

DISCIPLESHIP MENTORING



Compiled Outlines
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DISCIPLESHIP MENTORING

Preparing for Servant Leadership

Session One

“Producing Daily Fruit”

The purpose of these sessions are to stimulate your thoughts and foster a clearer understanding of what discipleship is all about through the lens of a servant leadership.

We sometimes do not see the value of past experiences because of the pain that it brought to us at that moment. Yet if we take some time to truly evaluate why it had happened and what could be gained from it, we can benefit and mature to overcome the next obstacle.

God allows many types of experiences to come our way to help us to see how we make decisions. Some of those decisions will be beneficial and we will be able to build upon them, while other decisions are detrimental and we need to leave them behind us. We also need to be careful not to repeat the wrong choices or go back and live in our past mistakes. Winston Churchill repeated the quote that many of us have also probably said over the years.

“We learn from history that we do not learn from history”

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel
German philosopher and idealist

My goal is to change this destructive pattern that continues to bring hardship and heartache to ourselves, our family, our friends, our coworkers, our churches and our nation. There are several ways to do this. One of those ways is by leading discussion into an open way that will clearly shows the foolishness of repeating certain past patterns. But it also must offer a better way, a clearer way, a godly way.

That is why I am beginning by looking at the need of being a servant leader. No matter what type of style of leader you become (disciples are leaders), you must always remember that you are called to serve. Jesus gave us a wonderful example of this.

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Mark 10:45

Servant Leadership is a skill that we can gain once we determine the value of it. We will never strive after something that has no value to us. How many of us as have ever thought that it would be incredible to find a penny on the sidewalk today? But I'm sure that some time in your life you have dreamed or hoped that through some miracle that you could become rich and famous. The chances are very slim but that may take place. Yet I do know that Jesus wants to reproduce Himself in and through your life. This is sure to happen if we follow the principles found in God's Word.

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

*Galatians 2:20
KJV*

*"Not that we are **adequate in ourselves** to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but **our adequacy is from God**,
6. who also made us **adequate as servants** of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life."*

*II Corinthians 3:5,6
NASB*

Jesus Christ wants to be seen in and through our lives. The way that I want to portray this is by looking at the type of fruit that is being produced from our thoughts, words and actions.

I. TYPES OF FRUIT



A. Artificial Fruit - This kind of fruit looks very real. In fact, there have been people who have bitten into it only to be embarrassed that they were deceived. But we must not forget that the people who design and produce these artificial fruit are using everything in their means to copy what looks real. They are even using sprays to not only deceive what you are seeing but also what you're smelling.

The same can be true in to our Christian walk. We can put on a pretense of what we want people to see or believe. Yet there will come a time when the true inner person will be revealed. It is artificial or fake or unreal.

I. TYPES OF FRUIT (Contd.)



A. Artificial Fruit (Contd.)

“And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.

15. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. There in will be what their actions deserve.”

II Corinthians 11:14,15



B. Canned or Preserved Fruit - This kind of fruit looks and tastes quite good.

It is carefully processed in an attempt to preserve its quality. Many companies pride themselves in the fact that they only choose the top quality of the fruits they process. They've been carefully inspect every vital part to ensure that they continue to duplicate only the best before they put their name on it and ship it to the consumer.

Buyers are becoming much more alert to the fact that many of these canned goods contain a variety of ingredients that are not found on the original fruit. These are often called added ingredients. They are added to preserve and sometimes even to “improve” either the taste or the colour.

God knows what is in our “containers.” Darkness cannot hide from Him. He knows all the added ingredients but we have tried to put into our lives in order to look like a true servant.

“He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with him.”

Daniel 2:22



C. Frozen Fruit - This kind of fruit also looks and tastes quite good once it's thawed. We've actually come up with some ways of quickly freezing our food so that we don't lose much of the quality. Once again you can never avoid losing some of the quality. It can be hidden by serving it with a creamy ice cream or a scrumptious cake.

Can you see the parallel that could happen in our Christian walk? We try to save something in the “fruit of our lives” in order to use it in another time. When we do we will never have quality of the lost opportunity. We will have to add to it in order to reach the same potential.



D. Fresh Fruit - Now this is the kind of fruit that looks and tastes good because it is fresh. You pay more for this kind because it has quality in it. In fact, the grocers will often place a sign beside them indicating that they were “picked today.”

If we choose to become a servant leader, we must understand the importance of a daily walk with Jesus. We cannot live on our past knowledge and experience. It doesn't take long to become stagnant if we do not pray, study our Bibles, share our faith, give of our resources.

The same is true in the fruit of our lives. The Bible tells us that there are at least nine different types of spiritual fruit that need to be part of our daily lives. They are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22, 23).

We will not be effective in the kingdom of God if we try to live by demonstrating yesterday's love. We may talk of an act of kindness that we did in our past, but that won't be good enough for today. We need to control our words thoughts and actions everyday.

Let's take time to talk about the different ways that we can demonstrate these nine types of spiritual fruit on a daily basis.

How can we encourage one another to live in such a way that our lives demonstrate what we believe?

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Session Two

“The Call of God”

There has been an increase of the number of books that attempt to clarify the questions that surround the call of God upon our lives. It truly is something that this generation is interested in. It is also very important for the church as a whole because without a call of God upon a person's life, the leadership will begin to fade away.

There has never been a time in church history where God is not calling upon men and women to respond to His voice. In fact, the calling of God is much more extensive than just a call to servant leadership. Anyone who is a Christian has been called by God.

*As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the **calling** you have received.*

- 2. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.*
- 3. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.*
- 4. There is one body and one Spirit – just as you were **called** to one hope when you were **called** –*
- 5. One Lord, one faith, one baptism;*
- 6. one God and Father of all, who was over all and through all and in all.”*

Ephesians 4:1-6

There are many scriptures recorded in the New Testament to support the fact that the entire church has been called by God (Romans 1:6, 7; 8:28; Mark 2:17; I Corinthians 1:26). It is not us who “find Jesus,” but it is He who calls us to follow Him and served Him. The Bible makes it clear that God called both the Jews and the Gentiles to follow Him (Romans 9:24 – 26).

There was and also is a calling that God places upon certain individuals to serve the body of Christ in a more specific capacity. The **apostle Paul** was called to be an **apostle (Romans 1:1; I Corinthians 1:1)**. **Jeremiah** was called to be a **prophet** while he was still in his mother's womb (**Jeremiah 1:5**). **Isaiah** was called to be a **prophet to a rebellious people (Isaiah 6)**. **Gideon** was called to be a **judge and deliverer** of the children of Israel from the Moabites (Judges 6). **Even the nation of Israel was called by God (Romans 11:25-29).**

How Do You Know You've Been Called by God?

I. THERE IS A DESIRE

II. THERE IS A DIRECTION

III. THERE IS A DETERMINATION

I. THERE IS A DESIRE

It seems to be clear by reading the Scriptures that very few if any of those who were called by God did so because there was a deep desire in their life to serve God. The fact is that it is God who places the desire into our lives to begin the process of preparing us for servant leadership. **Noah** was going about his daily tasks when God spoke to him to build an ark. **Abram** was living in the Ur of the Chaldees overseeing his servants. **Moses** was caring for his father-in-law's sheep when God spoke to him from the burning bush. **Gideon** was secretly caring for a wine press. **Paul** was travelling to Damascus to persecute the early Christians when God placed at the call within his heart. **James and John** were doing their daily fisherman tasks. **Levi** was at his tax table.

People who teach that there was always a strong desire in our life before we respond to the calling of God do not have the biblical basis to back it up. **It is God who has the strong desire to call to us to do His will at His time.** What He looks for are those who are faithful and dependable and willing to follow His Word and His voice.

So it seems from the Scriptures that the desire to serve God comes to its fullness AFTER receiving the call NOT BEFORE. There were even those like Jonah who attempted to run away from the call. Most of the people whom I've spoken with tell me that they weren't asking God be involved in full-time ministry. God is looking for those who will walk in a way that is pleasing to Him in order to bring peace and unity to the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:1-3).

II. THERE IS A DIRECTION

God doesn't just place a calling upon our lives, He also begins the process of unfolding His purpose as well as His direction. Noah was chosen to build an ark to save his family in which he was obedient to follow (Genesis 6:9-22). Joseph was chosen to save many lives (Genesis 50:20). God chose **Moses to rescue the Israelites from the Egyptians and lead them into a promised land** by performing a number of miracles (Exodus 3:1-22).

The Biblical illustrations do not stop there. God spoke to **Samuel to begin a process so this judge, priest, prophet** would learn how to decipher God's word to him (I Samuel 3:7,21). There is a process in walking in the will of the Lord (Psalm 1:1-3; 37:23; 23; Proverbs 3:5,6). That is why it takes so much time to be developed when God places a call upon our lives. God's Word is filled with the knowledge to guide our direction one step at a time (Psalm 119:105).

III. THERE IS A DETERMINATION

A true servant of Lord will find many obstacles that attempt to thwart his/her direction. That is why there must be a strong determination to continue to fulfill God's will. It is important during these days to also receive wise counsel from those who have journeyed before them. There are certain skills, talents and gifts that must be developed.

A young sapling can be easily readjusted. It is much harder (if not impossible) to attempt to straighten up an oak tree when it is older. Determination needs to be tethered with godly counsel (Proverbs 11:14). A young calf may enjoy its escape from a stall and kick its feet in the air but, it must soon realize that its freedom is given so it can gain strength and nourishment. We are given freedom to do God's will not our will.

The apostle Paul was sent into a wilderness in Arabia for three years to be trained by God (Galatians 1:11-24). Paul was set apart because God had to reveal to him the mysteries of salvation (Ephesians 3:1-13). The Lord kept pouring into the apostle divine truth because He knew that Paul would need to be clear in his understanding of God's purpose in unfolding and unveiling His gift of salvation.

Anyone who has never taken the time to be tried and tested in a furnace of affliction are seldom ready to offer leadership to others. This requires years of consistent development. We can be a Christian for 30 years and never enroll in these developmental classes. We choose to let others pay the cost. These are days when our lips are often closed and our ears need to be opened. It is not a day to tell others what to do, but rather of time for God to speak to us. Any who tries to speed up the process find themselves before the court of God where they are broken and THEN restored (Psalm 51; Psalm 34).

There comes a time in our life when we must freely walk into the crucible in order that the ropes that firmly bind us become removed as we walked through the fire with the Most high God (Daniel 3:19-25). It is then that God will be worshipped and acknowledged as the One and Only God (Daniel 3:26-29).

It was because John the apostle was determined to be a servant leader to God that after several attempts to kill him, he was sent to the island of Patmos. Let it be clearly understood that John was not given an apocalyptic vision of future events until he had a clear revelation of Jesus Christ. Are we determined to see Jesus or do we want to have unveiled the mysteries of things to come? Don't ever try to bypass the revelation of Jesus Christ and skip to the mysteries that He may wish to unveil. **Too many novices search for God's head when they need to be striving to know His heart.**

It takes more than determination to be successful when it comes to the development of servant leadership in God's kingdom. We must be determined to do the right things and not avoid the necessities to survive as a servant leader.

USING THE RESOURCES YOU HAVE

*** At 12:55 pm the mayday call crackled through the speakers at the Flight Service Station on Alaska's Kenai Peninsula. The desperate pilot of a Piper A22, a small single-engine plane, was reporting that he had run out of fuel and was preparing to ditch the aircraft in the waters of Cook Inlet.

On board were four people, two adults and two young girls, ages 11 and 12. They had departed two hours earlier from Port Alsworth, a small community on the south shore of Lake Clark, bound for Soldotna, a distance of about 150 miles. Under normal conditions it would been a routine flight; however, the combination of fierce headwinds and a failure to top off the fuel tank had created a lethal situation.

Upon hearing the plane's tail number, the air traffic controller realized that his own daughter was one of the young passengers aboard the plane. In desperation himself, he did everything possible to assist the pilot; but suddenly the transmission was cut off. The plane had crashed into the icy waters. Four helicopters operating nearby began searching the area within minutes of the emergency call, but they found no evidence of the plane and no survivors. The aircraft had been travelling without water survival gear, leaving its four passengers with even less of a chance to make it through the ordeal. Fiercely cold Cook Inlet, with its unpredictable glacial currents, is considered among the most dangerous waters in the world. It can claim a life in minutes, and that day it claimed four.

Kirk adds these thoughts to the story: For reasons we will never know, the pilot of that doomed aircraft chose not to use the resources that were at his disposal. He did not have enough fuel. He did not have the proper survival equipment. Perhaps he had not taken the time to get the day's weather report. Whatever the case, he did not use the resources that were available; and in this instance the consequences were fatal.

Nowery states, "*The stewardship of resources is a serious business; and God's will is that we give it serious attention. This demands that we have the right perspective on our resources, and that is possible only if we have the right focus on our source.*"

Kirk Nowery
"The Stewardship of Life"
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Session Three

“Proven Character”

I have often said that *“God is more concerned with our character than he is in our comfort.”* We forget about the value of a godly character until it is proven by words or actions to be otherwise. I believe we can truly say that they will know we are Christians by our character not just our love.

“There are many people who were at one time great leaders, but their character traits undermined all that they had or would be. As leaders we must look in the mirror and examine who we are. Our words and actions must go hand-in-hand if we are to be the vessels that the Lord can use to bless and lead others. It does not mean that we are perfect but it does mean that we have to be wise in how we deal with people and things.”

Dr. James Humphries
“Servant Leadership”
p. 16

There is a book that was written by Holly Lisle is titled *“Create a Character Clinic.”* In this book she identifies 447 character traits. Proven character is what others see in us not what we believe we are. Our true beliefs will influence our actions. We can never truly hide who we really are. Somewhere and sometime in life it will be revealed. Our mouth will unveil what is in our heart (Matthew 15:1–18).

“Reputation is what you are supposed to be; Character is what you are. Reputation is what you have when you come to a new community; Character is what you have when you go away. Reputation is made in a moment; Character is built in a lifetime. Reputation grows like a mushroom; Character grows like an oak. Your reputation is learned in an hour; Your character does not come to light for a year.”

William Hershey Davis

The true character of an individual is often seen when the trials and troubles of life attempt to overwhelm them. That is why we see the order that the apostle Paul was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write to the church at Rome.

*“Therefore, since we have been justified through our faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
2. Through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.
3. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our **sufferings**, because we know that suffering produces **perseverance**;
4. **perseverance**, **character**; and (proven) character, **hope**.
5. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.”*

Romans 5:1-5

Lets take a few moments and try to decipher the main points that the apostle Paul is bringing forth to the church especially from verse three to verse five. **When have you noticed the greatest points of growth in your life? Would you have chosen the circumstances that led to that growth or would you have tried to avoid them if you were in control? What were some of the plaguing thoughts and feelings that hindered you from dealing with what was taking place? What was the biggest thing in a positive sense that you gained from the experience?**

How Is Our True Character Displayed?

I. THROUGH OUR THOUGHTS

II. THROUGH OUR WORDS

III. THROUGH OUR ACTIONS

I. THROUGH OUR THOUGHTS

Have you noticed your thought patterns changing since you have become a Christian? If not, why not? We sometimes believe that we are the only ones who truly know what we think. The fact is that it usually doesn't take very long for us to expose what is within our heart and our mind by the instability of our life that is displayed (**cf. - Proverbs 4:18,19**). The wisdom of God cannot be contained so it will come forth through our godly character which is demonstrated in the wisdom of God (Proverbs 8). The same is true of foolishness.

I. THROUGH OUR THOUGHTS (Contd.)

That is why we need to **guard our thoughts** because they will never be fully contained. At some point in time they will manifest themselves. That is why God needs to test US and our THOUGHTS.

*“Search me, O God, and know my heart; **test me and know my anxious thoughts.**
24. See if there is any offensive way to me and lead me in the way everlasting.”*

Psalm 139:23, 24

“Sow a thought, reap an act; sow an act, reap a habit; sow a habit, reap a character; sow a character, reap a destiny for yourself, your family, your church and your world.”

Author Unknown

It is vital that we do everything we can to change our thought patterns so they are pleasing to God.

*“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent and praiseworthy – **think about such things.**
9. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me – **put it into practice.** And the God of peace will be with you”*

Philippians 4:8-9

“Thoughts lead on to purposes; purposes go forth in action; actions form habits; habits decide character; and character fixes our destiny.”

Tryon Edwards

We need to guard our thoughts so they become seasoned with grace and mercy. In doing so it will not take long for people to notice the improvements in your life. It is then that our testimony becomes something that can give glory and honour to the God we serve **(Matthew 5:13 –16).**

II. THROUGH OUR WORDS

“Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.”

Proverbs 12:18

The Bible has quite a bit to say about controlling our tongue. James, the half brother of Jesus, wrote almost an entire chapter to tell the church to tame its tongue (James 3:1–12). Haven't we all had times in our life when we wish we would not have said something? Wouldn't it be nice if we could take back our words? Unfortunately we cannot. So we must either be very cautious about what we say or we will have to become accountable for those unbridled words.

Have you ever noticed how a defence mechanism clicks into place very quickly when a person is not willing to admit to what they have said? One of the most common defences is to redirect the blame to someone else. There was also another subtle way of trying to twist scriptures to support the unhealthy words. The Bible gives us direction on how we should speak (**Ephesians 4:29**). We will also be accountable for every idle word we say (**Matthew 12:36,37**).

I truly believe that we should stop advertising that we are a Christian IF we are not willing to speak properly. It does a great deal of damage to the kingdom of God even though people do realize that it is coming from a false character. It offers ammunition for the enemy to attack the church. Let us instead give them words of truth to build up the Kingdom of God.

“May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, all LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.”

Psalms 19:14

III. THROUGH OUR ACTIONS

Our **thoughts** become expressed through our **words** and eventually through our **actions**. There is no way to avoid this transition whether for the good or for bad if we continue in its pattern. It becomes our lifestyle. It expresses our character.

The reason you are attending this session is because you want to become a more mature disciple for Jesus Christ. It will take consistent growth.

“Character can never be summoned in a moment of crisis, **IF** it has been squandered through years of compromise and rationalization.”

[Author Unknown](#)

III. THROUGH OUR ACTIONS (Contd.)

“A good character is the best tombstone. Those who loved you and were helped by you will remember you when forget-me-nots have withered. Carve your name on hearts, not on marble.”

C.H. Spurgeon

“Lead your life so you won't be ashamed to sell the family parrot to the town gossip.”

Author Unknown

“Character may be manifested in the great moments, but it is made in the small ones.”

Phillips Brooks

The Church of Jesus Christ is rising up and is being noticed at this greatest moment in the history of the world. It is shining forth in a dark world. God knows that we need His help today more than we have ever needed it. That is why He is raising up a generation that loves Him and is willing to follow His Word. That is why God is building His Church to display His splendour.

DISCIPLESHIP MENTORING

Preparing for Servant Leadership

Session Four

“Building Strong Relationships”

The beauty of becoming a disciple is found in the willingness to face all kinds of realities which for years we may have avoided. Most often the reason for not maturing is because it is often a difficult process. After all how many of us truly wish to confront the failures in our lives? We may attempt to run from our problems but they continue to pop up just when we believe we've avoided them.

One of the greatest problems in the Christian church today is that we are not building strong and healthy relationships. Somewhere in time these relationships will be tested by truth. Many that do not survive the test and begin to head down a pathway of broken and hurtful relationships have caused Christianity to be painted with the wrong brush.

We do not have to sit back and accept this as a reality within the church. It is not what God wants and therefore we need to reestablish what His purpose and will is for His church without compromising but yet balancing our mind with a heart of compassion. It also doesn't hurt to have a healthy dose of humility in that balance as well.

“Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?”

Matthew 7:3

Jesus gave some healthy advice to His disciples when He prayed for them.

*“That all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.
22. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one;
23. I in them and you and me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and you have loved them even as you have loved me.”*

John 17:21-23

What Can We Do to Build Healthy and Strong Relationships That Will Weather the Storms of Life?

I. SPEAK THE TRUTH IN LOVE - Ephesians 4:15

II. CONFRONT THE DECEPTION - Galatians 6:7-9

III. RESTORE THOSE WHO REPENT - I Corinthians 5:1-5; II Corinthians 2:5-11

I. SPEAK THE TRUTH IN LOVE - Ephesians 4:15

One of the greatest weapons that the enemy of our soul continues to keep sharpened because he knows how effective it is, is that of **delay**. He wants us to put off what we know needs to be done. Just wait another day. It is his reasoning that becomes a sly deception for us. But the devil is not the only source of delay.

So we need to also take into account that there are times when we ourselves are not ready and we must be willing to trust a mature mentor. So God also allows for delay but for a totally different purpose. Will the words that come from our mouth truly be that of love or will they be of anger and frustration? Are we ready to face our own demons? Are we willing to admit that we also are on a journey of receiving and applying truth to our own lives?

Truth must penetrate our own heart before we can portion it out to others. Much of that truth can change who we are in such a short period of time. Do you truly know that God loves you and has forgiven you of all of your confessed sin? Do you believe that He has a purpose for your life? Do you know that He wants your life to shine forth as a reflection of His truth in this world (Matthew 5:14-16)?

There are so many positive truths in the Bible that we can apply to our own lives that help to lift this out of the quagmire of our past failures. As we take these wonderful truths and build our lives upon them we begin to notice the stability that takes place even in the midst of trials and temptations (Matthew 8:24-27). We no longer allow our lives to be tossed back and forth by "every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming." (Ephesians 4:14). It is in that strength and that stability that we can "speak the truth in love."

Have you noticed how God allows things to happen in your lives to open your eyes to witness His love for you? Have you noticed how you are able to stand when others facing easier problems seem to fall? If so, I encourage you to bask in His love and seek to understand the wisdom behind it in order for you to be able to pass it onto others not just in words but also in deeds.

II. CONFRONT THE DECEPTION - Galatians 6:7-9

“Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.

8. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

9. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”

Galatians 6:7-9

We’ve all met Christians who have sown their wild oats and have prayed for a crop failure. We can run but we cannot hide. Some people who try to play with God think that they can get some sort of a life insurance protection. Unfortunately, their policy will be cancelled because of a precondition that has been hidden.

It’s difficult when reality sets in, BUT it is one of the most promising times in our lives. Deception tries to keep the truth from being revealed. It is a very foolish thing to do because God knows what is truly in our heart (Matthew 12:27; Luke 5:22; 6:8; 9:47; Psalm 139:2). **God reveals deception so that it can be replaced with truth.**

Too many people wait until the damage is almost irreversible before they are willing to surrender to God’s perfect plan for their life. This is not just a spiritual truth. It is a physical truth as well. A house that is left to termites will eventually collapse. A car that is allowed to rust will eventually rot away. Some people in Oklahoma attempted to out run the tornadoes that were sweeping down in their area. They unfortunately ended up in the death toll.

We cannot build strong relationships if we choose to live in deception. That is the reality of life – Christian life. A servant leader in the kingdom of God has got to be willing to lay his/her life before God. God loves us enough to have the unfruitful deeds of darkness exposed in our lives so we can walk in truth (Romans 13:12; Ephesians 5:11; John 3:20; Acts 26:18).

III. RESTORE THOSE WHO REPENT - I Corinthians 5:1–5; II Corinthians 2:5–11

Biblical excommunication is never intended to be forever. God is always looking toward reconciliation/restoration for those who repent. It is important to everyone and especially to the one who has truly repented.

The apostle Paul had to deal with an incident of incest in the church at Corinth. Scholars believe that this man was having sexual relationship with his step mother. They should've put him out of fellowship until he repented. A very stiff penalty was placed upon him so his eyes would be open to the sinfulness of his actions.

“hand this man over to Satan so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord.”

I Corinthians 5:5

Thank God that this story does not end with that verse. Jesus came into this world to heal those who were sick and to bring sinners to repentance (Luke 5:31, 32). [Have you ever prayed to ask Jesus to bring all kinds of sinners into the church? Would you be prepared to help them and guide them? Have you seen God preparing you to meet this challenge?](#)

It is clear from Scripture that this man that had committed incest demonstrated a genuine and sorrowful repentance. It then became a test for the church to see how they would respond to this repentant sinner.

“Church discipline, important as it is, should not be allowed to develop into a form of graceless rigor in which there was no room for pardon and restoration.”

[The NIV Study Bible](#)
[p. 1765](#)

[Why Was it Important to Restore this Man?](#)

1. So he would not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow - vs 7
2. So he would know he is still loved - vs 8
3. So the church would be proven to be obedient - vs 9
4. In order that Satan might not outwit the church - vs 11

There is no doubt that building strong and healthy relationships in the church is a key to church growth. It will take time and a willingness to be open with one another. We will need to challenge our insecurities and past hurts in order to become healthy.

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Session Five

“Being Committed”

Commitment is a fundamental requirement for every servant leader in the body of Christ. The word “**commitment**” means according to the Oxford University press dictionary

*“1. dedication to a cause or policy. 2. a pledge or undertaking.
3. an engagement or obligation that restricts freedom of action.”*

I’m sure we’ve all met people who are committed to what they are doing. But that is not what I believe is needed in the body of Christ today. There was a big difference between an individual commitment and a group effort.

“Individual commitment to a group effort - that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work.”

Vince Lombardi
Head Coach of Green Bay Packers
Led 5 league championships in 7 years

“Commitment means that it is possible for a man to yield the nerve center of his consent to a purpose or cause, a movement or an ideal, which may be more important to him than whether he lives or dies.”

Howard Thurman (1899-1981)
Author, Philosopher, Theologian, Educator, Civil Rights Leader

The Bible has much to say about being committed to God and offers us many examples to show how that commitment was witnessed on a regular basis.

We find an interesting discussion that Jesus had with one of the experts of the law recorded in Matthew, Mark and Luke. I would like to use these thoughts as a foundational text for this session. The man asked what he must do to “*inherit*” eternal life. Jesus tested his knowledge of what was written in the Law (and within his heart) with which he answered,

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

Luke 10:27

Our expression of love is the greatest measure of our commitment to one another. We will never be committed to someone/something we do not love.

*** Pliny the Elder, was a Roman writer who lived during the same time period as Jesus. He told a story of the setting of an obelisk, which when erected would stand 99 feet tall. Twenty thousand workers were chosen to pull on the ropes and activate the hoisting apparatus. There was great responsibility and risk in the operation. Just one error could cause the obelisk to fall, ruining years of work.

The King demanded one act which insured the complete attention and best direction of the engineer. He ordered the engineer's own son to be strapped to the apex of the obelisk, so that his heart as well as his head would be given to the task. ***

*“Pulpit Helps”
August, 1992, p. 14*

A question that every Christian needs to ask themselves on a regular basis is how committed I am to God and His cause? The true way to answer this is to search your heart and see what and whom you love.

I. A LOVE FOR GOD

II. A LOVE OF OTHERS

I. A LOVE FOR GOD

The test of the apostle's love for God was seen at the **beginning, during** as well as at the **end** of their ministry. They were not always successful. They, like us, constantly have our commitment tested to see just how deep it is. God does not want us to be a mile wide and an inch deep in our desire to serve Him.

Our commitment can be tested in many ways. It is not always the difficult things that will tempt us to give up. The enemy of our soul is much too sly to just use one form of cunning deceit.

I. A LOVE FOR GOD (Contd.)

“In Russia, Christians are **tested by hardship**, but in America you are **tested by freedom**. And testing by freedom is much harder. Nobody pressures you about your religion. So you relax and are not so concentrated on Christ, on His teaching, how He wants you to live.”

Pavel Poloz
exiled in 1987 from Russia
Moody Monthly, April, 1989

An interesting test of the disciples commitment to Christ came in John chapter 6 when Jesus spoke about himself as the Bread of Life. In fact, Jesus made a very strong statement when He said,

*“I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you will have no life in me . . .
56. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him.”*

John 6:53,56

It was even said that this was difficult teaching that was hard to accept (John 6:60). After explaining it a little more fully and making it clear that some of them were not believers (just followers) and who his betrayer was going to be.

“From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.”

John 6:66

How has God tested your love for Him? Are you presently facing a test that is trying your love and commitment of Him? What have you learned from others?

*** The Bohemian reformer John Hus was a man who believed the Scriptures to be the infallible and supreme authority in all matters. He died at the stake for that belief in Constance, Germany, on his forty-second birthday. As he refused a final plea to renounce his faith, Hus's last words were, *“What I taught with my lips, I seal with my blood.”* ***

Source Unknown

II. A LOVE OF OTHERS

Let's take this one step further. God is not so selfish in His love that He just wants it all for Himself. In fact, He proved who He was not just by asking for our love but by vividly offering His love to the world. We sing a song that says, *"They will know we are Christians by our love."*

So who are we to love? Did Jesus give us any insight on this? Yes he did! He actually told the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 29 –37). Have you ever considered your neighbour is the one that you can have mercy on? Let's look at the commitments of our love.

A. The Love of our Spouse - This of course, applies to those who are married. It can also be measured to the one we may be preparing to marry. The Bible never speaks about dating. It was either a betrothal or an espousal. It was just another way of saying that they were committing themselves to a lifetime of loving relationship.

The Bible makes it clear that a man is to love his wife and she is to love and respect her husband (Ephesians 5:33; Titus 2:4). There is no doubt that the way that we treat each other is an indication of our love toward one another (I Peter 3:1-7) and our commitment to God.

B. The Love of our Children - Do you believe your children will **respect** you if you don't **love** them? Do you believe your children will **love** you if you don't **respect** them? Can you expect them to be committed to the values of your home if you don't love and respect them?

John Zawahri showed his lack for commitment to his family when he killed both his father and brother and set their house on fire before killing other innocent victims. There is a high cost in our society for the lack of love demonstrated in our homes.

"To be in your children's memories tomorrow,
You have to be in their lives today."

Barbara Johnson

C. The Love of Others - Our world would be a different place if we learned to commit ourselves to one another. The reason I say this is because there is a close link between commitment and love. How many lives do you believe could change if they were given a good dose of love today? How much heart ache would it save our world and replace it with peace?

D. The Love of the Church - The way to tell how much we love the church that Jesus died for is to ask ourselves how committed we are to it. There is three ways of testing this. It is found in **our time**, in **our treasure** and in **our talent**. If nothing is holding you back in these and many other ways, then why aren't you committed?

II. A LOVE OF OTHERS (Contd.)

D. The Love of the Church (Contd.)

*** When Julius Caesar landed on the shores of Britain with his Roman legions, he took a bold and decisive step to ensure the success of his military venture. Ordering his men to march to the edge of the Cliffs of Dover, he commanded them to look down at the water below.

To their amazement, they saw every ship in which they had crossed the channel engulfed in flames. Caesar had deliberately cut off any possibility of retreat. Now that his soldiers were unable to return to the continent, there was nothing left for them to do but to advance and conquer! And that is exactly what they did. ***

Source Unknown

Let's do everything we can to cut off our avenues of escape and commit ourselves fully to God and others.

DISCIPLESHIP MENTORING

Preparing for Servant Leadership

Session Six

“Unwavering Trust”

There comes a time in all of our lives that our faith in God is severely tested. That testing comes in a variety of ways. It is essential that we recognize the benefit and allow God to enhance our desire to serve Him even though we can't fathom what He is doing. The Bible is full of examples to help us be more determined in our willingness to follow Him with an unwavering trust.

Consider for a few moments just a few of these recorded biblical stories.

1. Noah - took 100 years to build an ark
2. Abraham – was challenged to offer his son Isaac
3. Joseph – was given a dream to follow
4. Moses – was called to deliver a nation from bondage
5. Joshua – lead the people into the promised land
6. Gideon – saved Israel from the invading Midianites
7. Deborah – led an army against Israel's enemy Sisera
8. King David – challenged Goliath and gave victory to Israel
9. Elijah – confronted King Ahab and Queen Jezebel
10. Daniel – remained true to God though it meant being cast into a den of lions
11. The 12 apostles – faced martyrdom and remained true
12. The apostle Paul – faced many forms of severe punishment and trials

Sometimes when life gets hard and out of control you have to just put it all on God's altar and trust Him like many who have served before us. **I've met a number of Christians who are waiting for an opportunity to die for Christ but have failed to lay down their daily life for Him (John 15:13).** By waiting for some future spectacular event we miss the constant ventures that God has set for us to journey through.

What has God set before you that has tested your faith? What did you gain from the experience? Have you been going through a present time of testing that you are willing to share? Have you discovered God's purpose at this point?

Lets take a few moments to look at Matthew chapter 14. We have three types of tests that are recorded. The first one deals with John the Baptist. The second one relates to the story of Jesus feeding the 5000. The last test takes place on the Sea of Galilee in the midst of a severe storm.

What Were the Individual Three Tests That Were Recorded in this Chapter?

I. A DEDICATION/DOCTRINAL TEST

II. A DEBIT TEST

III. A DEPENDENCE TEST

I. A DEDICATION/DOCTRINAL TEST

One of the most important things that we must come to grips with if we are going to trust in the Lord with all our heart is whether Jesus is who He said He was. Once that fact is established, we can then face any type of testing and trial that will come our way. A vivid example of this takes place in the life of John the Baptist.

Remember that John was the one who baptized Jesus in the Jordan River (Matthew 3). There is no doubt that John recognized Jesus to be the Messiah whom he was not worthy even to untie his sandals (Mark 1:7). He heard the voice of the heavenly Father proclaiming that Jesus was His Son (Matthew 3:16, 17). But there came a time in John's life that he wavered concerning what Jesus as the Messiah was allowing to take place (Matthew 11:1-6). The early disciples had to come to grips with the fact that suffering was allowed in God's kingdom. Jesus didn't come to simply overcome the kingdoms of this world. He came to establish a new kingdom that loved and cared for people. Once that truth was reestablished in his mind he was able to face death (Matthew 14:1-12).

John was never willing to revoke his doctrine of morality even if it meant that he would be beheaded. He was totally dedicated when God and His kingdom became an established fact in his heart and his mind.

Have you ever doubted God's Word? Welcome to the camp of testing. Every disciple of Jesus Christ will have to face a time when the doctrine of the Word of God must become unwavering. One of the most significant ways that will be tested is how you see God's kingdom be established upon this earth. The prophet Habakkuk complained to God because he could not understand why God allowed so much violence and injustice (Habakkuk 1:1-4). God made it clear that He has a purpose and timing for what He does in His kingdom (Habakkuk 2:3). **It is all a matter of trust.**

John the Baptist was totally doing the will of God and it cost him his life.

II. A DEBIT TEST

Most likely all of us have faced a time in our lives when we cannot see how the needs that are facing us will every be met with the resources we have. This is how the disciples must have felt when Jesus was not about to send the crowds away hungry. He turned to His disciples and said

“You give them something to eat.”

Matthew 14:16

Here we have a **“Debt Test.”** There was a great need but there also didn’t seem to be way of meeting the need. The debt was greater than the supply – or at least it looked that way. **When have you ever had to face an overwhelming need? What did you do about it? What was the outcome?**

The disciples were totally in the right place at the right time when God put them in an awkward position of trying to feed 5000 people with only five loaves and two fish. There is no doubt that this appears to be an insurmountable problem to overcome. Yet Jesus allowed for this to happen. It’s important also to know that Jesus was not overwhelmed by the problem. It may seem like a simple answer but He basically had an unwavering trust that His heavenly father would provide for their needs.

“And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 4:19

There was no doubt in the Bible that God has a vast storehouse of treasures for His people. God does not need what we have. He not only owns the cattle on a 1000 hills (Psalm 50:10) and heaven is his throne and the earth is His footstool (Isaiah 66:1).

Becoming overwhelmed with the needs around us does not mean we are doing something wrong. It simply is an opportunity for God to declare forth His greatness.

******* George Muller is best known for his ministry to orphans (though he was also a pastor). He housed over 10,000 children in his lifetime in Bristol, England, and he believed that He had seen God answer over 50,000 prayers. This is astounding, but what makes it even more so is that He never asked anyone for anything but God. Muller simply prayed to God, and God never failed him. His life story proclaims both the omnipotence and generosity of God toward His people. *******

III. A DEPENDENCE TEST

There is one last record of amazing trust in Matthew 14. It takes place directly after the feeding of the 5000. Jesus told His disciples to get in the boat and row to the other side while He dismissed the crowd. Once that was completed Jesus went up on the mountainside to pray. Sometime between 3 AM to 6 AM Jesus made His way out onto the lake. The disciples were a considerable distance from shore so they had no way of escaping the danger they were in from the wind and the waves.

To make matters worse Jesus chose to walk upon the water which just created more fear within their lives. There were many superstitions among sailors the same as there is today. That is why Jesus spoke these words.

“Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.”

Matthew 14:27

For reasons beyond our understanding that is all it took for Peter to ask Jesus to let him come to Him and walk on the water. Especially after Jesus said,

“Come”

Matthew 14:29

There are times when we need to abandon the unstable security of our “boats” in order to recognize Jesus in our midst. *Is it time to get out of the boat? Is it time to challenge our fears?*

Some would say that this was a reckless act of foolish proportion. Everything was going well until Peter **“saw the wind.”** We all know that what he actually saw was the effects of the wind. He became overwhelmed by the waves that were surrounding him. He knew his life was in danger when he began to sink so he cried out to the Lord to save him.

Jesus immediately took hold upon him and led him back to the boat where the winds died down. But let us not miss a very interesting response of Jesus toward Peter. Remember that Peter was willing to get out of the boat and depend upon Jesus to help him walk on water. This is a skilled fisherman acting in this manner. I would say that this is an incredible act of faith. But Jesus said,

“You of little faith . . . why did you doubt?”

Matthew 14:31

How would your faith compare with Peters’? What was the last major thing that you depended upon God for? What is your faith challenged? Did your faith grow?

There is no doubt that the Church of Jesus Christ today is having its faith tested. It must learn to walk in unwavering trust in the midst of the storms that are attempting to overtake it. Are we going to run to the safety of the boat or to the arms of Jesus?

Get ready – more intense testing is coming!

DISCIPLESHIP MENTORING

Preparing for Servant Leadership

Session Seven

“Being Properly Equipped”

One thing to always keep in focus is that a disciple is called to **serve** others not **control** or **manipulate** them. One of the valuable ways we can accomplish this goal is to offer others the best tools they will need to serve as well. A servant leader must constantly be equipped if he/she is to equip others. This should always be at the forefront of our minds. How will WE be equipped? Our equipping should always consider how it can be passed on to others.

“Freely you have received, freely give.”

Matthew 10:8

The apostle Paul passed on his experience and wisdom in God’s Word to many others including Timothy. Timothy was encouraged to pass what he was entrusted with to others to help them to grow in their faith.

It is vital that we be equipped with what is right if we are to be successful in ministry.

*“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,
17. So that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”*

II Timothy 3:16,17

According to the Oxford University Press Dictionary the word **“equip”** means **“1. supply with the items needed for a purpose. 2. prepare (someone) mentally for a situation or task.”** It is probably from an Old Norse word meaning **‘to man a ship.’**

God has set up the leadership structure of His Church with apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers so that the Church can effectively grow into maturity. The Message paraphrases the Scripture in this manner by displaying what the duty of this fivefold ministry is:

*“to train Christ’s followers **in skilled servant work**, working within Christ’s body, the church, 13. **until we’re all moving rhythmically and easily with each other**, efficient and graceful in response to God’s Son, fully mature adults, fully developed within and without, fully alive like Christ.”*

Ephesians 4:12,13

I like the Seven Things That Dr. Humphries Mentions We Need to Become Equipped in If We Want to Be an Effective Servant Leader.

1. Prayer - Prayer is not just the backbone of the church but it is the **heartbeat**. It must be first and centre if we are to equip the next generation of believers. This prayer must expand much beyond our services. It has to be a daily part of our lives whether we meet as a congregation or whether we are alone with God. It becomes the life breath of our soul.

Jesus taught His disciples to pray (**Matthew 6:5 – 13**). He even told His disciples that *“when you pray”* not *“if you pray.”* They were even taught to pray for their enemies and those who persecuted them (**Matthew 5:44**). They were also told to fast along with **their prayers** (**Matthew 6:16–18**).

James who was not just a half brother of Jesus but also a disciple passed on what he learned as well to the early church (James 5:13–18). Without prayer, the Church will be misguided because it will follow man’s principles and wisdom instead of God’s. It will also have no power to effectively evangelize the world.

2. Study - The apostle Paul was one who continually studied from the Old Testament Scriptures. That is why he became so effective in unfolding the mysteries of God to the early Church. He made it very clear that any disciple who wanted to be approved of God would have to study the Scriptures not just read them.

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

*II Timothy 2:15
KJV*

This must be a lifetime commitment. There will never be an end of your learning of God’s Word. It is shallow enough for a child to wade in it and deep enough to drown an elephant. It has depth and height and length enough for everyone no matter how intelligent they are. I like the way it is translated in Knox’s Bible.

*“ Aim first at winning God’s approval, as a workman who does not need to be ashamed of his work, **one who knows how to handle the claims of the truth like a master.**”*

*II Timothy 2:15
Knox Bible*

3. Serving - This once again must be done in a very appropriate order. Many fellowships and denominations require a time of internship. This gives an opportunity for someone to learn “on-the-job” and also make mistakes. We have all had to learn from our mistakes. A seasoned leader is able to encourage a “rookie” as they gain the skills that they will need to be effective in ministry.

John Mark failed in his first missionary endeavour with the apostle Paul (Acts 13:13). Mark did not have the opportunity to become a mature missionary and a number of his insecurities and inabilities surfaced. Paul recognized them and realized that John would just fail again until he became mature because of the many hardships that he would face (Acts 14:22).

Barnabas was able to mentor Mark in a more concise manner because of his encouraging nature (Acts 15:36 – 41). Barnabas was able to disciple Mark so that he became valuable to the ministry (II Timothy 4:11).

4. Observation - Another great way of becoming equipped as an effective servant leader is by observing what others are doing. There was much to learn of other cultures and practices. Many churches are learning from parachurch organizations how to become better in missions and evangelism.

We can learn valuable information by seeking advice of those who have journeyed before us. That is why it takes years to develop into a mature leader. We are warned in the Scripture not to set people apart into ministry quickly.

“Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands.”

I Timothy 5:22

“Paul is speaking of the ordination of an elder, which should not be performed until the candidate has had time to prove himself.”

[N.I.V. Study Bible
a footnote of I Timothy 5:22](#)

5. Action - One of the best ways of learning how to do something is by stepping out of one's comfort zone and beginning to serve. It never hurts anyone to start from the bottom and work your way up in greater responsibility. No one is able to learn everything overnight. It takes practice as well as willingness.

“For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little.”

Isaiah 28:10

Paul admired the Bereans for not just taking everything for granted that he spoke to them about. They went home and studied the Scriptures to make sure that what he was saying was true. It took a specified action on their part.

“Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.”

Acts 17: 11

So it is not just important to be active, we must also walk in truth.

6. Response - Those who seem to accomplish great things for God understand the importance of challenging their fears. It takes courage to step out in faith and believe in God and His Word. We can never expect to lead others until they see the courage in us. That courage will also help to build confidence for the next challenge.

It will also help to broaden our horizons for future endeavours. If you take a look at Paul's missionary journeys, you will see that he covered more ground with each journey. His last journey cost him his life.

The ways we respond to difficult situations are being watched by others. They will either admire our courage or despise our cowardice. They will want to know that we practice what we preach. **We may want to take the easy road but we know the cost is too high.**

7. Evaluation - Jesus not only sent out the 72 disciples but He also had them return and share everything that it happened (Luke 10:1-24). It gave Jesus an opportunity to highlight what is valuable to building the kingdom of God.

Every worker in God's kingdom must understand the importance of being accountable. Another very important key in the kingdom of God is being faithful to what we have been entrusted with. One of the ways that this truth is explained in the Scripture is found in Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14–30).

Our Master will return someday and evaluate what we have been entrusted with. It's important that we at least try to serve God faithfully. Those who choose to do nothing with what they have been given will be considered as a worthless servant and face the inevitable consequences.

It is so important that we continue to be equipped properly because those whom we lead will follow our example. Our mistakes can become their mistakes. Our victories can become multiplied in their victories.

“May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, 21. equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ of whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

Hebrews 13: 20, 21

DISCIPLESHIP MENTORING

Preparing for Servant Leadership

Session Eight

“Passion for God - Compassion for People”

There often seems to be two main pillars that we build upon and rightly so. It is just like a person that only has one leg – they become unstable if they choose to continue in that manner. It also hinders any advancement. That is why in the kingdom of God, we as God’s servant leadership, must stand for both a Passion for God as well as a Compassion for People.

“You can be committed to the Church but not committed to Christ, but you cannot be committed to Christ and not committed to the Church.”

Joel Osteen

“If passion drives you, let reason hold the reins.”

Benjamin Franklin

Passion is a burning zeal within our soul. It has been described as an intense enthusiasm for something. We often use the term of *“The Passion”* to describe the suffering and the death of Jesus Christ upon the cross. He was determined to face the cross even though He knew it would cause excruciating pain. We could say that Jesus was passionate about offering the world salvation from their sin.

“A great leader's courage to fulfill his vision comes from passion, not position.”

John C. Maxwell

But that is not all that we can say about Jesus. He also set a clear example in the fact that He had Compassion for People. People of all walks of life. People of every gender and every age. He even showed compassion for people who mocked and ridiculed and fought against Him. Christian Compassion is not determined by circumstances. So it is vital that we get these important truths in their proper order. We will become another statistic if we don’t fully understand how important this is.

“For the soul of a person to be inflamed with passion for the living God, that person's mind must first be informed about the character and will of God. There can be nothing in the heart that is not first in the mind. Though it is possible to have theology in the head without its piercing the soul, it cannot pierce the soul without first being grasped by the mind.”

Author: R.C. Sproul
“Essential Truths of the Christian Faith”

The conversation between Jesus and the apostle Simon Peter in John 21:15–17 is a crucial one to understand in the context of today’s session. There are two different words used in the Greek language that do not show themselves when they are translated into English. The only difference we see is whether the adjective **“truly”** is used or not.

“‘Truly love’ refers to a love in which the entire personality, including the will, is involved.
‘Love’ refers to spontaneous and natural affection or fondness in which emotion plays a more prominent role than will.”

N.I.V. Study Bible
10th Anniversary Edition
Footnote on page 1635

So let’s take a few moments to understand this distinction so we can become stable in how we “work out our salvation.”

I. PASSION FOR GOD

II. COMPASSION FOR PEOPLE

I. PASSION FOR GOD

Jesus wanted to clearly make a distinction in what He was looking for in Servant Leadership. One of the problems we have in our churches today is that we have many people who are following a belief or a creed instead of following Jesus. They are more committed to this creed than they are to Jesus. And it doesn’t take very long before their **creedal beliefs** are replaced with their **personal beliefs**. Once this happens they become more devoted to **A CAUSE** than they do to **THE CHRIST**.

Jesus asked Simon Peter if he **“truly loved”** Him (Greek - agapao) two times. Each of those times Peter responded to Him that **“you know that I love you”** (Greek - phileo). It was on the third time that Jesus finally asked Peter **“do you love me?”** (Greek - phileo). In which Peter replied for third time **“you know that I love you”** (Greek - phileo).

I. PASSION FOR GOD (Contd.)

Let me remind you once again of the definition of these two words

Agapao is defined as - *“To esteem, love, indicating a direction of the will and finding one’s joy in something or someone.”*

[Complete Word Study Dictionary](#)

Agapao is an exercise of the will, a deliberate choice. This word is found 117 times in the New Testament.

Phileo is defined as - *“To have to have affection for someone, to be fond of, to like, indicating feelings, warm affection.”*

[Complete Word Study Dictionary](#)

We need to ask ourselves the question about how deep is our love for God. **Does our passion for God go well beyond our feelings?** Is our love directed by our will or is our love directed by our feelings?

This is a very important distinction. Jesus was attempting to guide Peter in the choice that he was making. In fact, Jesus was trying to indicate to Peter that he needed to move beyond a level of feelings if he was about to venture out as a disciple without Jesus daily by his side.

Hopefully one other way of showing how this truth can be embedded into our mind and then have it affect the choice of our will is by seeing how this word is used in other portions of Scripture.

It is the word used when Christians are commanded to love our enemies.

“But I tell you, Love (agapao) your enemies and pray for those who persecute you”

Matthew 5:44

God was not instructing them to have feelings of affection for their enemies like they would toward their family or friends. It was a moral or ethical love, a duty that God commanded His children to observe. He was commanding an outward expression, not an inward expression of feeling. We can choose to love in this sense but we cannot make a choice to have an inward feeling. **Feelings can and will control our choices if we allow them to.**

I. PASSION FOR GOD (Contd.)

The word that is used to command us to love our enemies is also used to command us to love the Lord our God:

“Jesus replied, “Love (agapao) the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.

38. This is the first and greatest commandment.

39. And the second is like it: Love (agapao) your neighbor as yourself.”

Matthew 22:37-39

God is NOT commanding us to have affection towards Him, though we may. He is commanding us to obey Him by keeping His commandments and worshipping only Him which is an act of our will. You will never find a command for us to love Him in the sense of agape which denotes affection. He only asks that we love Him in the agapao sense. **Despite that, HIS love for US entails both agapao and agape.** It is also used in the famous verse that we all know by heart along with many others such as:

“For God so loved (agapao) the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

John 3:16

“Greater love (agape) has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.”

John 15:13

“By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love (agape) one another.”

John 13:35

“Because of the increase of wickedness, the love (agape) of most will grow cold.”

Matthew 24:12

II. COMPASSION FOR PEOPLE

Once the truth is established that we love the Lord our God by an active choice of our will, we are then ready to move onto the next stage.

Jesus emphasized to Peter that He wanted him to:

“Feed my lambs” - John 21:15

“Take care of my sheep” - John 21:16

“Feed my sheep” - John 21:17

We are not to be making converts to believe what we believe but rather we are to NOURISH THEM in the knowledge of whom Jesus is. Jesus sees us serving Him based upon **what we are to Him, not what we do for Him.** We will reproduce what we believe so we must be extremely careful.

We must be very careful that we don't just do acts of compassion to win people over to the kingdom of God. Our **compassion for people** must be directed by our **passion for God.** Jesus placed the will of the Father before the needs of the people. There have been a host of people who have fallen by the wayside because they have reversed this vital order.

“If I am devoted to the cause of humanity only, I will soon be exhausted and come to a place where my love will falter; but if I love Jesus Christ personally and passionately, I can serve humanity though men treat me as a doormat. The secret of a disciple's life is devotion to Jesus Christ, and the characteristics of life is its unobtrusiveness (not conspicuous or attracting attention).

Oswald Chambers
“My Utmost for His Highest”
June 19th

Jesus knew that if He sent Peter out to feed His sheep without clearly setting in place his love or compassion according to his will not his feelings that He would be setting him up for a fall.

So we must ask ourselves the question of how long do we want to serve Jesus? If we want to be here for a long time then we need to clarify what our discipleship is based upon.

II. COMPASSION FOR PEOPLE (Contd.)

“Discipleship is based upon devotion to Jesus Christ, not on adherence to a belief or a creed.”

Oswald Chambers
“My Utmost for His Highest”
June 19th

So every disciple of Jesus Christ must decide whether they are going to make other disciples according to WHAT they believe (their creed) or WHO they believe (Jesus Christ). Then we can consider how we will live out our lives and apply the teachings of the Word of God in a practical manner like those found in Romans 12:9-21 as well as many other Scriptures.

DISCIPLESHIP MENTORING

Preparing for Servant Leadership

Session Nine

“The Stewardship of a Servant’s Life”

The topic of stewardship of a servant’s life is truly a foundation that much of our life must be built upon. It’s the way of identifying the biblical concept that we have been entrusted with as something that does not belong to us. We have the privilege of using it until the Owner asks us to return it. We need to treat it with special care and remember that we will be accountable for its condition when we return it. In the case of Christianity we have been entrusted by God to be faithful in what He places into our care.

Stewardship - to supervise arrangements or keep in order, manage or look after (another’s property).

Accountability - of a person, organization, or institution. Required or expected to justify one’s actions or decisions; to be responsible

Entrusted - to look after, to maintain in good order, to be responsible for, or to be delegated to.

Lets use the following Scripture to lead the discussion.

“Each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

11. Whoever speaks, let him speak, as it were, the utterances of God; whoever serves, let him do so as by strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

I Peter 4:10-11 NASB

The bottom line is that God has entrusted us with many things that we will be accountable to Him for. The gifts and many other blessing that God has poured into our lives are like an investment that we need to carefully use for the honour and glory of God. Let’s look at five areas that we can be faithful in our stewardship.

I. STEWARDS OF OUR TALENTS (Godly Wealth)

Jesus shared a parable of the kingdom of God in Matthew 25:14 – 30. This story teaches about three people that are described as having a servant relationship with their master. He was about to leave and he was not indicating to them when he would return. He simply entrusted them with a certain amount of money based upon their abilities. By doing so there would not be a demand placed upon any of the 3 that would exceed what they could do.

The parable says that “*after a long time*” that the master returned with the purpose of settling up their accounts. The first two servants were able to double what they had been given. They were both recognized as being faithful in what was noted as “*a few things*” so they were each given a greater responsibility.

The third individual attempted to make excuses and basically never did a single thing with what he had been entrusted with. Jesus called him a “*lazy servant.*” **This parable highlights the fact that all of us as God’s servants have been entrusted with an amount that is reasonable with our abilities.** God has placed **an accountability and a responsibility** into our hands so we will be faithful in what He has given to us until He returns.

The reward for faithfulness is a greater level of faithfulness. The sentence for being unfaithful is a place in utter darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. This is clearly speaking of an eternal separation from God in hell. So we should not take this lightly.

II. STEWARDS OF OUR TIME

A similar teaching is recorded in Luke 12:35-48. The difference between these two teachings is that we also need to be **watchful and faithful** as we wait for our Master’s return. Time is also a wonderful gift that God has given to us. None of us know the exact time when we will be called home to give an account of our faithfulness. We have all been given the same amount of time. Our time can either be wasted or valued.

There are two times in this parable that Jesus mentions about being dressed ready to serve (Luke 12:35, 37). Servants throughout time have always been distinguished by their dress. We as servants of Christ have been given robes of righteousness (Isaiah 61:10).

This parable also indicates to us that we are sometimes required to go into overtime to serve God (Luke 12:38). There are times when the people we’ve been entrusted to care for will require their “*food allowance at the proper time*” (Luke 12: 42).

The reason why God has given us time is to serve others. He once again has given more responsibility to some than to others in the same time period. Those who have been given more have a greater responsibility and will be treated differently (Luke 12:47, 48).

III. STEWARDS OF OUR WORLDLY WEALTH

There is a very interesting parable that Luke speaks about in Luke 16:1-15. This parable speaks of a shrewd manager who was given the responsibility of managing a number of financial accounts for a rich man. We are told that he is “*accused of wasting his possessions*” (Luke 16:1). This manager became greatly concerned because he didn’t figure that he could survive in the workforce. So he met with a number of his master’s debtors and reduced the price that they owed his master. It seems to be insinuated that he believed he could get a job with one of these people who owed his master after he lost his job. There is a very interesting footnote that perhaps explains what is going on that I found in the NIV study Bible.

“Originally the manager may have overcharged the debtors, a common way of circumventing the Mosaic law that prohibited taking interest from fellow Jews (Deuteronomy 23:19). So, to reduce the debts, he may have returned the figures to their original amounts, which would both satisfy the master and gain the good favor of the debtors. In any event, the point remains the same: he was shrewd enough to use the means at his disposal to plan for his future well-being.”

NIV Study Bible
10th Anniversary Edition
Footnote of Luke 16:3
p. 1569

There is a very important question in this parable.

*“So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?
12. And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else’s property, who will give you property of your own?”*

Luke 16:11, 12

We are not just responsible for our tithes but also for every part of the finances that God entrusts into our hands. **In fact, the part that God requires of us to be responsible for is 100% not just 10%.** Those who are faithful with worldly wealth are candidates for God to use in riches that are far exceeding those of this world.

“What is highly valued among men is detestable in God’s sight.”

Luke 16:15

IV. STEWARDS OF OUR LIVES

We all know the daily challenges of living a life that others would want to follow. This problem is escalated because of the increase of lawlessness in the nations of the world. There is no doubt that the increase of secular humanism has impacted even our churches. It coincides with Galatians 2:20 that depicts a life that has been crucified and has now begun a new life in Christ Jesus. The words of the apostle Paul to the church at Ephesus are also even more significant today (Ephesians 5:8-21).

We are responsible to live as children of the light in a dark world. The more we study God's Word the more will find out what it is that pleases the Lord as well as displeases Him. The light of our life should expose the hidden works of darkness that surrounds us. It should also make us very careful in how we do live.

It is not easy to live a life that is separated from the world if we are not filled with the Spirit of God. **What is within us will come out of us.**

V. STEWARDS OF OUR GIVING

There are also some pertinent verses in other Epistles, and the message of Scripture to Christians is that because of the finished work of Jesus Christ, we do not live under the Mosaic Law, during which tithing was instituted and commanded as part of the Law. **Tithing as a commandment of God was given to the Jews while the standard of giving from our abundant blessings was taught to the early Church Christians.**

Although *tithing* per se is not relevant to Christians, *giving* most certainly is. As a member in particular of the Body of Christ, **each Christian is to determine in his own heart how much he gives.** The Epistles metaphor by which material giving is strongly encouraged is that of **sowing and reaping**—the more you sow, the more you reap (II Corinthians 9:6). **“Tithing”** is never mentioned.

“Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”

II Corinthians 9:7

In the Old Testament, believers understood that when they gave to God, they were opening a door, if you will, for Him to bless them in return. This is, of course, still true, but the idea has been distorted by some Christians who teach that one must give to God before God can bless him. **Thus, too many Christians are giving in order to get.**

V. STEWARDS OF OUR GIVING (Contd.)

GOD ALWAYS GIVES FIRST. Also, He does not specify just how He will bless us. If we sow, we will reap accordingly, but it may not be money for money, etc. Some Christians have become disillusioned about giving because when they gave money to their church, etc., they did not receive money back. They may have even failed to notice the blessing that God *already gave to them*. **When we give in RESPONSE TO A BLESSING, and not so that we will get blessed, we can be cheerful and contented givers.**

Making known the truth about this subject is critical, because the vast majority of Christians are told, and thus believe, that it is God's will for them to "tithe," which means to give one-tenth of what they earn. **Many of the more fundamental Christian groups are adamant about this, and accompany this exhortation with a warning that failure to tithe will result in consequences of various kinds, usually having to do with a lack of prosperity and illness.**

In many groups, this has become little more than ecclesiastical extortion, with church leaders using the lever of people's sincere desire to do what God says is right to squeeze money out of them. Such leaders proclaim that what God says is right is that you give at least ten percent of your income—to their organization - BUT they are not the storehouse of God. As a result of such pressure, financial giving has, for too many Christians, become a joyless, mechanical act of "bribing" God to avoid the consequences of not giving, and an attempt to earn His favour (something they already have!).

For many other Christians who once gave cheerfully, financial giving is no longer an act at all. They have stopped doing it altogether, either because they got sick and tired of the pressure being applied to them, or they really could not afford to tithe, or they saw the money they gave misused and feel that they were cheated when they did give.

Neither of these attitudes—giving joylessly or not giving at all—is biblically right and both are therefore detrimental to a believer.

Conversely, error regarding the Bible (the truth) will put people in bondage. And financial giving is a category in which **countless Christian people are being subjected to the bondage of guilt and put through an emotional wringer they do not deserve.**

Knowing and practising what God's Word says about financial giving will enable you to experience *the joy of giving*, and it will enable others in the Body of Christ to experience the joy of receiving and therefore having their needs met, so that together we can reach out with the Good News of God to a dying world.

Lets do our best to be good stewards of what God has entrusted to us in every area of our lives.

DISCIPLESHIP MENTORING

Preparing for Servant Leadership

Session Ten

“Having a Consistent Life”

One of the most consistent problems we have in our Christian walk is inconsistency. We can feel that we are on top of the world one day and then find ourselves down in the dumps the next day. Some of these problems can be based upon our physical and emotional state. But we need to also consider what we are doing to live a healthy spiritual state. All three of these tie to gather to make up who we really are.

As Christians we sometimes place too much emphasis on our spiritual state and forget that the other aspects of our life are equally important if we wish to live consistently. One thing we should always keep in mind is the importance of living a balanced life. It can be somewhat likened to our eating habits.

That is why the Canadian government has made up a healthy eating guide. Too much or too little of anything can become detrimental to our health. We need fruits and vegetables but we also need protein. Our body needs the right balance of vitamins, minerals and nutrients. It has been discovered that we can reduce the risk of obesity, type II diabetes, heart disease, certain types of cancer as well as osteoporosis by eating a balanced diet.

So Let’s Take a Few Moments to Consider the Three Parts of Our Makeup That Need to Be Balanced to Live a Consistent Christian Life.

I. OUR PHYSICAL STATE

II. OUR EMOTIONAL STATE

III. OUR SPIRITUAL STATE

I. OUR PHYSICAL STATE

We are very blessed to live in a country that has so many advantages in its medical system. Our hospitals and clinics have the most updated equipment and skilled workers. We have a medical system that is coveted throughout the world. All we need to do is show our OHIP card and just about everything from checkups, to tests, to medication as well as medical equipment is paid for through our tax dollars.

I wrote a small booklet years ago called *“Caring Enough to Confront Yourself.”* I begin to research what it took to live a healthy life. It came about because of a heart attack that I had in 1995. I had to make a number of decisions to improve my options to live.

I. OUR PHYSICAL STATE (Contd.)

I discovered that not every problem we have in life is self-induced. Some of our problems are hereditary. Other problems are created because we don't know what we are eating especially when it comes to processed foods unless we take the time to evaluate the ingredients. For instance, many canned foods have high levels of salt that can lead to high blood pressure. Some people frequently eat high levels.

Scriptures do not maintain a consistent diet from the garden of Eden to the present day. I tend to believe that was because of the changes that God's people were facing. There needed to be different guidelines as the children of Israel were going through the desert. Notice some of the changes that took place from Adam and Eve to Noah as well as to the children of Israel and then onto early church.

"And the LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground - trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food."

Genesis 2:9

"Then God said, 'I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.'"

Genesis 1:29

"Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, now I give you everything.

4. But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it."

Genesis 9:3,4

By the time the Mosaic Law was introduced, God placed a number of restrictions on the children of Israel. One distinct area was their consumption of fat. God chose to select the fat along with the vital organs (which are very high in cholesterol) as His portion for a number of the Offerings.

"Then take all the fat around the inner parts, the covering of the liver, and both kidneys with the fat around them, and burn them on the altar."

Exodus 29:13

I. OUR PHYSICAL STATE (Contd.)

But we also see in the New Testament that we need to be careful how we treat our physical body.

*"Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?
17. If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple."*

I Corinthians 3:16,17

But once again we must maintain a proper balance in what we believe for today.

*"Therefore do not anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath Day . . .
20. Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules:
21. 'Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!'
These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based upon human commands and teachings."*

Colossians 2:16,20,21

*"The Spirit clearly says that in the later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.
2. Such teaching comes from hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron.
3. They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.
4. For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving
5. because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer."*

I Timothy 4:1-4

I. OUR PHYSICAL STATE (Contd.)

Here Are Some Practical Guidelines to Live a Healthier Life

1. Lower your intake of fat (limit to 3-5 tsp./day), especially saturated fats (animal fats). Use smaller amounts of even the recommended margarines containing corn, canola, safflower, soya and sunflower oils. Lower or eliminate your intake of butter, lard, coconut oil, palm oil and cocoa butter.
2. Eat more fibre foods such as whole grain products.
3. Select low-fat dairy products, lean meats, fish and poultry. Trim off all fat and remove skins. Roast, BBQ or broil meat
4. Avoid eating foods with high cholesterol including, liver, kidneys, brain, sweet breads.
5. Avoid eating most processed and fast foods due to the high content of salt and saturated fats.
6. Limit your intake of salt (1/4 tsp./day) and caffeine.
7. Achieve and maintain a healthy weight. Eat regular meals and avoid rushing your food intake.

God gave us a wonderful body to enjoy. No one but God could create such a complex arrangement of cells and organisms. He has designed us in a way to recover from problems we have created through unwise choices. We can begin today to honour God by taking better care of our physical state.

II. OUR EMOTIONAL STATE

Stress is another link in the chain that places people into a higher risk for heart disease. We all live under certain levels of stress. Yet some stress is unnecessary. Certain people and situations need to be confronted. Your health may very well be at risk.

I once read a book titled *"Restoring Your Spiritual Passion"* where the author spoke about VDP's (Very Draining People). We've all met these kind who seem to constantly draw as it were our very lifeblood. They continue to pour their problems into our laps if we allow them to. There must come a time when these people need to be confronted so their lives can begin to take root as well. A careful, honest, and loving approach could bring about wonderful results.

The Bible shows us that God does not want us to live under the darkened cloud of stress which often lives itself out in many forms of depression, discouragement and defeat.

"Cast all your anxiety upon him for he cares for you."

1 Peter 5:7

In 1967 Dr. Thomas H. Holmes and Dr. Richard H. Rahe created a test to help people discover the amount of Life Changing Units (LCU's) in their lives. Those who had a level below 150 had a 35% likelihood of a stress-related accident or illness within two years. Moving within 150-300 increased the chance to 51% while values above 300 put the sickness or accident risk at 80%.

Holmes & Rahe Stress Test

- * Death of a Spouse: 100
- * Divorce: 73
- * Marital separation: 65
- * Detention in jail or other institution: 63
- * Death of a close family member: 63
- * Major personal injury or illness: 53
- * Marriage: 50
- * Marital reconciliation: 45
- * Retirement from work: 45
- * Major change in health or behaviour of a family member: 44
- * Pregnancy: 40
- * Sexual difficulty: 40
- * Gaining a new family member through birth, adoption or remarriage: 39
- * Major business readjustments: 39
- * Major change in your financial state: 38
- * Death of a close friend: 37

II. OUR EMOTIONAL STATE (Contd.)

- * Change to a different line of work: 36
- * Major increase in the number of arguments with spouse: 35
- * Taking on a mortgage: 31
- * Foreclosure on a mortgage or loan: 30
- * Major change in responsibilities at work (promotion, demotion, transfer): 29
- * Son or daughter leaving home: 29
- * In-law troubles: 29
- * Outstanding personal achievement: 28
- * Spouse beginning or ceasing work outside the home: 26
- * Going back to school: 26
- * Major change in living condition (building a new home, remodelling, deterioration, of home): 25
- * Revision of personal habits: 24
- * Troubles with supervisor, boss, superiors: 23
- * Major changes in working hours or conditions: 20
- * Change in residence: 20
- * Change to a new school: 20
- * Major change in the usual type and/or amount of recreation: 19
- * Major change in church activities: 19
- * Major change in social activities: 18
- * Purchasing a car, or other big purchases: 17
- * Major change in sleeping habits: 16
- * Major change in the number of family get - togethers: 15
- * Major change in eating habits: 15
- * Vacation: 13
- * Christmas or holiday observances: 12
- * minor violations of the law (traffic tickets): 11

A Harvard Medical School cardiologist and stress researcher Herbert Benson attracted wide attention in the medical conference held in Boston in December 1995. He and his colleagues confirmed what theologians have taught for years that prayer has astounding therapeutic effects.

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."

Philippians 4:6,7

II. OUR EMOTIONAL STATE (Contd.)

The first nationwide survey of stress and depression conducted in 1992 by the Canadian Mental Health Association, discovered that nearly 50% of Canadians feel "really stressed" from a few times a week to all of the time. Is it little wonder that doctors report that between 50-70% of office visits are related to stress. Stress ironically drains our physical, emotional and intellectual energies when they are needed the most thus adding to the pressure.

In October 1995, Ian Manion, a psychologist and co-author of the Canadian Youth Mental Health and Illness Survey reported that 51% of Canadians between the ages of 13 and 18 felt "really stressed" from "once a month" to "all the time." Sixty five percent related the stress to pressures surrounding school. It was not just due to making their grades but also because of the peer pressure to become involved in drugs, alcohol, sex. There was also the daily pressures of making it through the increasing violence unharmed.

God has given us a number of ways to cope with stress.

"By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work."

Genesis 2:2

The children of Israel were not allowed to labour for their food on the Sabbath Day (Exodus 16:16-30). Anyone who was disobedient to the word of God found the works of their hands were full of maggots and began to smell. God's Word does not change like the winds and the seasons. God instituted a day of rest for our benefit.

"Six days you shall labor, but on the seventh day you shall rest; even during the ploughing season and harvest you must rest."

Exodus 34:21

We would also benefit and reduce the levels of stress in our lives if we adopted the patterns set forth in God's Word in our homes and workplace.

"But godliness with contentment is great gain."

I Timothy 6:6

III. OUR SPIRITUAL STATE

The third part of our life entails our spiritual state. This is the one that most Christians believe they have succeeded to obtain. We come to that place in our life when we realize that we were born as a sinner and needed to obtain salvation through Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour. Becoming a Christian is actually the easiest part our spiritual state. Once we overcome our stubbornness and unwillingness to surrender to Christ, we are well on the pathway to a vibrant Christian life.

But this does not necessarily mean that we will have a life without difficulties. There many Christians that when they go through trouble that they think that God is judging them. This can often be so far from the truth. Trials and troubles are NOT an indication of our spiritual state. A clear biblical case comes from the book of Job. In fact, it is mentioned three times in the first two chapters that he was a man who was blameless and upright and that he shunned evil (Job 1:1,8; 2:3).

Yet we also read that his life was full of anguish (Job 6:2,3; 7:11). He entered a state of gloom and doom (Job 10:18-22). Many tears and shadows seemed to overcome his life (Job 16:11,16; 17:1,11). His physical condition had depleted like someone with an acute illness (Job 16:20). He had times in his life when he thought that God had actually left him (Job 23:1-9). He also felt that no one was standing up for him (Job 9:33-35).

It was said by Eliphaz,

“Yet a man is born to trouble as surely as sparks fly upward.”

Job 5:7

We have all heard of people who have lived for God and yet died in a terrible state. We must be careful not to make the same mistake that the disciples did to the young man who was blinded from his birth. It seems like millenniums of time have not change the fact that we still believe there is a correlation between everyone’s sickness and their spiritual state. **Jesus made it clear that neither the man nor his parents had sinned but rather that God was going to use this healing to show forth His ability to open blinded eyes (John 9:1-5).**

Job is not the only one in the Bible who had to balance suffering in his spiritual life. King David also reflected upon a time that he felt isolated from God and could not understand the reasoning behind the suffering. What good could possibly come out of the problems he was facing?

III. OUR SPIRITUAL STATE (Contd.)

A few of his Psalms are filled with anguishing prayer such as those found in **Psalm 22 and Psalm 69**. They are now referred to as a Messianic Psalms but David had no idea how his personal suffering could ever benefit anyone. He never would've dreamed that these same words would be used by our Lord and Saviour as He was being crucified. It was God's way of showing how He could relate to the pain and suffering of mankind.

Many Christians find it so hard to accept the fact that they will face problems even though their life is right before God. This is the time when we need to live most consistent. It is not a time to give up or get out of the race.

*“Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead,
14. I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.
15. All of us who are mature should take such a view of things . . .”*

Philippians 3:13–15

The greatest test of our spiritual state does not take place at our **point of Justification**. Rather it is during the **process of Sanctification** which leads us to our **destination of Glorification**. This is where we must live a consistent Christian life. **It is not how well we begin; it is rather how great we end.**

DISCIPLESHIP MENTORING

Preparing for Servant Leadership

Session Eleven

“Living in Peace”

Our lives are often full of diversities that make it very difficult to walk in peace. There are many types of things that attempt to challenge our peace. Take for instance, when the phone rings and we discover that a loved one has passed away. We may have had a call from our doctor informing us that we things don't look good. Some have faced hardships finding steady employment. Others have relationship challenges. Some have wondered if they are going to lose their homes. On top of all these things can be natural disasters as well as wars and conflicts.

It appears as if our world is becoming more chaotic everyday. We are under the constant stress of economic collapse as well as military conflicts that could instantly change the way we live. But as a Christian, we need to ask ourselves why we are reacting similar to the way those in the world are? Why do we fret and worry and allow our lives to be full of anxious moments? The Bible gives us a better way to deal with the problems.

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

7. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

8. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable -- if anything is excellent or praiseworthy -- think about such things.

9. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me -- put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you."

Philippians 4:6-9

The word that is used for **“anxious”** is one that speaks of **“being burdened down with cares.”** Peter told us a wonderful way of dealing with these kinds of cares that try to overwhelm us.

*“Cast all your anxiety (cares - KJV) upon him,
because he cares for you.”*

I Peter 5:7

This is often easier said than done. **So How Do We as Servant Leaders Actually Accomplish the Things That the Bible Tells Us to Do?**

I. UNDERSTAND THE WAR WITHIN - Ephesians 2:12

II. TAP INTO THE PRINCE OF PEACE - Isaiah 9:6; Ephesians 2:14

III. UNVEIL THE PROMISE OF PEACE - John 14:27

IV. UNMASK THE ENEMIES DECEPTION - John 10:10; I Peter 5:8

I. UNDERSTAND THE WAR WITHIN - Ephesians 2:12

There are some Christians who focus much of their energy upon **the war without** instead of **the war within**. This is the part that we must begin at and overcome in order to find the peace of God within our hearts. **This is the inner conflict**. It does not focus upon our circumstances but rather upon the internal battle within our soul.

There was a time in our life when we were separated from Christ simply because we never accepted the offer of salvation that are Lord freely made available to us all (Ephesians 2:12,13). It was not that God separated Himself from us but that we chose to alienate ourselves from Him (Colossians 1:21).

When things continue to act improperly within us, perhaps we need to go back to where we started. We need to be sure that we began properly if we expect to end right. We can never reach our destination by taking the wrong road.

People can backslide, that is why we need to make sure that our foundation is sure. If it isn't, we will never have the peace of God in our lives especially when we face the obstacles that continue to hinder us from going ahead.

II. TAP INTO THE PRINCE OF PEACE - Ephesians 2:14; Isaiah 9:6

Once we know for sure that our Christian heritage is true and we no longer walk in doubt, we need to then ensure that we've made the second step. Up to this point we have depended too much upon ourselves. It is only when we totally surrender our lives to Christ that we begin to release our prideful strongholds that we constantly turn to in times of trouble. There is a much greater source that we need to tap into.

II. TAP INTO THE PRINCE OF PEACE - Ephesians 2:14; Isaiah 9:6 (Contd.)

We don't find the Bible telling us that Jesus is our peace, we find that He is the **Prince of Peace** (cf. - Ephesians 2:14; Isaiah 9:6). In other words, **He sits as one of authority over peace.** He can command it to do what ever He chooses. We need to call upon Him instead of thinking that our words are so powerful that we can get whatever we want.

III. UNVEIL THE PROMISE OF PEACE - John 14:27

One of the problems we all face as we walk with God is that it is so easy to have God's promises become faded or even removed from our lives because of the problems that we face. If we take a looney (which represents our problems) and draw it closer to our eyes, all we see is a looney. The same thing can be true if we allow the looney to represent the promise of God's peace. What do you think will benefit us the most - our problems or God's promises?

Jesus knew that His disciples needed words of encouragement prior to His crucifixion. That is why He said to them,

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give you, I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."

John 14:27

This was our Lord's promise to His disciples. He knew they were about to face some very difficult challenges. But that was just the beginning. Most of them would die a martyr's death. Many came after them (just like ourselves) who recognized what **the unveiling of peace** was able to give them on their dying bed.

"I have pain—but I have peace, I have peace."

Richard Baxter
17th Century Puritan Theologian

Billy Graham notes that when the great saint Joseph Everett was dying, he said, "GLORY! GLORY! GLORY!" and continued exclaiming "GLORY!" for over twenty-five minutes until he was whisked away by angels to the gates of heaven.

The Bohemian reformer John Hus (AKA Jon Huss - 1369 A.D.) was a man who believed the Scriptures to be the infallible and supreme authority in all matters. He died at the stake for that belief in Constance, Germany, on his forty-second birthday. As he refused a final plea to renounce his faith, Hus' last words were, *"What I taught with my lips, I seal with my blood."*

IV. UNMASK THE ENEMIES' DECEPTION - John 10:10; I Peter 5:8,9

Many people in our world are living under a cloud of deception. The Bible makes it clear that the enemy of our soul has come to kill, to steal and to destroy. That killing is not just some form of murder but he has also come to kill our dreams and visions. He has come to steal the hope that God would place within our heart. He steals only those things that are worth something to us. He wants to leave us in a state of utter destruction.

The Church of Jesus Christ needs to stand up, speak up and stand out. We are not ignorant of the fact that the Devil is acting like a roaring lion prowling about looking to devour his prey. That doesn't mean that we need to give in and become his supper. The Bible doesn't end with that verse. Read on and you will be encouraged . . .

“Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.”

I Peter 5:9

We not only need to unmask the enemies deception, we need to de-claw him and remove his teeth. So how can that be done?

A. By Changing our Focus - Hebrews 12:1,2

It is so easy to get our eyes off of the finish line by believing that we will never make it. The best way to overcome that hindrance is by fixing our eyes upon Jesus. He already won the race. He perfected our faith. He sat down (indicating that everything is finished) at the right hand of the throne of God.

We need to stop talking about what the devil's doing and begin to proclaim the wonders of God. Why should we focus so much on all the problems of our lives when we have One who has overcome. It's time to look through a new set of lenses.

II. By Changing Your Circumstances - I Kings 19:3-5; II Corinthians 4:7-10

Just because we are children of God doesn't mean that we won't have problems. Some of the greatest leaders have faced incredible trials that have attempted to deplete every ounce of strength that they had.

The prophet Elijah just finished facing 450 prophets of Baal as well as 400 prophets of Asherah who ate at Jezebel's table (I Kings 18:19). He won the challenge and made absolutely sure that these false prophets were destroyed (I Kings 18:40). There is no doubt that this changed the circumstances in Israel at that time. Yet that was not enough to reassure this great prophet.

IV. UNMASK THE ENEMIES' DECEPTION - John 10:10; I Peter 5:8,9 (Contd.)

II. By Changing Your Circumstances - I Kings 19:3-5; II Corinthians 4:7-10 (Contd.)

Elijah left Mount Carmel and headed to Beersheba where he left his servants and headed a day's journey into the desert. It wasn't the first time that Elijah had been in the wilderness. He also stayed at the Kerith Ravine until the brook dried up (I Kings 17:1-7). It simply opened up an opportunity for another miracle to take place. We need to understand that we serve a God who changes our circumstances in order to reveal His will. It often brings about a miracle that could have never happened otherwise. This story goes on to show how God used Elijah to provide for the widow at Zerahaph during the famine that came because of the lack of rain.

Once the prophet arrived in Beersheba we are told that God directed him a day's journey into the desert. It was there that his emotional state was on the verge of a breakdown (I Kings 19:4). God allowed him to get rest and helped ensure that he was eating and drinking properly before setting out on a 40 day journey.

Without going into vivid detail of this next step we do find that God spoke to him in a quiet voice. **God told them to go back the same way he had come.** It was time to anoint some new kings and a prophet to take his place. The circumstances around Israel were about to change.

This is much like the apostle Paul. He knew that God could work in his life but he was just feeling overwhelmed by the problems that were facing him. The Spirit of God would not let him give up even though he felt beaten and despaired. He was quite aware that God uses **insignificant people** to bring about **significant changes.** Read the words that Paul wrote in II Corinthians 4:7-10.

III. By Changing Your Attitude - I Thessalonians 5:16-18

One of the best ways of overcoming problems in life is by changing our attitude. That is why the apostle Paul was inspired by God to write these important words,

*"Be joyful always;
17. Pray continually;
18. Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is
God's will for you in Christ Jesus."*

I Thessalonians 5:16-18

Most of us do not enter into problems in life with this kind of attitude. But just think for a moment how this could change things drastically in the way you feel, the way you think and in what you do. We have an enemy in our life that loves to lead us into **depression, defeat and despair.** But God has given us powerful weapons to use against him.

IV. UNMASK THE ENEMIES' DECEPTION - John 10:10; I Peter 5:8,9 (Contd.)

III. By Changing Your Attitude - I Thessalonians 5:16-18 (Contd.)

There are three things that the apostle Paul speaks about. The first is a **continual joy**. The second is having a **habitual prayer life** and the third is **giving of thanks** no matter what you're facing. These are not normal ways of handling problems. But we all need to imagine just how great God can win a battle if we use the weapons of warfare that He is placed into our hands. Let's go ahead and live in the peace of God.

DISCIPLESHIP MENTORING

Preparing for Servant Leadership

Session Twelve

“Overcoming Misguided Desires and Confusion”

There are times in all of our lives when we try to convince ourselves that we really need something from God. We often go to the extent that we try to convince God that we deserve it. Have you ever tried to remind Him of something that you did that was worthy of a reward? This is not an unusual happening. In fact, I believe it repeats itself many times throughout our lives.

It is also interesting the ways and means that we attempt to get Him to do what we want. We have a story relating to this issue in the Gospel of Matthew 20:20 – 28. It is worthy of looking at with the spiritual microscope in order to uncover what is really going on inside of our often misguided lives.

It is first of all noteworthy that Jesus didn't scold either James and John or their mother. In fact, we don't even see that He became indignant toward them. He simply used it as an opportunity to show them a better way of living.

God often takes us in a direction that we don't understand or perhaps we don't want to understand. **We often seem to go through confusion to get to where God wants us to be.**

I. WERE THEY UNDERSTANDING OF THE POSITION? (Matthew 20:20-22a)

II. WERE THEY WILLING TO PAY THE PRICE? (Matthew 20:22b-23)

III. WERE THEY WILLING TO ADOPT THE POSITION? (Matthew 20:24-28)

I. WERE THEY UNDERSTANDING OF THE POSITION? (Matthew 20:20-22)

One of the first things Jesus was trying to teach them was what it meant to sit on His right hand and the left hand in His kingdom. From an outward appearance it definitely appeared that they understood part of it. Notice that they all came to Jesus and knelt before Him to make their request.

According to Thayers Greek Definitions for words used to describe the “*favour*” that they were asking for means “*to ask, beg, call for, crave, desire, require.*” So it seems clear that they were not just wanting this position but they were begging for it or craving for it. But did they truly understand what that position meant?

I. WERE THEY UNDERSTANDING OF THE POSITION? (Matthew 20:20-22) (Contd.)

What are we told from the Scriptures that describe Jesus sitting on the right hand of the Father? (Psalm 110:1; John 14:28; Ephesians 1:19–21). The right hand is a place of honourable position and rich blessing (Genesis 48:13–14). Can this position be obtained through begging or craving?

So this position is not gained by what we do but rather by WHO we are. Jesus sat on the right hand of His Father not because He died on the cross and offered His life as an atonement for our sins. **He was given that position because He was the Son of God.**

It is easy to fall into the trap of trying to compare ourselves with others in God's kingdom. Peter almost got caught in that web after the resurrection of Jesus and his appearance to the disciples of the Sea of Tiberius when he told Peter to follow Him. Peter began to wonder about the beloved disciple John.

“Jesus answered, ‘If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me.’”

John 21:22

The Bible warns us not to get caught into the mistake of comparing who we are and what we will do.

“We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise.”

II Corinthians 10:12

The problem still exists today. **People want to “take over” other people's positions when they have no idea what kind of sacrifice it means.** They also have very little idea of the commitment and the wisdom that it takes to fulfill that calling. Jesus said it so well,

“You don't know what you are asking . . . These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father.”

Matthew 20:22,23

II. WERE THEY WILLING TO PAY THE PRICE? (Matthew 20:22b-23)

The next part of the conversation began with a question. This was very common in Jewish custom. Many conversations were done through the form questions and answers. The question that Jesus asked him appeared as something not even relating to the conversation they were beginning to have.

“Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?”

Matthew 20:22b

This question was stated in the form of a metaphor. **He was basically asking them whether they were willing to go through the same type of experience that He was ready to face.** This meant both the joyous as well as the adverse situations; whether they would be favourable or unfavourable. We need to ask ourselves whether we are ready to face both **prosperity and adversity.**

Their answer indicated they were willing to drink from the cup but they were not willing to drink ALL of the cup. No one would be willing or able to experience everything that Jesus experienced.

It doesn't hurt every so often to sit down and evaluate what we've come through and what we're ready to face. There is no doubt that if we choose to walk in a manner that is pleasing to God that we will face opposition (I Timothy 6:12; Ephesians 6:10 –18). Are we ready to face the next battle? Are we still equipped or has the last battle taken its toll upon us?

As for the disciples their greatest battles were still to come. The same is probably true for most of us. God doesn't allow us to face any battle that we are not prepared for (I Corinthians 10:13). One of the biggest problems we do in life is to evaluate how big our problems really are. We often conclude the wrong answers and then we begin to question God. A true servant leader doesn't make that mistake. A servant leader is ready to offer his/her life as a sacrifice to God. There are many people suffering for the cause of Christ today.

The Afghani MP, Nazir Ahmad Hanafi, stated in a published report (Ava): *"Numerous Afghans have become Christians in India. This is an offence to Islamic Laws and, according to the Quran, they need to be executed."*

On August 24th, Eritrean authorities arrested members of the Church of the Living God in Kushet, a village near the capital city of Asmara, as they met for evening prayer. Among the 30 arrested were 12 women. Although the circumstances of their arrest are not known, sources state that these believers are now under pressure to recant their faith during detainment.

II. WERE THEY WILLING TO PAY THE PRICE? (Matthew 20:22b-23) (Contd.)

In noble honour this is how the 12 apostles gave their lives for their Master.

1. Matthew suffered martyrdom by being slain by a sword at a distant city of Ethiopia.
2. Mark was cruelly dragged through the streets of Alexandria until his death.
3. Luke was hanged upon an Olive Tree in the classic land of Greece.
4. John was put in a caldron of boiling oil, but miraculously escaped death, only to be banished to the destitute island of Patmos.
5. James, the Greater, was beheaded at Jerusalem.
6. James, the Less, was thrown from a lofty pinnacle of the temple, and then beaten to death with a fuller's club.
7. Bartholomew was flayed alive.
8. Andrew was bound to a cross, where he preached his last message to his persecutors.
9. Thomas was run through the body with a lance at Coromandel in the East Indies.
10. Jude was shot to death with arrows.
11. Matthias was stoned and then beheaded.
12. Barnabas of the Gentiles was stoned to death at Salonica.
13. Paul, after various tortures and persecutions, was beheaded at Rome by Emperor Nero.
14. Peter was crucified upside down at Rome because he felt unworthy to be crucified like his Lord.

III. WERE THEY WILLING TO ADOPT THE POSITION? (Matthew 20:24-28)

The final question we need to ask if we are wanting to overcome misguided desires and confusion is whether we are willing to adopt the position that God requires of us. The disciples had a very important lesson to learn. In fact, everyone who wants to effectively serve God must learn this lesson and apply it on a daily basis.

Those who are looking to become great in God's kingdom must be willing to humble themselves and serve in whatever capacity God chooses. **It is not a matter of exultation but rather one of humility.** Jesus proved that He was a servant through His entire ministry on earth.

III. WERE THEY WILLING TO ADOPT THE POSITION? (Matthew 20:24-28) (Contd.)

There was a wonderful example of our Lord's humility that took place while the evening meal was being served.

“Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and he was returning to God;

4. So he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist.

5. After that, he poured out water into a basin and began to wash his disciples feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him . . .

12. When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. ‘Do you understand what I have done for you?’ He asked them.

13. You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am.

14. Now that I, and your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you should also wash one another's feet.

15. I have sent you an example that you should do as I have done for you.

16. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a master greater than the one who sent him.

17. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.”

John 13:3-5,12-17

So it appears that the disciples of Christ did not learn the lesson that they were taught by Jesus just days ahead when He was going up to Jerusalem with them. Jesus was very clear that they were not to lord over their people. He made it very clear that if they wanted to be great they had to learn to become a servant. **I wonder why we need to be taught this lesson over and over again?** Is it because we prefer to be recognized and given authority over others?

III. WERE THEY WILLING TO ADOPT THE POSITION? (Matthew 20:24-28) (Contd.)

Another great example took place in the upper room after Jesus had served them communion. The disciples were arguing among themselves as to who was the greatest among them.

“Jesus said to them, ‘The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors.

26. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves.

27. For who is greater, the one who was at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who was at the table? But I am one among you as one who serves.”

Luke 22:25 – 27

Are we willing to offer our lives so that others may be set free?

"In some ways we would prefer to hear Jesus' call to deny father and mother, houses and land for the sake of the gospel than his word to wash feet. Radical self-denial gives the feel of adventure. If we forsake all, we even have the chance at glorious martyrdom. But in service we must experience the many little deaths of going beyond ourselves. Service banishes us to the mundane, the ordinary, the trivial."

Richard Foster

The word “*servant*” is used 34 times in the book of Matthew alone. There is no doubt that it is a focus that our Lord wants everyone to know and practice. So how are we doing with what we know? Have we a true heart of servant hood or do we want to be served? Are we willing to pay the price? Will we give up our time our talent and our treasure for God? As it has been often said “only time will tell.”