. When you minister under the anointing, people aren't just hearing a speech; they are experiencing the power of God to break chains (Luke 4:18).
3. **It sets you apart:** The anointing distinguishes your ministry. It is the "mark" that shows God is with you.
4. **It teaches you:** 1 John 2:27 (NKJV) says, "But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you... but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him." The anointing gives you spiritual insight beyond your natural education.

How to Protect the Anointing

Mentoring makes a difference!

The anointing is a precious treasure, but you are an "earthen vessel" (2 Corinthians 4:7 NKJV). You must guard your life to ensure the anointing is not hindered or lost.

- **Maintain a Clean Heart:** The anointing rests on holiness. Compromise, secret sin, and pride are the quickest ways to grieve the Holy Spirit and quench the anointing.
- **Stay Under Authority:** The anointing flows through alignment. If you are rebellious against your spiritual covering, you are effectively cutting off your own supply.
- **Guard Your Words:** An anointed tongue speaks life and wisdom, not gossip, complaining, or foolishness. If your mouth is dirty, the anointing will withdraw.
- **Stay Humble:** The moment you think the anointing is "yours" to control or use for your own fame, you are in danger.

Give God the Glory—Always

There is a grave danger in ministry: touching the glory. Many leaders start with a pure anointing but eventually begin to believe their own press. They begin to think the power flowing through them is a result of their own goodness.

When you see people changed, when you see a yoke destroyed, you must immediately deflect that glory back to Jesus. You are just the pipe; He is the Living Water. If the pipe starts bragging about the water, it has lost its purpose.

1 Corinthians 4:7 (NKJV) asks: "For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?"

Never forget: The anointing is a stewardship. God has entrusted it to you for the sake of the sheep, not for your own pedestal. Keep your heart low, and God will keep the anointing high.

Study Questions

1. According to Isaiah 10:27 (NKJV), what is the specific result of the "anointing oil" resting upon a person?

2. In 1 John 2:27 (NKJV), what does the Apostle John say the anointing does for the believer regarding "all things"?

3. According to 2 Corinthians 4:7 (NKJV), why does God put this "treasure" of the anointing in "earthen vessels"?

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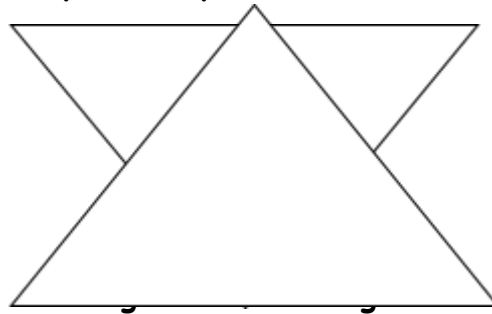
4. True or False: You can live in secret sin and compromise and still expect the full weight of God's anointing to remain on your life.

5. Why is it a dangerous trap for a leader to take personal glory for the miracles or breakthroughs that happen under their ministry?

Lesson 30.....The path to greatness!

The word greatness is thrown around in our culture so much that it has lost much of its luster. God called a couple of people (great) in the scriptures. The one I think brings the most reaction from me is John the Baptist. John the Baptist was called great! Take a moment and read His story in Let's unpack this story. Why was John the Baptist great? Let's look at scriptures to find the answer.

Responsibility and Rewards



Noticing the example above, as you go upward you lose your rights and privileges but you gain responsibility and rewards! So when you move into leadership you can't say anything you want and you can't do anything you want. You are in a tighter place. But God's power is greater and your rewards are tremendous! This is one example of losing your life for Jesus so His power can flow through you! Many will not lay down their lives. Many have gifts but they will not obey. Many have skills but they are not obedient to God. Those people are not useful for the Lord. I know many who can do much better and are more gifted but they will not lose their own will or submit to God's great call on their lives. Will you give up so you can go up? Will you lay down your rights so God can do the best things through your life? This is a small example of losing your life for Christ!

This is what John the Baptist did for Jesus!

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because of his commitment to God's will. He was willing to lay down his own will and even the glamour that the priesthood may have held to serve God's cause at that time. John was the one in line for the high priest duties, however, he paved the way for Jesus!

Greatness does not come to us easily. Greatness is only a result of a sacrificial life. Laying your life down you will go up. Serving others will bring you to greatness. Jesus stated that if you want to be great become a servant.

In an age when most people think their very existence should attract applause this is contrary to the current of our day. Many want to do their work in front of others so they can get their applause and accolades. God states that we should do our work as unto Him. He is our rewarder. Just a question to think about for a moment. Do you do things as unto the Lord or are you looking for others to celebrate you. The disciples were caught in that web. Even their mother was asking for positions beside Jesus when He came to His Kingdom.

You must give up, to go up.

One step toward greatness is serving the person or people God has put in your life. So many pastors are looking for people who are willing to do what needs to be done behind the scene. God will exalt you if you are faithful in the little things. Many want the 5000 seat sanctuary full and people clamoring to hear their words. This may be the future of your life but very rarely does it begin there. It starts by serving a man of God and a people of God. Behind the scene serving the cause of Christ. Maybe picking up trash around your church. Maybe cleaning toilets. Maybe calling people who missed Sunday service and praying with them. Maybe your opportunity now is cutting a widow's grass. Maybe it is working in the nursery one Sunday a month. If you can't do these tasks God will not promote you.

Another area of sacrifice that will bring great returns is fasting and praying. If you will pray and seek God for the souls of men and women by fasting and praying you will see tremendous results. This kind of sacrifice is what Jesus our leader gave for His ministry. Jesus fasted 40 days before he stepped into ministry. If a minister is going to do great things the flesh must be subdued and then tested by God. After that God can bestow greater anointing's and greater titles of leadership in your life.

What you make happen for others God will make happen for you!

Do you want people to follow you? You better be a good follower.

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Do you want people to help you in your ministry vision? You need to help someone in their ministry vision. Till you are faithful with someone else's ministry you will not be given your own. Do you need nursery workers for your church when you're a pastor? Better serve in that area now. If you can't do the helps ministry you will never be trusted with the Apostolic, Prophetic, or Pastoral ministry.

God may think you're special but he doesn't skip you to the front of the line. You must climb just like Jesus, Joshua, Timothy, and the disciples.

If serving others is below you, then leadership is beyond you!

When you serve in the ministry somewhere as you are in training. You will see God reward you in many ways. One of those ways includes when you are a pastor or leader and you need help there will be others that will assist you. If you help and serve a ministry and a man of God, you will reap help in your future!

The future is in the hands of the diligent and those willing to serve! Many will not leave their titles and put off their high and mighty clothing. But God will bypass them quickly to find a David. God will pull the priesthood out of their hands and find a John the Baptist. God is looking for servants that He can exalt. Why because a servant first will have a heart for the people!

Some get caught up when they are serving someone on what they can see. Well he doesn't have it. He doesn't flow like the other pastor I know. When you serve someone you are not serving them only. You are serving the cause of Christ! Find a place to serve in the Kingdom and be faithful and watch God! He will exalt you in due time! When you pass the test of serving God can raise you to greater levels of influence.

A couple of pitfalls to look out for as you serve others include: One major area the enemy will try to bring you low is your thinking about those over you in the lord. It's very easy to think you could do a much better job than those leading you. You may feel that they don't have the anointing like you do. It may be so, but If God has called you to serve he will first ask you to serve a man of God then he will give you that anointing so you can one day be in leadership. Look at Jesus and John. Jesus was anointed with a greater anointing. Jesus was wiser in many ways. But God told Jesus to be submitted to John. You may think you don't need those who are over you in the Lord but this attitude can spiral you into years of pain and even cause your ministry to be delayed. Jesus submitted to John and fulfilled all righteousness.

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Lesson 31.....What Does Honor Look Like?

Honoring your wife would be a man who is faithful not to look at another woman with lust. Not sneaking and making eyes with another woman.

Honoring your husband would be a wife who respects and appreciates what her husband has made possible for their family. Not talking behind her husband's back to friends wishing she had made a better choice.

What does honoring your parents look like? Striving to value their opinion even when they are out of date and not in the latest fads of society. Listening and obeying the words of a parent for a teenager and holding fast the teaching of a parent even when all the other teens are lying and manipulating their parents'

What is honoring your children? When you give them the time you can and don't consider them an inconvenience. But are willing to set aside time to really speak into their hearts words of love, affirmation, instruction, correction, and etc.

What is honoring the Lord? God asks for us to honor him with our finances. This shows God that we understand He is the one who gave us the ability to get wealth. He is the one who made available all that we could ever be and have. Missing this and using our tithe for something other than giving it to God will actually bring a curse.

What does honoring your boss look like? Doing the best job possible. Not floating and not just giving eye service. It's giving an honest day's work for a day's pay.

What does honoring your Pastor look like? It is striving to listen to the instruction of a man of God and to place high value on their involvement in your life. It is not gossiping and not pointing out faults but encouraging and appreciating their effort to be a blessing to you. It is coming to them in private when you have an issue and not going to 6 other people with your complaints.

How do we honor one another? It is speaking to one another with love and appreciation. It is not degrading someone in front of another. It is not pointing out failures, weaknesses, limits etc. But looking for the best in others and encouraging them in the faith. It is when there is a real issue asking them for some private one on one time to discuss your concern with them in a private setting therefore giving

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them time for repentance or for further explanation so they and you can grow in the faith.

What does honoring the elderly look like? It is realizing they have lived on this earth more years than you and they have fought a million battles to survive to the point where they are. It isn't giving them a license to sin but it is valuing their contribution and giving them the opportunity to speak when there are 50 young people who want to push their way. It is preferring them above yourself and opening opportunities to create an easier walk for them in their elderly years.

What does honor look like? It is a decision to value, recognize, and perceive the difference in others while desiring the best for others!

Honor is a sweet smell in every environment! Honor is always appropriate in every situation! Honor will create many open doors for those who are looking to advance their lives to greater levels of influence!

A quote I like to think about that gives reference to honor!

Dance with the one who brought you!

So many are ignorant of honor. People open doors for them. People pay their way. People give them endorsements. However, soon they step on those who have helped them most. They totally disregard them. They move beyond and don't even give as much as a thank you. This is a bad seed we are sowing. If you have dishonored someone you need to repent and ask God to help you be honorable. Don't get under condemnation. We haven't been taught honor. We haven't been taught loyalty. However, now that you know it, do all you can to walk in honor, loyalty, and more.

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Losing honor will also result in God's hand being lifted from your life. People who are dishonorable are missing so much that God wants to give and do for them. My prayer is that we have a revival of honor in our culture!

Honor considers the other person's desires and wants and works to facilitate that opportunity where possible and appropriate!

Answer these questions in your own words:

What is honor?

What is the reason you would honor God?

What is the reason you would honor your Mother?

What is the reason you would honor your Father?

What is the reason you would honor

Scriptures about honor:

Proverbs 15:33

Psalms 145:5

Proverbs 20:3

Roman's 12:10

Roman's 13:7

I Samuel 2:30

Psalms 91:15

John 12:26

Proverbs 3:9

Some do not honor correctly. You can give credit to the wrong person. You can celebrate someone who is a complete fraud. Be wise not to give honor to a fool, it will make him more prideful and create a huge mess!

Honor for a fool is dangerous. Proverbs 26:1

Esther 3:1 - The king exalted a fool and honored a fool.

Some do not honor Jesus Christ in the right manner. Some may honor him as a good teacher but not as the son of god.

Some may honor their pastor as a friend instead of a man of God. They are constantly like hey dude I love you buddy. When they call him they are like what's up instead of an honorable greeting. Hello Pastor, can I have a few moments of your time?

I had a dear friend who had a doctorate degree. I didn't honor him on some occasions until someone adjusted my responses to him by saying you know he is a Dr. I was embarrassed that I was not expressing His true honor. He was worthy of being called Dr. He had started 6 schools in China. He was overseeing over 2000 students. He was speaking in many venues that considered him as a valuable influence and I was calling him Mr. and buddying up to him like I was his pal. This is what our culture has lacked for many years. So many think they are equal with each other. We are not equal. There are significant people in our midst and we totally miss their differences. Recognize difference and reward that difference and you will see God's blessing come upon your life! Some may say how will God's blessings come upon my life for seeing someone's difference? God's blessings will come upon you because you are using wisdom and obtaining His favor and you will have people's favor because they will see that you understand value. A plastic cup is not worth the same as fine china. Well you can do the same thing with it. Yes but fine china will be at the lips of dignitaries and kings when a plastic cup will be at the lips of a thief.

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I want to be a man of honor! I want to be a man that has moved from dishonor to honor!

Dishonor and a wound he will get. Look at dishonor in the scriptures. What brings dishonor?

God is asking for the honor he is due. Even the priests have arrived to a state of dishonor and disrespect and they don't even know it. The priests are surprised because they keep doing the ritual but it became to them a habit and not an act of worship.

I lived several years in a house that was close to a small train station. Every morning at rush hour the train will stop and the road intercession was cut. A red light and a bell flashed and rang for about 5 minutes while people entered and left the train. This repeated several times a day and when I moved to that house I was really disturbed by the trains. With time something happened. I stopped hearing the train. I mean the train was still there several times a day and nothing was wrong with my ears but I became used to that annoying noise and just ignored it. When people visited me they woke up with the train but I just kept sleeping like a baby.

You can stop seeing the things of God as worthy of honor and respect and just like the priests described in the book of Malachi be surprised by this message because you still come to Church and you still do all things right but the question is; "where is your honor?"

Malachi 1:11-13 (The Message)

11"I am honored all over the world. And there are people who know how to worship me all over the world, who honor me by bringing their best to me. They're saying it everywhere: 'God is greater, this God-of-the-Angel-Armies.'

12-13"All except you. Instead of honoring me, you profane me. You profane me when you say, 'Worship is not important, and what we bring to worship is of no account,' and when you say, 'I'm bored—this doesn't do anything for me.' You act so superior, sticking your noses in the air—act superior to me, God-of-the-Angel-Armies! And when you do offer something to me, it's a hand-me-down, or broken, or useless. Do you think I'm going to accept it? This is God speaking to you!

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Here is the list of things that God's people were doing and that displeased God.

1. They said that worship is not important (coming to the Church is not my top priority)
2. They affirmed that God didn't care about their offerings
3. They said that they were bored and that there is no advantage in coming to Church
4. They acted superior sticking their noses in the air (arrogance and lack of respect by authorities)

This is just one of the lists of things that Malachi, the prophet, brought to their attention.

Malachi 3:7 (AMP)

7Even from the days of your fathers you have turned aside from My ordinances and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts. But you say, How shall we return?

8Will a man rob or defraud God? Yet you rob and defraud Me. But you say, In what way do we rob or defraud You? [You have withheld your] tithes and offerings. 9You are cursed with the curse, for you are robbing Me, even this whole nation.

10Bring all the tithes (the whole tenth of your income) into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and prove Me now by it, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

Here we see how God is telling them how to reverse the down spiral fall in their lives.

Honoring God includes tithing and God sees our giving as honor to Him. Their lifestyle was going down and down. Financially, they were in trouble, their worship was boring, Church was a drag, everything was going down and the cause was the lack of honor given to the things of God.

You see, honor elevates and dishonor brings everything down.

Jesus said in Matthew 15:8

"This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me;

Conclusion

You can be one of these people that chose to follow God with your lips but not with your heart. The fact that you can come to Church and talk like a Christian is relevant to God but the bottom line is do you honor God with all your life. If you retain what belongs to God he will not bless you.

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Honoring God includes honoring his prophets.

Matthew 13:57

And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his own household."

Jesus was honored everywhere but the people of his hometown saw him as "the son of the carpenter". They couldn't recognize His greatness.

A few years ago in Washington DC a man took his place on the street against a wall. He pulled a violin from a case and began to play. For this performance he chose six selections from Bach. Several thousand people walked by as he began to play. Some stopped and listened briefly and moved away, some even gave sympathy money. On several occasions little children would stop to listen but every time they did it the parent would pull them on. Maybe it was just childlike curiosity or maybe the children just sensed something different. Because it was something. The beggar on the street that morning was the World renowned Joshua Bell. The instrument that he played was a violin valued at 3.5 million dollars. Just 48 hours earlier people packed the Boston Theater at an average of more than \$100 per seat to listen to him play. Today his concert gave him an honor of \$32 most by sympathy. When he finished there was no applause, no standing ovation asking for more. There was nothing to acknowledge the magnificent power that has been on display. Then the music stops, the violin goes back into the case and the master leaves the place. For nearly one hour there has been grandeur there but no one noticed it. For nearly one hour there has been greatness there but no one recognized it or valued it. People just rushed by, unaware, and my guess is that this gets to happen every day and everywhere. Greatness and grandeur happens and goes unnoticed. Grandeur and greatness is in our presence and yet we don't recognize it. Greatness and majesty is in our presence and yet we are unaware of it.

How can we keep ourselves from being unaware of greatness? The magnificence, the grandeur that comes into our lives? There is a concept in our society that causes everything around us to become common. People keep comparing the Word of the living God with Science books written by men. People compare those that God anointed as their servants with themselves. Others compare Church to a show or a little theater and grandeur is missed, honor is missed and then everything spirals down to a place of curse. We need to bring honor back into our lives.

Some men disrespect their wives and don't even notice them. One day another man comes and starts flirting with her and she likes the compliments. The husband then gets jealous and starts making a scene or buys her some flowers and a ring. When you love your wife you

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should acknowledge that relationship by giving her honor. Saying nice things and giving nice presents. You take time alone and show that respect and that honor and by doing so your marriage is greatly blessed. You see dishonor brings relationships down but honor elevates things.

I would like to challenge you today to re-examine your protocols of honor and to start treating the things of God with honor; begin by honoring also the men and women of God that serve in your local Church and treat them respectfully; bring honor to your marriage by showing your appreciation for your husband, for your wife and children.

Romans 12:10

Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor

The violinist can be playing right now and my question is, do you recognize grandeur? When Jesus was born only a few recognized that they were in the presence of a King. They bowed down and honored him with gifts. Let us take time to honor the Lord in the first place and also learn how to honor others.

What is the difference between honor and dishonor?

The first 5 commandments have to do with honor. Exodus 20:1-17 God desires honor! God wants us to honor one another. Honor means to show respect to someone who is deserving of it. Romans 13:7 When we do not honor God, the benefits He bestows can be removed in a moment! Living with a stench of dishonor will close many opportunities for you! Think about what dishonor looks like. These are a few of the indicators: Your instructions aren't valuable to the person, they don't value your time, they think they are ok to correct people over them, never welcoming, never attentive to solve problems, always contentious, not giving, dominating conversations when they should be listening, too familiar with people and easily disrespectful, not paying attention to the needs of those around them.

God rewards those who honor Him and are honorable ! I Samuel 2:30

9 ways to honor God and others.

- 1. Never take a gift or a blessing for granted. Respond with graciousness. Malachi 1:6*
- 2. Always enter conversations and environments with a respectful posture and attitude.
Matthew 7:12,*
- 3. Never push your way or dominate conversations of those who are over you.
I Peter 5:5*

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4. *Don't critique an environment until you have qualified to influence the environment.*
II Kings 2:1-25, Matthew 7:1-2
5. *Be attentive to the needs of those who are over you and of whom you're responsible.*
I Timothy 5:8
6. *Show you honor God by valuing His church, being a tither and obeying His word.*
John 14:15, I John 5:3
7. *Deal with sensitive issues in private settings. Recognizing strife opens the door for evil.*
I Corinthians 13:11, Galatians 5:19-21
8. *Recognizing your willingness to criticize, rebel, and compete with those over you will bring terrible consequences. You will suffer, your family will suffer, and your church will suffer.*
Numbers 16:1-50
9. *Serve those God has placed in your life, as you are serving God and out of your love for God!*
Ephesians 6:1-3, Ephesians 5:21

Lesson 32..... Conversational Excellence

\\\\include listening and asking questions

Let's talk about the value of conversations. Conversations are what changes destinies. Conversations are what begin a courtship that ends in marriage. Conversations are what start wars. Conversations are what lead our world to its destiny.

When you communicate in writing with people, be very detailed and precise.

Some things are not important for some people.

Effective communication can serve you for the rest of your life.

Keys to conversational excellence:

- Recognize there is a proper time to talk about things.
- Recognize what interests the person you are talking to.
- Recognize when you have overstepped your boundaries.
- Recognize what is under your authority to address.
- Don't ask inappropriate questions.
- Don't minimize the person's statements even if it doesn't interest you.
- Don't abuse the person who is giving you a conversation.

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- Be willing to listen without immediately giving a thought or idea of your own.
- Be a thorough listener.
- Don't insert your opinion into the conversation without considering their opinion.
- Be a respectful communicator. Not overbearing and assertive without patience.
- Be willing to let others come to conclusions without you giving them the answers.
- Work to solve problems with them.
- Don't introduce discomfort into their environment.
- Don't minimize their struggles or concerns. Give them a heartfelt response.
- Don't stereotype. They couldn't understand me. They don't care. They are not mature enough. They are just _____. Etc.
- Evaluate every expression. Is it respectful? Is it honorable? Is it building hope in others? Is it at the right time? Is it done from love and care or out of hate, envy, jealousy, or fear? How will people perceive you when you say that or respond that way? You may be very loving but the way you talk to people comes off very snobbish. You may care deeply but when you say things people feel like you degrade them. You may be a very wise person but often you do not think before you present your opinion.

- **Proverbs 20:5**

When you listen, listen with purpose. Do I hear pain? Do I hear confusion? Do I hear a heart needing encouragement? Do I hear a passion they have for something? Do I hear a problem they are trying to solve? Do I hear a need for someone to carry their load? Do I hear frustration? Do I hear the joy they have that I can celebrate? Do I hear a need for prayer? Do I hear a cry out for something?

The final element of excellent conversation I want to share will truly change your life from now on!

It is a question!

Do you ask good questions?

Do you ask thought provoking questions?

Do you ask questions that will bring needed information your way?

Do you ask questions like Jesus did?

Jesus asked questions that helped people relocate truth in their hearts.

Jesus asked questions that caused people to express their deepest longings and convictions.

Jesus asked questions that caused uncertainty to leave the room.

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Do you ask questions that will open the heart of a person you love?

I was driving somewhere with my daughter at the end of Christmas break. It was around New Year's. I knew school was getting ready to start back so I ask here a couple of questions. First I asked, What do you think you will need in order to do well this next semester of school? She gave me a couple of responses that we have worked on before. Including staying organized with her bookbag and making sure she is diligent to do her spelling words every night. Then I asked her, Which class she was going to like going back to the most? She said a particular class. Then after a pause she said, I am not going to enjoy music. Well if you know my family we love music. My wife is a wonderful musician and vocalist. My son is learning instruments and my daughter sings all the time. So for music to be her most fearful class, I was awakened. So I asked, What is going on? She spilled her heartache that she had held onto all through Christmas break and even about a month before. I had heard her playing her school issued recorder but I had kind of avoided the room because of the irritation of sound. My lack of involvement produced an additional area for frustration when her teacher was moving a little faster than my daughter could learn. After our talk and our arrival home I involved my wife and we began to work on the assignments with which she struggled. Before she went back to school she could play every song she had been given by her teacher. Now my daughter was in tears in the car during that conversation. She was scared she was going to have to do a solo in front of the whole class because the teacher had voiced that for students that were not practicing. However, when my daughter went back to school she was able to volunteer for a solo. This one conversation and series of questions moved my daughter from heartache and frustration to being a model student in her class. I don't want to preach about parenting here but I do have to say parents who are involved and actively participating with their children can be part of raising kids who can change the world!

Another element of conversation is listening. Are you a good listener?

Do you really hear what people are saying?

Do you really tune your ear to learn from others?

Are you listening to hear and understand?

Are you listening for pain?

Are you listening for a problem you could solve?

Are you listening for honor in their conversation?

Are you listening for disrespect?

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Are you listening for solutions?

Are you listening with compassion?

Are you hearing what is really being said? Sometimes it's not what is being said as much as it is something deeper.

Work on your listening skills. James 1:19 tells us to be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to anger.

Many say that God wants us to listen more than we talk. That is why He gave us 2 ears and only one mouth.

There are several references in scripture that tell us to listen to what the Spirit is saying. Look at Mark 4:9, Revelation 2:7, Revelation 2:29, and Revelation 3:22.

Listening seems to be very important to God and Jesus. Are you a good listener? Will you work to be a better listener?

Write an example of a time when you didn't listen and it turned out bad for you.

Lesson 33 Whose Opinion Matters?

The greatest struggle for all ministers is to discern whose opinion matters. We are often at the forefront of what is happening and you can hear everyone's criticism. If you are not convinced of your approval by God you will not make it in ministry. There are times when you can listen to those around you, however; many times you will have to keep moving forward with God's will in the face of others who think you have missed it. Knowing God's voice is a major part of being successful in ministry. If you hear His voice you may make decisions others do not like.

There is a fine line concerning this point though. Many people are so hard headed they are not willing to listen to someone who has the ability to assist them in the matters they are facing.

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If Jesus had listened to the Pharisees He would have stopped His work early. If he would have been insecure their opinion of Him would have shut Him down. However, he realized that what they said wasn't the voice of God through them, it was actually an evil religious spirit using them.

Moses had an experience with his father in law that tremendously helped him in his leadership. His father in law came to him with some wisdom about dispersing the responsibilities to other leaders within the tribes of Israel.

I was at a baseball game with my son today. My son is a lot more respectful than the majority of other children his age. I am glad for this; however, it often makes my son a target of disrespectful kids who know he will not do anything about what they say to him. So I am constantly telling my son things to encourage him in his journey of life. So I want to relay some of these instructions to you.

If you are doing the best you can you don't have to worry about the critics. If you are obeying God you are pleasing to Him. You will always run into idiots in life. Don't let their opinion change your direction.

I do have a conviction about whose opinion should matter in our lives. I am putting it in the order below. You can consider it for your investigation and critique it as needed. You must decide whose voice you're going to value the most. If you listen to the wrong voices it will destroy your purpose and stop your success.

Whose opinion should matter to you?

- First in everyone's life is God's opinion
- If you are a child, your parents or guardians
- If you are a student, your teachers.
- If you are an employee, your boss and those over you.
- If you are a wife, your husband.
- If you are a husband, your wife's.

The list can go on but I hope you realize my point. Some people have opinions but it really doesn't matter. They can't pay you more. They don't decide your relationships. They can't really bless you anyway. You can listen to those people's opinions but does it really matter?

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We all have 5 levels of relationship.

Us and God

Us and those over us.

Us and those who are peers.

Us and those who are under our influence.

Us and the world.

Recognize whose opinion matters. Paul had to realize the Jews' opinion didn't matter. They tried to put him in a box that God would not bless. Paul had to leave them behind. Many people love to tear down others to make themselves feel better. You have to move on. Don't be that person who oversteps your influence and authority. Don't disregard everyone's opinion. But frankly some people love to hear themselves talk. They think you should listen and adjust your life but you shouldn't. Listen for wisdom in every situation. Apply that wisdom if helpful but keep doing what god told you to do!

Recognize the third voice entering your garden. Adam and Eve were tempted and deceived by the third voice. You must be on your guard against the third voice.

A third voice could enter your ministry. They began to pull people away from the pastor and begin to speak evil of the leader. This is a tactic of Satan to stop the work and word of God from going forward. If you have a concern, take it immediately to your pastor. Don't listen to gossip. Don't justify the third voice's opinion with additional issues you have perceived may be out of order. A lot of people get on board with the third voice because they see things they wish were different. Don't let people find a listening ear to griping and complaining. You look them straight in the eye and say maybe you should go to the pastor and talk to him about that. I know he would consider your opinion.

If you have children you must watch for the third voice. It's that voice that enters the environment and stirs up discontent for what you do in their lives. It may be a television show, a neighbor's kid, or etc.

If you're an employee, watch out for the third voice. That's the person who would do it much better if they were the boss. They always have a critique about the ones doing the work. Respond to them the same way. Hey, let's go to the boss and tell him your idea. I

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know he would listen. You will usually see them say oh no they won't listen or give some excuse that they can't take that to the boss.

That is a grumbling and complaining person. Get away from them. They will not see the blessings of God in their life.

These types of people are constantly looking for a justification to why they don't have to do their job. They are looking for fault in others to diminish leadership influence. They may not know it but they are being used by the enemy.

The way to respond is to call them on it. Get them to go to the boss with what they are suggesting the boss should do when he is not around.

Hold them accountable and they will recognize the need to change or change their strategy.

Be true blue through and through. It will pay off!

Lesson 34Spirit of Leadership

The Spirit of leadership is so needed in our world.

A lack of leadership is what many in this world are experiencing.

Many are floating through life.

The 3rd world nations are experiencing a huge vacuum of leadership. That is often why evil men seem to be winning. God needs leaders. Leaders who will bring opportunity, safety, wisdom, and strength to others lives. Everyone is responsible for their own decisions and life. However, good leaders can definitely create a better environment for lives to flourish. John 10:10 talks about Jesus's leadership. He came to bring life and life abundantly. The enemy has come to steal, kill, and destroy. Evil leadership will lead the group to pain, loss, evil, and sin and evil will prevail. A godly leader sees evil and purges it. A godly leader moves to develop a safe environment. A godly leader will work to build a system that meets needs for people. A godly leader will fight for the wellbeing of those they lead. So think right now about some of the things a good leader would do.....And think about what an evil leader would do.

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In a world lacking leadership I know there is a spirit of Godly leadership rising in some of you! You see what can be. You see what should be. You see how to get there! You see a group working together to hold up the banner in this generation! You see life through the eyes of what can be!

God's speaking to your heart! Like He spoke to Nehemiah. Nehemiah saw what could be and began to move towards that end.

A leader sees ahead and makes provision.

Let me share a story that may help you understand leadership.

My wife and I were in China for a little under 2 years. During this time we met a young man who became a Christ follower and a great friend. We went on a trip to Guangzhou China for the weekend. Our young friend who's name is Daniel was leading us around town to see different sites. We actually had a group of about 8 people who Daniel was responsible to lead. He was 17 at this time and we were able to see him mature and grow. I saw some leadership potential in him and had invested many moments of mentoring over the last months with him coming up to this point. We were trying to get from one tourist site to another in the town of Guangzhou when we ended up in a very dangerous situation. Daniel had our group of 8 people crossing a very busy multi-lane highway. We were crossing at least 8 lanes to get to our next destination. I was very frustrated with Daniel and realized he had made a very bad decision that actually put us in danger. After scolding Daniel publically and getting safely to our destination I was able to talk with Daniel in a private setting and explain leadership more effectively to him. I told Daniel that as a leader of the group he was responsible for our wellbeing. I advised he must be able to assess the people's ability and the people's needs. I also informed him that keeping people informed of the upcoming challenges and opportunities would help him lead people effectively. I shared with him the need to see probabilities of what could go wrong or right, also I shared with him the importance of leaders seeing ahead and making provisions for upcoming scenarios.

I would relay the same advice to you.

As a leader, learn how to assess peoples' abilities.

As a leader, strive to see what may come up.

As a leader, recognize the needs of the group you are leading.

As a leader, don't assume everyone knows what to do.

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As a leader, keeping the group informed
Leadership is needed in many areas of life.

What does leadership look like for a pastor?

What does leadership look like for a parent of a 2 year old?

What does leadership look like for a shop teacher?

What does leadership look like for a Sunday school teacher?

What does leadership look like for a boss of brick layers?

What does leadership look like for a boss of a crew at a hamburger drive through?

Realize that leaders must see ahead. Leaders must position themselves for what is coming. Leaders must prepare others.

One of the downsides to having a leadership anointing is the ability to recognize what is coming. If you see a major flaw in someone's character, that will bring them trouble in the future, they may resist your influence if you try to address it. Recognize there is a time for everything. Sometimes, just because you discern something doesn't mean it is time to address it. Wait on God's time when to address things in people's lives. Know the willingness of the person to listen to your input. Sometimes people are very willing to heed what you're saying. Sometimes you don't have that much influence in their lives and when you share what you think they may perceive it wrong. So be wise with what you are discerning!

There is another point I would like to make in this lesson.

Keep a good reputation! A valuable scripture to meditate on is:

Abstain from the very appearance of evil. I Thessalonians 5:22. When you are in leadership you must guard your actions and even the potential observations of the world around you. If we do not stay on our guard the enemy will diminish and even destroy our leadership with others.

As a Christ follower our enemy is constantly trying to minimize, diminish, destroy, and defame us and our influence. If the enemy can start a rumor or point out a weakness he can cause immature people to be swayed and even become a catalyst to defame you.

Let's talk about situations that can destroy your reputation:

- A Pastor with a woman in his office who is not his wife.
- A young minister not married spending long hours with the opposite sex.

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- Shacking up with your boyfriend before you get married.
- Lazy work habits.
- Lying about things.
- Not repaying money you owe someone.
- Not taking care of bills on time.
- Wrong use of money can be a terrible scar on your reputation.

Just a note: A minister who is caught in a money scandal and a sexual scandal has the hardest times ever being respected again. Keep on your guard against both!

In my first pastorate, I used church money one time when I was having financial difficulties. I had good intentions of repaying it but I was sneaking the money behind people's backs. My church treasurer found out and I was caught. I was broken and of course came clean. The church treasurer was very honorable in her dealings with me. She actually stated she knew my intentions were good but it looked very bad. With the paper trail we were able to verify there was never a loss of money but it was just a shifting of money that was not mine for a time until I repaid it. This caused a breach in my ministry. I had to go before my leaders and explain the scenario. It was the most embarrassing thing I have ever had to do. I felt it was a scar on my leadership.

Your sins will find you out. Don't deceive yourself into thinking you can slip and slide in life. God will not bless Slither.

The intent was to do the right thing but it didn't look good and dishonored those who trusted me. Broken trust takes a long time to restore. People will never look at you the same way again. Don't do that to yourself. It's not worth it.

Let me talk about money for the minister. You must separate your money from church money. Don't ever intertwine those two. The church is a business and your home is your personal finances. Don't cross that boundary. Keeping good records and honesty is the best policy. Do your due diligence to get your financial income to a place where you are blessing the church with finances not needing the church to survive. Many young ministers think that the church is their ticket to finances. Your best ticket to finances is a venture God provides for you. Jesus worked as a carpenter for years. Then he used that money for the ministry. He also had people that supported His ministry. Just understand that the salary you get from your church if you're paid is a blessing. However, don't let that be the only salary you

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depend on. Work to multiply your money in many ways. God can help you! He will give you witty ideas that will bring wealth into your life.

I think you get the understanding. You must work to keep your reputation honorable. A smear on your reputation can cause some to lose respect and even gossip about you to others.

Some people say I don't care what anyone thinks about me.....I understand that perspective but God tells us that we must be concerned about what others think about us when it comes to our witness for Him. We don't want to bring reproach on God's name by being in a questionable scenario. Strive to live a life that is holy and avoids the very appearance of evil.

A great quote to remember:

- Don't give your enemy additional ammunition to shoot at you!

Lesson 35The Power of Presentation

The way you present things can really impact your success. If I have a great idea yet I present it at a bad time, or without much dignity I will lose the idea's impact in the process. Sometimes I have had a very good thought but when I brought the thought to the person I didn't present it with a quality effort. Something that should have been typed and put in a nice folder I scribbled on a paper bag. The person didn't value it because they didn't see that I valued it.

I have heard great salesmen say words to the effect of (I can sell shoes 30% higher than all my competitors because I put them in a nice box and I showcase the shoes on a dynamic display. Many things we see selling for 19.99 can be bought in a dollar store somewhere for less than 5 dollars. But the display and the quality of the presentation increases the value of the item tremendously.

I talk about this because I believe this is a major part of your success as a minister. If you can present your message, idea, goal, and desire to those you influence with quality you can truly get results. We have the greatest message however it is often presented in such a shabby way that many don't care to listen. We also have the holy

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spirit who is working with us. When we make a great presentation God's anointing is working to convince and bless those we are speaking to.

If I cook eggs. Throw them on a plate. Yell for you to come and get it. You may enjoy the eggs but you would be fine eating those eggs on the run. You would be fine eating those eggs real quick while watching a tv show. You would be willing to scarf those eggs down and keep moving. However, if I cook you some eggs, make some toast, sprinkle some cheese on the eggs, put a little jelly on the side. Cut up an apple and add a few of the apple wedges to your plate. Then if I set your plate at the table with some orange juice in a clean glass. The eggs garnished with some bacon, apples, toast and jelly, you will value that meal. Probably talk about that meal for hours and even weeks. Because of the presentation. Presentation can take an experience up about 5 notches. People remember the little things. People remember when you make something special.

When in the scriptures was their time given to presentation?

Esther with her husband at the banquet.

Daniel is willing to present himself after 10 days.

Abraham when he hosted God

Jesus when He had the Passover with His disciples.

Woman with the her alabaster box

Lesson 36.....Your Opportunity to Speak

So you have been asked to speak for your church, or a special meeting, or a funeral, etc.

What do you do now? These are some thoughts to assist you in this opportunity.

- **The person who asked you to speak, trusts you with their pulpit or with their influence enough to give you an opportunity.** Some people never say thanks to those opening doors for them. Make sure you appreciate them publicly and privately. Thank them dearly for thinking enough of you and trusting you with the opportunity.
- **Know who you're speaking to.** Your message will be different for certain groups. You will talk differently to teenagers than older people. Is the group you're speaking

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to leaders? Are they new believers? Are they handicapped? Is the message going to be in line with someone else's message? Are you one of several speakers? Are you the main speaker? Are you coming into a church that the pastor has been speaking about Faith for 2 weeks and wants you to speak on the same subject? Ask the person to request you to speak if there is a theme or subject they would like you to speak about. Sometimes there will be an opportunity for you to speak whatever God places on your heart.

I use this process when teaching, preaching, or just simply conversing with those I have influence.

1. **Find common ground.** If they like baseball, start with a story about baseball. If they like donuts, tell them about the best place to get donuts in your town. Etc.
2. **Explain why what you're sharing will be valuable for them.** How has this helped you? How did it change your life? How did someone receive help that used this word in their life? Etc.
3. **Share scripture or scriptures that reveal the subject, principle, or challenge you are speaking about.** Always build your message around scripture. God's truth is what will change lives. If you're speaking at an event that isn't necessarily church focused you can share truth without having to name verse and chapter etc. You can bring the truth from God's word without having to be so preachy that people are feeling bible thumped. You can bring truth into your job and share keys to your success that are from scripture but maybe relayed in a way that connects with your colleagues. Let's look at a subject such as integrity. God speaks much about integrity and in your speaking you can refer to the blessings that come to those who practice integrity without having to quote scripture and verse multiplied times.
4. **Break down your information with points that are easily digested.**
5. **Add stories that support your subject.** Adding a good story will be a breath of fresh air at points in your sharing. Sometimes I am speaking about something and it is so heavy in the room. I will feel the tension or the pressure and I will slow down and share a little story. I feel the tension release and people are at ease again. Many times what we are sharing is information overload but a good story always connects with people on a great level.
6. **Bring them to a decision point about what you have shared.** It may be coming to the altar to make a decision, or receive prayer for a blessing, or a step of commitment, or an action to take this week, etc. Ask them to put into practice what you have spoken about from God's word.

Some helpful keys to remember when you're speaking!

- **What you focus on, while you are speaking, the people listening will focus on that!** If you bring attention to all your failures they will think about those. Make sure you are coming to edify not share all your pain, hurt, failures, fears, etc. Make sure you are indicating your dependence on God. Your victories are good to share but don't be dogmatic or portray your superiority over others. Keep the focus on Jesus Christ and God's word. Keep your sharing framed in your dependence on God and the Holy Spirit.
- **Don't use your speaking opportunity to promote your racism, your own goodness, your accomplishments, etc.** Use your opportunity to share something helpful and edifying to people. Leading them to rely more on Christ. Leading them to pursue God. Leading them to mature in an area. Leading them to overcome a stumbling block. Etc.
- **Don't close the door of favor.** There are many ways that you can close a door of favor that God has opened for you. I see people close off favor every day. I see people cut their opportunities in half because of their actions or their ignorance. I am going to give you some important insight right here. These are ways I have ruined favor with someone.
- These are also ways I have seen others close the doors of favor.
 - By being unappreciative.
 - By lying
 - By having unreasonable expectations
 - By speaking about racism.
 - By speaking to many subjects at once.
 - By not honoring the leaders in the church where they were a guest.
 - By speaking a story that brought a negative light on a group of people or someone in the congregation.
 - By not being clear with the goal of the message.
 - By being unprepared.

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- By pushing people down at the altar.
 - By praying only for the opposite sex at the altar.
 - By inappropriate statements about sex in the pulpit.
 - By calling someone sweetheart who was not their sweetheart.
 - By stating scripture references wrong.
 - By stirring up rebellion against pastors.
 - By talking bad about other ministers.
 - By stating facts wrong.
 - By saying something wasn't scriptural that was in the bible.
 - Being overly demanding of the help such as sound people or those serving the church. Dogmatic statements.
-
- Your opportunity to speak should result in bringing a truth that will benefit someone's life. You are there to share the gospel and bring life to people. If you have been in the pulpit for years God may use you to bring correction. However, that is not your first assignment. Your ministry influence is just beginning so bring truth that applies to people's lives and helps them grow into Christlikeness.

Lesson 37.....The Bema Seat Rewards

This subject is not talked about often enough. If you are a Christian and keep your relationship with Christ strong through the rest of your life you will not appear before the white throne judgement. You will appear at the Bema Seat. The Bema seat is a seat of rewards. Paul talked about it concerning the Olympics. The athlete will appear before the judges and receive their awards for how they performed.

We will appear before God to receive our crowns. If we run our race well we receive awards. If we get into someone else's lane we will lose certain rewards.

What will we be judged on when it comes to the Bema seat?

How we treated those under our leadership.
How we treated those over us in leadership.
How we used the gifts God has given us.
How we took care of our responsibilities.
How we advanced or diminished the gospel in our community.
How we helped our church.
How we passed on the knowledge about God that we received.

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How we obeyed God's instructions.

Let's look at scripture where these are discussed.

For while one saith, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are ye not carnal?

⁵ Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye came to believe, even as the Lord gave to every man?

⁶ I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.

⁷ So then, neither is he that planteth anything, nor he that watereth, but God who giveth the increase.

⁸ Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one, and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor.

⁹ For we are laborers together with God; ye are God's husbandry; ye are God's building.

¹⁰ According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed of how he buildeth thereupon.

¹¹ For no man can lay another foundation than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

¹² Now if any man build upon this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble,

¹³ every man's work shall be made manifest; for the Day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall test every man's work of what sort it is.

¹⁴ If any man's work abide which he hath built thereon, he shall receive a reward.

¹⁵ If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as fire.

Bema Judgment

Two most important judgments in the future: Great White Throne Judgment and Judgment Seat of Christ (Bema).

I. The Meaning of Bema Judgment.

Bema = a Greek word translated in English as "judgment seat."

At the large Greek Olympic was an elevated seat that the competitors would assemble before to receive their rewards and crowns.

II. The Evidence of the Bema Judgment.

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Rom. 14:10-12 10 But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. 11 For it is written: "As I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God." 12 So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.

1 Cor. 3:9 9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field (agriculture metaphor), you are God's building (architecture metaphor). 10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed of how he builds on it. 11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ (the "Rock"). 12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, (what are you building your life upon?) 13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. 14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. 16 Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? 17 If anyone defiles God's temple, God will destroy him (lost man). For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.

2 Cor. 5:9 9 Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

Gal. 6:7

Col. 3:24,25

III. The Purpose of the Bema Judgment

A. What the Purpose of the Bema is not.

1. Not to determine if going to heaven or not.
2. Not to punish you for sins committed either before or after being saved.
3. Not purgatory.

Our salvation is based on grace = Eph. 2:8,9

But Eph. 2:10 affirms that works done after salvation are important to God.

B. What the purpose of the Bema is.

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1 Cor. 4:2 Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.
We will give an account as stewards of our Lord.

- a. In the past, God dealt with us as sinners.
- b. In the present, God deals with us as sons.
- c. In the future, He will deal with us at the bema as stewards.

What happens at the judgment seat can have permanent consequences.
There are degrees of punishment

in hell and degrees of reward in heaven.

IV. The Time of the Bema.
Between the Rapture and 2nd Return of Christ.

V. How Will We Be Judged?

A. Fairly

B. Thoroughly

Laid bare

Stripped of every outward façade of respectability

Openly revealed in the full reality of one's character

All hypocrisies and concealments

All our secrets, intimate sins of thought and deed

Opened to the scrutiny of Christ

All false accusations leveled against you will be brought to light.

Cruelty, gossip, and misunderstandings will be cleared up.

All "he said, she said" arguments will cease.

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Nothing but facts, nothing but the truth.

If you need vindication, you will have it.

If you need to be shown your error, you will have that too.

No time will be needed to gather evidence.

No jurors will be selected to hear the arguments

We will not dispute the outcome.

We will not disagree with Christ, because we will know He is right.

C. Impartially: [Romans 2:11](#)

11 For God does not show favoritism. [read more »](#)

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No special advantages are given to the wealthy.

Those who counted on perks and power in this life find themselves stripped of every crutch.

Every trappings of man will fade into insignificance in the presence of the

One who discerns the "thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12).

Pastors and missionaries will not be given preferential treatment.

In fact, those who teach the Word of God will be judged by "a stricter judgment" (Jas. 3:1)

He will inspect the rubies as well as the rubble.

The color of our skin, the size of our income, and our fame or lack of it will suddenly be irrelevant.

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D. Individually

E. Graciously

God will not be venting anger.

Jesus will not be angry, but disappointed.

VI. What will be judged at the Bema.

1 Cor. 3:9-15 9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building.
10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one heed as he builds on it. 11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. 14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

A. Those indestructible and worthy objects: gold, silver, and precious stones

1. How we treat others.

Heb. 6:10 For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

Matt. 10:41,42 41 He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward.

reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. 42 And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward."

2. How we exercise our authority over others.

Heb. 13:17 Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account.

Jas. 3:1 My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a

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stricter judgment.

3. How we employ our God-given abilities.

1 Cor. 12:4, 11 4 There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

1 Pet. 4:10 As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

4. How we use our money.

1 Tim. 6:17-19 17 Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. 18 Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, 19 storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

Give our tithes.

Give offerings to church, missions, and needy.

Spend our money daily.

In what we invest.

5. How we spend our time.

Eph. 5:15,16 15 See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, 16 redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

6. How much we suffer for Jesus

Mt. 5:11,12 11 "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. 12 Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven

Mk. 10:29,30 "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, 30 who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life.

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Rom. 8:18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

2 Cor. 4:17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory

Fired from a job because of faith in Christ.

Ostracized from company perks.

Bypassed in the pay scale because of your convictions.

Youth enduring rejection, jokes, and humility.

7. How we run that particular race which God has chosen for us.

Phil 2:14-16 14 Do all things without complaining and disputing, 15 that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, 16 holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.

8. How effectively we control the old nature.

1 Cor. 9:24-27 24 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. 25 And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. 26 Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. 27 But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

9. How many souls we witness to and win to Christ.

10. How we react to temptation.

11. How much the doctrine of the rapture means to us.

12. How faithful we are to the Word of God and the flock of God.

B. Those destructible and worthless objects: wood, hay and stubble

What the fire cannot purify, it destroys, and what the fire cannot destroy, it purifies.

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Moses was willing to sacrifice riches to gain crowns in Heaven.

Heb. 11:25-26 24 By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, 25 choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, 26 esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.

Earl Radmacher says that "the person I am becoming today, is preparing me for the person I shall be for all of eternity."

Only in this life can we impact our eternity.

VI. The Results of the Bema Judgment.

A. Some will receive rewards. 1 Cor. 3:14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.

Note the following five crowns:

1. Incorruptible Crowns = 1 Cor. 9:24-27 = master the old nature =

24 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. 25 And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. 26 Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. 27 But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

2. Crowns of Rejoicing = 1 Thess. 2:19,20 = given to soul-winners

19 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? 20 For you are our glory and joy.

3. Crown of Life = Rev. 2:10 = endure temptation

To Smyrna: 10 Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

4. Crown of Righteousness = 2 Tim. 4:8 = love the rapture =

8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous

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Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

5. Crown of Glory = 1 Pet. 5:2-4 = faithful preachers and teachers =
2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; 3 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; 4 and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.

B. Some will suffer loss. 1 Cor. 3:15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss

Can a person lose their rewards in heaven through carnality on earth?

2 Jn. 1:8 Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward.

Rev. 3:11 Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.

"I'll be content to sit in the back row in heaven!"

Our eternal rewards are to be able to better honor Jesus.

Such an attitude shows a shameful lack of desire to honor Christ.

Those that profess to be content with a "little shack in heaven" are usually the ones who want a much bigger one on earth.

We should be all that we can be on earth so that we can be all that we could be in heaven.

VII. Living in the Light of the Judgment

A. This life is the training for the next.

B. Every day we live is either a loss or a gain so far as our future judgment is concerned.

C. Rewards are not based on ministry size results.

D. Rewards are not based on the length of our time of service, but based on our loyalty to Christ with the time, talents and treasures that were at our disposal.

There was a man who was trudging through a blistering desert. He was faint with thirst, and

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to his delight he came across a well with a pump. Next to the pump sat a small jug of water with a sign, "Please use this water to prime the pump. The well is deep so you will have enough water for yourself and your containers. Please fill the jug for the next traveler." Should the man play it safe and drink the jug of water, assured that his parched lips would at least get some relief? Or should he take the risk of pouring the water down the pump in hopes of getting all he would need? You could spend your reward here, or be primed for heaven.

Lesson 38The Church - Dream of Jesus!

In today's society, church seems to be an afterthought. When people go to church they are often ready to run out the door as soon as possible. People who do this have a huge misunderstanding in their heart when it comes to the church. The church is the family of God. The church is the place God shows up mightily to bless and do miracles for His people. The church is the assembly of the upright. The Church is a hospital to those hurting. The church is the pillar of truth in a community. The church is more important than many are recognizing. Jesus died for the church. A person does God a great disservice when they will not become part of the church. Don't just search for a church that meets your needs, find a church you can become part of its vision. Do you know Jesus died for the church? So what do you think your commitment to the church should be? If you really love Jesus and God you will make the church a priority. In the last days the bible says that many will forsake the assembling together. Many can barely make time for Sunday mornings much less to really become part of the body of Christ by giving Sunday School time, Wednesday night time. And God forbid a church have Sunday night service. Who will show up for that service? The church is the instrument and organism God uses to get people ready for heaven, to reach the lost, to teach the truth so people truly know God, and so much more! How much will you be a part of your church? Just 10%? Just 50%? I hope you will become a blessing to your church. Don't just be a taker. Be a giver!

Let's look at some scriptures about the church!

Who is the head of the church (Eph. 5:23)?

Who is the church to be subject to (Eph. 5:24)?

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Who loved the church and gave himself for it (Eph. 5:25)?

How does Christ wash the church (Eph. 5:26)?

What type of church does Christ want (Eph. 5:27)?

Who does the church belong to (1 Tim. 3:15)?

What will not prevail against the church (Matt. 16:18)?

What did Christ give to the church (Eph. 4:11)?

What is the job of the apostles, prophets, evangelists and the pastor and teacher according to Eph. 4:12? _____

We are all to come to the unity of what according to Eph. 4:13?

We are all to come to the knowledge of whom according to Eph. 4:13?

What are we not to be carried about with according to Eph. 4:14?

Who are we to grow up in all things into according to Eph. 4:15?

What is every part of the church to do according to Eph. 4:16?

What causes the growth of the body of Christ or the church according to Eph. 4:16?

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So if everyone does their part God's church will grow and the gifts He gives each one helps the body grow up into maturity. Will you use your gifts for God's church on the earth?

What is commanded in Matt. 28:18-20?

_____.

Who were added to the church according to Acts 2:47?

What happened to those who gladly received the word according to Acts 2:41?

What four things did those who were added to the church continue in according to Acts 2:42? _____

What did the church do in Acts 2:46 and 2:47

What are we not to forsake according to Heb. 10:25?

How are you to treat those who rule over you and watch over your souls according to Heb. 13:17? _____

What day did they meet according to Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2?

According to Revelations 1: 12-13, 20 who is among the candlesticks?

What do the candlesticks represent? _____

Sometimes things happen in the church that doesn't represent Jesus. However we are to be committed to Christ. He is working on and through His church. Keep your eyes on Jesus even when things don't always represent Him.

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For us to be a blessing to our church there are several things we must keep in mind. As you reference these statements by scripture, understand that the church is very important to God because of the people involved. Things can get off course and we will see God address these issues through His word.

How do you address issues with a brother or sister in Christ? You must go to Matthew 18. We should not gossip, walk in envy, or be offended. We must go to the person involved first. If you have a problem with someone you should go to them first, not three other people. If you run into someone who is gossiping you should challenge them to go to the person they have the problem with instead of gossiping about their issue.

Write out this scripture. Matthew 18: 15-19

God hates gossip and strife. Write out these two scriptures concerning works of the flesh. Galatians 5:19-21

If you are struggling with these sins you can get God's forgiveness when you repent and forsake this sin. God loves you and He is willing to help you conquer this problem.

Read these scriptures in Proverbs about gossip and strife. Proverbs 11:13, 13:10, 16:28, 18:18. 20:3 20:19, 26:20-22

God wants us to walk in unity as a body of believers. Be on your guard. The enemy will try to use you to bring division and confusion.

Write out this scripture and think about its application. Ephesians 4:1-6

Why (((together)))) is important in the Christian Life

Scriptures Hebrews 10:19-25

- I. **Introduction:** Hebrews 10:24-25 says, "Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and do good deeds, *not forsaking our own assembling together*, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another".
- II. It's true that some people can't attend church due to physical limitations and others have no Bible-believing congregations in their area. But aside from those exceptions, everyone who wants to maintain a vital, growing relationship with Jesus Christ needs to be involved in a local body of believers.

II. Who originated the concept of church?

- A. Scripture clearly teaches that the church was originated by God. Our Savior Himself spoke about it the very first time in (Matt. 16:16). He's the Savior of the world, humanity's only hope. This truth is the foundation upon which Jesus established the church, and no evil force can prevail against it.
- B. Through history, many organizations have come and gone. In contrast, the church—also called the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:27)—has thrived for centuries and in our generation is growing quickly all over the world.
- C. Why has the church survived despite changing times? Because it belongs to God, not to men and women. Jesus is the originator and sustainer of the church. Today He ministers to both believers and unbelievers through His body.

III. What does it imply when someone says they don't need church?

- A. People who do not value church gatherings and make it a priority are blinded to God's great plan. They are missing what the church is for them and what they are for the church. They have stepped into dangerous territory. What does it say to God if you lightly esteem that which Christ highly esteemed. What does it say when you don't care about something God cared so much about. Many say they are Christians and they have not made church a priority. They are in a dangerous place. They are deceived. Illustration: If I say I love you If we could walk closely with God without fellowshiping with other believers then going to church is a waste of time. Those who believe this would say we don't need other Christians for support, encouragement, or prayer.
- B. If believers can maintain an intimate relationship with God apart from church involvement, then Jesus made a big mistake. After all, the church was His idea.

C. Of course, our Lord didn't make a mistake when He established His church. You and I need other believers, whom God commands us to love as ourselves—a mandate second only to loving Him whole-heartedly ([Matt. 22:37-39](#)). It is in the context of community that we exercise our spiritual gifts, find encouragement to follow God's will, and learn how to properly interpret Scripture.

IV. Why should believers assemble together as a church?

A. To worship: Worshipping Him lifts our spirits and strengthens our souls. Many of the songs are full of theological truths that educate us about the blessings we have in Him.

B. To learn the Word of God: In church, we often have the opportunity to learn from those with special biblical training or deep spiritual maturity. Be ready to check any teaching against the whole counsel of Scripture, since pulling verses out of context can lead to doctrinal errors.

C. To fulfill the Great Commission: As the body of Christ, we can send missionaries to far-off places. We support them through our prayers, letters or e-mails, and financial support. Together we fulfill the command to share the good news with the nations ([Matt. 28:18-20](#)).

D. To protect themselves: When someone stops attending church, it is almost inevitable that he or she will begin to drift away from God. Hearing scriptural truth each week helps in encouraging believers to high moral, ethical, and spiritual standards.

E. To exercise spiritual gifts: These supernatural blessings, such as administration, organization, and mercy, are to be used "for the common good in the body of Christ" ([1 Cor. 12:7](#)).

F. To develop an atmosphere of support: The New Testament is full of advice on how to relate in love to one another.

G. To strengthen and broaden the Christian impact on the world: When believers are committed to a local fellowship, the influence of that church is greatly multiplied. God works powerfully through churches where each person sees himself or herself as making a valuable contribution to the ministry's work.

V. Conclusion: Commitment to a local body of believers is the way to participate in fulfilling God's purposes. There, you can receive solid instruction in the Word of God, participate in corporate worship, and find opportunities to exercise your spiritual gifts. Find a Bible-believing church in your area, and make an effort to get involved. Church services should be unchangeable commitments each week. Make church services a staple in your weekly schedule. Make church services a stone that anchors your weekly schedule. If you don't make it a priority, years will go by without a commitment to God's will and it will set

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your family and personal life back significantly! The church is one of God's greatest tools in moving us and molding us towards God's destiny for our lives. Make church a priority and your life will never be the same.

Lesson 39.....Learning Your Pastor's Heart

Let's think about what your pastor provides for you.

What a pastor does for you!

1. They push back hell for you in prayer.
2. They bring a word from God for your life.
3. If you obey your pastor's words it's like obeying God's words.
4. Your pastor watches out for your soul concerning balanced teaching.
5. Your pastor watches out for your soul concerning the deceitfulness of Satan to get you distracted, deceived, doubting God and more.
6. God has processed your pastor to lead you and your family towards victory in Christ.
7. The heart of the leader is in the hand of God. God directs the leader to prepare you for the future tests, trials, blessings, etc.
8. I used to be afraid to say all of these things then God told me that Pastors have the word of deliverance and blessing in their mouth for their flock!
9. He encourages you to pursue God's purpose for your life.
10. He stands with you in hard times.
11. He holds up the banner for Christ in His community, family, and church.
12. His success hinges on your success.
13. Pastors give you opportunities that can result in your growth and eventual greater ministry opportunities.

***Remember: How you respond to a man or woman of God is how you respond to God!
How you respond to a man or woman of God will determine how God responds to you!***

If you devalue the voice of your pastor what happens?

1. Your divine link to God's purpose is broken.

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2. You're left to your own devices.
 3. You may miss a balanced approach at scripture
 3. The one pushing back hell for you is now feeling disrespected.
 4. The favor of God is hindered.
 5. No one who has the authority is watching out for your soul. A lot of people may say they are watching out for your soul but are they qualified?
 6. Your divine link to Godly prosperity is broken. - Obey the prophets and you will prosper.
 7. You have disrespected God's plan for your life.
 8. You have shut doors that God ordained to be opened through the man of God over you.
- Think about Jesus and John.

In our society people are very quick to dismiss the role the pastor plays in their lives. Many do not see that there is any difference between them and their pastor. There is a huge difference in responsibility.

If you cannot trust or do not value your pastor you need to get before the Lord and search your heart. If your pastor is immoral, or doing something illegal you should leave that church. If he isn't failing in these area's, you should strive to serve them and the vision of God they are putting before you and the congregation.

Make sure you are under a pastor that preaches God's word, is serious about God's work, is serious about holiness, and is growing personally.

Remember your pastor is human just like you. So he does have challenges, weaknesses, and will make mistakes. However, if you have someone willing to stand in that office and strive to live the life God wants them to live you have a pastor that will help you grow and help you get to heaven.

10 things your pastor needs from you!

1. He needs your attendance at church.
2. He needs you to tithe to your church the whole tithe.
3. He needs you to communicate with him when things are happening.
4. He needs you to let him know the things He can pray about.
5. He needs you to serve in the church somewhere.
6. He needs your prayers for him and his family.
7. He needs you to invite others to the church. Share info about the church to others.
8. He needs your feedback on how his teaching and preaching is blessing you.
9. He needs you to do your best to serve with excellence in your church ministry area.

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10. He needs you to squelch gossip when you hear it.

Pastors don't do ministry because it is a glorious job. Most of the time pastoring is very hard work. Most of the time pastoring has many headaches and people's disrespect runs high. Pastors usually do not make a lot of money for what they do. The pastors heard God say one day that He wanted them to shepherd His people. From there they have been attempting to grow, learn to lead, know God's word, and more. They are not as lazy as people think. They do have the spotlight of 3 hours a week in the pulpit but most of the time their job is challenging in ways you cannot understand. Think about the phone calls of a parent with a drug addicted son. Think about the news just coming in that a member was killed in a car accident. Think about the hospital visits. Think about the hours he is speaking to God about you that you can't even imagine. Think about the hurt a pastor feels when someone says I am leaving your church. Why? I am just not getting fed. These are some challenges they have. Pastors have to keep their family honorable and watch out for the stereo types they get consistently. If a pastor is a true shepherd he has put all the hurtful words, disrespectful attitudes, and more behind him and he still stands in that pulpit and brings a word from God for you and your family each week.

He hears how other preachers are much better. He hears his flock just gave a guest speaker \$1000.00 when they haven't given in the offering for his church for 6 months. I am here to tell you a lot of stupid things are said to pastors and about pastors. It hurts sometimes. That may be why your pastor is a little guarded. Be a safe place for your pastor and it will come back to bless you!

As a pastor I do want to tell you a lot of great things happen as well. I have been able to lead hundreds of people to Christ. I have seen people baptized in the Holy Ghost. I have seen life changes in people you would not imagine. I have seen people take the messages I have taught and their lives have improved. They have become leaders, they have escaped many troubles. Their family life has gotten doubly blessed. God uses us a lot. I have preached messages where I came out of the church so drunk in the Holy Ghost I could hardly walk. The blessings are tremendous. I wouldn't do anything else with my life! I know I am right where God called me to be. Pain and joy are in this journey! I am thankful for the journey!

If you have a good pastor, let him lead you. Walk with him and be willing to do whatever he may need. God will lift him higher which in turn will lift you higher! Stay connected to a man of God. I understand and realize that we do grow and at points in our lives we will need to transition and break ties with someone who has mentored us for years. Sometimes the

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leader we are under has taken us as far as they can and we will need to connect to our next mentor to get where God wants us to go. However this is not something that happens once a year or every 3 months. The mentoring process can range from 3 years to 40 years. Some people will change whenever they feel a little uncomfortable. Don't move until God tells you to move and then do it honorably. If the man of God you're under is doing something illegal and immoral, get away fast. Otherwise submit to their leadership and trust God to work through them to help you grow.

Also be loyal to the man of God whom God has connected you with for this season. Every time you see something shinier don't run to that person or ministry. You're not assigned to everyone and everyone does not have in them the gift that God is using to mature you. Think about Elijah and Elisha. Elisha was encouraged by many and even by Elijah to leave but Elisha knew something was in Elijah that he needed. The same challenges happened for Jesus and John the Baptist. John the Baptist's ministry was nowhere near what Jesus' ministry would accomplish. However John was the person who God had assigned Jesus to follow and submit to and who was going to open the door for Jesus ministry. What if Jesus had rebelled? What if Elisha had left Elijah too early?

How do you keep your relationship with a man of God healthy?

- Be available to assist in the ministry they lead.
- Follow His vision- get behind the causes he brings forth!
- Don't spiral off on your own plans- speak what he is speaking
- Search things out for yourself in scriptures.
- Let them know when something they have shared has touched your life.
- Don't get involved in gossip about the ministry or others connected to the ministry.
- Ask them consistently if there is anything they need you to do.
- Invite others to the church or ministry events.
- Don't get jealous when the leader helps someone else.
- Understand timing with the conversations to the leader.
- Don't take advantage of the leaders' kindness or abuse their time.
- Be respectful of their responsibilities.
- Value the moments when they do share something valuable with you.

What are the rewards for serving a man of God?

1. Whatever you do for a man of God will be rewarded by God.
2. Whatever you do for a man of God will receive God's blessing!

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3. Whatever you do for a man of God is a seed for someone to serve you in that capacity in the future. So if you are an armor bearer, God will make sure you always have armor bearers. My wife and I worked in the children's ministry of a church for 3 years. Ever since we have become pastors we have never lacked children's ministry workers.
4. When you serve a man of God, Jesus's Kingdom is advanced and you will be a part of it!

Let me end with this word of wisdom that you should hold on to for the rest of your life !

- **What you make happen for a man of God will get a divine reaction from God to reward you!**

Lesson 40..... Spirit led or ?

As a minister you will need to discern God's spirit and the other influences on your life! You will have to bring your own flesh under as well. Jesus fasted for 40 days and He defeated the power of His flesh. He was the leader over his flesh and all other forces that attempt to control or step on the throne of our hearts.

One minister put it this way: If you can't get your flesh under control, how are you going to lead others in God's church? I am still trying to get victory over my flesh every day! I believe the flesh is a constant warfare we will face. I do believe there are levels of victory given through prayer and fasting!

So what are the different influences on our lives? Besides, the one we should listen to every time is the Holy Spirit.

The other influences include:

People, our own flesh, fear, vengeance, insecurity, social agenda's such as racism, money, fame and so much more!

We also have a soul that will try to mask like it's the Spirit of God and try to lead us somewhere we shouldn't go.

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So the way to overcome this is in Hebrews 12 where the word divides the soul and the Spirit. You can judge because of God's spirit what your Spirit is saying and discern it from what your flesh and or soul is wanting.

Let's look at the types of power a leader can operate out of, and lets see which one/ones are healthy!

Coercive power - Based on fear

Connection power - based on who you know

Charisma power - based on your reputation and ego or flamboyancy

Competence power - based on your knowledge and ability

Christmas power - based on giving gifts to get people doing what you want them to do.

All of these have their place and are useful at times however the power we should be led by is Holy Ghost power! Working out of the authority of Christ!

God wants you to walk in His authority and be led by His spirit not by the outside sources. If you don't have God's plan the world and others will create the plan they think you should follow.

I want to reiterate that statement!

If you don't have a plan someone else will pull you to their plan!

It's not wrong to work with others but make sure they are not driven by a different motive than God's will. They may think their plan is God's plan but it could just be their wife talking through them. Or their fear or their guilt, or their sister sharing what she thinks things should look like!

Find God's plan and God's will and run with it.

Listen to people and let people share and if it falls in God's plan go with it!

But be careful of other agenda's pushing out God's agenda!

Many people make decisions out of guilt, shame, fear, revenge, pride, superiority, people pleasing, jealousy, envy, strife, and so on. We must make the transition into the spirit led

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life and out of the soul led life. Sometimes soul led living seems very right because it accomplishes the expected. However you were created for good works for which the Spirit of God has created you!

Let's go through some reasons we do things:

1. To please God or to please a person.
2. Feeling insecure or inferior.
3. Feeling vengeance or anger.
4. Desiring to help others. Leave a legacy.
5. Feeling prideful and superior to others. No one is as good as you.
6. Feeling fear, misunderstanding, etc.

You can overcome it because Moses did. Jesus did. Paul did.

When you are motivated for wrong reasons it will rarely bring forth the fruit of the Spirit. Most of the time it will bring stress and confusion. When you are motivated to do something check your motive? Is it to please God? Is it to fulfill a duty I should perform for someone? Or is it something I feel guilted into? Or is someone manipulating me? Does it bring more pain and stress? Am I doing it out of love or am I doing it out of a wrong motive?

Here are ways God can help someone address wrong motives:

He can help those with a sense of inferiority by giving them worth.

He can help those with insecurity by giving them a sense of belonging.

He can help those with inadequacy issues by giving them competence.

He can help those feeling illegitimate by giving them a sense of purpose.

He will allow those who feel prideful by letting them experience failure.

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He can help those who feel superior by showing them others who are much more anointed, effective, and used by God.

How many times do you stop your own success because of these behaviors?

How many times have you shrunk back from an opportunity because of these feelings?

How many times have you given up with these feelings driving your decision?

How many times have you removed yourself from a great opportunity because of one of these feelings?

This is being soulish. When we let these feelings rule our lives we will not experience the fruit of the spirit but the results of the soulish life.

These are indicating a soul sickness that Christ wants to heal. Moses felt this way. Gideon felt this way. David felt this way. I am sure a lot more people felt this way than we realize. Christ wants to heal you!

Write out Hebrews 4:12

Do you see that getting more acquainted with the word of God, will grow into being led by the Spirit of God? We all should desire a Spirit led life, not a soul led life. Ask God to break you out of a soulish driven life and move you into a Spirit led life!

Conclusion: Closing Words for My Minister Friends

I want to close with some wise words for my fellow ministers. Ministry is not a linear path; it is a roller coaster. There will be days you want to give up and times you feel unfairly disrespected. Yet, there will also be mornings when you are surprised by new opportunities and Sundays when you rejoice to see lives transformed by the Gospel.

When you are in the valley, keep your perspective: this is just a season. When you are tired, trust that your strength will return. When you struggle, remember that God is with you. Perspective is your anchor—it is the process that prepares you to respond correctly, no matter the circumstances.

Let yourself be fully persuaded:

- Be fully persuaded that God loves you (Romans 8:38-39, NKJV).
- Be fully persuaded that He is watching over you (Psalm 121:7, NKJV).
- Be fully persuaded that He is able to save to the uttermost (Hebrews 7:25, NKJV).

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- Be fully persuaded that you are not alone; as it was in Elijah's day, God still has a remnant standing for His cause (1 Kings 19:18, NKJV).
- Be fully persuaded that God is working all things for your good (Romans 8:28, NKJV).

Know that your devotion to God may not yield immediate results, but it will always yield lasting ones. Greater is He who is in you than he that is in the world (1 John 4:4, NKJV). Pursuing God will always pay off, for He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6, NKJV).

Now, take this wisdom and pass the baton. You are ready for your next season.

Pastor William Bryant

CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION

Timothy Mentoring Program

This certifies that

has successfully fulfilled the requirements of the Mentoring Makes the Difference Program.

We joyfully acknowledge that the hand of the Lord is upon you for the work of the ministry, and you are fully equipped for this next season of influence.

"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." - 2 Timothy 2:15 (NKJV)

Date: _____

Mentor's signature

Mentoring makes a difference!

Mentoring makes a difference!

Are you running hard after your divine assignment, or are you wandering through ministry trying to figure it out all alone?

The kingdom of God is filled with passionate believers who love Jesus and want to serve, but many feel completely stranded. You know you have a calling on your life, but without a seasoned spiritual father to guide you, raw potential can easily turn into frustration, exhaustion, and ultimate burnout.

In *The Mentoring Timothy Program*, Pastor William "Gino" Bryant flips the script on modern leadership development to speak directly to the heart of the emerging leader. Drawing from decades of pastoral experience and the powerful biblical relationship between the Apostle Paul and young Timothy, Pastor Gino gives you a definitive, step-by-step field manual on how to position yourself to receive true, life-altering mentorship.

Inside these pages, you will discover how to:

- **Recognize Your Assignment:** Distinguish between personal ambition and a true, heaven-sent ministry calling.
- **Survive the Testing Grounds:** Learn how to handle contentious people, navigate difficult ministry circles, and protect your character when your boundaries are tested.
- **Master Divine Stewardship:** Protect your physical health, mental clarity, and spiritual focus by implementing strict, biblical time management.
- **Transition from Servant to Son:** Understand the spiritual protocol of submission, honor, and shifting from an institutional volunteer to a true spiritual son or daughter.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Pastor William "Gino" Bryant is a visionary leader, pastor, and mentor dedicated to equipping the body of Christ for strategic leadership. Known for his practical wisdom, fierce commitment to biblical truths, and passion for fathering the next generation of ministers, Pastor Gino serves as a guiding voice for emerging leaders worldwide, helping them bridge the gap between divine assignment and everyday execution.