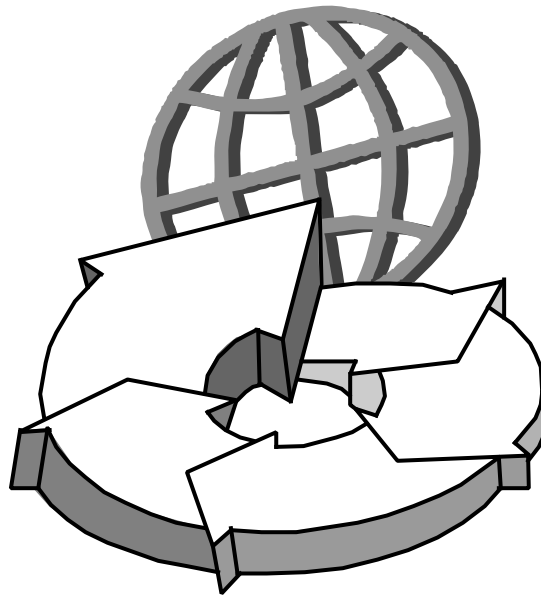


Omega Course:

Finishing the Great Commission through
“Saturation Church Planting”
Practical Church Planter Training



Manual Three

English companion to the Chinese Translation

By

The Alliance for Saturation Church Planting



August 2008

**Omega Course:
Practical Church Planter Training
Manual Three
English Companion to the Chinese Translation**

Copyright ©2008 by *United World Mission*.

You are **permitted and encouraged to reproduce and distribute this material** in any format provided that: (1) you credit the author, (2) you indicate if modifications are made, (3) you do not charge a fee beyond the cost of reproduction, and (4) you do not make more than 1,000 copies.

If you would like to post this material to the Internet or if your intended use is other than outlined above, please contact:

United World Mission
9401 Southern Pine Blvd Ste B
Charlotte, NC 28273-5596
+1 (800) 825-5896
chineseomega@alliancescp.org

The Alliance for Saturation Church Planting

www.alliancescp.org

Translations and adaptations for your context are also encouraged. Again, please contact *UWM* so that we can encourage and inform others who may also be interested in your language or intended use.



All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers. All rights reserved.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We extend heartfelt thanks and grateful acknowledgment to all who have contributed to the preparation of these training manuals. The following organizations have given so very much to the process of writing and editing these materials. Lord, plant Your Church...to the ends of the earth!

United World Mission

World Team

Greater Europe Mission

Christ for Russia

World Witness

World Harvest Mission

C B International

Project 250 of Peter Deyneka Russian Ministries

Grace Brethren Intl. Mission

UFM International

Interlink Ministries

The Alliance Regional Resource Team

MANUAL Three

Table of Contents

PREFACE	IX
CHURCH PLANTING CYCLE	XV
SCP VISION	1
LESSON 8 Signs of a Movement	3
I. Sign 1: A Special Time.....	4
II. Sign 2: Emerging Leadership.....	4
III. Sign 3: People Get Involved.....	6
IV. Sign 4: New Forms.....	6
V. Sign 5: A Movement Is Spontaneous.....	7
VI. Sign 6: A Movement Mobilizes People And Structures.....	8
LESSON 9 Training As Part of a Church Planting Movement.....	11
I. Training As Part Of A Movement.....	11
II. Foundations For Training Church Planters.....	13
III. The Process Of Training Church Planters.....	14
IV. Mentoring Church Planters.....	15
LESSON 10 Mobilizing Leaders Through National Initiatives.....	17
I. The Dawn Strategy.....	18
II. Conditions Necessary For A Dawn Strategy.....	19
III. Twelve Components Of A Dawn Strategy.....	19
THE CHURCH	23
LESSON 9 Social Dynamics of the Church.....	25
I. Biblical Principles.....	26
II. The New Testament Church And Culture.....	27
III. From The New Testament Until Now.....	30
IV. Contemporary Culture And The Church.....	31
LESSON 10 Characteristics of Growing Churches.....	33
I. What Is A Growing Church?.....	33
II. How Church Growth Happens.....	34
III. Twelve Characteristics Of Growing Churches.....	35
IV. Evaluating And Monitoring Church Growth.....	39

LESSON 11 Church Government and Church Offices	41
I. Types Of Church Government	41
II. Offices In The Church	43
LESSON 12 Church Discipline	47
I. Biblical Principles Of Church Discipline	48
II. Case Studies.....	49
SPIRITUAL CHARACTER	51
LESSON 7 Reconciliation Ministry	53
I. Initial Thoughts About Conflict Resolution	54
II. Conflict Resolution Is A Gospel Issue	55
III. New Testament Teaching On Conflict Resolution.....	55
IV. Loving Others.....	56
V. Practical Help For Conflict Resolution.....	57
LESSON 8 Grace Is For The Humble	59
I. Humility—What Is It?.....	59
II. Examples Of Humility.....	60
III. Prayer Expresses Humility Towards God.....	61
IV. Christian Life Characterized By Humility.....	61
LEADERSHIP	63
LESSON 5 Spheres of Leadership	65
I. The Example Of Jesus.....	65
II. The Church Planting Spheres Of Leadership.....	67
III. Exercise: Your Spheres Of Leadership.....	68
LESSON 6 Leadership Dynamics	71
I. Characteristics Of The Leader	72
II. Characteristics Of Group.....	74
III. The Nature Of The Task.....	76
LESSON 7 Training New Leaders	79
I. Biblical Examples Of Leadership Multiplication.....	79
II. Training Objectives.....	81
III. Five-Step Process For Training New Leaders	82
<i>Appendix: Qualities to Encourage in a New Leader</i>	<i>85</i>
LESSON 8 Releasing Leaders	87
I. Church Planters Must Release Others For Ministry	87
II. Problems Of Releasing	89
III. Principles For Releasing	91
IV. Maintaining Contact With Those You Have Released	92

SPIRITUAL WARFARE.....	95
LESSON 1 Understanding Worldview	97
I. Common Worldviews	97
II. A Biblical Worldview	98
LESSON 2 Dynamics of Spiritual Warfare	101
I. The Realm Of God	103
II. The Realm Of Man	103
III. The Realm Of Spirit Beings.....	104
IV. The Realm Of The Battle.....	104
Appendix: Inductive Bible Study: Ephesians 4:17 - 5:21	107
LESSON 3 Spiritual Battles	109
I. Arenas Of Satanic Attack	110
II. How To Know If A Problem Is From Natural Causes Or Is A Satanic Attack	111
III. How To Defend Yourself Against Satanic Attacks	111
IV. Guidelines For Dealing With Demonic Affliction.....	112
Appendix: Bible Study.....	115
Appendix: Case Studies From Around The World.....	117
THE FAMILY	119
LESSON 1 Biblical Roles in the Family	121
I. Balancing roles.....	122
II. The Married Couple.....	122
II. The Role Of The Husband	123
III. The Role Of The Wife.....	124
IV. The Role Of Children.....	125
LESSON 2 Parenting.....	127
I. Some Initial Observations	128
II. Some Biblical Principles	128
II. Practical Application.....	129
LESSON 3 Ministry to the Family.....	133
Guidelines To This Workshop	134
I. Scenario ONE—Igor And Luba	134
II. Scenario Two—Andrea And Tibor.....	135
III. Scenario Three—Nicu And His Family.....	135
IV. Scenario Four—Anicka And Mirek	136
V. Scenario Five—Renata And Her Family	137

STEWARDSHIP 139

LESSON 1 Introduction to Stewardship..... 141

- I. What Is Stewardship? 141
- II. Why Talk About Stewardship? Two Issues 142
- III. Stewardship Principles In The Bible..... 143
- IV. Our Stewardship..... 145
- V. Stewardship And The Church Planter 146

LESSON 2 Financial Stewardship 147

- I. Exploring The Bible 147
- II. Personal Giving 149
- III. Local Church Finances 150
- IV. Financing And Church Planting Movements 152

MULTIPLYING CHURCHES 155

LESSON 7 Church Multiplication..... 157

- I. The Goal Of Multiplication 157
- II. The Process Of “Natural” Multiplication..... 158
- III. Barriers To Multiplication..... 161

PREACHING 165

LESSON 1 Biblical Preaching 167

- I. Inductive Bible Study—A Solid Base..... 168
- II. The Main Idea Of The Message..... 168
- III. Structure Of The Message 170
- IV. Types Of Messages 172

PREFACE

THE PURPOSE OF THIS MATERIAL

Church planters are often recruited and sent out with little or no training for the task that is before them. Church leaders who are overwhelmed with ministry difficulties often lack a clear vision of what God desires to accomplish through them. Both church planters and church leaders need training and vision, but Bible schools and seminaries are not realistic options for many.

This material is designed to provide not only vision for the church planter and church leader, but also the biblical foundation and practical ministry skills in order to see that vision become reality. It is not an educational "program." Rather, it provides necessary biblical and educational foundations, as well as practical ministry skills, which are required for church planting.

This curriculum has been designed to accomplish two goals:

1. To provide the necessary training for churches to be planted.
2. To encourage mobilization in the whole Body of Christ toward a church planting movement.

Today we see church planting movements taking place in many countries throughout the world, including Brazil, Romania, the Philippines, Nigeria, and others. We believe that the local church is God's primary instrument for world evangelization, and that church planting based upon multiplication principles is the most effective means of working towards the completion of the Great Commission. New churches must be planted with a vision for multiplication and the ability to plant other new churches. When this happens, there is potential for a movement of churches which is able to sweep across a nation and transform the lives of people throughout the land.

A church planting movement needs people involved in all levels of the church planting task, from young believers who are excited about their new faith, to leaders of denominations. Church planters by themselves can never be the catalysts for a church planting movement. This material is applicable and has much benefit for all levels of church workers and church leaders who can directly and indirectly support the efforts of church planters as they strive to fulfill the ministry to which God has called them.

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

This manual is one of five manuals, each of which contains approximately 26 one-hour lessons. In order to accomplish the goals stated above, the curriculum covers a wide range of subjects that are necessary for the church planting task. These include SCP vision, church multiplication, discipleship, Church, evangelism, inductive Bible study, leadership, prayer, spiritual character and more.

The curriculum was divided into five manuals in order to provide an ever-expanding approach to the learning process. As each participant completes a manual, he or she spends time before the next manual putting into practice the principles that have been learned. Therefore many of the later sessions build upon principles and skills which have been learned and practiced in earlier lessons.

In other words, the curriculum has been designed to be learned and used in parallel with the actual planting of churches. As the participant actively works towards starting a new church, he or she will need certain skills and knowledge, and will encounter various problems along the way. The skills and knowledge needed at the beginning of the church plant are provided in the first manuals, while the activities and principles needed at a later stage in a church plant are presented in the later manuals. Each manual has been designed to provide skills, answer questions, and discuss potential problems that relate to the corresponding phase of church planting in which the participant is actively working. After this Preface you will find a list of key development activities or "thresholds" that trainees are prepared for and expected to apply.

USING THE MATERIAL

Advice for using this Material in Mentoring Groups

Be aware that real learning takes place when you work with others to apply the concepts presented in these lessons. Most lessons include an action plan at the end. These action plans are designed to help apply the ideas in the lesson and should be completed as you are studying the material. It can be extremely helpful to have a mentor lead the small group to encourage and advise the group as they work through the process of planting churches. This type of group can also provide mutual accountability to the concepts being learned in life and ministry. It is strongly suggested that you work through the material in this manual in such a group context.

Mentoring groups

The goal of these mentoring groups is to train cp'ers to plant churches, not necessarily train leaders for pastoring existing churches.

It is important that the mentor is prepared beforehand for each part of the meeting. Praying for the Spirit's leading in each area is important because He knows the specific challenges and problems that each person is facing. It is be a good idea for the mentor to keep a journal of the meetings for future reference. The focus of the mentor is on training cp'ers. It is important that the mentor be familiar with the model.

The mentor does not necessarily need a theology degree, but only a desire to help facilitate others through the process of planting churches. It is, however, suggested that the mentor have been involved in planting a church.

Model for a Mentoring Group

Style – The style of the mentoring groups is two-fold:

- Discussion Based - New ideas and concepts will be learned better through discussing the key concepts together in the group setting.
- Mutual care and accountability – Using personal growth type questions participants can share their needs and difficulties. In this way they can deepen their relationship, care for and help each other grow in Christ.

Size – The group should be four to eight people including mentor. The more people the longer the time needed for discussion.

Frequency – Once a week is best. Every two weeks if members are also mentoring leaders under them. Once a month for two day sessions if the group members live far away.

Length of time (dependent on frequency) – Two to three hour sessions are necessary for everyone to be able to participate in the discussion.

Location – It is best to meet in an informal situation, not in a classroom, so discussion and sharing will be more open.

Participants– Choose people who have a basic foundation in their faith. It is important that both the mentor and participant will come prepared having completed the homework assigned. (Suggestion for choosing participants, or the goal of training. A church planter is someone who is a competent evangelist, can lead a small group, and skilled in discipling new believers.)

Steps for Mentoring Group Meeting

The goal of these mentoring groups is to train church planters to plant churches, not necessarily train leaders for pastoring existing churches.

It is important that the mentor is prepared beforehand for each part of the meeting. Praying for the Spirit's leading in each area is important because He knows the specific challenges and problems that each person is facing. It is be a good idea for the mentor to keep a journal of the meetings for future reference. The focus of the mentor is on training cp'ers. If a mentor is involved in the training then it is important that he is shadowed in his group meeting with other cp'ers until he is familiar with the model.

It will be important for the mentor to journal what happens and how each cp'er is growing so changes can be made into any future revisions and to understand each individual more specifically for intercession and counsel.

Meeting agenda:

It is essential that both the mentor and participant will come prepared having completed the homework assigned and answered the questions for review and application.

Meeting Starter

Before the opening prayer, the meeting should be started with either a scripture or a chorus dealing to bring focus onto the purpose of the meeting. Then, specifically pray the content of the scripture or chorus back to God. This should take 5 – 10 minutes.

Personal Growth (Openness and trust)

Prepare a question that will help the personal growth of the group members. The mentor should set the example in the beginning for openness and trust by sharing first. After a few meetings others may be willing to share first. Remember to be brief, but allow for the Spirit to have freedom if there is a specific problem that needs to be talked about and prayed for.

Pray for what was talked about. Different people can lead out but make sure everyone understands that this prayer time is asking for specific help in individual's lives. If there are no specific needs then different ones can pray generally for God's help in regards to this area of their lives. This may take 20-30 minutes.

Review and discuss homework questions (focus on application)

This is an important part of the mentoring time because application of the material is what will bring change and growth to life and ministry. Choose one or two points from the application portion from the previous meeting that each person can share their answers and experience. This portion should not be rushed and further discussion can be encouraged. There may be some meetings where discussing the homework will take the rest of the meeting time.

Discussion of Lesson (Participative and challenging)

There are several different ways that this section can be facilitated. The mentor will need to pray and understand what the Lord wants to emphasize in this section for study. You may choose to discuss or read a portion of the text, or ask the group members to summarize what they feel are the main points, look up some or all the scriptures dealing with a particular topic, answer questions that arose while reading the material etc. Be Creative!

The mentor can guide this discussion so that it is lively and informative. Asking the right kind of questions is important to draw out the main points of the material. What, how, why, are good ways to get discussion going. Be specific in your questions but stay away from yes or no questions, unless followed by asking "why?". Allow people time to share their ideas but don't let one person talk too long.

The mentor needs to allow people to discuss but also keep the discussion focused on topic and focused on the important issues the mentor will also need to share principles that he has learned or correct non-biblical ideas or challenge traditional ideas and methods from time to time.

Assign homework

Homework assignments will consist of reading the next chapter as well as answering questions. Encourage them to complete the homework assignments as it will greatly impact the next discussion time. Some chapters will include an action point to be assigned after discussion of the material.

Pray for ministry (Mutual encouragement)

Each person can share a brief request for prayer in their area of ministry, then pray one for another. You could be creative in this area, for example: starting a prayer journal with answers to prayers; assigning prayer partners for a specific period of time; creating a prayer chain; or doing prayer walks together, etc.

Evaluation

The mentor should periodically take time to evaluate the process. Think about each individual and as well as the group as it relates to their specific ministry situations. Find ways to encourage participants to keep on track with goals. A base line of how many trainees and churches are represented will need to be recorded in the beginning so a true picture of growth can be attained during evaluation.

The Omega project should show proportional growth in both mentoring groups and new churches.

Advice for Using this Material in Seminars

This material can be used in a variety of settings such as a Bible school, seminary or a church-based seminar. However this is not primarily educational material. It is training material. Education focuses on knowledge and information. The intent of the material is not merely to impart knowledge, but to motivate toward action employing biblically sound ministry skills. This manual is for 'doers.'

During seminars it is not necessary to teach every point of every lesson since participants can read the material on their own. Sometimes having trainees read the lesson and interact on how it relates to their own experience is a good method. At other times, a lecture from someone who is an expert in the subject being covered may be the best way to impart the concepts. But DO NOT DWELL ON THE LECTURE APPROACH. Be creative as you try various methods to convey the principles and skills in the lessons. Other trainers have found variations such as discussion groups, workshops and role playing to be helpful and interesting.

You have a sacred trust. The Lord of the Church wishes to disciple the nations, and leaders are needed. You have the awesome potential of helping to equip many who could foster church planting movements and to facilitate others in ministries of church multiplication.

Further help

For further assistance in spreading the vision of saturation church planting or practically equipping church planters, contact chineseomega@alliancescp.org

SUGGESTED SCRIPTURES FOR MEETING STARTER

Habakkuk 2: 14,2-3 For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea. Then the LORD replied: "Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it. For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay.

Psalm 67

Psalm 72:19 Praise be to his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen.

Psalm 96:1-3 Sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth. Sing to the LORD, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples.

Isaiah 6:1-3 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."

Isaiah 11:9 They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

Matthew 13:31-32 He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and perch in its branches."

Matthew 28:18-20 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Mark 16:15 He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.

Luke 24:46-47 He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Acts 4:23-31

Acts 8:1-4

Acts 16:31-34

Acts 19:9-11

Romans 15:20-21 It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation. Rather, as it is written: "Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand."

Romans 16:25-27 Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him—to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.

Ephesians 4:11-13 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

1 Thessalonians 1:7-8 And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia—your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it,

1 Timothy 2:3-4 This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

2 Timothy 2:2 And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

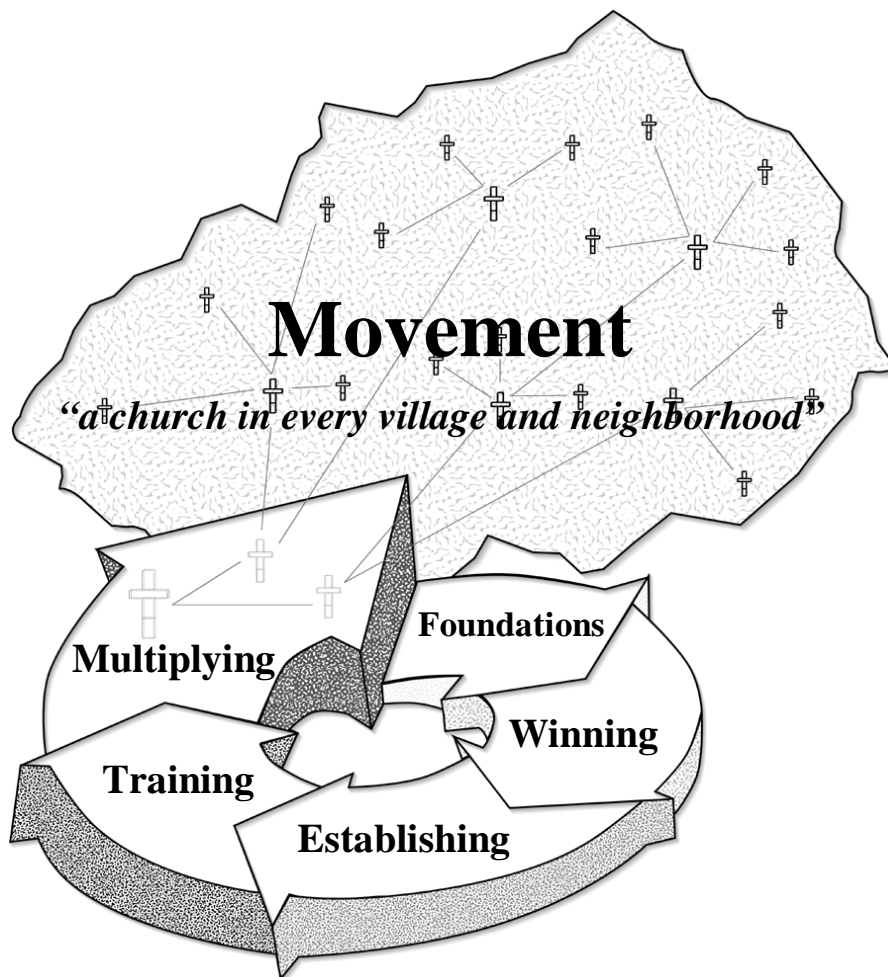
Revelation 5:9 And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL GROWTH (OPENNESS AND TRUST)

1. What are your desires and hopes for your life?
2. What is keeping you from reaching your dreams?
3. What does God want from you and your church?
4. How has your prayer life been this week?
5. If you could change one thing in your spiritual life, what would it be?
6. What have you been studying in the Bible this week?
7. Does your home reflect the of joy and worship of a Christian life?
8. How does the Lordship of Christ affect your daily life?
9. What gives you the most satisfaction in ministry?
10. What are some of the opportunities God has given you to serve him this week? Did you miss any?
11. What Bible character do you most identify with and why?
12. What challenges or struggles are you dealing with?
13. Are you taking time to relax?
14. What is your favorite Bible verse and why?
15. If God could give you one thing you really wanted what would it be?
16. How much time have you spent with your family this week?
17. How have you demonstrated a servant's heart to those around you?
18. In what ways has God blessed you this week?
19. How have you grown spiritually in the last 6 mo?
20. Are you sensing spiritual attacks from the enemy right now?
21. How are you financially right now? (things under control?)
22. What are you afraid of?
23. Describe your relationships with people in the Church.
24. Who are you most praying for to come to know Christ and why?
25. Describe how non-Christians perceive the church.
26. What do you perceive to be your greatest spiritual gift?
27. What has given you the most joy this week?

Look in Manual 1/Multiplying Churches/Chapter 3 Appendix A/Ice Breakers for more questions.

CHURCH PLANTING CYCLE



Church planting is not a randomly connected series of events and activities; it is a goal-driven process. This process requires the coordination of activity, the combination of skills, a commonality of philosophy, and competence in leadership. Development in these critical areas is the goal of church planter training. The "Church Planting Cycle" is a diagram of the church planting process that visualizes, from a particular point of view, the interrelationship of the key principles and practices at work within that process. This represents a kind of 'roadmap' for the church planter, allowing one to always determine from where they've come and where they are headed.

SCP VISION



Signs of a Movement

Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to show that church planting can turn into a movement.

Main Points and Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- A movement is a social phenomenon in which what was once rare is becoming more common.
- There are certain signs of a movement that can help the church planter discern what God is doing in the region.
- Understand how to recognize the signs of a movement.
- Know the principles of ministry that lead toward a movement.
- Participate not only in planting churches, but work toward a church planting movement.

Suggestions to Trainers

To introduce this lesson, have the trainees discuss movements from their history, both secular and spiritual. Talk about movement principles from these examples.

This lesson discusses six “signs” for discerning a movement. Choose at least one example from each of the six areas and discuss it with the trainees in class. If you have extra time, you can choose several others to work through with trainees. When selecting examples, keep in mind the specific cultures and contexts of the trainees. Stress the principles used in each example which contributed toward facilitating biblical and healthy church planting movements with sound doctrine and practice.

Suggestions for Mentoring Time

1. Read 1 Corinthians 1:10 and use it as a basis for your opening prayer time.
2. Personal Growth Question: What are you doing to keep the vision alive in the hearts of your leaders and people?
3. Discuss the questions in the text and at the end of the chapter.
4. Homework: Complete the Action Plan, Read the assigned Chapter(s) for the next meeting time.
5. Pray for ministry needs.

INTRODUCTION

A movement is a social phenomenon. One way to describe a social movement is to say that, "What was once rare is becoming more common." It involves a growing number of people who are convinced about a common cause, an opportune time, and leaders who desire to make radical changes to the **status quo**. Special leaders emerge to inspire, motivate and lead their respective groups toward that cause. Movements motivate new events and activities. Simply put, it means that something that only a few people did is now being done by more people. It means that something that people did rarely, they now do commonly. It has enough of an impact on a group of people that it even changes their thinking, but not without conflict in the process.

The democratic movement in Eastern Europe that began in 1989 is an example of a secular movement. As a vision for political change swelled in the hearts of common people, revolutions came in a swift, spontaneous, and dramatic way that few could have predicted. The spread of the Gospel in the New Testament, the Protestant Reformation, the Wesleyan revival and the contemporary church planting movements are all examples of spiritual movements.

The clear goal of this church planter training is to help a church planting movement get underway in your region. When there is a movement of God in a nation, believers will have a renewed passion for the Gospel that should lead them to the spread the Gospel through spontaneous planting of churches.

Discuss: For a movement to happen, what are some things that are now rare but must become common?

I. SIGN 1: A SPECIAL TIME

When the time is right, God moves and accelerates what He's doing in a nation! God is never early and He is never late—He always does what must be done at exactly the right time.

For a movement to happen, there is a delicate sense of timing. Within a nation or ethnic group, events, conditions, and expectations come together in a certain moment of history to form raw ingredients of a massive movement. In the Bible, timing is so important that God Himself ordained the time for movements. In the book of Exodus, it took four hundred years for the people of Israel to be ready to move out of Egypt, but what a movement it was! Two million people walked out of a devastated Egypt as the cloud led them by day and the fire by night. Daniel noted that God's time of seventy years had come as he prayed for Israel to move back to the promised land from captivity under the Persian Empire (Da 9:2). As God heard Daniel, waves of Jews returned to Jerusalem. They rebuilt the temple and the city walls and the desolate city came to life once again.

Galatians 4:4 says that, "At the right time God sent His Son..."

In the New Testament, timing is also a factor in starting and mobilizing the church. The disciples of Jesus were told to wait till they received the Holy Spirit. They waited until Pentecost (Ac 1:4; 2:1). The church was begun on that day, and a great movement in Jerusalem followed. Home meetings spread across the city, teaching God's Word. Believers also met publicly. In addition to teaching, there was fellowship, eating together, and people praying with one another (Ac 2:42-47).

Another great movement of the Church recorded in the New Testament is the great advance of the Gospel in Asia Minor. Acts 19:10 states that, "everyone in Asia Minor heard the word of the Lord, both Jew and Greek." God's timing was so critical in that movement that God would not even let Paul enter the region a few years before! Acts 16:6 describes Paul and his companions as "having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia."

It appears that timing is extremely important. God brings people to a point of receptivity to the Gospel, the message of a church planting movement, and mobilizes the Church to preach that same Gospel and plant more churches. A receptive population and a mobilized Church combine to form great advances of the Gospel. These movements will also leave their mark on history. If it is not God's time for a *massive* movement, do not be discouraged—You can still join in where God is moving even in a small way. Like the parable of the mustard seed demonstrates, God starts great things from a very small beginning. *Look at what God is doing and where He is working in your region and join in working there toward a church planting movement.*

EXAMPLE:

Argentina had always been known for the pride of its people. After losing at war to the British in 1822, the nation was humbled. This brought on a special timing for the advance of the Gospel because more people recognized their need for God when they experienced such a national tragedy. Within five years, the *Vision of the Future* church planting movement swelled to 100,000 people.

Discuss: What evidences do you see in your target area that God is working? How can you join in there with a vision for a church planting movement—even if it is a tiny, seemingly microscopic mustard seed beginning?

II. SIGN 2: EMERGING LEADERSHIP

Many times in history when it seems that the kingdom of darkness is certain to overcome the forces of righteousness, God calls leaders who "understand the times" and know what God's people "should do" (1 Chr 12:32). At just the right time, not too late and not too soon, God releases a blow through these leaders which brings the kingdom of darkness to its knees. So it was with Moses, David, Nehemiah, John the Baptist, the Apostle Paul, Martin Luther, John Wesley and others.

EXAMPLE:

The 18th century preacher, John Wesley, was such a leader. They called him "the most useful Saint in the British Empire" (Miller p. 63). The revival led by him and George Whitefield in England began at a spiritual low point when churches seemed powerless to impact society for Christ. Wesley's ministry resulted in the conversion of hundreds of thousands and had a social impact that helped avert a revolution like the one in France. The Wesleyan revival spilled over into America, and led by Jonathan Edwards and Francis Asbury, resulted in saturation church planting of Congregational and Methodist churches.

Movements are all about leadership. For a saturation church planting movement to happen, leaders must emerge. They must promote the vision, develop new leaders, and convince existing leaders to support and join the movement. As the movement takes momentum, new leaders start emerging to carry it forward.

Like a rowboat heading upstream in strong current, these leaders will usually face some opposition. Usually, when directing a change in the *status quo*, those who lead a movement at its very beginning are more radical. This radical element can be like a new stallion in a herd of horses, challenging all of those who have been in the herd a while—they cause friction. Hooves may fly as leaders rear up and react! People will react to what leaders in a movement stand for—some positively, some negatively.

Movements can actually gain momentum from opposition as the resistance forces leaders to modify, solidify, and develop their sense of direction and convictions. Hopefully, if leaders of Christian movements hold radical opinions that are not biblical, they will modify their directions and convictions toward a biblical position.

Some leaders cast vision and ideas (such as the prophets, from Isaiah to John the Baptist). They demand change, but motivate it by reaching deep into the longing of people's hearts for God to work among them. As they proclaim God's intentions for His people, they work to convince them to depart from the *status quo* and follow God's plan. *A church planting movement needs leaders who will plead the cause of saturation church planting to other leaders who may be reluctant to accept this vision.*

Discuss: How do you draw out a longing in peoples hearts to do God's work?

The Apostle Peter did this excellently in a public sermon as he focused on the hopes and dreams of the Jewish heart. He quoted his and their Scriptures from the prophet Joel. His message provoked their longing for God to send His Spirit to once again bring a prophetic word. But instead of speaking about the Spirit coming upon some distant, exalted prophet, he overwhelmed their expectations by quoting Joel and saying that their own sons and daughters would prophesy! What could be described as a spiritual movement followed (Ac 2). But opposition also followed his message. *A church planting movement needs leaders who draw out the longing in peoples' hearts for God to work through them, advancing His Gospel by multiplying churches in the land.*

Paul was a leader who took action. If Christ was not preached somewhere, he would go there to do it (Ro 15:20-21). He set an example for others in ministry. In spite of hardships, persecution, and even destitution, (2Co 11:23-27) he planted churches! Others followed him in this example (2Ti 2:3). This is obvious, but must be said: *A church planting movement needs leaders who will lead teams to plant churches!*

Barnabas was a leader who developed other leaders even when they were considered a risk to the cause of the Gospel. He stood beside Paul when there was great doubt over whether his conversion was sincere and genuine (Ac 9:26-27). While Paul was alone in Tarsus, Barnabas called him over to Antioch and released him into his teaching ministry (Ac 11:25-26). It was from his ministry at Antioch that Paul went on to become a recognized apostle and church planter.

Barnabas also faced opposition when Paul refused to take young Mark with them again after he had failed on his first trip. Barnabas split from Paul to restore Mark to useful service (Ac 15:36-39). After time, not only did Paul himself say that Mark had become useful, but he became as a son to Peter and even wrote a Gospel! See for yourselves in 2 Timothy 4:11, Colossians 4:10, and 1 Peter 5:13 and read them aloud.

EXAMPLE:

The greatest ministry of J. Christy Wilson may not be that he was the first person in 1500 years to plant an Evangelical church in Afghanistan, but that he has inspired many other Christian leaders for missions, both on the foreign mission field and in pastoral ministry. He himself does not lead any organization. Bill Bright, leader of one of the largest missions and evangelism organizations in the world says that Dr. Wilson has deeply influenced him as the most spiritual man he has ever met. Dr. Wilson prays for hundreds of people every week—that God would use them. He encourages people, he believes in their spiritual gifts and he uses his own heavy influence and powerful connections to give them every opportunity to use them. As a pastor, professor, missionary, friend and counselor, he helps others see how God will use them and encourages them to work for the Lord before others notice them. Often, he will stand by and publicly speak well of someone, who although controversial, is serving the Lord and being used by Him.

One can pass the fire of a torch to another unlit torch without dimming one's own light. Lighting the torches of new leaders so they may also lead helps a small flicker in the night turn to a great blaze which can be seen a long way off. In the same way, equipping, or 'facilitating' others into leadership makes a movement grow. Acts 19:1-10 describes how in Paul's last ministry before he was imprisoned, he developed other leaders by beginning with twelve men in Ephesus. Paul himself stayed in the city, but those he trained reached all of Asia Minor with the word of the Lord! He describes how he worked with them during that time in Acts 20:17-38. Paul lit their torches! *A church planting movement needs leaders who will influence and develop other leaders who will keep the movement expanding.*

Leaders in a movement hold people accountable to the truth when it is overshadowed by traditions. Peter, Barnabas and Paul appealed to the ethics and conscience of other leaders to convince them regarding Gentiles and the Jewish law. They told the apostles and elders how God had used them to bring uncircumcised Gentiles to Christ. From this argument, they convinced the apostles and elders to write a letter freeing Gentile believers from obligations to Old Testament ceremonial law (Ac 15:6-7,23-29).

Discuss: Why do we keep talking about leadership development over and over?

III. SIGN 3: PEOPLE GET INVOLVED

When a movement is underway, people continue to get involved in aspects of the movement in growing numbers and growing levels of commitment to the common cause. For a church planting movement, *the common cause is to fill the land with churches that preach the Gospel!* This means that more people will need to be involved in all the aspects of starting new churches. More people will become fully committed church planters. More people will help with special skills like music, evangelism, research, and in any other way that will be a help to plant churches. More people will be part of the sending team by regularly praying for church planters and their ministry.

EXAMPLE:

In Romania, the beginning signs of a **prayer movement** are evident. From Alba Iulia, Romania, a group of three women began praying for each other and their husbands. They progressed to pray for their churches, their region, for the nation and for new churches to be planted. This fellowship grew to over 30 groups with approximately 150 women involved in prayer. It spread to Bucharest where a prayer brochure for Romania was produced and used all over the nation and outside of the country. In Sibiu, two churches which are not of the same denomination pray together. In Cluj, there is a monthly women's prayer gathering open to all churches. Often, unconverted women attend, and some even become believers through this fellowship.

The invisible, empowering relationship that we have with God through prayer is the intimate link with Him who gives birth to and drives on a movement. That expression of a movement of His Spirit is signaled as multiplying groups of believers come together to meet with Him in prayer. First a few, then more and more gather for prayer, until the movement of His Spirit sweeps across a nation.

What signifies a movement is the reason *why* it attracts more people. People are convinced and committed to the common cause, and pass on their conviction and commitment to others. People are committed to a church planting movement because they are convinced this is God at work.

EXAMPLE:

The Deeper Life movement in Nigeria grew out of a Bible study in the home of William Kmuye, then a university professor. It has grown to more than three thousand congregations from that one Bible study. People sensed that God's presence was among them through the serious study of His word. Although growing rapidly, the Deeper Life Movement is committed to biblical practices, sound doctrine and quality leadership training.

Discuss: Is your church planting balanced? That is, are people encouraged in multiple forms of ministry, or is only the use of one gift stressed?

IV. SIGN 4: NEW FORMS

When a movement is underway, not only professionals and ordained leaders serve in ministry, but ordinary believers discover that God wants to use them too. A movement gets people involved at every level. Leaders emerge with a passion for ministry. People become active in serving God in all sorts of ways that they may have formerly thought only professional or well-established Christians could do. For example, not only seminary-trained leaders may preach and teach, but also believers in the church whom God has gifted for this ministry.

EXAMPLE:

Someone asked a church planting pastor of the Assembly of God in Brazil where he attended seminary. Since very few of the Assembly of God leaders have ever attended any formal theological education he looked at the person who asked him with surprise that he would even ask. His answer was, "Why, the seminary of the street!" Such a great church planting movement needs leaders and their leaders are trained through practical ministry experience.

What happens next? As more people start working in the ministry of the Gospel they will discover more successful, interesting, or unique styles of ministry that help others get involved also. For example, in a church planting movement a certain song may become popular because of how it touches the hearts of those who hear and sing it, or because of how it turns people to the Lord.

EXAMPLES:

The Lord's Army, a church planting movement which preached the Gospel from the Romanian Orthodox church, experienced great growth from the 1930's to the 1950's. While most music in the evangelical churches was imported and translated (often badly), the Lord's Army movement produced praises to God in music born on Romanian soil coming from the Romanian soul. Evangelical believers in Romania from other churches use this music to praise the Lord today.

The "hippies" from Calvary Chapel started making music, founding Maranatha Music and producing songs that have been translated all over the world. Two of those songs are *Lord I Lift Your Name on High* and *As the Deer*.

The Icthus house church planting movement out of England has made the *March for Jesus* a world event. The song *Shine Jesus Shine* also comes from this movement.

V. SIGN 5: A MOVEMENT IS SPONTANEOUS

When a massive movement is underway, no one person or organization can control it. It simply gets too big for any one person to organize it. However, leaders in a movement can get together and influence the direction of a movement. It is completely unrealistic to think that separate denominational and independent churches will join together to become one denomination for the sake of a church planting movement. The differences are too real for them to be the same entity. But they can unite together as separate organizations toward the common cause of advancing the Gospel through church planting! That happens in a saturation church planting movement.

It is very possible for leaders from different denominations to get together and plan to fill their nation with Bible preaching churches, whether Pentecostal or Baptist (and others too)! Therefore, a movement cannot by nature be organized, but people and structures in a movement can be directed toward the cause of church planting.

EXAMPLE:

In a meeting that brought major denominational leaders together to discuss advancing the Gospel in Brazil, the president of the Assemblies of God, Jose Wellington read Psalm 133, "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to live together in unity!" This meeting started the process which led to the Brazilian AD 2000 delegation and interdenominational good will.

A spiritual movement is always unpredictable. It is the very nature of the dynamism that is inherent in a movement. Yet such participation in the movements of God is oft times uncertain. We so often are operating and advancing within chaos, simply trying to manage that which we can and leaving the rest to God's sovereign care. Never knowing if there will be enough money, never certain that God will open the doors we envision or expect Him to open, never certain if there will be other people to join us, never certain if our strategies are 100 percent implicated in His movement, we advance in faith and confidence in His loving kindness.

A good test to see if what is happening is a movement of God or a human program is to ask, "Can a person control this?" Humans have great limitations. A movement of God must exceed and surpass human abilities and expectations. Can a person make another's heart receptive? Can a person convict another of sin? These are things the Spirit of God does. It is highly unlikely that what the human mind programs and controls is a movement of God. Get involved in ministry that will only succeed if God is in it. Avoid what will succeed if you just do the right things.

Discuss: What are some things that are holding your current church growth from being spontaneous?

VI. SIGN 6: A MOVEMENT MOBILIZES PEOPLE AND STRUCTURES

Rapid growth requires new structures, more leaders and new ways of communicating. As a church planting movement gains momentum and new forms for ministry emerge, Christians will also begin to be mobilized at all levels to be involved in planting churches. Existing structures like local churches, denominational leadership, Christian organizations, and even schools will begin to find ways to participate in and help the church planting task. Sometimes new structures are formed for helping existing ones cooperate toward a church planting movement. Literature and communication media need to emerge to take the movement farther. The following things may happen when people and structures mobilize:

When existing leaders such as pastors, denominational officials and other key Christians see that the church planting movement is clearly the will of God, they will encourage the structures they lead to help.

EXAMPLE:

The Discipling a Whole Nation (DAWN) ministry brought together church leaders in the Philippines in 1973 for prayer and planning. The denominations each set their own church planting goals and set a target of planting 50,000 new churches by the year 2003. They are on target today as God has honored both their faith and unity!

When previously inactive Christians see that the church planting movement is of God, they will often begin to join in by prayer, financial giving, and even working! Training will take place to help people participate in practical ways, some of that training may find its way into Bible schools and seminaries as well.

EXAMPLE:

The Alliance for Saturation Church Planting joins local churches with mission agencies to serve as a united unit in the former communist countries. *The Alliance* has helped with training church planters. By developing facilitation teams in the former Communist countries of Eastern Europe, they have reached out to national churches and helped them to train their own church planters. *The Alliance* has also produced training materials including this manual.

Literature and other communication media will inform, instruct, and inspire people *en masse* concerning the main ideas and themes of the movement. This is an essential element to help different groups in a movement grow together in the same direction. Media, especially literature, also legitimizes. Literature and media can help people to take the movement that produces them seriously. They also help a movement to spread beyond our imagination. Literature and media also reach geographically where the leaders and participants in a movement never could. The New Testament epistles are an excellent example of literature that grew out of a church planting movement. They are still informing, instructing and inspiring church planting movements today! Do you think first century Christians imagined Paul's letters instructing and inspiring believers in South America almost two thousand years later?

Discuss: What are some things that must be developed to help take the movement of planting churches to a new level of growth?

CONCLUSION

How do you find out where Jesus is actively working? He will always be found dwelling in His people. The first place to look to determine how God is at work is to check where He lives! How is God working in your region? Some of the signs of a movement may be evident in your region.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- What can you do now to help lay the groundwork for a church planting movement in your region?
- How is God working at this time in the place you will serve Him for church planting? How can you stir the longing in people's hearts for God to work?
- Of the kinds of leaders in a movement, what kind of leader are you?
- What kind of literature is needed to accelerate a church planting movement?
- How would it be possible to have a consultation or congress toward a church planting movement in your region or country?

ACTION PLAN

- Find a way to spread vision for saturation church planting. Either preach it, write it, or tell it to someone—but do something concrete to pass this vision to people somehow.
- Join in fellowship with others who have the same vision. Find and meet regularly with a group of people committed to saturation church planting.
- Develop some form of communication to spread the vision beyond your personal contact. Try to produce a newsletter, book, video, radio program or something that will communicate the vision when you are absent.
- Find other groups or organizations that will be partners with you toward a saturation church planting movement.

SOURCES

Miller, Basil. *John Wesley*. Minneapolis: Dimension Books, 1943.



Training As Part of a Church Planting Movement

PASSING IT ON

Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to give trainees practical ideas and guidelines on how to continue to train additional church planters as part of fueling a church planting movement.

Main Points and Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Training As Part Of A Movement
- The Process of Training Church Planters
- Additional Types Of Training
- Understand how to get started in training church planters.
- Know the principle of training toward a movement.
- Participate in giving vision to, training, and multiplying a church planting movement.

Suggestions to Trainers

Share a case study of how this church planter training site or other church planter training sites were established in this country or a similar context. Highlight the various activities of this lesson (prayer, sharing vision, talking with leaders, etc.) and how they worked out in the establishment of the site in the case study.

Ask God to give you the faith to believe that this training can reproduce itself.

Suggestions for Mentoring Time

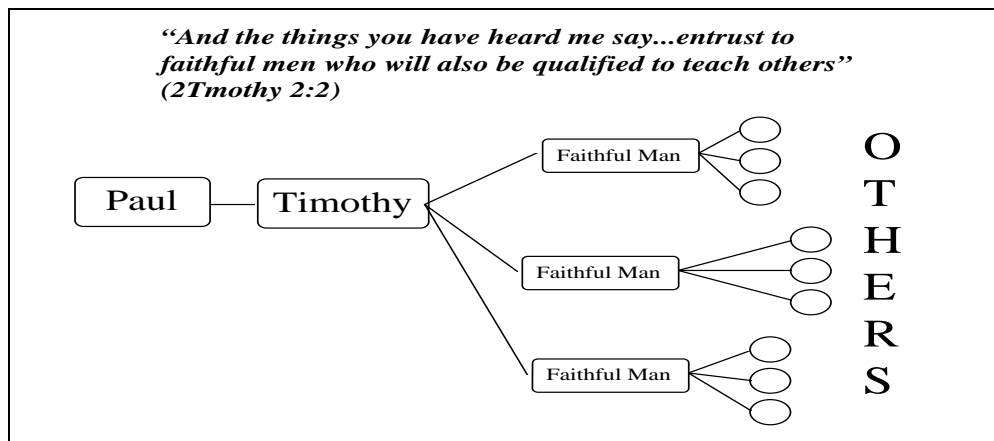
1. Read 2 Corinthians 4:2 and use it as a basis for your opening prayer time.
2. Personal Growth Question: How has the vision affected your everyday life?
3. Discuss the questions in the text and at the end of the chapter.
4. Homework: Complete the Action Plan, Read the assigned Chapter(s) for the next meeting time.
5. Pray for ministry needs.

I. TRAINING AS PART OF A MOVEMENT

For saturation church planting to happen new churches have to be planted everywhere! Someone must plant those churches, and therefore there must be enough church planters to do this task.

According to 2 Timothy 2:2 what Paul taught Timothy was not only for Timothy, but for him to pass on to others. Timothy was responsible to find and teach faithful men. These faithful men were responsible to find and teach others. Paul, Timothy, faithful men, others...four generations of teaching! (See Figure 9.1). This is how multiplication takes place.

Figure 9.1 Training As Part Of A Movement



Discuss: What is Paul’s relationship with Timothy? How is Paul influencing “Faithful Men” and “Others?” How do we cultivate relationships like Paul did with Timothy – to see several generations of new leaders developed?

This means that it is not only important to train all believers, but that each one of them should then begin to train and disciple someone themselves. This training seems to be more in the context of personal relationships rather than a formal institution.

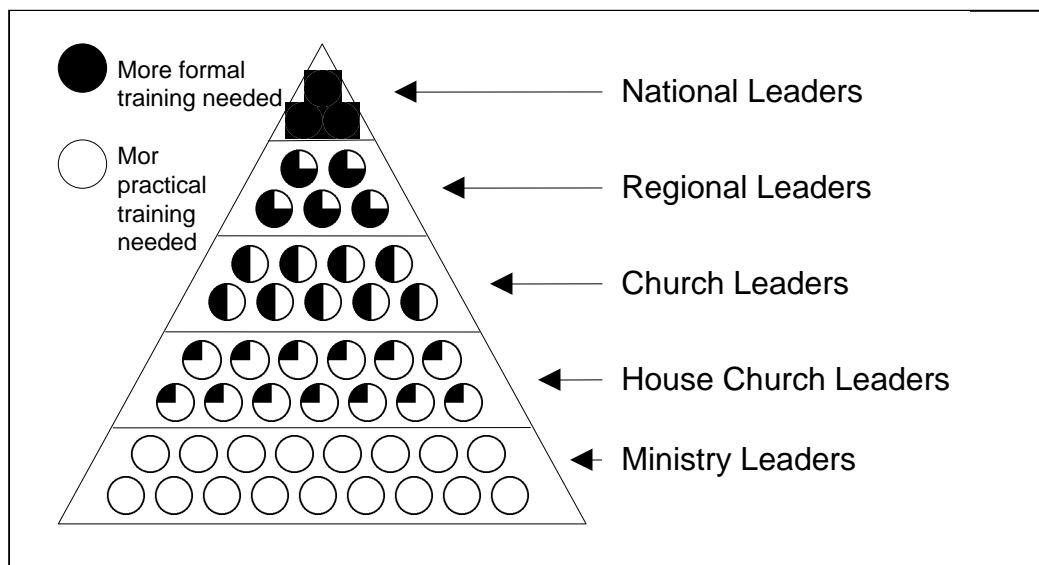
Similarly, in order for a church planting movement to develop and continue into succeeding generations, church planters must continuously be training others. Just as the apostles became leaders and teachers of others, some church planters will also need to train other church planters—able to train and mentor other church planters.

How do you know if you should be involved in training church planters?

- Has God used you in touching people’s lives?
- Is one or more of the subjects in the training interesting to you?
- Do you want others to learn what you have learned in your training?
- Are you completely convinced that God wants new churches to spring up?
- Are you willing to try with the Lord by your side?

While formal theological education has an important role in the Church, it is not for everyone. However, the process of a more mature believer training a less mature one *is* a process for everyone. The amount of formal training needed for every level of leadership rises, even as the number of leaders decreases. Figure 9.2 shows this relationship. The Church needs many ministry leaders, but these need little formal or theological education. Rather, they need helpful practical training that they can use right away in their relationships. The leadership role is informal but very real. This leadership influence is strong, even by youth (1Ti 4:12). National church leaders at the other extreme, however, should have a considerable amount of formal training in the areas of theology, ministry, administration, finance, etc. Fortunately, fewer national church leaders are required so that the Church is not excessively burdened with their training.

Figure 9.2 Training for Church Leaders



It becomes increasingly difficult to provide training as we move to higher levels of leadership. In many parts of the world, the Church is simply not able to provide the training needed for leaders at regional and national levels, so leaders may need to travel abroad. In any case it is important to at least be aware of the needs for leaders at these levels so that provision can be made as the needs arise.

Every church planter is also a trainer, always equipping others to learn and minister in their many roles from evangelism through local church leadership. To further the potential of church multiplication it is always important to be identifying and training others in the important role of starting new congregations. Others need to be getting the training you are getting in this curriculum regardless of the form of the training process.

Discuss: What levels of leadership require seminary training? How does relying on seminary training slow down the process of saturation church planting?

II. FOUNDATIONS FOR TRAINING CHURCH PLANTERS

Church planter training does not "just happen." It takes hard work and prayer to challenge local churches to send people for training, prepare materials for the training, and then actually train and mentor these new church planters. The following describes some of the foundations required for seeing church planter training continued and passed onto others as part of a church planting movement.

1. Motivate Prayer

A church planting movement is an act of God. Prayer shows that we expect God to work and wait for Him to do His part in making unbelievers receptive and getting believers to participate in the task. Rally prayer support within and outside the nation. Pray and encourage other to pray for workers for the harvest, conditions for the harvest, and people groups who would turn to Christ as commanded in Matthew 9:38, 1Timothy 2:1-5, and Romans 10:1.

Discuss: How does a leader motivate prayer?

2. Raise Vision

Give people a vision concerning God's will for their nation, region, city or town. Help them to embrace a vision that everyone hear and see the Gospel in a culturally relevant way through the witness of a living church in their community. Help them work toward planting churches that will multiply, grow, and saturate the nation in God's time as He gives conditions, freedom, and workers for the harvest.

Sharing vision with others can be done in a variety of forms: one-on-one through personal networks of influence, in small group settings, or in large group settings, as God gives you opportunity.

3. Meet With Leaders And Pastors

Visit leaders and pastors. They are the ones with the authority and influence to sponsor and encourage people to get involved in church planting. Also, they are the ones who will know which members in their churches or organizations have the potential to be effective church planters.

When you meet with pastors and leaders, tell them boldly, "We train church planters" and ask them, "Do you know someone in your group with an interest in church planting?" Discuss with them the benefits of church planter training and how they can be involved in and oversee the expansion of the church!

4. Produce And Disseminate Literature

Produce literature that deals with topics related to church planting movements and church planter training. Literature brings legitimacy to what you are doing and carries your work beyond your presence. It also speeds up multiplication of leaders. The church planter training manuals you have received during the church planter training sessions will begin to serve this purpose. Media, such as newsletters, magazines, radio, e-mail, and video, will also help to serve this purpose. The production quality of your literature or media does not need to be "state of the art", but it should be of similar quality to the existing media and literature in the country.

5. Find Leaders

Find other like-minded leaders who will embrace the saturation church planting vision. These are usually leaders with a youthful vision, unencumbered by a great many on-going responsibilities, and rising in their leadership skills and role.

Discuss: How do leaders find other leaders?

6. Network with other training programs

In addition to church planter training, other types of training are essential in order for a church planting movement to continue to advance. Training on such topics as saturation church planting, prayer movements, evangelism, how to train and send out missionaries from your local church, spiritual warfare, youth ministry, outreach to children, etc., are all important for the growth and development of a church planting movement in a country. One of your roles in church planter training might be helping to connect the church planters which you are training with other training resources they might need in order to help their church planting ministry succeed.

Many types of training are important.

7. Expect Results

Church planter training should produce churches. From the beginning it is important to expect nothing less than that those who are involved are confident that the Lord will build His Church through them. Make sure that the clear objective of planting new churches is the foundation for organizing church planter training. When there is an expectation of new churches, those who begin to participate will find their place as prayer warriors, organizers, financial backers, encouragers, helpers, and church planters. They are all necessary components of a church planting movement and the training should help them find their place and work toward planting churches.

Discuss: Why is confidence in our cause necessary? Is it easy to keep this confidence?

III. THE PROCESS OF TRAINING CHURCH PLANTERS

1. Begin Training

You can train church planters by responding to an invitation or by setting up and organizing training sessions with your team. When you are invited to do the church planter training, it is better to let the host dictate the approach, protocol, and logistics. If you are hosting the training, you can experiment with different forms. However, make sure that you determine the content of the training material to be taught and who will be the trainers.

Do not be discouraged by the results of your first round of training. It takes time to find the best trainers and environment for training. Learn from your mistakes and continue to press on with the training. God may surprise you with the results of a "difficult" training session.

Discuss: Some say that the hardest part of getting started is making the decision to start. Have you already started training your next generation of leaders? If not, what are you waiting for?

2. Discover New Trainers

Use the training sessions to discover new trainers from among your trainees. Get *them* to do training as soon as possible. Those who become trainers should be able to understand the subject matter and know how to equip others in any aspect of the specific material they would teach.

Discuss: How is training leaders and training trainers different?

3. Decentralize Training Sites

Develop a geographic strategy for the training. Find strategic zones in the country or region where there is receptivity to church planter training. Those in the zone can carry out the training for church planting there. To do this, you must find leaders from the training who are active in church planting and want to mobilize others in their own zones. Help them to establish training in their zone. Encourage them to find and equip leaders from the local region. This will help the training multiply and will be a positive step towards a movement.

4. Pass On Leadership

Walk others into leadership and oversight of the church planter training movement. Keep finding other people with a vision to fill the land with churches and give them opportunities to lead in church planter training. Try to back out of your leadership and develop gradual but definite steps to pass it on to others. Be a mentor to them, helping them lead as they grow in their vision and capability to implement that vision through training other church planters. Encourage them to reproduce your mentoring with others they train, multiplying towards a movement.

5. Develop Funding Structures

Develop a funding structure for the work. As the movement grows you will need to fund the production of materials, travel costs, and at times support leaders to work full time. A healthy mix of local giving and outside funds should work together to support the needs of this work. Deliberately foster internal giving. It is very important to raise local and in-country funds. Church planting movements around the world are sustained by local giving. This includes teaching on the subject of stewardship. (See the lessons in the Stewardship Track of Manual 3).

IV. MENTORING CHURCH PLANTERS

Training church planters is not just a matter of seminars. Mentoring is a valuable and necessary supplement to seminars. Mentoring is fundamentally a purposeful relationship when someone with more life experience guides and directs another to accomplish his or her goals and objectives with greater personal effectiveness. A mentor, then, is a person who affects and influences the development and growth of another person toward certain ends. The mentoree, the person being helped, is guided so as to reach his potential, to maximize his gifts, talents and abilities, and to do his best. The Christian mentor strives to help the Christian mentoree reach his God-given potential and to accomplish God's goals for his life, for the glory of God!

Training church planters is more than seminars.

The mentoring of church planters is strategic. Reports from those in church planter training seem to indicate that where mentoring takes place, more churches are planted. Conversely, where no mentoring takes place, often there are few resulting churches.

The goal of mentoring is empowerment. Empowerment is the sharing of appropriate God-given resources at the right time, resulting in progress or development in the mentoree's life and work. The benefits of having a mentor include:

- Promotes genuine growth and change (2 Timothy 1: 7-8).
- Provides a model to follow (1 Peter 2:21).
- Helps you reach your goals sooner (Romans 16:1-2).
- Plays a key role in the maturity process (Hebrews 13:7).
- Benefits others through you (2 Timothy 2:2).

The mentoring process should be linked to the practical training for church planting and be intentional from the start. It involves a clear agreement on the relationship and includes the following when meeting: review, refocusing, resourcing. Mentors need to constantly develop their own skills of listening, asking questions, taking notes and giving wise counsel.

There is more training available on mentoring. Please inquire of the people who brought you this practical training material for church planting. A Godly life and growth in Christian character is the essential outcome of mentoring for the long term, while the short term should produce local churches planted! Thus a model of training can be 'caught' for the future.

Discuss: How can you integrate the process of training and mentoring? Is it possible to do both at the same time? How?

CONCLUSION

One of the most valuable things you can do as you come to the end of this training to pass the training on to others. Do not hesitate to propagate the training you are now completing and be careful to identify and mentor other potential church planters who could benefit from your zeal and growing experiences. Just as Timothy was asked by Paul to pass on what he had learned so it is now your responsibility to pass on what God has taught you.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- How does insistence upon *formal* training inhibit the growth and multiplication of churches?
- Why is training such a key part of what a church planter does?
- Why should church planter training be decentralized?
- Why is mentoring an effective part of church planter training?

ACTION PLAN

- Think about the context in which you are church planting. With whom could you begin the training of church planters?
- How can you begin to raise vision in your target area, region, city or nation?
- Prayerfully choose a location where you could begin church planter training. Talk with church leaders there and develop a plan to begin training. Begin training church planters according to your plan.

SCP VISION
10
LESSON

Mobilizing Leaders Through National Initiatives

THE DAWN STRATEGY

☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to inform church planters about the process of mobilizing denominational leaders and leaders of groups of churches toward a systematic plan for saturation church planting in their nation.

☞ Main Points and Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Introduction to the DAWN strategy.
- Understand how to begin a national saturation church planting initiative.
- Know the conditions necessary for and the components of the Discipling A Whole Nation (DAWN) strategy.
- Participate in a national initiative for filling a whole country with churches.

☞ Suggestions to Trainers

If a translation of *DAWN 2000* is available in your language, have it available for purchase by the trainees.

Keep in mind that God's timing is an element of church planting movement. However, even if your region is not ready for DAWN, this lesson included information that every trainee should be aware of and be working toward.

It is also helpful to have a map of the nation the trainees serve in along with demographic data in order to facilitate discussion on what it would take to see that country disciplined.

☞ Suggestions for Mentoring Time

1. Read 1 Chronicles 12:32 and use it as a basis for your opening prayer time.
2. Personal Growth Question: What have you had to change in your life to accomplish the vision?
3. Discuss the questions in the text and at the end of the chapter.
4. Homework: Complete the Action Plan, Read the assigned Chapter(s) for the next meeting time.
5. Pray for ministry needs.

INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of this training program, we talked about the idea of "Z" thinking. We talked about the importance of asking the question, "What does God want for my region, city, this people group or this nation?" We know from Scripture that one day, "the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord" (Isa 11:9), and that it is God's desire for all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth (1Ti 2:3-4, 2Pe 3:9). We also know from Scripture that God chose the Church, to be His representation on earth, His primary instrument for building His Kingdom, until He returns. Therefore, God's desire is to see regions, cities, people groups and nations filled with vibrant, living churches that proclaim His greatness to those around them.

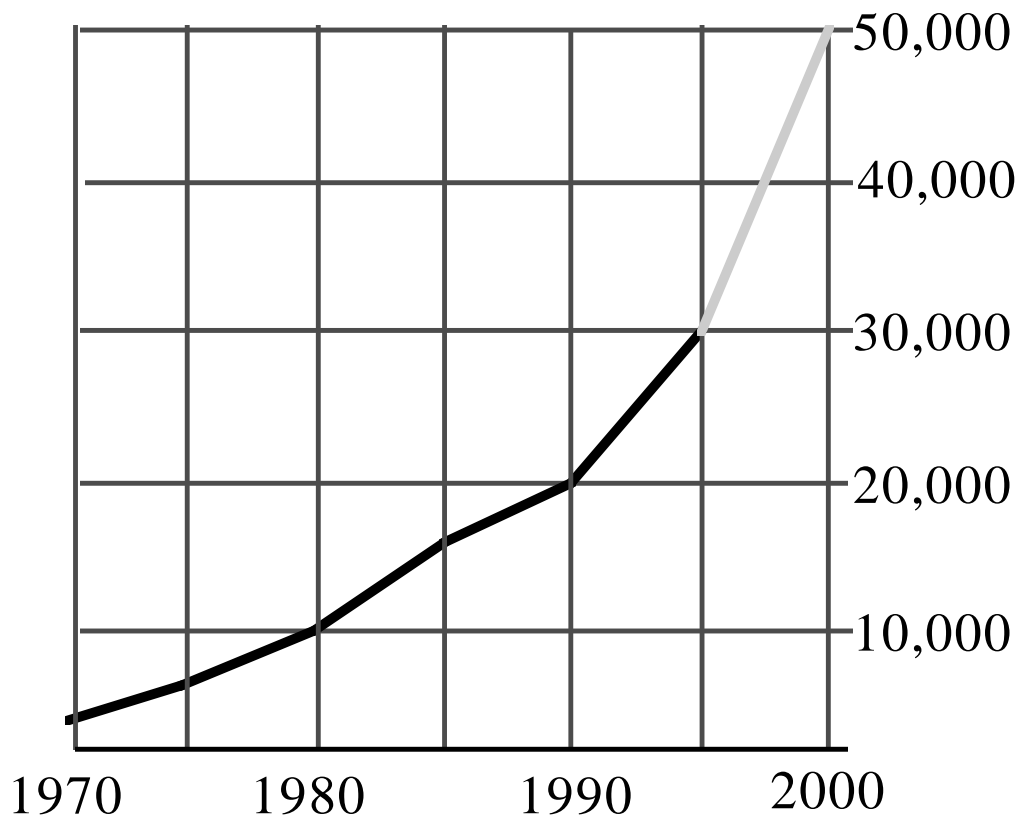
At the beginning of the training, you were asked to define your "Z"—the area where you felt God calling you to serve Him. Now, we want to expand this thinking and consider the questions:

- *What does God want for my nation?*
- What does it mean for the knowledge of the glory of the Lord to fill my nation?
- How can every man, woman and child in my nation have the opportunity to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth?
- How can I be involved in seeing the Gospel penetrate every segment of every society in my nation?

I. THE DAWN STRATEGY

This lesson is adapted from a book By Jim Montgomery entitled, *DAWN 2000: 7 Million Churches To Go*. It is about a simple strategy or plan to fill any geographic area with churches. The book contains practical steps to implement what Montgomery calls, "Disciplining a Whole Nation" or, "DAWN." The DAWN strategy helps groups of churches and denominations to advance their own church planting movements through the synergy resulting from interdenominational participation and cooperation as leaders share their own goals and results, and encourage and support one another to advance the Gospel in their nation. Each group maintains its own identity but all are working together for the kingdom of God, filling the nation with churches!

Figure 17.1. Church Growth in the Philippines from AD 1970 to AD 2000.



For example, in the early 1970s denominational leaders in the Philippines set goals together to plant 50,000 churches by AD 2,000. As the graph above indicates growth was steady but not dramatic at first. However, with growth the 'harvest field' becomes part of the 'harvest force' so that more can be accomplished due to the increase in resources and laborers. As of 1998 they were on target, giving every reason to believe that they are still on target as you read this today!

Since its birth in the Philippines, the DAWN strategy has been successfully implemented in a number of other countries, including Guatemala, El Salvador, Ghana, Zimbabwe, and India. In all of these cases the number of churches were dramatically increased. DAWN initiatives are also underway in European countries that are generally considered unresponsive to the Gospel. In spite of this, the DAWN strategy has helped leaders in Norway, England, Denmark, and Belgium increase their church planting efforts.

II. CONDITIONS NECESSARY FOR A DAWN STRATEGY

What makes the DAWN strategy so useful is that it takes existing movements that already advance the Gospel, and *take concrete steps to move from vision to reality*. It is a tool for giving direction to already existing spiritual activity. Therefore, in order for the DAWN strategy to be effective, certain conditions of God's activity in that nation must be evident. These conditions are as follows:

The DAWN strategy takes existing movements that already advance the Gospel, and helps them *take concrete steps to move from vision to reality*.

1. Evangelism and Church Planting

Evangelism and church planting needs to be already taking place. This is an indication that the Spirit of God is at work bringing people to Himself and calling His people out into service for Him. Often times these small movements are isolated from one another. By bringing them together as part of a DAWN strategy, synergy takes place, and the potential of these small efforts can be harnessed to reach the nation for Christ. Without these small movements, the task of reaching a nation for Christ is like trying to move a mountain with a shovel.

2. Unity In The Body Of Christ

There must be sufficient unity in the body of Christ for leaders to get together and encourage one another to reach their goals instead of trying to tear each other's work down (John 17:21).

3. A Receptive Harvest Field

The DAWN strategy works best in a ripe harvest field, where the population is receptive to the Gospel. The DAWN strategy aids in the rapid multiplication of churches, so that a ripe harvest will be reaped and not left to rot.

Spiritual movements in a nation can be compared to spirited horses in a field. The DAWN strategy is like the saddles and bridles that bring the horses to follow the direction of their riders. The riders are able to harness all the power and energy of their horses and move in the same direction. Christian leaders can harness the spiritual movements of the body of Christ in their nations and take them in the direction of advancing the Gospel through saturation church planting.

Discuss: Is it the right time to start talking about a larger regional or national strategy?

III. TWELVE COMPONENTS OF A DAWN STRATEGY

Christ is building His church through the commitment, prayer and energy of His people. To harness the Church's potential with the saddle and bridle of DAWN, denominational and church group leaders should take use the following 12 components to set and pursue their church planting goals. Each denomination sets its own church planting goals and strategies, which are one piece of a common purpose, shared with other denominations in a spirit of unity, of seeing the nation filled with living churches.

1. Continuously Cast Vision Concerning The Advance Of The Gospel

Believers constantly need to be reminded of God's purposes for His people and for the world. Vision casting involves sharing with others a vision for seeing villages, towns and cities—entire nations—filled with congregations of believers who are on-fire for Christ. Vision casters are people who are gifted by God to share this vision at all levels of church leadership—from local churches to denominations.

Vision casting, however, should be concentrated at the "grass-roots" level—local churches and groups of local churches. As the vision catches on at these levels it will get passed up to denominational leaders. When you dream great dreams and see large visions, you are driven to work persistently towards seeing them accomplished. One denominational leader had a burning desire to see his whole province filled with churches. The result was hundreds of churches planted and thousands of converts being disciplined. In contrast, another denominational leader said, "We are the largest denomination already. We don't have to grow." The result was very slow growth. And, this denomination is no longer the largest denomination.

2. Develop And Use A Good Base Of Information

Part of the DAWN strategy involves researching the harvest field and harvest force in different regions, cities, neighborhoods, and among people groups. The Gospel is advanced by those who not only have great vision, but also understand the realities of seeing that vision fulfilled. They see that the way to accomplish their dreams is not through sentimental, emotional fantasizing but through a concrete understanding of their situation.

Those who study their context see who is responsive to the Gospel and how to best reach them. They study their own resources to see how big they are, how fast they are growing, what their effective and ineffective methods are, and so on. They study other growing churches and denominations to find good ideas for their own programs. Research is a vital tool for the advance of the Gospel.

Adequate research for a DAWN Strategy includes:

- the number of denominations in a country,
- their respective number of local churches and members and/or average attendance,
- the average annual growth rate of each denomination,
- the methodologies being used by various groups that are producing the best growth,
- the ratio of churches to population for the whole nation and every sub-group of the nations, and
- such contextual factors as the history, economy, religion, culture, politics, natural disasters and other societal forces that tend to indicate the relative responsiveness of the population and the methodologies and themes that might best see a response to the Gospel.

The analysis of the research results and what it means for the advance of the Gospel in that nation is usually presented at consultations and at a national Congress (Points G, J and K below).

3. Depend On Prayer

When churches plan for growth, they are sometimes accused of having a greater concern for numbers than a desire to see the Holy Spirit at work. However, *no significant growth* in the church will ever take place unless it is backed by prayer. When the church prays, the Holy Spirit acts. Resulting growth in numbers and new churches is subsequently good and pleases God.

<p><i>No significant growth</i> in the church will ever take place unless it is backed by prayer.</p>

4. Set Challenging, Realistic, And Measurable Goals

Challenging goals stir up and mobilize the people. Laymen and women will want to get involved in a challenge. It is exciting to work together towards a worthwhile and challenging goal. In the DAWN strategy each evangelical denomination, mission agency and other groups sets their own goals for numbers of churches to be planted by a certain date and implements plans to reach that goal. These goals are often shared at a national congress and the collective sum of these goals is the "national goal", which is collectively committed to by delegates at a national Congress.

Realistic goals are set so as not to discourage the people. Goals not based on the present facts in terms of what is possible, can be worse than no goals at all. Make goals large enough to be a challenge, but realistic enough to avoid discouragement.

Measurable goals allow people to rejoice in their achievement. Specific numbers and specific dates get members involved.

It is important to seek God and set *challenging goals*- not just easily attainable ones. Goals set under the guidance of the Spirit are "*Sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see*" (Heb 11:1). In other words, goal setting by the Christian is an act of faith, without which "*... it is impossible to please God*" (Heb 11:6).

In Central America, leaders were setting their Discipling a Whole Nation church planting goals. One leader felt that the goals were too easy. His words were, "We could do that in the flesh!" He requested that higher, more challenging goals be set that would require not only human effort but God's power as well. Make sure that goals are not so fantastic that they will disappoint people if not attained, but equally important you must set goals that only with God's help you can attain, and He gets all the glory!

5. Promote Goal Ownership

In the process of goal setting, it is important to *achieve goal ownership*. In one very large denominational program, the foreign missionaries got together and set a ten-year goal. Then they had a very difficult time getting the church to work towards it.

In a second program, however, everyone had a say in what the goal should be. They argued and wrestled with each other until everyone was satisfied it was the right goal. Everyone now "owned" the goal and worked hard to achieve it. This is a very crucial step in a successful growth program.

6. Train Members

Training is an indispensable part of any significant growth program. The biblical strategy is to equip the saints for the work of the ministry (Eph 4:11,12). In successful denominations, members are trained for every aspect of church development and outreach. This includes training for planting churches, pastoral care of churches, how to lead Sunday school classes, youth ministry, evangelism and discipleship training, prayer groups, finances, executive leadership, communications, etc.

Training is given in every type of situation from Bible schools and seminaries, to short-term and Theological Education by Extension (TEE). Church growth and multiplication will not take place without effective training.

7. Hold Regional Consultations

Regional consultations are a means of bringing Christian leaders together, to give them an opportunity to get to know one another, to pray for one another, and to consider the facts of the research results and its implications for the advance of the Gospel in their region. Consultations are also a good place to cast vision, discuss training needs and opportunities, sharing of resources, and church planting models. Consultations are part of the grass-roots vision casting and mobilization which helps to seed and fuel a church planting movement.

When leaders get together, lay aside their church and denominational differences and discuss advancing the Gospel, God does great things as they "stimulate one another to love and good deeds" (Heb 10:25).

8. Form A National Committee

At some point it will be necessary to form a national committee to keep the church planting movement alive. The national committee oversees the following:

- continued data gathering by means of a permanent national research team,
- development of publications on the exciting growth and challenging aspects of each program,
- the seminars and consultations with denominational leaders and pastors in various regions.
- the planning of national congresses where evaluation is made of progress to date and new plans and goals are set for the future.

In countries with successful DAWN strategies, the national committee is composed of representatives of various evangelical denominations and, sometimes, even foreign missionaries.

9. Raise Money

Denominations creating strong, new growth programs are forced to evaluate their whole financial structure. They need to evaluate just how they are spending their money. Frequently, funds can be diverted from lower priority items to the challenging evangelistic thrust before them. Good teaching and creative planning are needed in the area of financial stewardship. (For more information on this important topic, refer to Stewardship Lesson 2, "Financial Stewardship" in Manual Three.) Strong growth requires sacrificial giving to God's work.

10. Hold A DAWN Congress

The critical event of a DAWN strategy is a national congress where primary leaders of all denominations, parachurch organizations and leading pastors gather to consider the discipling of their whole nation, discussing the results of the research project (point B above). Anywhere from 50 to 1500 delegates from every evangelical denomination gather in unity and commitment to a long-range strategy of working towards a common goal, to present *Discipling a Whole Nation* (the DAWN strategy), to motivate a large group, and to bring about a spirit of excitement and unity.

Note that it is important to have spiritual discernment in determining the timing for a Congress. It is important that delegates from all evangelical streams in a nation attend the Congress. Therefore, it is important to wait until the unity of the Church is such that this will be feasible. In Finland it took eight years before such unity came.

11. Follow-Up The Congress

Follow up work to the congress must develop. Leaders must find what steps, such as training/mentoring, mobilizing churches, recruiting church planters, must be taken and implement them. They must then find those who will devote their ministry toward pursuing saturation church planting.

12. Reevaluate Progress And Make New Plans

Periodic reevaluation of progress toward reaching the goals needs to be done by denominations and parachurch organizations and on a national level through succeeding DAWN Congresses. The national committee can publish progress to date in its regular publication. This helps to keep the goals and vision before the people.

Denominations with successful growth programs behind them are very likely to continue setting new goals. One denomination has been setting goals and carrying out regular growth programs for 20 years. When one program concludes, members and leaders meet for a time of celebration. It is also the time when the new goals are set and the new program launched.

By constantly making new plans for new growth, evangelism and church planting become a regular part of the church life, rather than an activity engaged in only once in a while. Evaluating growth regularly, making necessary changes and equipping new workers becomes a healthy, dynamic aspect of the life of the church.

Discuss: Which of the above 12 components need to be done now? Who do you know that could participate or take ownership of each of these components?

CONCLUSION

A spiritual movement to advance the Gospel is like a spirited and vibrant horse. The DAWN Strategy is like a saddle and bridle that allows the rider to guide the horse in the right direction. The DAWN strategy requires people to set plans by faith for spiritual things to happen in their nation. Somehow, God has included us as His partners in the great task of advancing the Gospel—*filling nations with churches!* Let us set goals for the glory of God and watch Him work as we serve His cause for the nation!

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- Where is there a sign of a spiritual movement like a horse that needs a bridle and saddle?
- In what ways is your region ready for DAWN? What are the strongest (in order) of the conditions and resources in your setting?

ACTION PLAN

- Think about others who would share the vision toward DAWN. Write their names down, pray for them and seek them out. Share the vision for saturation church planting with them and let them read this lesson.
- Study the 12 steps of a Discipling a Whole Nation strategy. Which ones will be the easiest to get into practice in your churches? Study them, pray about them, and develop a program incorporating the ideas.

SOURCES

- Montgomery, James H. *DAWN 2000: 7 Million Churches To Go*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1989.
- Montgomery, James H., and Donald A. McGavran. *The Discipling Of A Nation*. Colorado Springs, CO: Dawn Ministries, 1992.
- Montgomery, James H. *Then The End Will Come*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1997.
- Wingerd, Roy. *DAWN Research Handbook*. Colorado Springs, CO: Dawn Ministries, 1992.

THE CHURCH

THE CHURCH
9
LESSON

Social Dynamics of the Church

HOW OUR CULTURE AFFECTS OUR CHURCH

Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to explain how culture—both religious and social—has influenced the church throughout its history. It will also draw parallels between the church today in Central/Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union and the early apostolic church.

Main Points and Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should...

- Churches will be influenced by culture but must not cross the line into sin.
- Culture can be a positive, negative, or neutral influence in the church.
- The church must adapt its forms to the changing culture in order to be relevant.
- Be aware of the great influence of culture on the church in the past.
- Be convinced that church forms must change as culture and needs change.
- Evaluate his own church to see if it is adapting to win the lost or expecting the lost to change to match the church.

Suggestions to Trainers

- In preparing to teach this lesson, briefly review the major points of your country's religious history. Consider preparing a short bibliography of your context.
- Consider making a transparency of Figure 9.1, or draw it on a board. Discuss whether the three cultures shown have the right to be different from each other—or should they always be the same if they are biblical.

Suggestions for Mentoring Time

1. Read 1 Peter 5:5,6 and use it as a basis for your opening prayer time.
2. Personal Growth Question: What changes have you made to the vision to make it more a faith vision?
3. Discuss the questions in the text and at the end of the chapter.
4. Homework: Complete the Action Plan, Read the assigned Chapter(s) for the next meeting time.
5. Pray for ministry needs.

INTRODUCTION

Culture always plays an important role in determining how we think and act. We are formed by our culture, surrounded by it, and influenced by it. This often happens without our notice. Even when we meet someone from another culture that is very different from ours, we may decide that *he or she* is unusual, and we are “normal.”

Culture surrounds and influences the church.

Culture also influences the church. Churches in every country are different. Some differences result from doctrinal beliefs, but most differences result from culture. For instance, the church buildings in Africa would be very different from ones in Russia. The climate is different, and so is the culture. Music in a South American church would be very different from music in a Korean one. These differences arise from the culture and not from doctrine.

Furthermore, no country is a homogeneous cultural group. Every country includes people from various countries and cultural backgrounds. Culture may vary greatly even among native groups within a country. Differences in economic status, educational level, and age may cause radically different worldviews. Even the cultural differences between rural and urban areas can be significant.

Some of these cultural influences on the church are positive. They help the church relate to and win their countrymen. An example of this kind of influence might be the use of poetry. If this is an art form that is greatly appreciated in the culture it may be used effectively for expressing spiritual truths. Other cultural influences are neutral and not very significant; they simply reflect the way a particular church chooses to do something. An example of a neutral influence is the collection of the offering: should it be taken during the service itself, at the beginning, middle, or end or should a box be left at the back of the room in which people can put their offerings? Unfortunately, there are also negative cultural influences that may impact church life. These might include racism or syncretism that spills over into the church from the culture.

Cultural differences can be positive, negative or neutral.

Discuss: How has culture influenced your church as compared to other churches you know?

I. BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES

1. Keeping the Balance

Adapting to the culture without conforming to sin in the culture can be difficult. This is an important issue for the church planter. As he works to organize a new church, he needs to make decisions about which forms and structures to use. There are two very significant passages about this issue in the New Testament.

1) *Acts 14:11-18*

In this passage, Paul had just healed a crippled man in the city of Lystra. When the people saw the miracle, they proceeded to offer sacrifices to Paul and Silas. Their intentions were good, but Paul recognized that this would be idolatry and struggled to prevent this evil. Paul refused to participate in a cultural practice that was clearly contrary to Scripture.

2) *1 Corinthians. 9:19-23*

Paul clearly states that he is willing to become like a Jew, a Gentile, or anyone else in order to win them to Christ. He considered the salvation of the lost far more important than his own cultural preferences. However, he also states that there is a limit to the degree to which he can become like another culture. Paul is always under Christ's law (v. 21). He cannot accept sin, but he will yield the rest of his culture for the sake of the lost.

Discuss: What are some aspects of the culture of the people that you are trying to reach – that could be better utilized by the church to reach these people?

2. Form and Function

The concept of form and function has already been discussed in previous lessons. They are the keys to finding balance in the church's approach to culture. It is important to remember the meaning of these terms.

1) *Function – What We Must Do*

The things which the church is commanded to do are the *functions*. The main functions include teaching, preaching, evangelizing, baptizing, worshipping, praying and observing the Lord's Table. There are many other functions, such as encouraging one another, loving one another, singing hymns and spiritual songs, and giving to the Lord and to the needy. The church must do these things.

2) *Form – How We Choose to Do the Functions*

The *forms* of the church are the *ways* in which the church carries out its *functions*. The church has great liberty in this area as long as they do not choose a form that is prohibited by Scripture. For example, the church is commanded to pray. How, where, when and how often the church prays is not stated. The position one assumes (standing, kneeling, sitting, etc.) differs from culture to culture. There is liberty in these decisions. If, however, the church decided to pray to Buddha, that would be a sin. We do not have *that* much freedom.

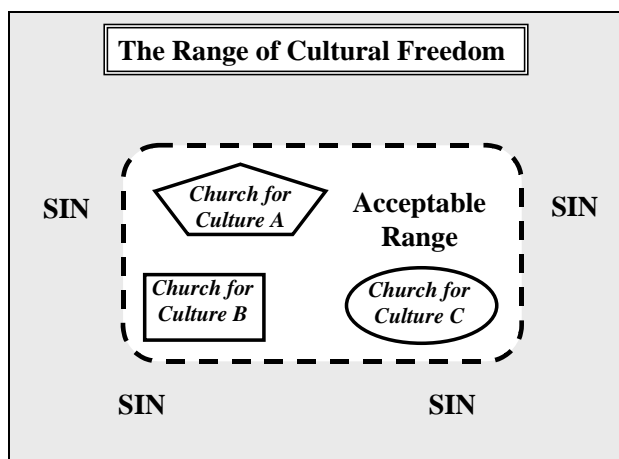
We have freedom to choose how we worship, as long as we do not cross the line into sin expressly forbidden in the Bible.

Distinguishing form and function is the first step in developing a church that is appropriate for each cultural group. We must understand that we have freedom to choose how we worship and minister as long as we do not cross the line into sin, which is expressly forbidden in the Bible. The forms can and will be different for each culture. This is good and normal as long as sin is avoided.

Figure 9.1 helps explain how our range of freedom allows diversity in our worship and Christian life. The three different shapes in the center represent church forms appropriate for diverse cultures. Any point within the white center is acceptable to the Lord. However, different cultures prefer different forms within this acceptable area. Cultures A, B and C may each choose a different way of doing their biblical functions. This is good and normal. The gray area represents sin. Each cultural form is equally valid, as long as it does not cross the dashed line into the area of sin that the Bible forbids.

Discuss: Often times we want people to conform to “church culture” when we need to be “becoming like them in order to win them to Christ. How do we deal with forms that we are “used to” and the changes that are needed in order to win the target people? Which side do we often err on?

Figure 9.1 Range of Freedom for Church Culture and the Christian Life



II. THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH AND CULTURE

The influence of culture is clearly seen in the story of the New Testament church. It began as a basically Jewish group and then quickly spread to the Gentiles. Eventually, the church in the Gentile regions far surpassed the church in Jerusalem in size and importance. In AD 70, the destruction of Jerusalem ended the influence of the Jerusalem church.

As we read through the book of Acts and the epistles, we see that forms of worship, church structures and organization developed as *they were needed*, and often in response to cultural issues. This was a continuing process as new challenges and new cultures confronted the growing church.

Forms of worship, church structures and organization developed as *they were needed*—often in response to cultural issues.

1. The Jerusalem Church

The Jerusalem church was a tremendous example of a thriving local church. It still serves as a model for a loving, caring, sharing body. It had one major weakness. The congregation only fulfilled the first part of Christ’s command to be witnesses in “Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” We must imitate the love of these believers for one another, but not their lack of concern for the rest of the world.

The early church in Jerusalem was mainly comprised of Jews influenced by their culture. The apostles had to continuously decide how to mesh Jewish forms of worship with the Christian faith.

1) *Prayer in the Temple*

The disciples continued to meet, pray and worship in the Jewish temple even after their conversion (Ac 2:46; 3:1). They were already used to this style of worship, and it was comfortable for them to continue it. As the number of believers grew into the thousands, there was no other place large enough to meet. There was no thought of building a “church” building. The believers *were* the church. This part of their Jewish religious culture was acceptable. However, they no longer participated in the sacrifices. They understood that Christ, the Lamb of God, had already fulfilled the sacrificial function (Heb 7:27). They rightly rejected that custom, despite its deep roots in their culture.

2) *The House Churches*

In addition to the temple meetings, the believers met together from house to house (Ac 2:46). This pattern began even before Pentecost. The disciples were constantly together as they waited for the Holy Spirit (Ac 1:12-14), and for three years previously they had been together daily with Jesus. This custom therefore arose not from their Jewish culture, but from their experience with Christ.

3) *Evangelism*

The culture of the Jews had a negative effect on evangelism. They had trouble believing that God would save the Gentile “dogs” despite Christ’s acceptance of all people (Jn 4). The Lord corrected this weakness by sending persecution to drive them out of Jerusalem to witness to the world. He also spoke to both Peter and Paul through dramatic visions in order to persuade them to go to the Gentiles (Ac 9,10).

The Jewish cultural view of the Gentiles had a negative affect on the evangelism of the world.

4) *Development of Deacons*

The foundational church offices were the apostles and the prophets (Eph 2:20). The next office appears to be that of deacon, although it is not specifically called such in Acts 6:1-7. The occasion for the development of this office was a cultural problem. It appeared that the church took better care of the “real” Jewish widows who spoke Hebrew than they did of the ones who spoke Greek.

This decision of the apostles was to have the congregation select seven men to care for this task. Since all have Greek names, it appears that the church made their decision based on culture. They decided that the Greek-speaking widows were as important as the Hebrew-speaking ones. They also decided that Greek-speaking men could best minister to their own cultural group. But they appointed them in a public fashion that demonstrated they were not a “second-class” culture within the church.

2. The Church Among the Gentiles

With the persecution of Acts 8:1-3, the disciples finally spread the gospel to Samaria and the “uttermost part of the earth.” Many of the Gentiles readily believed the message, especially when they saw the miracles performed by the apostles. God also chose the Apostle Paul to specifically minister to this group (Ac 9:15). As a result of his ministry, the church exploded in growth despite severe opposition.

Even the churches in the Gentile areas of Asia Minor included a significant number of Jews. Paul’s normal method of winning a new city was to go to the Jews first and to the Gentiles only when the Jews rejected the message of the Gospel. Paul knew that the Jews were God’s chosen people and that they already had a basic knowledge of God and of the Old Testament. Sometimes he found devout Jewish men or women who enabled him to quickly form the nucleus of a new church. But they also brought with them both secular and religious cultural traits that often hindered outreach to the Gentiles.

A common theme in the New Testament is how to integrate these Jewish believers into the body of Christ. Christ has broken down the division and formed one new body—the church—from both the Gentiles and the Jews (Eph 2:14-16). However, they did not always get along. Usually conflict arose when the Jewish Christians insisted on passing their religious culture on to the Gentile Christians. The epistles consistently rebuke such an attitude.

Conflict often arose in the early church when the Jewish Christians insisted on passing their religious culture on to the Gentile Christians.

1) *The Jerusalem Council*

Acts 15:1-21 records the landmark decision concerning how much Jewish religious culture should be brought into the church. The Jewish believers insisted that circumcision was necessary for salvation. There were two major decisions made by the council.

A. Circumcision

Circumcision was one of the most sacred rites of Judaism. However, the council rejected it. They were not willing to place any extra burden on those being saved (Ac 15:10-11,19). Salvation by grace through faith eliminated the need to perform any religious work. The book of Galatians is essentially written to address this same issue. The movement to force new believers to submit to Jewish traditions and religious culture was decisively rejected.

B. Eating of Meat

While specifically rejecting circumcision, the council did make another concession (Ac 15:19-21). They asked the Gentile believers to refrain from the following:

- Food polluted by idols
- Sexual immorality
- Meat of strangled animals and blood

Verse 21 gives the reason for this. There were unbelieving Jews in every city, whom the church desired to win to the Lord. Sexual immorality, meat offered to idols and meat with blood in it was so culturally offensive to them that it would hinder reaching them for Christ.

Sexual immorality is specifically prohibited in the Bible as sin. Its prohibition is understandable. But what about the eating of bloody or sacrificed meat? Paul later added an important discussion on this subject. In 1 Corinthians 8 he relates the following principles:

- Idols are nothing
- The food we eat does not affect our relationship to God

He also condemns abstaining from foods in 1 Timothy 4:3-5. Clearly, eating food is not a sin. And yet he decides not to eat meat that has been sacrificed to idols in order to avoid offending the "weaker brother." Paul is referring to young Christians who are still weak in their faith and do not yet understand their new freedom in Christ. Paul gives up such meat in order not to be an offense to the weak believer. This closely matches the situation in Acts 15. We therefore see that the disciples were to make cultural concessions to two groups:

Believers must adjust their religious forms to be less offensive to the culture of unbelievers and "weak" Christians.

- The unsaved Jews
- The "weak" Christians

The important teaching is that *believers must adjust their religious forms to be less offensive to the culture of unbelievers and "weak" Christians*. This then becomes the context for Paul's statement about becoming "all things to all men" in order to win them (1Co 9:19-23).

2) *Missions in Antioch*

God mightily used the Antioch church as a base from which to send out Paul and Barnabas, and later Silas, to evangelize the Gentile world. We know little of the internal life of that church as compared to the Jerusalem church, about which much is written. The new component that the Lord shows us through Antioch is the necessity of taking the Gospel to all peoples. The religious culture of the Jewish believers prevented them from accomplishing this task. They could not, and would not, make the changes necessary in their forms of worship that were necessary to reach the Gentile nations. God set them aside and used the Antioch church instead. It is a heart-breaking end to the wonderful beginning of the Jerusalem church in Acts 2.

The structure of the church changed, grew, and was refined as needed.

3) *Development of Church Offices*

As the church spread throughout Asia, and the Mediterranean area, new offices were added to the church structure. We see elders added in 1 Timothy 3:1-11 and Titus 1:5. Deacons continue, but their requirements, like those of the elders, are given in greater detail in 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9. In these books we also see possible reference to deaconesses and a reference to a specific support list for church widows, complete with a list of requirements for them. It is clear that the structure of the church changed, grew, and was refined as needed in the changing times and needs. And church ministry was adjusted according to the specific cultural needs and traits of each group (Tit 1:12-14).

Church ministry was adjusted according to the specific cultural needs and traits of each group

4) *The Roman Persecution*

Beginning in Acts 8, the early church was severely persecuted by the Romans. The suffering and death of the Christians during this period is well known, as is their faith and love. Most of the New Testament was written during this time, and calls to remain faithful are common. In general, believers did remain true to the faith and serve as a great example to us. Forbidden to meet publicly, they met in homes, forests, and caves. But pressing on in faithfulness was difficult. They continued to struggle with leaving their cultural forms and customs. As the persecution became more severe, it was a strong temptation for Jewish believers to return to Judaism and the safety of its official status. The fact that they could not make a clean break with the past and their old forms of worship later served as a snare for them. The book of Hebrews is written to this group to demonstrate the foolishness of exchanging the power for Christ for these old forms.

Discuss: Compare and contrast the following topics based on their cultural basis – jew vs. gentile. 1) Church governance, 2) Worship style, 3) meeting place, 4) dietary constraints.

Discuss: Most Christians today see covering your head during prayer, and women keeping quiet during services as a result of the cultural issues facing the new testament church during its day. Could the answer to finding the balance between legalism and liberality be in researching the target culture? Why or why not?

III. FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT UNTIL NOW

Much time has passed from the New Testament days until our modern era, and the Christian Church has also changed. Some of this change has been positive and some has been negative. Much of it has been influenced by culture rather than by doctrine.

1. **The Development of the State Church**

The devotion of the saints was eventually victorious—even the Emperor Constantine believed, and Christianity was named the state religion. That act changed the religious picture of the world. Instead of a small group of serious believers meeting in homes at great risk, huge state church buildings appeared with the prestige that attracted even unbelievers to their power, beauty and wealth. There were always true believers—a “remnant.” But as the political power and visibility of the church increased, its spirituality declined. Forms of worship became increasingly more important than their functions.

As the political power and visibility of the church increased, forms of worship became increasingly more important than their functions.

2. **The East-West Split**

Eventually the Catholic and Orthodox Churches split. The issue was partly doctrinal (the “filioque” clause), but also was largely influenced by cultural differences between the East and the West, and by a struggle for power among the leaders of the two groups. Both the eastern and western churches relied heavily on forms rather than functions. *How* they went through the motions of worship meant more to them than *what* they believed. There emerged two very different forms of Christian worship—one in the East and one in the West. Notice this appreciation of form when emissaries reported in 987 AD to Vladimir, Grand Duke of Kiev, on the Orthodox faith in Constantinople:

The Protestant Church slowly adopted many of the same forms that the Orthodox and Catholics used.

“The Greeks led us to the edifices where they worship their God, and we know not whether we were in heaven or on earth. For on earth there is no such splendor or such beauty, and we are at a loss how to describe it. We only know that God dwells there among men, and their service is fairer than the ceremonies of other nations. For we cannot forget that beauty. Every man, after tasting something sweet, is afterward unwilling to accept that which is bitter, and therefore we cannot dwell longer here.”
The Primary Chronicle

3. The Protestant Reformation

The root of the Protestant Reformation was the desire of the reformers to correct this unwarranted emphasis on forms. They desired to return to the true functions of the church. The reformers preached that salvation was through faith in Christ—and faith alone. The forms of church were not as important as the functions. **What we believe** is far more important than **how we worship**. Both the Orthodox and Catholic Churches rejected this argument. Wars were fought over the issue. Countries were invaded. Infidels were slaughtered. Christian state churches persecuted the other Christian churches. Explorers raced to claim newly discovered continents for the “true” religion. There were abuses on all sides.

The degree to which churches have been affected by their culture and past depends in large part on the choices church leaders have made concerning form and function.

Discuss: Why is it so easy for the forms we choose to become cold legalistic restrictions? Is it possible that the forms you choose today could become tomorrow’s cold legalistic restrictions?

IV. CONTEMPORARY CULTURE AND THE CHURCH

The churches in Central/Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union today struggle with the results of cultural, political and religious history. Each local church has its unique congregation and setting. It is impossible to paint a general picture that applies to all. The degree to which each church has been affected depends in large part on the choices church leaders have made concerning form and function. These choices may have been made consciously or unconsciously, but they were certainly made. Some of them are positive. Others may hinder the contemporary church from reaching the lost.

Two clear principles arose from the study of the New Testament church:

- 1. The forms of the church must change according to need or cultural change.**
- 2. The church must be willing to change its forms so as not to hinder unbelievers or weak Christians—although avoiding sin.**

Unfortunately, these principles are often completely reversed. Rather than follow the clear example of the Bible, we take one or both of the following actions:

1. We Refuse to Change

Many churches *refuse* to change. They may be totally unaware of the amount of “cultural baggage” they have collected over 2000 years of church history. If aware, they justify it as an ancient tradition. Forms have supplanted function. They follow the course of the Jewish Christians and cling to their traditions. As a result, they are unable to reach and relate to their culture.

2. We Expect the Unbelievers to Conform to Our Church Culture

This is so common as to be accepted without question. However, it is clearly opposed to Scripture. In the Bible the *believer* is supposed to become all things to all men. We are to live lives that identify with the unbelievers and make it easy for them to relate to us and listen to our message. We are to attract them to the Savior. Some things in a culture are sin. They must be rejected. But often they simply conflict with the church’s culture. When this is the case, the church must change. Even Christ totally changed his culture and became a man in order to reach sinners—yet without sin (Php 2:7; Heb 4:15).

In the same way churches often expect “weak” believers to quickly give up things for which they are not ready. But the scriptural pattern is for the strong believers to sacrifice their rights in order to keep from placing too difficult a burden on the weak believers. How often have church members acted as the “weak” brother and demanded that the new Christians give up their culture?

It is true that the stronger brother should teach the weaker one. But this is to take place over time. The first stage is for the stronger brother to yield his rights and suffer the shortcomings of the weaker brother until he grows and matures.

V. SUMMARY

The challenge for the church today is to know when to confront sin in the culture around it and when to change and adapt to the culture in order to win the lost. These must always be kept in balance. This is a difficult issue for the church in Central/Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union. There are centuries of tradition and history weighing on them. In many ways the issue resembles the problem of the Jewish Christians in the early church. They were devoted to the Lord. They prayed fervently. They loved one another. But they had a difficult time setting aside their 2000-year Jewish history in order to fulfill the Great Commission. Let us change before another persecution would scatter the brethren.

The challenge for the church today is to know when to confront sin in the culture around it and when to change and adapt to the culture in order to win the lost.

Some churches today will choose to change and win the lost, but many will not. For this reason, the planting of new churches is even more important, and the task of the church planter is an urgent one. The cultural dynamics of new churches are much more like the Antioch church. New believers come without the religious cultural "baggage" of older Christians. They can relate to their world and their culture easily. Their potential is unlimited. Without concrete forms they are free to adapt their worship and life in order to reach the lost.

The danger is that new believers also know little of holiness or doctrine. The Antioch church overcame that shortcoming with good teachers (Ac 13:1). As they taught the people about both grace and holiness, God used them to reach the known world of that day. May we be as faithful today!

Discuss: Some churches define spiritual maturity based on outward conformation to the church meeting's cultural norms (dress codes, language, etc.). What is the danger of this?

Discuss: How do you confront sin in the culture while still adapting to the culture in order to win the lost?

Discuss: How can your church better adapt to the culture? What are the things we must ask the target people to adapt to?

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- What are some of the major cultural traits of your country or area? Where did they come from? Are they from history, religion, politics, climate, lifestyle or something else?
- How can a believer distinguish between something that is sin and something which contradicts his religious culture?

ACTION PLAN

- Review the lessons on form and function in light of this lesson. List the forms and the functions of your church.
- Evaluate your list above in light of what you now know about the historical cultural influences on the Christian Church.
- List the traits of the other historical branch(es) of Christianity in your country, such as Orthodoxy, Catholicism or Lutheranism. Critically and prayerfully evaluate which of these traits have been assimilated by your church. Categorize them as positive or negative.

SOURCES

Russian Primary Chronicle: Laurentian Text, Samuel H. Cross. N.p., n.d.

THE CHURCH
LESSON 10

Characteristics of Growing Churches

GET NEW PEOPLE, KEEP THEM AND PUT THEM TO WORK

Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to explain which characteristics must be present in a new church in order for it to grow.

Main Points and Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Understand how the characteristics of a church will positively or negatively affect its growth.
- Growth and reproduction is the norm for all healthy things.
- Churches grow when they reach new people, keep them, and equip them to reach out to others.

Suggestions to Trainers

Stress that a mindset of growth is key for both new and old churches. While some of the characteristics in this lesson will be more effective than others in a specific location, the mindset will enable each student to creatively develop the right method for growth.

Suggestions for Mentoring Time

1. Read 1 Peter 5:1-4 and use it as a basis for your opening prayer time.
2. Personal Growth Question: What difficulties have you faced in pursuing the vision?
3. Discuss the questions in the text and at the end of the chapter.
4. Homework: Complete the Action Plan, Read the assigned Chapter(s) for the next meeting time.
5. Pray for ministry needs.

I. WHAT IS A GROWING CHURCH?

Jesus Christ promised that He would build His church and that the gates of hell would not stand against it. As we look at the history of Christianity, we see that He has been keeping His promise. The church has grown from a few disciples in Jerusalem on Pentecost to hundreds of millions of believers located in nations around the globe. Today the church is still growing at a tremendous rate in Asia, Africa and South America. In other places the growth of the church is much less obvious. Some countries have practically no church, and in others growth is stagnant. Since the growth of the church of Christ is dependent on the growth of individual congregations, a church planter must understand some of the reasons why churches do or do not grow.

It is important to define what we mean by a *growing church* before we note their characteristics. A church can grow in three main ways:

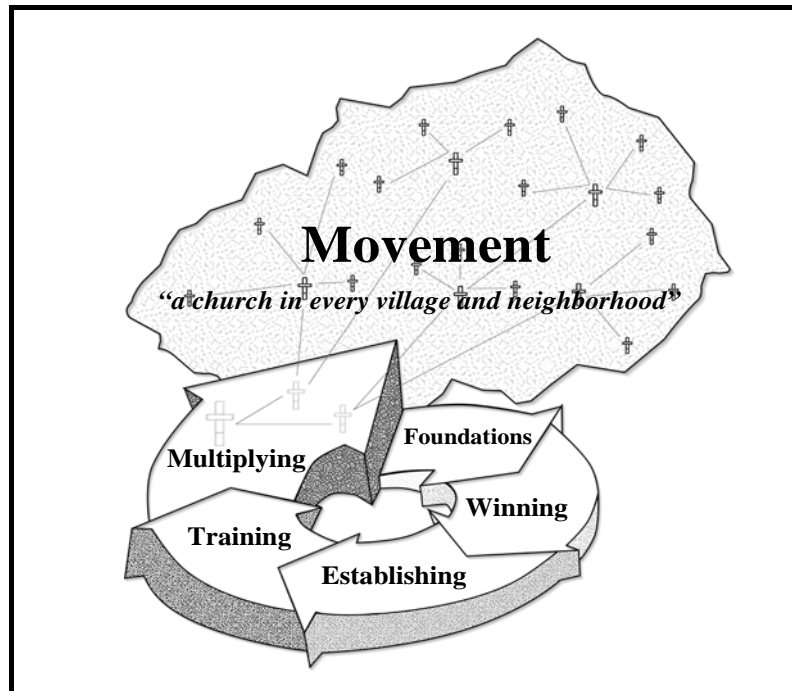
1. Numerically—More believers or more churches
2. Spiritually—Increased biblical knowledge and deeper spiritual walk
3. Socially—More or better effectiveness as “salt” in a lost world

Many churches are content if they see even one of these. Some are satisfied if they simply survive. They may say, “We haven’t seen anyone saved, but we are faithfully serving the Lord.” Others may be so obsessed with numerical growth that they downplay commitment in order to raise their attendance. None of these approaches is biblical. A local church should be growing in each of the ways listed above.

However, a local church that *grows*, but does not *reproduce* is not acceptable to the Lord. The Great Commission instructs us to bring *all nations* into obedience to Him. The Church Planting Cycle in Figure 10.1 illustrates the importance of church planting in accomplishing this goal. Churches that want to be pleasing to the Lord and obedient to the Great Commission will seek to *multiply* themselves by planting

daughter churches, who will in turn plant other churches. This concept is vital to the understanding of what a growing church should be.

Figure 10.1 The Church Planting Cycle



A method that helps the church to grow in one country and culture may fail miserably in another. A good church must decide what is effective and appropriate in its own culture. But there are certain basic characteristics that seem to be universal. Explosive growth does not always happen. Some cultures resist the Gospel for decades or longer. But usually absence of growth signals a problem with the church or its ministry methods.

Discuss: What are the three characteristics of church growth? How does your church doing with respect to these?

II. HOW CHURCH GROWTH HAPPENS

The basic requirements to have a growing church are fairly simple, although it is challenging to implement and maintain them. The church must **attract** new people, **keep** them, **equip** them to reach others.

1. Growing Churches Attract New People

Without new people, the church does not get bigger. This is so simple and yet so vital. This growth usually does not happen by accident. We must plan for it and work for it. The church planter must consciously think about where and how his new church can find and attract new people.

2. Growing Churches Keep New People

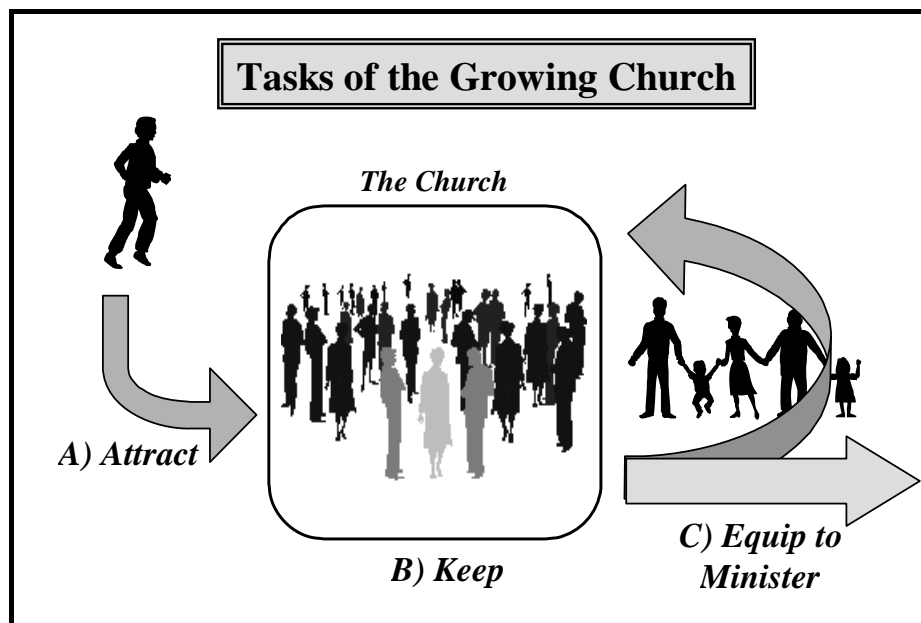
Bringing more people is the first step. The next one is to keep both these new people and the old ones. Otherwise, it is like filling a bucket with a hole in the bottom—a futile effort until the hole is fixed. Any person in a church has a choice to stay or to leave. A growing church will adapt to such a good job of meeting the spiritual needs of the new believers that they will want to become more faithful in the church.

3. Growing Churches Equip New People for Life and Ministry

Ephesians 4:11-16 is a key passage on church growth. It shows that the church grows to maturity as each member of the body is equipped. In a healthy church the leaders consider that their main purpose is to equip the other members. This ministry includes three major area:

- Ministry within the body
- Ministry of bringing the lost into the body
- Ministry of establishing new congregations

Figure 10.2 The Growing Church



The important actions of a growing church are demonstrated in Figure 10.2.

Discuss: How is your church, or your church plant, doing in each of these areas? Where do you need to improve?

III. TWELVE CHARACTERISTICS OF GROWING CHURCHES

Here are twelve practical ways that a local church can accomplish the actions shown in the figure above. A good church should be involved in each area.

1. They Go to the Lost

This vital step is often forgotten. Some churches believe that it is the responsibility of the lost to come to church. This is totally counter to the Great Commission, which commands the church to go (Mt 28:18-20). We are to leave the 99 righteous sheep and seek the lost one (Lk 15).

Any hunter or fisherman knows how ridiculous it would be to expect the fish or the game to come to them. They use all their skill and understanding in order to determine where the fish or game are located and to go to them. "Fishers of men" must do the same.

The early church sought the lost in the temple, the synagogue, the market, and house-to-house. Jesus went to banquets and parties attended by tax collectors, prostitutes, and others of known sinful character. Unfortunately, the "righteous" did not understand this principle. The religious rulers attacked Jesus for "eating and drinking with sinners" (Lk 5:30-32). Jesus did not dispute that He did exactly that. Rather, He said that His purpose was to seek the lost. When a lamb is lost in the swamp, a loving shepherd will go down into the mud and muck to go after it and rescue it.

It takes wisdom and discernment to know where we can and cannot go. But the ministry of Jesus demonstrates that it is important to seek the lost wherever they may be, even if it brings criticism from the "righteous." We must strive to find an acceptable balance rather than throw away the opportunity to minister to the lost where they are.

2. They Participate in Social Activities with Unbelievers

A church that wants to grow will encourage its members to go to sporting events, chess clubs, the market, the pool, the sauna, birthday parties, weddings, funerals, picnics, public meetings, etc. Any activity may be a chance to meet and develop relationships with the unsaved. Christians are to be separate from the *sin* of the world, but not from the *world*. Rather, we are to be in the world as salt and light.

Discuss: What are some activities which you and your church could participate in to build relationships with unbelievers?

3. They Maintain Natural Networks of Relationships

Most people come to Christ through the influence of someone they know. Every Christian should be developing relationships with unbelievers that will eventually allow them to share the Gospel. If every member managed to develop only one such relationship each year and led that person to Christ, the church would double yearly. Many believers have few relationships with the lost. As a Christian becomes more involved in church life, his circle of friends changes and begins to include more Christians and fewer unbelievers. Consequently, he has increasingly fewer friendships with the lost and less opportunity to attract them to Christ.

The new believer should be encouraged to live an authentic Christian life and evangelize his lost friends.

The best source of contacts with the lost is through the new believer. Unfortunately, new believers are often encouraged to separate from their unsaved friends and spend all their time with believers. This approach severely damages evangelism and hinders church growth.

Discuss: How can we do a better job of maintaining one's natural network of relationships with non believers when they come to Christ? Why is this important?

4. They Change in Order to Win the Lost

The Apostle Paul attempted to become all things to all men in order to win all men (1Co 9:19-23). What did he mean? Certainly he did not become sinful in order to win the sinful. What then did he mean? He was willing to change the way he lived if it helped the lost to listen to the Gospel. Think about what that means to us.

Rather than the believers changing their "culture" to win the lost, many churches expect the lost to change their "culture" in order to come to the church.

The scriptural principle is clear. The believer is to yield his own rights and preferences for the sake of the lost.

Yet the scriptural principle is clear. The believer is to yield his own rights and preferences for the sake of the lost. And the strong believer is to yield to the weak believer. This does not mean that the believer may sin. But he seeks to do everything permissible in order to reach out and meet the lost in a manner that is comfortable for them.

The character traits of the believer draw the lost to Christ. If the believer is gloomy, moody, dowdy, or bitter, his witness will not be effective. A genuine Christian should exude joy despite his troubles, a love for God and others, and peace and assurance about God's love for him. Think about the lists of personal traits or actions in Figure 13.1.

Discuss: Which column below , A or B, do you think would attract an unbelievers?

Table 13.1 Personal Traits

Column A	Column B
Love for others	Goes to church every Sunday
Joy in trials	Dresses differently
Assurance of God's love	Doesn't drink
Peace in difficult times	Doesn't smoke
Generous with finances and time	Stingy
Loving marriage	Sings in the choir
Well-behaved children	Knows the Christian hymns
Dependability	Knows the Lord's Prayer
Graciousness	Avoids sin

Most Christians would agree that both columns contain good Christian traits. That is not the issue. Which traits are attractive to the unbeliever? The traits in the left column are more likely to influence an unbeliever to listen to our message. Believers in whose lives those traits are most noticeable will be more effective in evangelism.

These characteristics must be genuine. A believer who pretends to love a lost acquaintance in order to win him will be recognized as fake. A genuine Christian is attractive, even to the unsaved. Character traits are best seen in a crisis. When we have problems, the unbeliever can see how we depend on God. When the unbeliever has a crisis, he can experience our love and help. Both situations attract him to the Gospel.

5. They Are Involved With the Needy

Many people come to Christ during a crisis. Unbelievers often pay little attention to God when things are going well. The Lord often uses a crisis to force them to understand their need. Growing churches know that people are more open at those times, and they seek ways to respond to people when they are hurting.

The particular means is not as important as the fact that we demonstrate our love and care for the lost. Sometimes material help is needed because of unemployment, fire or other problems. In the case of illness or death, a sympathetic ear may be the most appreciated way to demonstrate compassion. The key is to keep our eyes open for needs that we can respond to, as did the Good Samaritan.

Discuss: How can your church be more involved meeting the needs of the poor and sick around them?

6. They Quickly Include New People

The way members react to a new person during his first visit may well determine whether he ever comes again. If he feels welcome and accepted, he will probably return again. This is often true of a new believer as well as an unsaved visitor. Many churches in Eastern Europe are very cautious about accepting new people. This caution helped the church survive in times of persecution, and was understandable then. However, continuing to hold this attitude today can be devastating to church growth.

An unsaved visitor normally attends church because he is open to the Gospel. It is important to seize that opportunity to make him feel welcome and to seek to answer his questions. The same is true of new believers, who are compared with newborn babies (1 Pet 2:2). They also need love, acceptance and encouragement to convince them of the need for a close relationship to the church.

Discuss: How can you quickly include new people?

7. They Have Vibrant Body Life

The early Jerusalem church is an excellent model of a local church body that was alive and fulfilling the needs of its members. In Acts 2:42-47 we see the main functions of the church body demonstrated:

- 1) *Powerful, clear Bible teaching and preaching*
- 2) *Loving and accepting fellowship*
- 3) *Heartfelt devotion to the Lord's Table*
- 4) *Life-changing prayer*
- 5) *Sharing with brothers and sisters in need*

Everyone enjoys being in a group that loves them and cares for them. This is one major benefit of a family, and the church is to be a family. When Christians care for one another as brothers and sisters in Christ, people will stay in the group.

Discuss: If vibrant body life is based on love and care, what are some practical things you can do to improve on these?

8. They Equip Members for Life

Each member is to grow in maturity. For this to happen, the leaders must model the Christian life for them. Real discipleship takes place when the godly members spend time with the younger Christians and demonstrate for them how to grow and how to serve the Lord.

It is surprising how much of a typical church service is intended to evangelize the lost, even though most of the congregation may be believers. Evangelistic sermons do little to help the believer grow to maturity. While the Gospel should be preached in church, a greater emphasis should be placed on messages specifically for the believers. If the teaching is appropriate for the needs of the believer, they will continue to attend the church.

9. They Equip Members for Ministry in the Body

The ministry of the church is to be carried on by the members of the church—not by the leaders. God has gifted all believers with spiritual gifts to be used in ministry. The purpose of the leaders, then, is to train and equip the members of the church to use effectively their spiritual gifts in ministry. When this principle is followed and all the members of the body are active in serving one another and reaching the lost, the church will grow. The entire church body can accomplish so much more than the leaders alone.

10. They Equip Members for Ministry to the Lost

Believers are to help the church grow. In John 15, Jesus said that the believer should bear fruit and that He would prune the branches so that they would be even more fruitful. The will of the Father is that we bear much fruit. This applies to all believers—not just the leaders. Jesus did not define the fruit in John 15, but he commanded us to go and make disciples. Surely the fruit includes the winning of the lost.

Few believers ever win another person to Christ. There are many reasons for this. Some of the most common ones are:

- They are not taught to evangelize until they have been a Christian long enough to lose their non-Christian contacts.
- They are taught so little about the Christian life that they are afraid to try to explain it to unbelievers.
- They are never taught any effective method of presenting the Gospel.
- They assume that evangelism is the job of the leaders.
- Some believers fail to witness because of unconfessed sin in their own lives.

All of these stem from poor equipping of the believers for ministry. A good church planter will be careful to prepare his members for ministry, motivate them, model a soul-winning heart and encourage them as they minister. In this way, he will multiply his ministry.

11. They Equip Members for Ministry to New Congregations

While the growth of a local church is good, the multiplication of churches is better. A healthy church should not only grow in size but also reproduce itself many times. There are a number of reasons why establishing new churches is more desirable than the simple growth of the mother church.

1) *New Congregations Grow Faster*

It is a fact that new churches almost always grow much faster than old ones. There are many theories as to why this happens:

- Newer churches usually locate in an area where there has been no church, and therefore closer to unevangelized individuals. It is like picking berries and finding a patch where no one else has yet picked.
- New churches are free from old problems. Some older churches have a history of hurts, problems or scandals. Unbelievers may use these as an excuse not to attend. However, they might be willing to try a new church with a clean reputation.
- New churches must grow to survive, and therefore their members more naturally have an evangelistic mindset. They are more conscious of the lost and more willing to reach out to them. They have not yet become complacent.
- People like to be part of a church where there are people of a similar culture. Most established churches have developed a program and style of worship that is appropriate and attractive to their typical member. People of a different age, education or background may not be interested in that church. New churches can design ministry forms that are appropriate for these other people that the established church cannot reach. For this reason, it is usually good if the new church forms do not precisely resemble the old one.
- New churches often do not have their own meeting place and are forced to conduct much of their ministry in homes. In reality, meeting in homes is a much more effective way to reach the lost and to disciple new believers. So the lack of facilities becomes an asset rather than a liability.

The new believer should be encouraged to evangelize his lost friends and acquaintances while he still has a relationship with them.

2) *Reproducing Churches Grow Faster*

While older churches seldom grow as fast as new ones, they grow faster when they are involved in planting new congregations. This is hard for some to believe, but true. Many wrongly assume that helping to start a new church would weaken the old one. Rather, the increased emphasis on evangelism, outreach and training that are needed for the new work almost always results in growth for the old church! The enthusiasm for growth is so contagious that a stagnant church can often revitalize itself by promoting church planting.

This principle also applies to new churches. The church planter should teach the new congregation about the need to reproduce from the very beginning and encourage them to start other groups as soon as possible. Such a mindset will keep his new work vibrant and growing.

Discuss: Why do new and reproducing churches grow faster?

IV. EVALUATING AND MONITORING CHURCH GROWTH

All parents know that it is important for their child to be weighed and measured by the doctor on a regular basis to determine if the child is healthy and growing properly. The same is true of the church. By gathering and analyzing certain types of numerical growth, church planters can gain valuable insight into the health and growth of their churches. For example, the number of baptisms per year in a church is an indication of "conversion growth" and shows how effectively the church is bringing in new people. Increases or decreases in church membership and attendance can indicate whether the church is keeping and equipping the members. Finally, charting the number of new church plants, or other ministries outside the church can show whether the church is successfully involving members in the work of the Gospel. Evaluating this data is the only reliable way to know whether the church is doing its part to fulfill the Great Commission.

Discuss: Why is evaluation important? Why is it often overlooked? What should be included in the evaluation?

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- Is your church growing? In what sense? Numerically? Spiritually? Socially? Some of these? All of these?
- Am I fulfilling my responsibility to equip the believers for ministry, or am I trying to do it myself? How am I equipping them? Is it working?
- Why would an unbeliever want to come to my church? Why would a new believer want to stay? Can I make my church more receptive to them?
- Have I started a new church plant yet? If not, what am I waiting for?

ACTION PLAN

- Attend your church or another church and imagine that you are an unbeliever. Would you come back to that church? Why or why not? How does it compare to your church? What did you learn from this that will help you in your church?
- Think about the churches in your area. Which of them are growing, and which are not. Compare the characteristics of each to the traits in this lesson. Which characteristics appear to be the reasons for their growth or lack thereof? Can you define other helpful traits?
- Develop an evaluation for your church including a number of questions regarding each of the areas of church growth and church life. Set a regular evaluation time; i.e. monthly, quarterly, etc.

THE CHURCH
11
LESSON

Church Government and Church Offices

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to explain the major types of church government and the requirements for the officers of the church.

☞ Main Points and Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Have a good understanding of the different types of church government
- Understand how to identify potential leaders.
- Understand the responsibilities and privileges of church leaders.
- Two major types of church government are Hierarchical and Congregational.
- Elders and deacons must meet biblical requirements.

☞ Suggestions to Trainers

The purpose of this lesson is not to try to convince the church planter to adopt any particular form, but to help him think through the implications for church growth and multiplication of his choice of church government and leaders.

☞ Suggestions for Mentoring Time

1. Read Psalm 15 and use it as a basis for your opening prayer time.
2. Personal Growth Question: What steps or accomplishments have you seen recently in your church that are getting you closer to your goal?
3. Discuss the questions in the text and at the end of the chapter.
4. Homework: Complete the Action Plan, Read the assigned Chapter(s) for the next meeting time.
5. Pray for ministry needs.

INTRODUCTION

Doctrinal and practical differences often lead believers in the same local area to form totally different and separate assemblies. Differing understandings of Scripture have led to numerous varieties of church structure and government. This lesson will attempt to summarize different forms of government so that you, the church planter, can think seriously about what form would work best for your church and what forms would lead to more rapid multiplication of churches.

I. TYPES OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT

Church government can be divided into two main types with several variations of each. A church may or may not be aware of which model of government it uses, but each church will generally fit into one of these forms, or some variation thereof. The various systems are distinguished mainly by the degree of autonomy of each local church. The important distinction in these forms of government is who chooses the leaders.

1. Episcopal Government

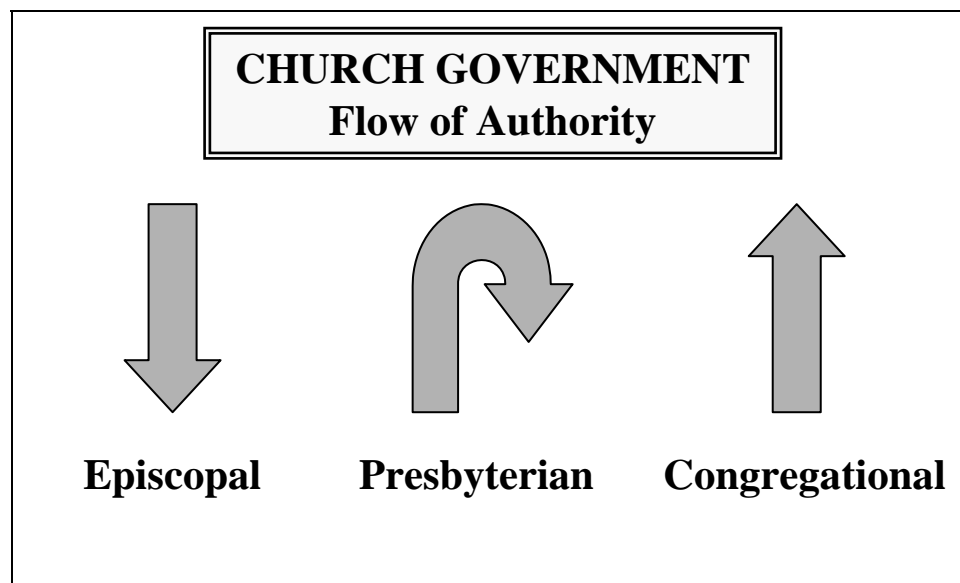
The Episcopal form of government includes a hierarchy that has control over the local church. This control is exercised through the bishops of the church. Authority flows down from the bishops to the presbyters to the deacons and finally to the church members. The bishops have the power not only to appoint the presbyters and deacons who serve under them but also to appoint the successor bishops. In this way, they perpetuate their authority. Episcopalian structure is used by the Methodists, Orthodox, Anglican and Roman Catholic churches.

In this form of government, the leaders themselves choose the next generation of leaders and who would succeed them. The leaders choose the elders, co-workers, deacons and individual ministry leaders.

Episcopal government is widely considered one of the Biblically acceptable methods of church government.

Discuss: How can this form of church government both support and hinder church growth? How are decisions made in this form, and what are the benefits and dangers of this method?

Figure 13.1 Flow of Authority



2. Presbyterian

The Presbyterian form of government also has a hierarchical structure, but this hierarchy is not appointed from above. Rather, authority is vested in representatives chosen by the people, both clergy and lay, who act in their interest. The church elects its ruling elders. These elders, along with the teaching elder (pastor), form the session. The teaching elder and a representative of the ruling elders from area local churches join together to form a presbytery, which has authority over the local sessions. Representatives from several presbyteries form a synod, and representatives from each synod form the general assembly, which is the highest authority.

Although Presbyterian government is appointed from below, unlike the Episcopalian form, there is one exception. While the congregation chooses its ruling elders, the presbytery ordains the teaching elders – also known as ministers or pastors. These teaching elders are theoretically equal in authority to the ruling elders. They simply have different functions. The teaching elders are responsible for the teaching of the Word and for the sacraments. The ruling elders are concerned with the other decisions involved with running the church.

Presbyterian government is also widely considered another Biblically acceptable method of church government.

Discuss: How can this form of church government both support and hinder church growth? How are decisions made in this form, and what are the benefits and dangers of this method?

3. Congregational

In the congregational form of church government, authority is "bottom up." Control and responsibility for governing the local church rests in the members of that church. That authority ultimately comes from Christ alone, the head of the church, and not from any other human body or individual. The members themselves make the necessary decisions within their body and choose their own leaders. In actual practice, they may allow their leaders considerable decision-making freedom, but they are still answerable to the congregation, who must approve all major decisions.

Congregational government is also widely considered another Biblically acceptable method of church government.

Discuss: How can this form of church government both support and hinder church growth? How are decisions made in this form, and what are the benefits and dangers of this method?

Discuss: Who chooses leadership in each of these three forms? What are the benefits / dangers of each? Which form would be easier for building the church? Why?

II. OFFICES IN THE CHURCH

There are a number of words used for the church leaders in the New Testament: elders, deacons, presbyters, overseers, bishops, shepherds, pastors, teachers. Qualifications for only three of these are listed in the Scriptures, so we will look at these. In 1 Timothy 3, Paul gives qualifications for overseers. In Titus 1, he uses the same qualifications for elders, but in the middle of the list uses the term overseer. This suggestion that the terms are interchangeable might help us in determining the offices in the church. (See also Ac 20:17,28 and 1Pe 5:1,2).

1. Qualifications for Overseers (1 Timothy 3:1-7)

This office of leadership has responsibility for the decisions made and general spiritual health of a network or group of churches. This may be one leader or a group of leaders. Generally the guiding vision and direction of all the church locations is set here.

In some places these leaders are called bishops, or elders of a network of churches. The qualifications of the overseer (sometimes bishop) are described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and listed as follows:

- Above reproach
- Having only one wife
- Temperate
- Self-controlled
- Respectable
- Hospitable
- Apt to teach
- Not given to drunkenness
- Not violent, but gentle
- Not quarrelsome
- Not a lover of money
- Manages his family well
- Sees that his children obey him with all respect
- Not a new convert
- Have a good reputation with outsiders

A man chosen as overseer must demonstrate these qualities in his life. The emphasis is on his current character. If he has had a poor reputation in his past life, there certainly needs to be a significant period of holy living to convince the congregation that he has indeed changed his ways and to help keep him from falling into sin.

2. Qualifications for Elders/Overseers (Titus 1:5-9)

This office of leadership has responsibility for decisions and spiritual health over one specific church meeting location. This may be one leader or a group of leaders over the local church.

In some places these leaders are called pastors, elders or co-workers. In his epistle to Titus, Paul reiterates his list of qualifications for elders and overseers. Notice that this list of qualifications is similar to the expanded list given in 1 Timothy 3:1-7.

- Blameless
- Husband of one wife
- Children believe and are not wild and disobedient
- Not overbearing
- Not quick-tempered
- Not given to drunkenness
- Not violent
- Not pursuing dishonest gain

3. Qualifications for Deacons (1 Timothy 3:8-13)

This office of leadership has responsibility for serving the body and the spiritual health of specific ministries in the church.

In some places, these leaders are called deacons, apprentice leaders or ministry leaders – including worship leader, evangelism leader, bible study leader, care/hospitality ministry leader, etc. The qualifications for deacons are similar to those of the elders, except that deacons are not required to be able to teach. The main requirements for deacons are listed in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 as:

- Respected
- Sincere
- Not excessive drinkers
- Not greedy for money
- Having a clear conscience
- Tested
- Having only one wife
- Managing his children and household well

The spiritual requirements are just as strict as those for the elder. They must also have proven reputations. The only difference, not being required to be able to teach, is readily understood in light of their role. The Greek word *diakonos*¹ that is translated as deacon refers to one who serves. The first appearance of the deacons seems to be Acts 6. At that time there was a problem in the church. Some of the Gentile widows were being overlooked in the distribution of food to the needy. The apostles who directed the church did not think it was right for them to leave their responsibility of teaching and praying. Instead, they asked the congregation to choose seven men who could be entrusted with the task of distributing food.

We therefore understand that the New Testament deacons were responsible for the material and social needs within the church. Since they would handle church finances, the strict spiritual requirements and the need for testing is reasonable. The purpose of the deacons is to allow the elders time to concentrate on the spiritual needs of the church.

In 1 Timothy 3:11 the feminine form of *diakonos* is used. Some churches take this to mean the “wife of the deacon.” Other interpret it to mean a female deacon, or “deaconess.” (See also Romans 16:1 where Phoebe is called a deaconess.) In churches with deaconesses, they have a serving role similar to that of the deacons.

Discuss: Is there anyone who fulfills all the qualifications for any of these areas of leadership? Why should the emphasis be on character?

Discuss: Why is a position of leadership not in a title, but in what you do?

¹ δακονοϋ

III. SUMMARY

Although the New Testament contains each of these types of government and of leaders, it has no specific command on how a local church should be organized. As a church planter, you should carefully and prayerfully consider the options. Your background and denominational affiliation will most likely heavily influence your choice of church government.

Discuss: Why is it important to note that there are no specific commands in the Bible on how the church should be organized? What should you consider in choosing a type of church government?

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- As you consider the types of church government described in this lesson, what are some positive things that would contribute to multiplication? What are some negative things that would hinder church multiplication?
- Do you agree with Paul's exhortation to pay the elders who teach? What position will the church that you are planting take on this?

ACTION PLAN

Identify (two) men in your church plant who you think have the potential to be elders. Develop a plan to disciple and test them in the specific character traits required for an elder.

CHURCH
12
LESSON

Church Discipline

REPENTANCE AND RESTORATION

Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to set forth the biblical principles that govern discipline in a local church.

Main Points and Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- Although the term 'church discipline' is not found in the Bible, the concept is clearly discussed, and the church is expected to follow the scriptural guidelines.
- The goal of church discipline is *always* the repentance and restoration of the sinning believer.
- Understand the biblical principles regarding local church discipline.
- Know how to use a practical tool for implementing church discipline

Suggestions to Trainers

Introduce this lesson by having trainees share church discipline policies or procedures with which they are familiar. Avoid discussions of specifically-named illustrations of church discipline and condemnation of denominational or church leaders handling of the discipline issue. Leave time at the end to discuss the case studies.

Suggestions for Mentoring Time

1. Read Deuteronomy 31:7,8 and use it as a basis for your opening prayer time.
2. Personal Growth Question: How are you adapting your role as a leader to fit the change and growth in your church?
3. Discuss the questions in the text and at the end of the chapter.
4. Homework: Complete the Action Plan, Read the assigned Chapter(s) for the next meeting time.
5. Pray for ministry needs.

INTRODUCTION

Although discipline in the church is such an important spiritual concept, it is a subject about which little is known and even less is applied. The following testimony by a Romanian pastor demonstrates this:

"When I first began considering the subject "DISCIPLINE IN THE CHURCH" it appeared to be a very simple subject to me because the church had much experience in this area. But it was not to be so. I had scarcely taken my Bible and begun a serious study when I noticed several problems in regards to this theme.

I sensed the existence of tension between my religious culture, and the message of Scripture; between the religious culture of my church and a true biblical model. I sensed tension in the establishment of a common vision about the discipline process.

While studying the Scriptures, I gathered much material which was only a tangent of this theme. To my surprise I didn't find any material which exclusively approached church discipline.

I spoke with many pastors and church leaders to know their philosophy in this area but found only one church that had their philosophy written down. Most churches don't feel they are on sure ground when they have to apply principles of discipline and treat the problem with insecurity or superficially."

If, as our brother states, church discipline is not addressed specifically in the Bible, then certain questions must be asked:

- Is church discipline biblical?
- What is church discipline?
- What are the biblical steps the church must take in disciplining a member?
- What are the goals of church discipline?

Discuss: How has your church dealt with issues of church discipline in the past?

I. BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE

Although the term *church discipline* is not used in the Bible, it is mandated in at least three passages in the New Testament; 1Corinthians 5, Matthew 18, and 2 Corinthians 2. These passages teach certain principles concerning church discipline practices that are applicable in current church life.

1. Church Discipline is a Biblical Mandate (1Corinthians 5)

For example, the church in Corinth had a case of a brother who was involved in sexual immorality (v.1). The Apostle Paul wrote to the church, giving instruction on how to deal with this brother:

- Put him out of their fellowship (v.2)
- Hand him over to Satan (v.5)
- Do not associate or eat with him or any other brothers who were sexually immoral, greedy, idolaters, drunkards, or swindlers (v.11)
- Expel the wicked man from among them (v.13)

Paul also tells them the purpose of these disciplinary measures: "...so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord" (v.5).

Discuss: What are the dangers of not dealing with problems in the church?

2. Church Discipline Must Follow Certain Steps (Matthew 18)

Jesus said that when a brother sins, we are to work through the following procedures:

- First, go to him privately and show him his fault. If he listens, the relationship is restored (v.15).
- If he does not listen, take two or three witnesses with you and confront him (v.16).
- If he still will not listen, tell it to the church (v.17).
- If he still will not listen to the church, treat him as an outsider (v.17).

Note: Some translations of the Bible indicate that this is a "sin against you." But whether the sin is against you personally, or is a sin you know about, the same principles would apply.

Discuss: Why is it important to have a process for discipline?

3. Restoration of the Repentant Brother Is the Goal of Church Discipline (2 Corinthians 2)

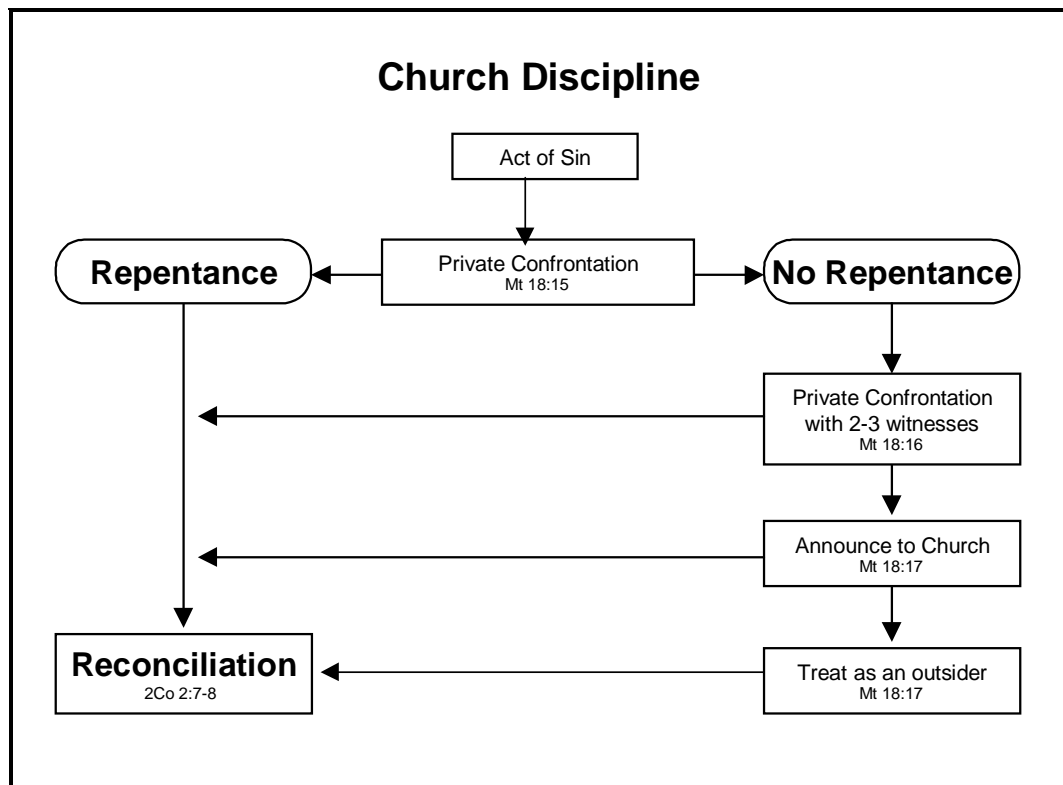
In his second letter to the church at Corinth, Paul writes about what to do when the sinful person repents after being disciplined:

- Forgive and comfort him (v.7)
- Reaffirm your love for him (v.8)

The reason that Paul gives for this is so that "Satan might not outwit us" (v.11). Forgiveness and restoration are characteristics of God, who reconciled sinful man to Himself through Jesus Christ. When the church refuses to reflect these same character qualities of Christ, Satan gains a victory over the church. We "outwit" Satan by forgiving and restoring repentant sinners.

Discuss: Why should discipline include steps for restoration?

Figure 15.1 Church Discipline Flow Chart



II. CASE STUDIES

1. Case Study One

George is a young man who loved the Lord and was actively serving Him as youth leader in his church and as leader of an evangelistic Bible study in his neighborhood. His church, once an active witness reaching out to the community, had recently dropped from 200 to 30 members. Concerned about this, he began asking questions.

The elders became offended and asked him to meet with them. Without having an opportunity to express his concerns, he was ordered not to ask any more questions and not to discuss this with anyone. Furthermore, he was told he could no longer lead the young people nor the small group.

Feeling that the elders were unjustified in their demands, George continued his small group. The elders ordered him to meet with the whole church and he was put out of the church. Letters were sent to church leaders in the area accusing him of insubordination and disobedience to authority.

Questions to Consider

- Was George's asking questions a sin?
- Was the elders' response to his questioning correct?
- How might they have handled this in a more biblical way?

2. Case Study Two

Samuel was an elder in his church. He had a habit of making inappropriate advances to women in the church, much to their embarrassment. Although he was not guilty of adultery, the other elders felt that his action was inappropriate for an elder. When challenged by them, he confessed his sin to the whole church and was removed from leadership. No attempt at restoration was made.

Questions to Consider

- Were the other elders right to challenge Samuel's actions? On what basis?
- Were they right to move him from leadership?
- What plans for restoration might they have had?

3. Case Study Three

James was a pastor who was greatly appreciated by his church. When it was learned that his unmarried daughter was pregnant, the elders were divided about what actions they should take. Some said that it was not his sin; he was already suffering from embarrassment and concern for his daughter and should therefore be treated with grace. Others said that he was not fulfilling the biblical requirement for an elder to control his family and should therefore be disciplined. But because they had no one to take his place and because he was loved by the people, they decided to do nothing.

Questions to Consider

- Were the elders right to ignore the problem?
- How might they have responded to this problem in both grace and truth?

CONCLUSION

Church discipline is not only biblical but is a necessary part of church life. The reason for this is not punitive, but the restoration of spiritual health to the individual and the local church. Every local church should prayerfully and carefully develop a church discipline policy.

ACTION PLAN

- Read 1 Corinthians 11:29-32 and answer these questions:
 1. Why were there weak and sick among the believers?
 2. What was the final punishment?
 3. Why does the Lord discipline His children?
- Read Galatians 6:1-5 and answer these questions:
 1. What are some of the qualifications Paul lists for restoring a brother?
 2. What is the "law of Christ" that Paul mentions?
 3. How should this law be applied in restoring a brother?
- With your team, develop a church discipline policy for your new church.

SPIRITUAL CHARACTER



Reconciliation Ministry

RESOLVING CONFLICT

☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to equip Christians for their job of entering conflict with grace and confidence so that they can work it through without offending others or destroying relationships.

☞ Main Points and Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Conflict is normal and does not have to be divisive.
- Conflict resolution is a Gospel issue.
- Love is the main quality that is necessary to resolve conflict.
- Understand how the Gospel impacts our conflict situations.
- Know how to love people in conflict situations.
- Participate in resolving conflict in a biblical and healthy way.

☞ Suggestions to Trainers

During this session, we will view conflict in the context of the Gospel so that we see a new way to approach it. This may generate lots of discussion and questions. The participants may want to discuss how and when you should cut people off due to unresolved conflict. This lesson does not speak to that issue; rather it deals with things to do to resolve the conflict.

The concepts in this lesson are best illustrated by real examples. It will be best to share some of your own experiences, if possible.

☞ Suggestions for Mentoring Time

1. Read Ephesians 4:29-32 and use it as a basis for your opening prayer time.
2. Personal Growth Question: What has been a help to team unity; and what been a hindrance to team unity?
3. Discuss the questions in the text and at the end of the chapter.
4. Homework: Complete the Action Plan, Read the assigned Chapter(s) for the next meeting time.
5. Pray for ministry needs.

INTRODUCTION

We live in an imperfect world as redeemed sinners. The Scriptures tell us that "...no one living is righteous before you (God)" (Ps 143:2). At our best, we are imperfect, going through the process of being transformed little by little into the image of Jesus Christ (2Co 3:18). In this process, we say and do things—most of the time unintentionally—that offend others. Feelings are hurt and conflicts arise. While conflicts are expected in a fallen world, the truth is that if we don't work at resolving them we will end up destroying each other. As Paul says to the Galatians, "*If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other*" (Gal 5:15).

This session deals with handling conflicts that arise between individuals, usually because of personal preferences, and not because of some obvious sin. Should the conflict be as a result of sin, or should it not be resolved by the individuals involved, it might be necessary for the church to intervene.

As a church planter, it is necessary for you to maintain good relationships. Although this session deals with resolving conflicts, it is obviously better if conflicts can be prevented. The first part of the 'covenant' in Figure 7.1 gives some practical steps for avoiding conflict.

How do we go about bringing others into harmony with one another and with God? As we will see in this session, God has given us the responsibility and the method for dealing with conflict. Be sure to make personal application of these teachings. Then you will be able to help others in the "ministry of reconciliation" (2Co 5:18).

Discuss: How do people in your culture resolve conflict? Is this method healthy?

I. INITIAL THOUGHTS ABOUT CONFLICT RESOLUTION

1. Conflicts Are Inevitable Because of Our Imperfection

Only a perfect person could get by in this life without conflict of some type (Jas 3:2). Each one of us could probably tell stories of conflicts we have had with others. While we agree *theologically* with Galatians 5:24—"*Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires,*"—*experientially* we know that we fall far short of a sinless life. So, we should not be taken by surprise when a conflict arises. At the same time, we shouldn't fatalistically accept conflicts as a necessary part of our lifestyle as Christians. We will study how Christ would have us resolve conflicts and be reconciled to each other.

2. The Difficulties of Confrontation

Some conflicts can be easily resolved by confessing the error, asking forgiveness of the other person(s), and making appropriate changes. Other conflicts may require confrontation. What comes to your mind when you hear the word 'confrontation?' Normally, we think of something 'negative.' The following common assumptions about confrontation are not really true, but they keep people from dealing with others openly:

1. Confrontation is always destructive.
2. When involved in confrontation, the most important thing is to win.
3. Power wins out at the end of the conflict and confrontation.
4. Confrontation and conflict destroy relationships.

None of the above statements is true. But because we often think they are true, they keep us from dealing with relationship problems from time to time.

When we as Christians talk of confrontation in a conflict resolution context, we are talking about approaching another person with whom we are in conflict with a spirit of love and a desire for reconciliation. This doesn't mean that we should skirt around the truth and avoid the root issues. We are to speak truthfully to each other because we are all members of one body (Eph 4:25). We are to "not let any unwholesome talk come out of (our) mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs..." (Eph 4:29).

Discuss: Are there unresolved conflicts between individuals in your church?

3. The Results of Avoiding Resolving Conflicts

Refusal to engage in conflict resolution at church, home, work, or with friends can actually be harmful. Maybe you have been taught that it is best to keep silent, but when that happens, anger builds up inside and begins to eat away like cancer. Ephesians 4:26-27 advises us to "not let the sun go down while you are still angry." If we do, we "...give the devil a foothold."

Example #1

A person in your newly-planted church has some habits that are not easy to live with. He makes his way through the whole church trying to make friends and build relationships without success. Eventually, he knows he is not wanted and either stops participating in the church or moves on to another.

Example #2

A woman in a church had a hygiene problem. She needed someone to talk with her about this. When those in her church finally approached her, it was tough and there was risk involved in doing it. The woman could have been very angry and terribly embarrassed. But it was done in love and she was able to take it. Love meant approaching this woman in order to help her, not pulling away.

Discuss: Take a few minutes to explain how you would try to resolve the conflicts in each of the above examples.

II. CONFLICT RESOLUTION IS A GOSPEL ISSUE

1. The Gospel Sets Us Free to Deal with Conflict

The Gospel sets us free to approach other people about issues that have affected us. To fully experience that freedom, we must first understand our own weaknesses and fears. When we understand the issues that have affected us, we can face confrontation without threat.

The following are common reasons people avoid conflict situations. As our fears concerning conflict are seen, it becomes clear how the Gospel really is the issue.

- Fear of being wrong
- Fear of losing the fight
- Fear of rejection
- Fear of what others will think
- Fear of being confronted in return

Can you relate to any of these fears? If so, then perhaps the problem is what you think of yourself. The person with the above fears might love to minister... but he or she has a greater concern about his or her reputation or personal feelings. If, however, a person thinks about the Gospel, then he or she understands that Jesus is the one who gives righteousness and reputation. In such a case, the fears above are not really issues. Our security and reputations are in Christ. We are driven by the desire to minister and love, not by fear, punishment, or looking good. People feel a lot safer with other people who are not overly concerned about their own reputations. Understanding your position in Christ can give you confidence to confront others openly.

Understanding your position in Christ can give you confidence to confront others openly.

Discuss: How does the Gospel set us free to resolve conflicts?

2. The Gospel Provides the Pattern for Resolving Conflict

In writing to the church he planted in Ephesus, Paul describes the conflict that had existed between the Jews and the Gentiles as well as the reconciliation that is available by the cross (Eph 2:11-16). The very nature of the Gospel itself shows us how to love one another even in conflict.

When in conflict with another person we naturally think, "I am right and you are wrong." When we do this we cling to our own righteousness and demonstrate our blindness to our own shortcomings and sin. We simply don't want to admit our own inadequacies or our need for forgiveness.

In contrast to the "I am right and you are wrong" attitude, the Gospel message provides an example of a very different approach to conflict. In resolving the ultimate conflict between mankind and his Creator, Jesus gave up His rights, took a very humble attitude (Phil 2:5-8) and suffered (1 Pet 3:18), making resolution possible.

What would it be like if we took this attitude with others? Would not conflict be easier to resolve if we were more willing to take the humble position instead of protecting our own pride? This is the attitude Jesus has for us. His example leads us to life in which we can give up our "right to be right" and consider the needs of others above our own (Phil 2:2-3).

Discuss: What does it mean to give up the right to be right? Is this easy?

III. NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING ON CONFLICT RESOLUTION

1. Matthew 18:15-17

Jesus gives a very clear picture of what He expects of His followers concerning resolving conflicts. Read this passage and note the principles Christ gives for resolving conflicts.

- List the principles found in this passage.
- Note that the parable of the lost sheep precedes this passage and the parable of the unmerciful servant follows these instructions on conflict. What do you think this context has to say about verses 15-17?

One Christian group working in Eastern Europe has written the following relationship covenant based on this passage. It is a model that could be used in your church.

Figure 7.1 Sample Covenant for Conflict Resolution

We, the members of _____, taking seriously the instruction of Scripture to live in harmony as brothers and sisters and show to the world the love of Christ through our love for each other, do hereby covenant with each other the following:

1. I will be careful to protect the integrity and honor of other team members by not accepting or participating in gossip about other team members.
2. I will encourage and pass on positive comments about other team members.
3. I will practice the biblical teaching about conflict resolution (Mt 18:15-17a) and forgiveness (Mt 6:12; Eph 4:32).
4. I will remind and encourage the bearer of any negative comment to go to the person in question and seek to resolve the conflict among themselves.
5. I will actively seek the reconciliation and restoration of any who might transgress this covenant, and will expect that the same would be done for me if I should fail.

Biblical principles for conflict resolution as presented in Matthew 18:15-17a for sin committed by one team member against another:

1. All conflicts should be dealt with on a one-to-one basis. No one, including the team leader, will listen to a complaint until that person has prayerfully attempted to resolve the conflict with the other person.
2. Only those within the 'circle of offense' need to be included in the resolution process.
3. If the conflict is not resolved at the one-to-one basis, then the team leader should be consulted. (If the leader is part of the circle of offense, then another team member, but not a spouse of those involved, will be chosen by those involved to arbitrate.)
4. If the conflict is still unresolved, it will then be brought before the team leader and two other witnesses (but not the spouses).
5. If resolution is still not attained, the matter will then be brought before the entire team.

2. 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

We are to approach conflict in a way that is radically different from the world. As we said earlier in this lesson, Jesus took on our sin so that we could have His righteousness (2Co 5:21). Note Paul's words to the Corinthians in that context:

All this is from God, Who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God was making His appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God" (2Co 5:18-20).

It is interesting to note that after Paul describes the reconciliation we have in Christ with God, he explains that Christ has given us the *ministry of reconciliation* and that we are *Christ's ambassadors*. By using this terminology, Paul implies that we do for others what Christ has done for us.

Discuss: What are the components of the above covenant? Why is this useful?

IV. LOVING OTHERS

When looking at conflict situations, it is important to work toward restoration of the relationship. Confrontation is an opportunity to help people. The intent is never to punish or destroy. An attitude of love towards the people we work with is crucial.

Matthew 5:40-41 is a wonderful place to see what Jesus says to do with people who oppose you. We love enemies and pray for those who persecute us (Mt 5:44). We are told to do things that surprise people, like walking two miles instead of one (Mt 5:41), or giving people more than they ask for (Mt 5:40). This is the love offensive that Jesus tells us to engage in. These are the weapons that He gives us to do battle with.

In Romans 12:14-21, we see the same thoughts being expressed by Paul as we just saw in the words of Christ. The attitude the Christian is to express in facing a hostile environment is one of blessing, identification with those around him, living in harmony with others, not taking revenge, overcoming evil with good.

Example

A young Christian doctor was doing a year of social service in a government hospital. All her supervisors were non-Christians and gave her a very difficult time. After several months, she was ready to quit and return home. When counseled about how to resolve the conflict, she was told to overcome evil by doing good to those who were persecuting her. Her simple solution was to bake a cake and take it to her supervisor as a gift. That simple gesture, plus plenty of prayer, broke the resistance of her supervisor. The remaining months of her social service were quite different from the previous ones. Not all situations will be resolved so easily. But we must believe that there is a solution to every situation, because Jesus Christ is sovereign over this world.

Discuss: What is different about this young Christian's response to the conflict?

V. PRACTICAL HELP FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

1. How to Approach Conflict

1) *Discern your personal motives.*

It is crucial to look at what you are thinking when you are in conflict with another. Is this motivated by pride or by a loving desire to minister? You will never have perfectly pure motives, but it is very important that you know this problem and ask God to expose it in your life before you go and talk to someone else about this problem. Remember the log and the speck (Mt 7:3-5).

2) *Do not assume you understand the entire situation.*

Assumptions are deadly in conflict. Never assume you know it all and never listen to just one side. Assume only that you really do not know the whole story and it is important that you find out. Listening and asking questions are crucial here.

Example

One Sunday morning at a new church plant in Europe the overhead projector was missing. Everyone thought it was stolen. All the music had to be changed and the service was delayed. Finally, one of the members came in with the projector. The leaders naturally assumed that he had borrowed it and were furious with him for not returning it on time. Later, they learned that another ministry that used the same building had borrowed it and handed it to him as he was walking into the building so they would not have to face the embarrassing situation!

3) *Begin with yourself.*

If the problem is between you and another person, it is good to assume you have done something to hurt the other person. If you understand the Gospel and what Christ has done for you, then you are not above doing this. It would be helpful to find out how you have hurt them so that you can correct it. Discern the root cause of the conflict. The normal tendency is to look at the obvious, visible parts of the conflict. For example, let us suppose that we have gossiped behind someone's back, and word has gotten back to the person...and the person is now angry with us. The obvious thing is that we have gossiped, maybe repeating some things that were not true. But the real issue, the root issue, is a lack of loyalty to that person to protect his integrity. That disloyalty is what we need to deal with. Maybe we became entangled in the gossiping because we were jealous of that person and wanted to see him knocked down from his privileged place. Again, the jealousy is what needs to be dealt with, confessed, and repented of.

4) *Begin with encouragement.*

It is best to begin with encouragement when bringing criticism to another person. There must be things that are good about them, and you need to temper what you are saying with some good things as well. Encouragement is good for the heart (Pr 15:30; 25:11).

Discuss: Which of the above points is easy for you? Which do you find difficult?

2. Taking Criticism from Others

1) *Look at it objectively.*

Some criticism is good and some is bad. Some is helpful and some is harmful. Do not take criticism at face value. Hold it in front of you and examine it for truth. There are usually nuggets of truth in all criticism. Take the bits that are helpful and apply them to your life and throw out the rest.

2) *Do not take it to heart until it has been confirmed.*

Check criticism with others before you take it seriously. Ask trusted people if they agree with this assessment of you.

3) *Listen with the view, "I am just glad they don't know it all."*

Understanding the Gospel makes it easier to live with criticism. We know our life is in Christ and we know we are 'sinners.' Seeing sin is no big surprise to us. Sometimes it is painful to see how our sin hurts others, but seeing it and repenting of it brings more glory for Jesus, and that's what we want. The Gospel means that criticism is not lethal, nor is it unexpected. It is a means of growth in the grace Christ provides.

Discuss: How should you deal with criticism from others? Do you take criticism well? Why?

CONCLUSION

Unresolved conflict can be one of the most damaging things to personal and interpersonal life. If you have unresolved conflict with another believer, co-worker or family member, take the steps now to seek reconciliation. May we find the courage to love others as Jesus loves us.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- Why do people hesitate to confront others?
- When has someone's confrontation with you been a real blessing?
- In what ways can it be harmful to avoid confronting a brother or sister in Christ about an offense?
- What are some things you can do to make confrontation easier to take?

ACTION PLAN

The following exercise will help you to practice conflict resolution in your personal relationships:

- Review your relationships and see if there are people whom you have offended—or who have been offended by you.
- Discern the root causes of the conflict—and deal with the root issues.
- Talk with the person(s) and seek reconciliation and resolution to your conflicts.



Grace Is For The Humble

Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to show how the Christian life must be lived in humility. Strength comes out of weakness... and the Christian life must come out of humility.

Main Points and Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- Christians should be characterized by humility.
- We are called to minister not in our own strength, but in the power of the Spirit.
- Prayer expresses humility towards God.
- Understand how to serve with humility.
- Know the principle that strength flows from our weakness.
- Make a commitment to a dependent relationship with the Father.

Suggestions to Trainers

The humility test is very powerful. It may lead to a time of repentance for the participants. Look for the opportunity to deal with personal spiritual issues wherever possible. Look for good ways of illustrating the concepts in this lesson from your own personal experience.

Suggestions for Mentoring Time

1. Read 2 Timothy 2:15 and use it as a basis for your opening prayer time.
2. Personal Growth Question: In what ways are growing personally in your love for Jesus?
3. Discuss the questions in the text and at the end of the chapter.
4. Homework: Complete the Action Plan, Read the assigned Chapter(s) for the next meeting time.
5. Pray for ministry needs.

INTRODUCTION

Many Christians struggle to maintain humility. Some Christians—even leaders—start out humble, but after some success in ministry, they develop a subtle pride or self-confidence that contradicts Christian humility. Perhaps nothing is more deadly to a Christian than pride – and church planters are not exempt from this either. Not only does pride create barriers between Christian brothers, but it is also one of those things that the Lord hates (Pr 6:16-17).

Jesus made it very clear to His followers that they should not be self-serving (Mt 20:20-28; Jn 13:1-16). Many worldly leaders use intimidation or an attitude of superiority to get followers to submit. These things should never be characteristic of a Christian (Mt 20:25,28; 1Pe 5:1-7). On the contrary, humility should be the mark of all Christians, with the leader setting the example as Christ did.

Discuss: As church leaders become successful is it easier for them to struggle with pride? Why?

I. HUMILITY—WHAT IS IT?

What comes to your mind when you hear the word “humility?” Many people think of humility as lowliness. We sometimes describe the poorly dressed, poorly feed, poor man as ‘humble.’ While God wants us to be humble, He does not want us to think of ourselves as poor beggars, or paupers. The Scriptures tell us we are His children and joint heirs of His kingdom with

Purposely taking the lowest place seems wrong to the world...

Christ. To believe anything else is a great distortion of biblical truth.

Humility is 'not thinking of yourself more highly than you ought' (Ro 12:3). The humble person does not draw attention to himself, nor does he do things to state his own importance. Purposely taking the lowest place seems wrong to the world – and maybe even to some of us. But it is the path to righteousness and the way that Christians, especially leaders, display the Gospel to those around them. Our flesh despises the low place and we have a battle on our hands to take the lowest place. But it is in this place the humble will find grace (Lk 14:10).

"God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (1Pe 5:5). He does not leave us in our foolish pride. He wants us to be humble. It is from the humble place that we understand how great God is. Do you ever see yourself as being in conflict with God? Could it be that some of the struggles we face are actually God's efforts to teach humility?

Perhaps the best way to understand humility is to examine ourselves. The twelve questions listed in Table 8.1 will help us understand humility while revealing some of the ways in which we fall short. Consider each question carefully.

Discuss: What is humility?

Discuss: Quietly think over the following questions. What did you learn about yourself?

Table 8.1 The Humility Test

<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How do you take criticism?2. Do people find it easy to come to you? Are you approachable?3. Are you frequently involved in power struggles and arguments?4. Do you find yourself thinking everyone else is wrong but you?5. Does anger lurk beneath the surface of your life?6. Are you able to rejoice when you hear of others' successes?7. Would others think of you as a critical person?8. Do you find yourself frequently defending yourself to others?9. Are you a good listener, able to concentrate on others rather than your answer or what is the right thing to do?10. Do you purposefully take the lowest place? (Luke 14:7-11)11. Are you merciful and gentle, or is there a hard edge to your personality?12. Is prayer the first movement of your heart?

II. EXAMPLES OF HUMILITY

1. Jesus

The Apostle Paul clearly states that Jesus is our example for humility. We learn in Philippians 2:5 that we are to have the same attitude as Christ Jesus, who humbled Himself even to the point of death.

Our example for humility, Jesus, was perfect in all things. Yet, the **perfect man—Jesus Christ—was perfectly dependent!** Note what Jesus said about Himself: *"I will tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by Himself; He can only do what He sees the Father doing, because whatever the Father does, the Son also does"* (Jn 5:19-20). If anyone did not need to be dependent, Jesus was the one. But dependence is not a sign of weakness, but rather a sign of strength. This is the upside-down way of looking at both leadership and the Christian life.

Humility is a recognition that "I am dependent upon God for whatever I need to accomplish."

Humility is a recognition that "I cannot do it alone. I am dependent upon God for whatever I need to accomplish." In the world's eyes, such an admission is seen as weakness, not strength. Maybe that is why so many of us have such a struggle with the concept of humility. We let the world set our standards, not God.

Discuss: What is Jesus's example?

2. Paul

The great church planter Paul had much to be proud of by human standards (Phil 3:4-11, 2Co 11:22-29). However, we can see that Paul grew in humility over the course of his ministry. Notice that early in his ministry he describes himself as “the least of the apostles” (1Co 15:9). Later, in his letter to the Ephesians, he calls himself “the least of all saints” (Eph 3:8). And in the last phase of his life he describes himself as the “chief of all sinners” (1Ti 1:15).

Paul also had a “thorn” which we do not completely understand, but which he asked God to take away. Note his comments concerning this request: *“But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weakness so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong”* (2Co 12:9-10). It was more important from God’s perspective for Paul to testify through means of “the thorn” and live in humble dependence on God, than for Paul to be free from the thorn and be proud. God wants His children to depend on Him. God wants you and me to depend on Him.

Our self-righteousness is another form of independence. Compare and contrast the man who is strong on the outside (strong in himself) but weak on the inside with the leader who is outwardly weak but inwardly strong (see Table 8.2).

Discuss: Use the table below to discuss the changes in Saul as he became Paul.

Table 8.2 Saul and Paul

Saul: Outwardly Strong Inwardly Weak	Paul: Inwardly Strong Outwardly Weak
This man was very strong in his determination to “do the right thing.” His zeal even drove him to put Christians in jail. As a Pharisee, he followed the law strictly. He may have been outwardly flawless, but inwardly he was wasting away (Php 3:4-11).	When Saul was converted, he became less dependent on his own zeal to accomplish things and more dependent on the Father’s strength working in him.. He was no longer interested in how he was perceived outwardly and chose to take the lowest place. Think about how Paul humbled himself with the Corinthians. <i>“Who is not weak and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn?”</i> (2Co 11:29). <i>“May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ..”</i> (Gal 6:14). We see a man who was powerful because he did not care what others thought of him. He cared about what Jesus thought about him and as a result, became a powerful person used by God in a mighty way.

III. PRAYER EXPRESSES HUMILITY TOWARDS GOD

Many Christians have little knowledge of how to live in dependence and trust when life seems out of control. Unfortunately, prayer can be another way for us to display independence. Sometimes we pray to gain control of situations that we feel are out of control. But real prayer is about God being in control. It is an acknowledgment of complete dependence on God. The humble man does not pray in an attempt to gain control of situations. Rather, he prays to be linked to the purposes and plan of God. Does this describe your prayers?

IV. CHRISTIAN LIFE CHARACTERIZED BY HUMILITY

Pride keeps us from recognizing our need to depend on God. We started out the Christian life as beggars and God gave us bread to eat. He provided for us much like He did for the Israelites wandering in the desert. Each day, they needed bread from the Father to sustain them. That is the same situation we are in. But when we decide we no longer need the bread, we get into trouble. We are no longer beggars but rather have our own source of bread. This is independence and it comes with our love for our own righteousness.

Pride and independence also make leaders the dispensers of the bread rather than the guides to where the bread is. This is a dangerous move away from the Gospel. We figure that we have what people need rather than Jesus having it. We encourage dependence on us rather than Jesus. As leaders, we need to take people to the One who has the power, the food, the comfort and the forgiveness.

Pride and independence make leaders the dispensers of the bread rather than the guides to where the bread is.

1 Peter 5:1-4 gives some principles for those wanting to be church elders or leaders. They should be described in the following four ways:

- Shepherd
- Willing to Serve
- Not lording it over others
- An example

The kind of leadership described above is extremely loving and servant-oriented. A follower would naturally want to respond favorably toward the leader who meets the criteria above. People normally do not want to hurt someone who loves them. This is why it is very natural for Peter, in the very next verse (1Pe 5:5), to encourage the young men, no doubt the followers of the elders, to submit to their leadership.

We also learn in verses 5 and 6 that "all" are to seek humility: "*Clothe yourself with humility.*" In other words "seek it." "*Humble yourselves*" (vs. 6) is a command, not an option, from the Holy Spirit. This exhortation is not just for the leaders or for the followers. It is for everyone.

The following table can help show the difference between the Christian who lives independently and the one who lives in dependence on God.

Table 8.3 - Independence verses Dependence

Independence— <i>PRIDE</i>	Dependence— <i>HUMILITY</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The independent person has a "success/failure" view of things. • Unbelief is a normal pattern for this person because he knows he has limits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The person who depends on Christ understands that Jesus is in charge. He lives with this confidence. • Faith is central to this person's life. The only failure is unbelief.

CONCLUSION

Are you filled with pride or are you characterized by humility? If you are not humble, then you are missing out on great blessings from a mighty God who gives grace to the **humble**. Talk to your mentor about your need to be humble before God. Make this a matter of prayer.

Discuss: How do we grow in humility?

Discuss: What would you do to help a prideful leader that you are trying to raise up?

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- Why do you think many Christians, including leaders, struggle with humility?
- In what ways do you find it hard to be humble?
- Why does God give grace to the humble?
- What difference does humility make in the life of a church planter?

ACTION PLAN

- Find an accountability partner, a person with whom you can share honestly and openly.
- Ask your accountability partner to help you monitor the items included in the humility test.
- In your spiritual journal, document the changes you see taking place in your life.

LEADERSHIP

LEADERSHIP
5
LESSON

Spheres of Leadership

☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to help the trainees identify where they need to focus their leadership development efforts.

☞ Main Points and Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Church planters need to make training of new leaders a high priority.
- Effective leadership training requires that a church planter spend more time and effort with those who will become leaders and multiply the ministry.
- Be convinced that leadership training should be a priority for his or her time and effort.
- Know how to use the concept of 'Spheres of Leadership' to help plan leadership training efforts.

☞ Suggestions for Mentoring Time

1. Read Titus 2:7,8 and use it as a basis for your opening prayer time.
2. Personal Growth Question: What situations in your life are an example of picking up your cross and following Jesus?
3. Discuss the questions in the text and at the end of the chapter.
4. Homework: Complete the Action Plan, Read the assigned Chapter(s) for the next meeting time.
5. Pray for ministry needs.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most difficult decisions that leaders face is how to use their time. Demands are endless. There are never enough hours to get everything done. What must be done, and what can wait? The answers are not simple, but there are some general principles. One of the most important guidelines is that new leaders must be trained in order for any ministry to grow and expand. This is especially true with the planting of churches. Without ongoing development of new leaders, the process will stagnate and die.

Every church planter should be involved in the development of new leaders. But even then, there needs to be some kind of guidance concerning which leaders to train, and how much time to invest in each one. Jesus is the best example of how to maintain this balance.

I. THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

Jesus came to earth in order to pay for our sins, and to establish His Church. This Church would be His instrument to preach the Gospel to all nations. Considering the huge task that faced Jesus, it is truly amazing that He chose to spend His time as He did. He could have done incredible miracles every day, and spend all His time preaching to the multitudes who came to see them.

Indeed, Jesus did many miracles, but not daily, and not nearly as many as He could have done. Furthermore, He clearly chose to spend most of His time training twelve men rather than the multitudes. Instead of reaching as many people as possible, Jesus trained a handful of leaders who would reach others. The results were incredible. Although the powerful Roman Empire viciously persecuted the young, new Church, it survived and grew until Emperor Constantine himself became a Christian. Clearly Jesus' unusual method works.

Instead of reaching as many people as possible, Jesus trained a handful of leaders who would reach others.

A close look at the ministry of Jesus shows that He seems to have dealt with four distinct groups of people. These groups were:

- *The Three* – Jesus repeatedly took Peter, James and John apart from the other disciples and showed them more about His nature and purpose. Examples include Matthew 17:1, Mark 5:37, Mark 13:3, and Mark 14:33. As we look to the Book of Acts, we see that these three played a much more prominent role in the development of the Church than did the other disciples.
- *The Twelve* – The twelve apostles enjoyed a special relationship with Jesus. They were chosen for this honor from among the many disciples that followed him (Lk 6:13). Although the other disciples would play an important role in the new Church, the twelve (except for Judas) would provide the leadership. They were therefore a priority for Christ's time and effort.
- *The Disciples* – As we have seen above, there was a larger group of 'disciples' who were not chosen to be among the twelve. This group also left their homes and lifestyles in order to follow Him (Lk 14:27). The total number apparently changed often. On one occasion, many of them left Jesus (Jn 6:66). In Luke 10:1, the group was large enough for Jesus to select seventy-two of them for special ministry. After His resurrection, He appeared to more than 500 (1Co 15:6). And a core group of 120 devoted themselves to prayer as they waited for the promised Holy Spirit (Acts 1:15).
- *The Crowds* – Large numbers of people followed Jesus, listening to His teaching and waiting to see His miracles (Mt. 4:25; 13:2). We know that they numbered up to 5000, counting only the men (Lk 9:14). Some of them believed, and some did not. The people included in them ranged from disciples to Pharisees who wanted to catch Jesus in some fault.

Figure 3.1 Spheres of Jesus' Leadership

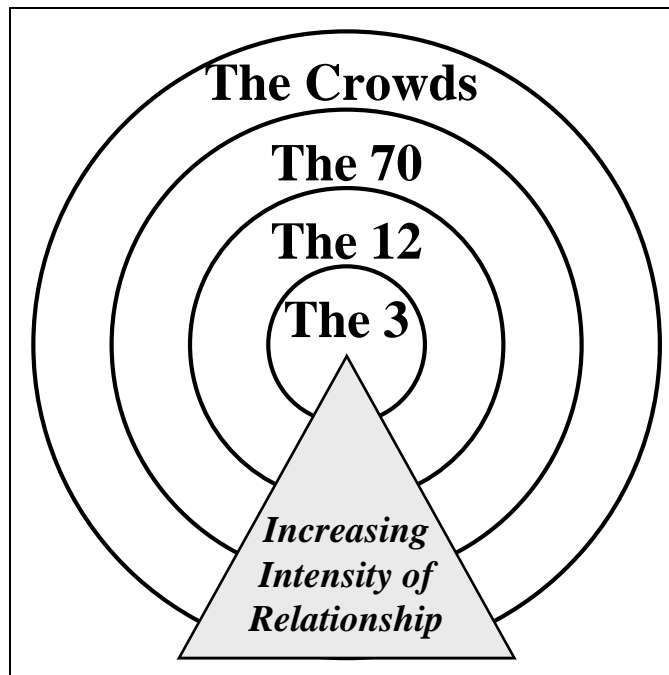


Figure 3.1 illustrates these various groups that followed Jesus as a series of spheres. The intensity of the relationship increases as we move from the crowds in the outer circle toward the inner circle composed of Peter, James and John.

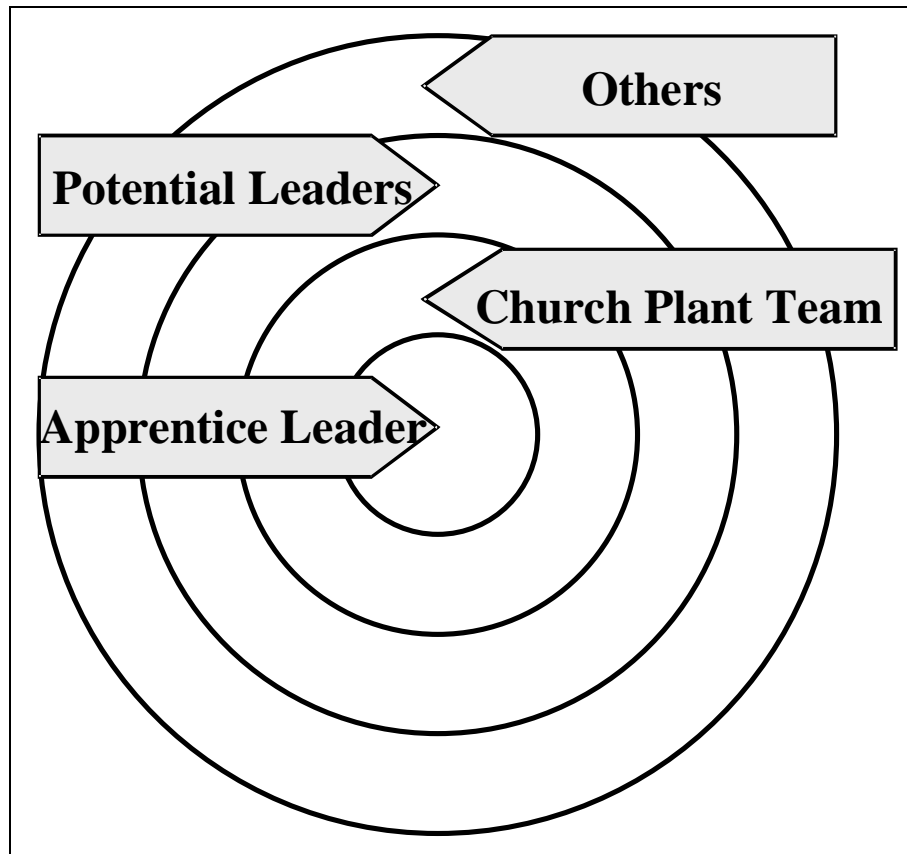
As we look at Jesus' ministry, He seems to set a higher priority on the formation of the spheres nearer the center. As we move from the outer to the inner circle, He spent more time, revealed more truth, and expected more in return.

Discuss: Why did Jesus have differing spheres of leadership? What purpose did it serve? How do we follow his example? How was his interaction different with each of the spheres?

II. THE CHURCH PLANTING SPHERES OF LEADERSHIP

Church planters should also follow the example of Jesus by focusing their leadership training efforts on the appropriate people. If you were to draw out your relationships as spheres, it might look something like Figure 3.2. On the 'outside' would be the general group to whom you minister—including both believers and unbelievers. The next level in would include those believers who seem to have potential as future leaders. Further in would be the church planting team—those with whom you are working to plant the church and who are already involved in the ministry. The center would be the person (or perhaps 2-3 people) with whom you are working most intensely to prepare him or her for leadership.

Figure 3.2 Church Planters Spheres of Leadership



As you look at Figure 3.2, there are several key points that you should notice:

- The closer one is to the center, the more time and effort you should spend developing them for leadership.
- You should be working to some degree with *everyone* in your spheres, since you cannot be sure who will or will not become a good leader in the future.
- Ideally, those in the outer spheres will continually move to the inner ones as they grow and mature, and as the apprentice leaders are released for ministry.
- Because you spend most of your time with the inner spheres, the other people with whom you work need to be carrying on the ministry to the 'outer' spheres so that they are not neglected. You will be the 'equipper' and they will be the 'ministers.' This model is biblical (Eph 4:11-12).
- Apprentice leaders will most likely be members of the church planting team that makes up the next spheres. This is similar to Peter, James, and John who comprised the inner Three, but were members of the Twelve.

Discuss: How do you realistically practice spheres of leadership with those you lead?

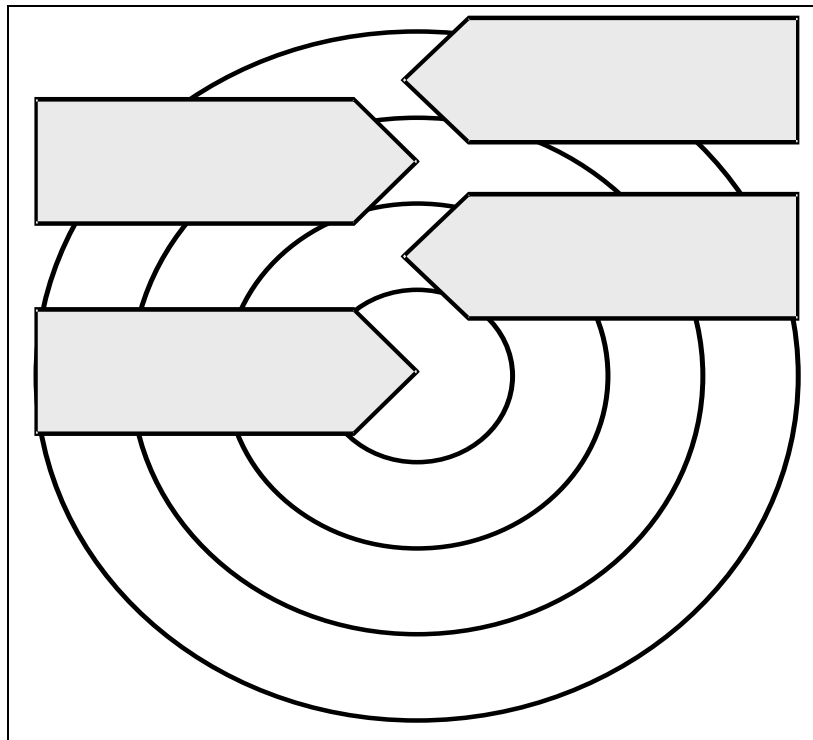
III. EXERCISE: YOUR SPHERES OF LEADERSHIP

What about your situation? Who would fit into your spheres? Take a few minutes and fill in Figure 3.3 with the names of the individuals and groups to whom you minister that would best be described by each of the spheres of leadership.

You may have a formal church planting team, and you may not. The ideal situation would be to begin a new church plant as a team, for the reasons already explained in this material. Unfortunately, the ideal is not always possible. If you already have a team, the spheres should be easy for you to fill in. If not, consider the following ideas and fill it in the best you can:

- If you don't have a 'formal' church planting team, perhaps you have an 'informal' one. Is there a small group of committed individuals with whom you are working closely with the goal of planting the new church? Consider them your team, even if it is not 'official.' But as you lead them using the principles in this material, you might want to discuss the possibility of forming a more organized team in the near future.
- Sometimes you have to begin a work alone, such as in a new area with no known believers. If this is your situation, you can only fill in the outer circle, but you should start planning now how you will train new believers and move them up through the levels as soon as possible. Your situation is far from ideal, and it is doubtful that you will be very successful in planting the new church unless you can begin to find people for the inner spheres.

Figure 3.3 Your Spheres of Leadership



- If you have doubts about whether people should be in a 'higher' circle, write their name in with parenthesis around it. This will remind you to spend the necessary time to evaluate these people, and to develop learning activities to see if they are indeed faithful. If you find that they are not, you can then remove them from that circle.
- Don't worry about having a lot of people in the inner spheres. Jesus was only able to intensely disciple three—Peter, James, and John. Don't be concerned if you are not able to accomplish more than the Lord. Having only one apprentice is better than having none. And it is much better to have only one and train him or her well, than to train several poorly.
- If you just can't think of anyone who might be in the inner spheres, you need to begin serious, specific, intense prayer that God would raise up leaders from within the new church plant.

Now that you have filled in your spheres, think about how you use your time and energy. If you have people at every level, you should be concentrating your time near the center. Are you? How much more time do you spend with those in the inner spheres than the outer ones? What kind of activities do you do with them? Are you consciously developing leadership and ministry skills in them?

Assuming that you are now spending enough time with the leaders and potential leaders, are the outside spheres being neglected? You will not have enough time and energy to minister to them alone and still develop leaders. It is imperative that you learn to delegate ministry to those who work with you. You need to be an equipper and resource person for those who are doing that ministry. How are you doing in that?

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW, AND APPLICATION

- How long will it take for a new believer to move through the spheres to the inner circle? That is about how long it will take to establish the church. Is this an acceptable time?
- How high a priority is leadership training in the eyes of most pastors in your area? How will this help or hinder church growth and the planting of new churches?

ACTION PLAN

Use your completed Figure 3.3 to develop a plan to help those in each circle develop as leaders. Then critically evaluate your plan to see if it is possible for you to implement it. Will you have enough time to spend with the 'inner circle?' How much? How often? Will someone minister to the 'outer' circle? Who? When? How? Make any needed adjustments to you plan, and then discuss it with your mentor. Then do it.

LEADERSHIP
6
LESSON

Leadership Dynamics

☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to explain how the leader, group and task are interrelated, and how they together influence the church planting process.

☞ Main Points and Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered each participant should...

- The leader, the group, and the task all influence leadership success.
- Varying leadership styles are appropriate in different situations, but leadership of a church planting group should be group-centered.
- Know his or her natural leadership style.
- Be committed to being more 'group-oriented' in his or her leadership.

☞ Suggestions for Mentoring Time

1. Read 2 Corinthians 8:6-11 and use it as a basis for your opening prayer time.
2. Personal Growth Question: What are you praying for personally these days?
3. Discuss the questions in the text and at the end of the chapter.
4. Homework: Complete the Action Plan, Read the assigned Chapter(s) for the next meeting time.
5. Pray for ministry needs.

INTRODUCTION

Why is it that some leaders fail and others succeed? Why do many leaders excel in some situations and fail in others? In the same way, is it really possible to describe a generic kind of leader who will be successful in all situations and in all cultures? Can we make bold statements such as "A leader must always . . .?" Many have tried to do just that, and failed. A study of leadership that looks only at the skills and qualifications of the leader is missing an important part of the equation.

The answer to the questions above is complex because several factors influence the effectiveness of leaders, of which the skills of the leader is only one part. Instead, leadership involves the interrelationship of three factors, as shown in figure 7.1:

- The characteristics of the leader.
- The characteristics of the group.
- The nature of the task.

In order for a leader to guide his group in successfully completing its task, these three factors must fit together. The leader must be able to lead the group and understand how to approach the task. The group must be capable of completing the task and willing to follow the leader. In order to ensure that a group committed to planting a church is reasonably well prepared for the task, it is necessary to evaluate the 'chemistry' between all three of these elements.

In order for a leader to guide his group in successfully completing its task, three factors must fit together.

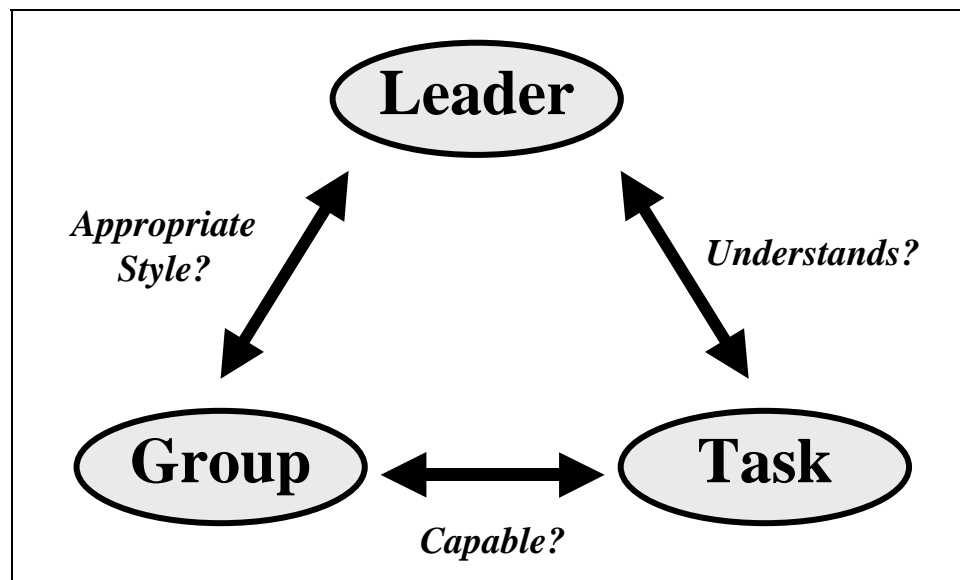
Discuss; Why do you think some leaders fail and some succeed?

I. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LEADER

The leader, while not the only factor, is the most important variable in the leadership process. Little happens without leadership, and the right leader can make all the difference in the world. Sometimes a group has no clear leader. This is a common ministry problem—no one rises up to take leadership. If, however, the group is accomplishing the task, one or more members of the group are probably fulfilling the leadership role—even if this is not recognized. In fact, there are situations where several people will direct the task by consensus, intentionally choosing not to have any one leader. While this works on occasion, it is difficult to make progress on any task without one person to coordinate and make sure that group decisions are followed up. This is the primary reason that committees have such a bad reputation of not accomplishing much.

This lesson assumes that your church planting group has a leader—even if the difference in authority between that leader and the other members is minimal. It is also assumed that you are probably that leader, and that you desire to do a better job of leading. What are the important factors in the relationship between leader, the group, and the task?

Figure 7.1 Three Factors of Leadership Success



1. The Person of the Leader

The character of the leader has already been dealt with in previous lessons, so we will only touch on it here. That does not mean it is not important. On the contrary, when we are dealing with the spiritual task of church planting, the heart of the leader is probably the single most important factor in the group's success. That is why it is of such importance to the Lord, and why it should be the top priority for us (1Sa 16:7).

Based on what has been discussed in previous leadership lessons, consider the following:

Discuss: To what extent do you fit the 'profile' of a leader in the context of church planting as discussed in Leadership lesson 2, "Profile of a Leader"?

Discuss: Obviously no one fits the profile perfectly. How do you as the leader deal with the areas in which you are not gifted?

2. How the Leader Relates to the Group

Leadership styles vary from leader to leader and from situation to situation. Figure 6.2 illustrates five styles of leadership that are common. The leader's style may range from "leader-centered" to "group-centered" depending on how much the leader shares control with the group.

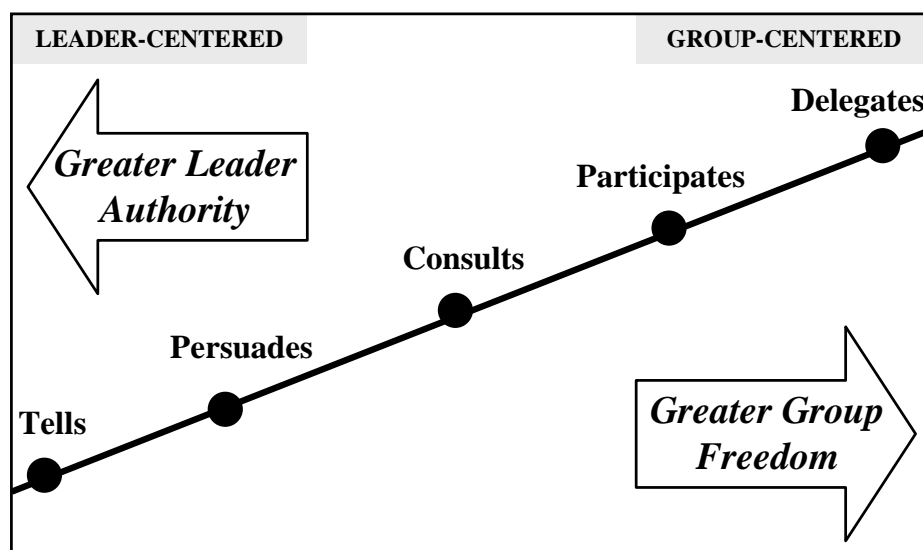
It can be argued that there is a time and place for each of these five styles of leadership. However, the 'leader-centered' end of the scale would normally only be appropriate when the group lacks the maturity or understanding to make good decisions, or perhaps in a crisis situation.

For the purpose of church planting, there should be a significant level of maturity and spirituality on the part of all those who are ministering and directing the work. Therefore, a leader of a church planting group should expect to mainly use the 'group-centered' styles of leadership. Problems arise when the leader of the church plant is only comfortable with 'leader-centered' styles. In that case, the leader has four options. He can:

- Learn to change his style
- Give up the leadership role
- Work alone
- Frustrate the entire group and hinder the planting of the church

As you look at figure 6.2 and read the discussion of each style of leadership, evaluate your own preferred style. We say "preferred" because although most leaders may be able to use a number of different styles, they tend to be more comfortable in one of them.

Figure 6.2 Five Common Leadership Styles



1) *Telling*

Leaders identify problems, consider options, choose one solution, and tell their followers what to do. Leaders may consider members' views, but members do not participate directly in decision-making.

2) *Persuading*

Leaders make decisions and try to persuade group members to accept them. A leader using this style may point out that they considered the organization's goals and the interests of the group members. They even point out how the members will benefit from carrying out the decision.

3) *Consulting*

Group members have opportunity to influence decision-making from the beginning. Leaders using this style present problems and relevant background information. They invite the group to suggest alternative actions. Leaders then select the most promising solution.

There is a time and place for each of these five styles of leadership.

4) *Participating*

Leaders participate in the discussion to a similar degree as the other members, and agree in advance to carry out whatever decision the group makes.

5) *Delegating*

Leaders define the boundaries within which to solve problems or accomplish tasks. Then they turn it over to the group to work out solutions or to implement the tasks.

Remember that none of these five styles is inherently right or wrong. The military, for instance, has had great success in *telling* soldiers what to do, with no discussion allowed. Even in church planting situations, there might be some times when it is best and simplest if the leader makes certain decisions without consulting the group. Usually this happens when there is an urgent need to make a decision *now!* However, in all but extreme situations, the leader of a church plant should consult those with whom he or she is working. A good leader needs to know when each leadership style would be appropriate, and be growing in his or her ability to use other than his natural style when necessary.

The leader of a church plant should normally consult those with whom he or she is working.

Discuss: How can the way a leader relates to the group affect the groups' success?

3. **The Leader's Understanding of the Task**

It should be obvious that a leader must understand the task to be accomplished and know how to carry it out. However, leaders are often appointed solely on the basis of personality or past leadership ability, even if they do not understand the task at hand. Some may be intelligent enough to learn quickly and succeed, but many fail in this situation. It is strongly desirable that the leader should have a thorough understanding of the task.

Church planting is too important a task to commit to leaders that do not understand it, or who are not willing to learn about it. In fact, a leader who is not a learner will seldom guide a group to successful accomplishment of its task. Therefore, a leader of a church plant *must* understand the process of church planting, and be growing in his or her knowledge. The role of the leader is crucial. If the leader has faulty assumptions or ideas, the church plant will probably fail.

It is not necessary that the leader know *everything* about church planting. If so, no church would ever be planted—for lack of leaders. In the same way, it is not even necessary that the leader know more than any other member of the group. Perhaps another member is an 'expert church planter', but is not a particularly capable leader. The best solution in that case is for the more gifted leader to assume the leadership of the group, but to make sure that he adopts a 'group-centered' style so that the group benefits from the experience of the more knowledgeable member(s).

It is not necessary that the leader know *everything* about church planting.

Discuss: How does the leader's understanding of the task affect the success of the task?

II. **CHARACTERISTICS OF GROUP**

By the 'group', we mean 'whoever the leader leads.' The leader may not be in control of this factor. You may work with people that you did not pick, but God has led you together. Whether you personally chose the group members or not, you can improve your leadership and the group's success by being aware of the nature of the group.

The church planting group must be leading godly lives, and be able to perform basic functions such as evangelism, discipleship, and building relationships. If the members are capable in these areas, your task as a leader will simply be to keep them focused on the goal of planting the church. If there is a deficiency in one or more areas, you will need to find a way to develop competency in those tasks. Therefore, a careful evaluation of the group will be very profitable, and enhance their chances of establishing a solid, growing church. There are several areas to consider.

If the group is deficient in some area, the leader will need to develop their competency in those tasks.

1. The Group Members' Skills and Abilities

Look at the group you work with and consider the following questions:

- How much experience do group members have in evangelism, discipleship etc.? Do you need to concentrate on training?
- In what ways are some of them ready to be released for ministry?
- Are your group members aware of their spiritual gifts?

The answer to these questions will affect the progress of the group. You cannot lead the group where they are unprepared to go. If your group lacks ministry skills, you will need to train them.

2. The Group Members' Commitment to the Task

Perhaps you have a group of skilled people to work with. Some may have planted churches before; others are experienced evangelists or ministry leaders. But perhaps your group members are not available to participate in the task because of other commitments.

- Do employment schedules interfere with ministry meetings and activities?
- Do family obligations interrupt the focus of group members?
- Do the members think that the church plant is of vital importance?

Perhaps group members are committed to the church plant, but have very different ideas about the kind of church they are establishing. They may expect different ministry styles, or have conflicting visions of church structure. If your team has not worked out a clear plan and strategy, this kind of problem will probably arise. You will have great difficulty moving the group forward until you all agree on what you are moving towards.

3. The Relationships Between the Members

Leadership is largely "people" business. A large part of ministry is dealing with others. If there are relationship problems among those you work with, it will interfere with the task sooner or later. Leaders need to continually monitor the relationships among the group members. If the group does not trust each other, progress can be inhibited. If members are competing for recognition or position, true cooperation will be impossible. A variety of motivations and hidden agendas may unconsciously interfere with the goal.

It is also possible that one or more members of the group might have a relationship problem with the leader. This often arises when leadership styles conflict with expectations. A leader might use a very directive style with a group that values freedom, thereby making the members feel belittled. Or, in the opposite case, a leader might defer decisions to a group that would rather have stronger direction from the leader, and thus feel confused or have trouble knowing what to do. Both issues should be addressed and a workable compromise reached.

Problems often arise when leadership styles conflict with group expectations.

How do you deal with interpersonal conflict as a leader of others? An experienced leader offers the following advice:

When I sense tension among those I lead, or when someone displays "disruptive" zeal for a particular point of view, I try to ask myself "what is going on here?" Oftentimes there are hurts, fears or interpersonal issues below the surface that are coming out in an unusual way. Perhaps I have offended this person, or maybe he or she feels unappreciated by the group. By spending a bit of extra time with the seeming "troubled" person, perhaps giving them a chance to open up, I am often able to reassure them of their worth and acceptance by me and the group. Often, this is all that is necessary to improve harmony among us.

Discuss the characteristics of the group and how it relates to the success of the group.

III. THE NATURE OF THE TASK

The third factor in leadership is the task. The task is the purpose for which the group exists. It is important that the task be clear in the mind of each member. The responsibility to keep this goal before them falls squarely on the shoulders of the leader.

It is the leader's responsibility to make the task clear.

There are two extremes:

- 1) Failing to keep the task clearly before the group, and
- 2) Overemphasizing the task to the detriment of group relationships.

The first extreme causes the group to flounder doing unimportant activities, or to get so caught up taking care of the group that they forget the lost to whom the Lord has sent them. The second extreme results in wounded relationships and an inability to model Christian community.

Your task is saturation church planting. As the leader, you need to continually evaluate whether or not your group is making progress in planting the church. Your research helps you to understand your particular situation and focus your efforts in the important areas. In addition to what you have learned in your research, you need to consider how the following issues affect the difficulty of planting a church in your target area, and adjust your expectations accordingly.

As a leader, you need to continually evaluate whether or not your group is making progress in planting the church.

Discuss: What is your task? Is it clear? Do you fall on either side of the extremes of failing to keep the task before the group, or overemphasizing the task? How can you change?

CONCLUSION

As you can see there are many factors that affect the leadership process. As a church planter you need to watch your own leadership abilities and skills, shepherd and train your group and monitor the various realities of the task. The action plan at the end of this lesson will help you take stock of your factors.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- What are the three main factors that affect the success of leadership?
- What is the most typical style of secular leadership in your country?
- What is the most typical style of leadership within your churches?
- What style of leadership was exercised by those Christian leaders who have had the most positive influence on you in the past?

ACTION PLAN

Write a report on the various factors in your leadership situation by answering the following questions. Give this report to your mentor and discuss it with him before the next training session.

- 1) Describe yourself as a leader
 - What leadership style do you use the most?
 - Which limitations do you see yourself as having? What can you do to compensate for these limitations?
- 2) Describe your group
 - Describe their skills and abilities.
 - What is their level of commitment to the task?
 - Are there any interpersonal conflicts that need to be addressed?
- 3) Describe your task
 - Are you planting a church among resistant or receptive people?
 - Are you or members of your team “outsiders” or “foreigners” among these groups?
 - Are there economic realities that make the church planting effort difficult?
 - Do you have enough information about your context? Do you and your group understand your task?
 - Do you have a clear plan and strategy that takes the results of your research into account?
 - Are there any unique spiritual dynamics that must be confronted?
 - Are there any political pressures that are affecting the situation?
 - Do you have the resources needed to complete the task?
 - In what ways has God prepared you and your group for this task?
- 4) Conclusion
 - As a result of what you have learned, what do you need to focus on?
 - What leadership style would be most effective in your situation, and why?

SOURCES

D'Souza, A., and Engel, J. F. “Leadership Styles, Being a Leader” in *Leadership: Making Human Strength Productive*. St. Davids, PA: The Center For Organizational Excellence, Eastern College, 1996. (Used by Permission)



Training New Leaders

Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to stress the responsibility of church planters to multiply themselves through the training of other leaders. It is not enough just to delegate responsibility; leadership must be multiplied. This lesson describes a simple on-the-job training technique that can result in multiplication of leaders.

Main Points and Desired Outcome

When the content of this lesson has been mastered each participant should...

- Moses, Jesus, and Paul all modeled the training of new leaders.
- Know how leaders were trained in the Bible.
- Know and use the 5-step process to train a new leader in a new task.
- Be committed to multiplying himself/herself through the development of other leaders.

Appendix

7A Qualities to Encourage in a New Leader

Suggestions for Mentoring Time

1. Read Romans 5:1-5 and use it as a basis for your opening prayer time.
2. Personal Growth Question: Are there areas of your family life that are not pleasing to God or keeping you from fulfilling his plan for your life?
3. Discuss the questions in the text and at the end of the chapter.
4. Homework: Complete the Action Plan, Read the assigned Chapter(s) for the next meeting time.
5. Pray for ministry needs.

INTRODUCTION

Leadership development is one of the most important aspects of church planting and church growth. Without leadership development, church members remain forever dependent on the church planter and his team. Growing churches normally have a program, formal or informal, in which leaders are trained to assume responsibility. Stagnant churches often do not.

As a church planter, you must multiply yourself by developing other leaders. Early in the church planting process when the church planter is spending most of his time engaged in evangelism, he needs to begin identifying and building up those who might be future leaders. At later stages in the church plant, he is likely to spend most of his time involved in leadership development. Leadership development is essential in order to create an active, growing church. How do we do it? First, note the following biblical examples:

I. BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF LEADERSHIP MULTIPLICATION

1. Moses and Joshua

Moses accomplished incredible things for God. He liberated the children of Israel from Egyptian slavery and brought them to the border of the promised land. Joshua was at Moses' side as a reliable fighter from the beginning of Moses' leadership (Ex. 17:9-14). Joshua went with Moses on Mt Sinai to receive the law and commandments, (Ex 24:12-13), and seemed to have special permission to enter the 'tent of meeting' where God met with Moses (Ex 33:7-11). Joshua's great faith was best displayed when he and Caleb alone believed that God would give them the strength to conquer Canaan (Nu 14:6-9).

At a certain point in Moses' life he asked himself a question that all leaders should frequently ask: "Who is going to replace me?" Moses recognized that Israel would need future leadership, and he asked God for a replacement. God chose Joshua, who had been learning at Moses' side, and then told Moses to delegate some of his authority to Joshua so that the people would know that Joshua was the man of God's choosing (Nu 27:15-22).

Moses saw the promised land, but did not enter into it. Joshua, however, saw the realization of Moses' dream when he victoriously entered the promised land with all Israel. Moses could have become jealous of the fact that he would not enter the promised land, but that Joshua would (Dt 1:37-38). Instead, however, Moses handed off the leadership gracefully to Joshua, just as God had instructed (Dt 31:7, 34:9). Moses serves as a shining example of a servant leader who seeks the best for the people and the Lord's work, rather than his own glory.

Discuss: What can we learn from Moses' method of training Joshua.

2. Jesus

Jesus had a plan to spread the salvation message to the whole world. How did he go about it? He taught large multitudes on many occasions, but his real focus was on the development of his very close followers. This relatively small group of men would carry on the message of salvation with even greater impact after He left. Jesus personally began to select these men before He initiated His larger preaching ministry (Jn 1:35-51).

Jesus spent three and a half years demonstrating the power of His message in His preaching and healing, and later in His sacrificial death and miraculous resurrection. He was a living model of His message for His disciples. At the earliest appropriate time, Jesus gave His disciples a chance to participate in the ministry by sending them out as missionaries (Mt 10). When their ministry was not successful, Jesus provided timely instruction to rectify the problem (Mt 17:14-21). Their training in ministry was evidently more important than the actual tasks they accomplished. Jesus prepared his disciples to be able to carry on without his physical presence. He had enough confidence in his disciples to give them the "keys of the kingdom" (Mt 16:19), and put the future ministry into their hands (Mt 18:18-20).

Jesus taught large multitudes on many occasions, but his real focus was on the development of his very close followers.

We see, therefore, that Jesus multiplied Himself in the lives of others in order to accomplish His purpose. He said, "follow me and I will make you fishers of men" (Mt. 4:19). Jesus was himself a fisher of men, so He essentially said, "follow me and I will make you what I am!" In leadership development, we are also interested in training replacements rather than just finding helpers. Our desire should be to see trainees eventually reach or even surpass the level of success that we have had in ministry.

Discuss: What can we learn from Jesus' method of leadership development?

3. Paul

We see Paul's commitment to developing leaders most clearly in his words to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:2: "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others." He refers to the "many witnesses" present as he taught Timothy. Both Jesus and Paul disciplined men in small groups, rather than "one-by-one." We need to follow their example by equipping leaders "in action." In this way, others will observe in a practical way how to develop leaders. Remember, discipling others is something that is not only taught; it is caught.

Paul was anxious for Timothy to learn how to equip others. Note his reference in 2 Timothy 2:2 to *faithful men*. The selection of those who are to be trained is an important part of the training process. The main requirement for Christian ministry is faithfulness. Paul was not only passing *information* on to Timothy, but also a *method* of equipping others. As Paul monitored and disciplined Timothy, so Timothy would learn to watch and disciple others. Paul had to be sure the training pattern could be repeated to a third and even a fourth generation.

Paul trained Timothy for the ministry almost as if he were his own son, but Timothy is by no means the only one to have been trained by Paul. We read of Silas, John Mark, Barnabas, Aquila and Priscilla, and Apollos—all of whom learned from Paul to various degrees. The last missionary journey of Paul seems to have been a training/discipleship trip. During this trip we read of seven people (Ac 20:4) traveling with Paul, most of them learning from him. In his own epistles, Paul mentions Epaphras, Demas,

Timothy is by no means the only one to have been trained by Paul.

Archippus, Titus, Phoebe and many others. For example, in the conclusion of his epistle to the Romans, Paul greets 27 people, many of whom had worked with and may have been trained by Paul.

You should use this pattern explained in 2 Timothy 2:2 and modeled by Paul by involving potential leaders in all you do during the time you are together. Whether planning group meetings, visiting the lost, counseling hurting people, praying for lost sheep, or teaching—all should be joint projects.

Discuss: What can we learn from Paul's method of leadership development?

II. TRAINING OBJECTIVES

You have already been introduced to "Z-Thinking." In a church planting context, that means planning with the final outcome in mind. Effective leadership training also requires that we look ahead to the needs of the new church as we train. The main questions we need to ask are: "What are we trying to help people to become?" "What kind of leaders are needed?" "What are we aiming for?" "What does a finished product look like?" These foundational questions are important, since they guide the training process.

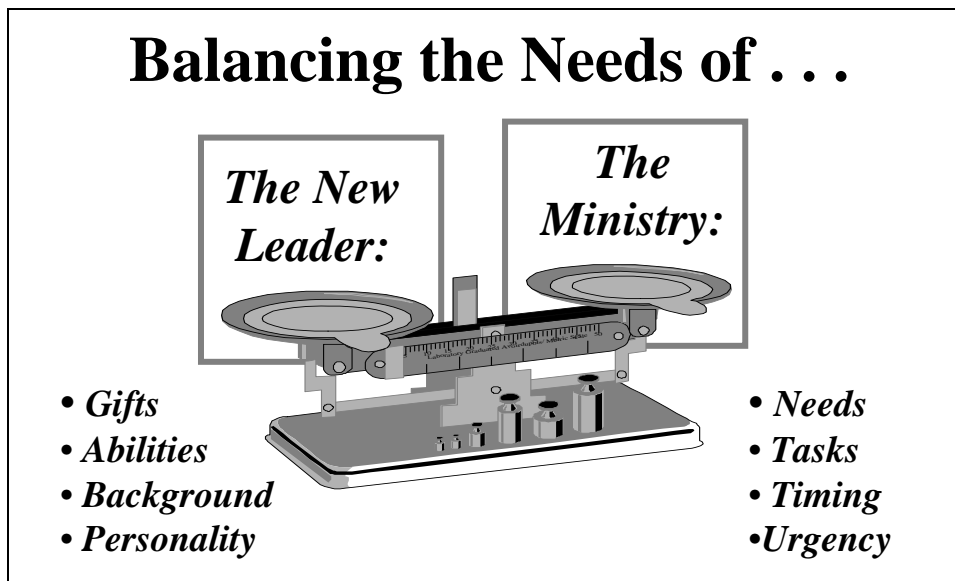
We need have a clear picture of the leadership needs, but we should also be careful not to squeeze the wrong person into those molds. When we find "faithful" people who have leadership ability, they should not be trained in a rigid, inflexible program. Each potential leader has his own personality, abilities, spiritual gift, background, and experience which *must* be taken into account. Therefore, when training potential leaders, consider the following factors:

Effective leadership training requires that we look ahead to the needs of the new church as we train.

- **Spiritual Gifts** - Remember that God has gifted each member of the body. People will gravitate to and find fulfillment in ministry that uses their spiritual gifts. For example, someone with gifts of mercy and administration might be effective in coordinating a soup kitchen or helping the elderly, but not in teaching a Sunday school class. Place growing leaders where they best fit, and not simply where there is a need for a "warm body."
- **Abilities** - Everyone has natural talents or activities that they have learned through effort and practice, and which may also be helpful in ministry. However, these *natural* abilities cannot replace *spiritual* gifts, so we need to be careful not to force growing leaders to focus on ministries that they *can do*, but for which they do not have a spiritual gift. The ideal situation, of course, is to find a ministry 'fit' that uses a leader's gifts as well as his or her abilities.
- **Ministry needs** - The needs of your church planting ministry should also influence the training process. If a person's gifts do not fit into a particular ongoing ministry, they probably should be trained in some other setting. However, a new leader's spiritual gift may not be immediately obvious—they are usually discovered through service. God may want someone to develop a skill for which they have no previous experience or apparent giftedness. It is also true that a leader often has to learn to fulfill roles that are needed to help move the church planting ministry forward. While a Christian leader should focus on his gift, he is not excused from being involved in other areas of ministry. For example, Timothy needed to learn to be an evangelist (2Ti 4:5).
- **Experience** - Past experience in leadership should be carefully evaluated, because it can either positively or negatively influence the future leadership success of the trainee. It might be a *positive* experience because the trainee has probably already learned some hard and valuable lessons about leadership. These need not be repeated, and can save time in the training process. It can also help to quickly identify strengths and weaknesses of the trainee. However, it can be *negative* if it has taught or reinforced an authoritarian or other non-biblical style of leadership. It can also make potential ability hard to discern—indication of capability might just be experience, or lack of experience might make it appear that there is no ability.
- **Personality** - There are so many factors of personality that we cannot possibly mention all the combinations. For instance, a potential leader may or may not interact easily with people—a vital skill. One leader might be easily depressed and need lots of encouragement, while another is upbeat and positive. Be aware of these and other factors as you choose and train leaders.

Prayerful consideration of these factors can reveal what God is calling potential leaders to become. Review them and adjust them to the actual situation in your ministry and for your trainees. This is easier said than done. It takes wisdom, and sensitivity to develop a new leader to his or her potential, meet existing needs in the church plant, and not slight either. Figure 7.1 illustrates the difficulty and importance of finding this balance.

Figure 7.1 Keeping the Balance



Once these dynamics are understood, the trainer should evaluate the trainee and determine how best to develop the leadership skills and qualities of the trainee in the current church planting situation. Each situation is different, just as each person is different.

An approach that is often effective is to form a list of the strengths and weaknesses of the trainee, and write down specific areas of growth that you want to encourage. As you compare potential leaders to this list of objectives, it will help you know how to approach the training process for each of them. For example, if a leader in training falls short of a particular objective, then a “learning activity” can be designed to help him grow in that area. Note the following examples:

Discuss: Think about the people you are currently training. Are you addressing spiritual gifts, abilities, ministry needs and experience? Are these areas balanced?

Table 7.2 Objectives Lead to Learning Activities

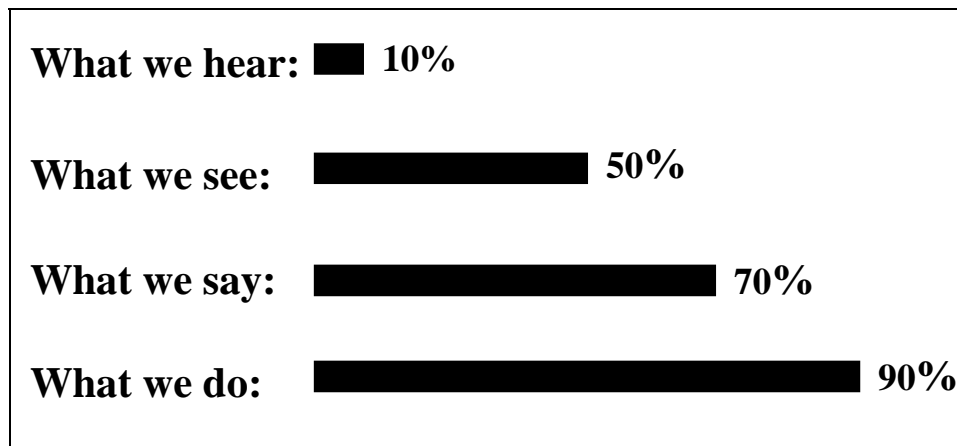
TRAINING OBJECTIVE	LEARNING ACTIVITY
To improve poor preaching skills.	Let him see exactly how you prepare your sermons.
To increase Bible knowledge enough to be able to lead a meeting effectively.	Have him take a correspondence course to increase his understanding of the Bible.
To strengthen weak nurturing (pastoral) ability.	Have him study the pastoral epistles inductively (1 and 2 Timothy and Titus).
A mature believer aspires to be a group leader but does not relate well to unsaved people.	Have the potential leader try to befriend an unsaved person and keep a record of his experiences in growing this friendship.

III. FIVE-STEP PROCESS FOR TRAINING NEW LEADERS

This process for training new leaders has already been explained in The Multiplying Church lesson 5, “Training New Church Leaders.” New churches offer wonderful training ground for developing new leaders. They provide opportunity for training leaders “on the job,” realizing that **we learn best by doing**. Always remember training is an active process. Do not place all the emphasis on knowledge and information. Instead, look for creative ways to get the aspiring leader to **DO** things. He will learn most from what he does.

Figure 7.3 shows how much of any presentation is remembered at the end of thirty days, under normal circumstances. The retention depends on what kind of involvement we had in the learning activity. It is clear that we remember best when we are involved in *doing* the activity.

Figure 7.3 How Much Do We Remember?



Discuss: Based on the above graph, how do we best learn? Why is it important to give activities and tasks as a part of their learning?

The following five-step process can be used to help a potential leader develop a particular skill. It is an activity-based process.

1. Step 1: “I Do It”

In the training of leaders, you should lead by example. Perhaps the number one rule in leadership development is to be the kind of leader others will want to imitate. Often training fails because it has not included good modeling of a concept or skill. Model ministry before you require it of your trainee.

2. Step 2: “I Do It; You Watch”

While the trainee also ‘watched’ in step 1, it was a more passive, one-way activity. In this step, we have in mind an active, two-way interaction between the leader and the trainee. The trainee knows he is being prepared to lead, and is absorbing everything he can learn by observing your ministry. Explaining your actions is very important. Take nothing for granted. Explain what you do and why you do it the way you do. Explain the ministry principles which guide your actions.

3. Step 3: “We Do It Together”

Be sure you have performed the particular ministry skill with your aspiring leaders to give them hands-on experience and to help them to see and learn from their mistakes in a secure environment with their mentor (you). This step is a bit like a child learning to ride a bike with the parent steadying it as needed. Your presence will give the trainees confidence that you can help if they have a problem, but they will also be able to test out the things they are learning from you. The length of time that this stage continues depends entirely on how soon you and the trainee agree that he or she is ready to try to lead by themselves.

4. Step 4: “You Do It; I Watch”

Observe your aspiring leader perform the ministry skill. Do not step in. Allow them to succeed for fail as they are able. Then, after the event and in private, objectively explain the strengths and weaknesses you have observed. Review the objectives at this point. It is important to explain both the positive and the negative, but whenever possible, emphasize the positive. Provide a learning activity to strengthen the weaknesses if necessary.

5. Step 5: “You Do It”

As soon as you think new leaders are ready, turn the task over to them. Don’t rush it, but usually our tendency is to wait far too long, and cripple the new leader by our continued presence. You should remain a close friend, treating the new leader as your equal. The process does not end with the training of another leader. We are interested in the multiplication of many leaders. Therefore encourage the new leader to soon begin to multiply himself in the life of another.

Table 7.4 Five Steps

The Step	The Leader	The Trainee
Step 1	<i>Do</i>	-
Step 2	<i>Do</i>	<i>Watch</i>
Step 3	<i>Do</i>	<i>Do</i>
Step 4	<i>Watch</i>	<i>Do</i>
Step 5	-	<i>Do</i>

These five steps do not always need to be followed in a strict fashion. Often, however, training fails because part of the process is not followed. Consider the young aspiring leader who was asked to preach a sermon, but was not trained in this process. His sermon was not very clear and every one concluded, including the young man, that preaching was not his gift. In reality, he just needed to see and receive a little guidance on how to prepare a sermon.

Discuss: How do these principles differ from your usual leadership development techniques? How can you implement these ideas?

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- Why is leadership development important?
- How were you trained as a leader? Describe the formative activities that helped you develop your leadership ability.
- How many generations of leaders are described in 2 Timothy 2:2?
- How is Matthew 4:19 like 2 Timothy 2:2?

ACTION PLAN

- Pick a common task that you know how to do well like driving a car, cooking pancakes, or building a wooden stool. Teach someone else to do it using the 5-step process described in this lesson. Describe the results to your trainer or mentor.
- In a small group with other trainees or with your church planting team, pick five objectives from Appendix 7A, "Qualities to Encourage in a New Leader." Describe how this 5-step process can be used with each training objective.

SOURCES

- Allen, Roland. *Missionary Methods - St. Paul's or Ours?* Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1962.
- Steffen, Tom A. "Leadership: Ten Implications for Cross-Cultural Church Planters." N.p., n.d.



Qualities to Encourage in a New Leader

I. GENERAL LEADERSHIP TRAINING OBJECTIVES

The following objectives are necessary for leaders at any level:

- Is building an intimate relationship with God.
- Demonstrates the fruits of the Spirit.
- Uses his/her spiritual gifts in ministry.
- Has a growing love for God and others.
- Demonstrates moral integrity.
- Is committed to the authority of the local church.
- Shows love and concern for those in his/her fellowship.
- Relates well to other bodies of believers.
- Applies biblical principles to relationships.
- Manages interpersonal conflict well.
- Listens to others and responds appropriately.
- Is convinced that the Bible is the word of God.
- Has a working knowledge of the Old and New Testament.
- Studies and applies the Bible.

II. LEADERSHIP TRAINING OBJECTIVES FOR SMALL GROUP LEADERS

Small group leaders should also display the following abilities and character traits:

- Demonstrates a passion for souls.
- Practices personal evangelism.
- Relates well to the lost.
- Can present the Gospel clearly.
- Can give a clear personal testimony.
- Has been disciplined.
- Shows sensitivity to the newly converted.
- Shows love for his/her disciples.
- Forms disciples who in turn disciple others.
- Can lead a group inductive Bible discussion
- Is able to effectively lead a meeting.

III. LEADERSHIP TRAINING OBJECTIVES FOR LOCAL LEADERS

Local leaders also need to be characterized by the following traits:

- Is a model disciple worth imitating.
- Understands that the Church is God's vehicle for world evangelization.
- Knows the biblical basis for church planting and missions.
- Is able to use various methods and techniques of evangelism.
- Is able to conduct basic research in preparation for a church growth and planting.
- Is able to lead public worship.
- Teaches the Bible effectively in a group or one on one setting.
- Identifies and develops potential leaders.
- Can organize believers into a self-governing, self-nurturing, and mission-oriented congregation.
- Understands how to put biblical functions into culturally relevant forms.
- Builds and works well with a team.
- Knows how to delegate responsibility.
- Sets goals, makes plans and establishes objectives to attain them.
- Develops the giftedness and abilities of others.
- Is pro-active.

IV. LEADERSHIP TRAINING OBJECTIVES FOR REGIONAL AND NATIONAL LEADERS

Regional and national leaders should reach an even higher standard of character and abilities:

- Is able to preach and teach.
- Will be able to provide spiritual guidance and counsel to a wide variety of situations.
- Has advanced understanding of the Bible and Theology
- Can train church workers for evangelism, discipleship, group leadership, stewardship, and worship or other areas of ministry as needed.
- Builds and uses house churches to saturate a community and mobilize the body of Christ..
- Portrays a growth mentality.
- Demonstrates seeker sensitivity, assimilate new comers.
- Is able to administer baptism and the Lord's supper.
- Communicates vision which inspires others.
- Can lead others into discovering their gift(s) and applying it in ministry.

LEADERSHIP
8
LESSON

Releasing Leaders

Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to emphasize the importance of releasing leaders to fully function in ministry, rather than simply delegating tasks to them.

Main Points and Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Releasing goes beyond delegating—it means allowing new leaders to carry on their own ministry.
- We need to keep in contact with the new leaders we have released for ministry.
- Be committed to a ministry of empowering and releasing others.

Suggestions for Mentoring Time

1. Read John 15:4,5 and use it as a basis for your opening prayer time.
2. Personal Growth Question: When you spend time with your family what brings you the most joy and satisfaction?
3. Discuss the questions in the text and at the end of the chapter.
4. Homework: Complete the Action Plan, Read the assigned Chapter(s) for the next meeting time.
5. Pray for ministry needs.

INTRODUCTION

This material has already discussed the importance of delegating tasks to other capable people, so that the leader is not doing all the work. Many leaders have learned that they can indeed increase their effectiveness as they spend more time training and equipping others for ministry, rather than trying to do it all themselves. However, there is another important step in the training process that goes beyond simply delegating work. This is the step of *releasing*. When we *release* new leaders for ministry, we allow them to function fully as leaders *without our control*. They make their own decisions and plan their own activities. In other words, releasing leaders means that we allow them to *carry on their own ministry* instead of simply helping us do *ours*. This is a vital distinction.

Releasing leaders means that we allow them to *carry on their own ministry*.

Discuss; How do you traditionally see the aspect of releasing leaders?

I. CHURCH PLANTERS MUST RELEASE OTHERS FOR MINISTRY

The leaders of a church plant multiply themselves through the identification and development of others. Many leaders try to build their ministries around themselves, but God calls us to disciple and train others (2Ti 2:2). However, the goal should be to see those new leaders leading ministry of their own.

1. The Example of John the Baptist

Perhaps the best example of a 'releasing leader' is John the Baptist. He appeared before Jesus, and gained a large following (Mk 1:5). He had the privilege of pointing the first disciples to Jesus (Jn 1:35-36). With this background in mind, consider John's response when the ministry of Jesus began to surpass that of John. Read John 3:22-30 and answer the following questions:

Discuss:

- What problem bothered John's disciples in verse 26?
- Why do you think they were concerned?
- How do you think they expected John to respond? Why?
- What word does John use in verse 29 to describe his attitude about this situation?
- What do you think about John's summary in verse 30? Was he sincere? What kind of emotion do you think he felt when he made that statement?
- How is John's response the same or different from the normal attitude of Christian leaders that you have known when someone else's ministry begins to surpass their own?
- It is true that John the Baptist was excited about seeing Jesus prosper. Certainly Jesus can do nothing wrong in ministry. But what about the risk of releasing someone who might not minister as 'perfectly' as we do?

2. The Example of Paul

Paul was perhaps the best example of a leader who trained and released others for ministry. The New Testament contains a long list of people who traveled with or learned from Paul, and then continued the work of the church. In addition to the more well-known leaders such as Timothy, Titus, Silas, Priscilla and Aquilla, we can find lists of others at the close of most of Paul's letters. Paul normally spent very short times at each of the churches he founded—anywhere from a week to a maximum of around two years.

How could Paul spend such a short time training leaders, and then move on and leave them in charge? Wasn't he worried that they might do something wrong? Certainly Paul was concerned about this possibility. And indeed, there were problems. The Corinthian church, for example, was a mess. But there appear to be two factors that helped Paul deal with his concerns:

1) *The Priority of Reaching the Nations with the Gospel*

The Great Commission commands us to make disciples of all nations. This is an awesome task, but it is not optional. We must do it. Understanding this, Paul considered it more important to reach the world with the Gospel of Christ than to worry about the fact that other leaders will not do things the way he might prefer. They might even make mistakes, or other blunders. Read Philippians 1:15-18 and answer the following questions:

It is more important to reach the world with the Gospel of Christ than to worry about the fact that other leaders will not do things the way he might prefer.

Discuss:

- Describe the two kinds of preaching that others were doing while Paul was in prison, according to verses 15-17. How do you feel about these kinds of ministries? Why?
- What was the most important thing to Paul, according to verse 18?
- What was Paul's reaction to preaching from true motives?
- What was Paul's reaction to preaching from false motives?
- Do you think motives were important to Paul?
- How do you think Paul was able to respond this way?
- What is your reaction when someone else preaches the Gospel in a way you do not agree with, or when you question their motives?

Please understand that we are not advocating preaching from false motives. Neither was Paul. Furthermore, Paul was rejoicing that the Gospel was preached by whatever means, the book of Galatians makes it clear that it must be the Gospel of salvation by grace through faith in Christ—not a false Gospel. For Paul, other issues were secondary to the importance of preaching the Gospel.

2) *The Church Belongs to the Lord*

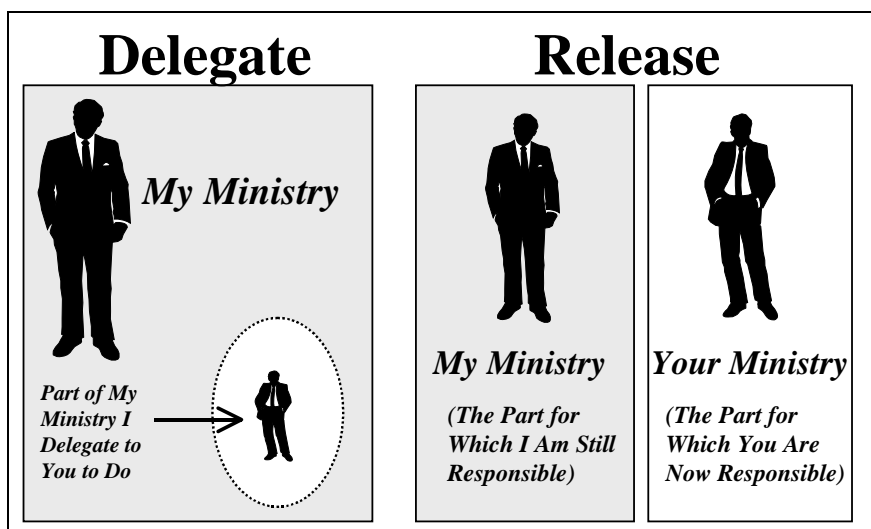
The second factor that seems to have helped Paul release leaders quickly into ministry was his confidence that the Church belongs to the Lord, and that He has promised to build it (Mt 16:18). As church planters or church leaders, we are not ultimately responsible for the growth of the church. Paul makes this point very clearly in 1 Corinthians 3:5-7. God might use a number of people to bring the church to maturity, just as He used Paul and Apollos.

This confidence does not excuse us from doing our best to be faithful leaders. It does, however, eliminate any responsibility to judge the ministry of others. God Himself will judge their motives and actions (1Co 4:5). This fact should allow us to release those we have trained for ministry, then relax and let the Lord guide and use them as He wills.

II. PROBLEMS OF RELEASING

Releasing leaders for ministry means taking our hands off them and allowing the Lord to guide the way that they serve Him. During the delegation stage of training, you allowed the new leader to have responsibility of a limited area of your ministry while you evaluated and guided him. However, you retained control of most areas, and were ultimately responsible for the ministry that you delegated to him. Releasing is the next step up from delegating, and assumes that the new leader has already proved his faithfulness and ability. Now it is time to help him find his own ministry, and release him to do it. Figure 8.1 contrasts delegating and releasing.

Figure 8.1 Releasing vs. Delegating



When you release the new leader, you may simply turn over to him some of the ministry that you used to do. However, in contrast to delegation, he is now responsible for that ministry before the Lord—not before you. An example of this kind of releasing would be a church planter turning the new church over to his apprentice leader, and moving on to start another church. This is the kind of releasing that is shown in Figure 11.1. In other cases, the new leader might begin an entirely new ministry. For instance, a church planter might remain at the new church as pastor, but train a new church planter who would go out to start another church—ideally with financial support of the ‘mother’ church.

The process of releasing is not as easy as it sounds. Trusting God to work in the lives of the people one leads goes against human nature and poses two serious challenges for any leader.

1. Fear That the Leader Will do a Good Job

As people are trained and released into ministry, some of them are likely to exhibit greater gifts and talents than the leader. They also may begin to have a deeper understanding of the leader's vision and want to make changes. This loss of control can be threatening to the leader who fears for his own reputation or position. The spiritual leader must remove this carnal stumbling block for his own spiritual growth and for the growth of the church.

Loss of control can be threatening to the leader who fears for his own reputation or position.

This stumbling block can be overcome only through faith and trust in God. A leader who is secure in His identity in Christ can trust that just as God is at work in His own life, He is at work in the lives of the people he leads. Therefore, if God is calling His people to service, it is really His work and reputation that are at stake and not the leader's. The leader needs to be confident that he is walking in obedience to the Lord in empowering and releasing his people for service and then turn over all of his anxieties and fears about his own reputation and position to the Lord (Php 4:6-7, 1Pe 5:7).

As Christians, our desire should not be for our own reputation and glory, but rather that God would be glorified in our lives, our ministry, and in the world. Rather than be envious of the gifts and talents of others, Christian leaders should rejoice in seeing God raise up others who can advance the cause of Christ further and farther than themselves.

Christian leaders should rejoice in seeing God raise up others who can advance the cause of Christ further and farther than themselves.

As we have seen on numerous occasions, the apostle Barnabas is an excellent example of a secure leader. When he was in Antioch, he realized that Paul's gifts would be of use to the church there. Barnabas could have kept quiet and done nothing. Instead, Barnabas went to great lengths to travel to Tarsus, find Paul and bring him back to Antioch (Ac 11:25-26). Rather than try and protect his "own territory" in Antioch, Barnabas took a risk and brought Paul into service with him. We see that eventually, Paul did surpass Barnabas in ministry renown, to the greater glory of God and the advancement of His Kingdom.

Discuss: How do we overcome this fear?

2. Fear That the Leader Will do a Bad Job

On the other hand, people released into ministry may not be as competent as the leader and may not do things the way in which the leader expects them to be done. A secure leader believes that God is powerfully at work in and for and through the people he leads, and is free to appropriately encourage risks.

A secure leader also understands that *failure is a necessary part of learning and growing*. An illustration from parenting: A child learning to walk will fall several times before he at last can walk by himself. When the child falls, the parent picks him up, gives him an encouraging word, and lets him try again. He does not yell, "You failed! You really embarrassed me! No more walking for you!"

When Jesus trained the disciples, He often used failure as an occasion for teaching. Peter's denial is a spectacular example. Jesus allowed the failure, and promised that it would result in Peter being able to strengthen the brethren (Lk 22:31-32). During the training process, God used you to correct and encourage your apprentice leader. The Lord will continue to work with him—although it might or might not involve your participation. Trust the Lord to complete the work that He has begun (Php 1:6).

Discuss: Why is failure a necessary part of learning and growing? How do we overcome this fear?

III. PRINCIPLES FOR RELEASING

There are a number of principles that apply to most releasing situations. The general idea is that you must have a continued good relationship with the new leader, but that you will refrain from controlling or smothering him.

1. Develop and Maintain Deep Relationships

Close relationships are a natural way to minister to others. Releasing is natural when people have established a bond of trust. Jesus traveled, worked, ate, laughed and prayed with his disciples. In the process, he built close relationships with them. He released his disciples with confidence that they would carry on properly. After all, they had been "with Him" (Mk 3:14-15).

Releasing is natural when people have established a bond of trust.

Paul as well shares how among the Thessalonians he shared the Gospel as well as his *life* with the Thessalonians (1Th 2:8). Paul also describes Timothy as his 'son' and says that Timothy knew "*all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance*" (2Ti 3:10). It must be the goal of the church planter to build the same kinds of close relationships with those he wants to release.

Discuss: Why is relationship important?

2. Make Sure Future Leaders Continue to Own the Vision

Many leaders mistakenly assume that others around them have vision they have. But taking this for granted can be a big mistake. Even though the vision may be articulated many times, and even be repeated by future leaders it may not be enough. Keep the vision before the new leader. If the vision burns in their hearts just as it does in yours, you will be excited by the results they will achieve.

3. Don't Wait Too Long to Release

People learn by doing. The sooner you can put new leaders in ministry, the sooner they will reach their full potential. The Bible warns us about ordaining leaders too early (1Ti 3:6), but the opposite is also true. In the Old Testament, King Saul brought disaster on himself and his family by trying to prevent David from assuming the role God had given him.

Discuss: What does, "people learn by doing" mean?

4. Expect Mistakes

When people take risks, they often fail. If there is room for failure, people are more likely to try new things. When those you have trained make mistakes, they must be reassured that you have confidence in them. Be gracious and patient using every mistake as a teaching opportunity. When the disciples were unable to cast out demons, Jesus took the opportunity to teach the importance of faith in deliverance ministry (Mt 17:19-21). A lesson on giving or obedience probably would have fallen on deaf ears at that moment. But, there can be no doubt that the disciples listened intently to this lesson since it was the remedy to the failure they had just experienced.

If there is room for failure, people are more likely to try new things.

5. Trust God to Work through Others

God can work through others just as he has through you. You must communicate this to those you are training. If people do not understand that you believe in them they will never take risks and therefore never grow. Jesus had such confidence in his disciples that He stated that they would do greater works than He did (Jn 14:12). Expect ministry to increase under the leadership of others.

6. Avoid Dependence

"Train and release", so that others do not constantly depend on you as the leader. How could Paul spend such short amounts of time planting these churches? He knew when he needed to get out of the way. He knew that there was something about his presence as a great 'leader' that prevented the development of 'good' leaders. Imagine if he stayed in Lystra for a long time. Who would preach when Paul was around? Probably no one but Paul, because he was so good at it. In such a case, however, others would not have an opportunity to develop their preaching skills. Paul spent little time in each place so that others would realize that they could not depend upon him for everything. They had to do things for themselves (Allen 1962:93).

The presence of a great 'leader' can prevent the development of 'good' leaders.

When a particular church planter in Europe was at this stage he would announce that he could not be at church the following week because of a meeting in another city. Sometimes he would deliberately plan meetings so that he would not be available. During these kinds of times the trainees are stretched and they grow. If you do not do plan to turn over ministry, then the trainees will depend on you too long.

Discuss: Discuss the relationship between the leader and the new leader. Why is this deep relationship essential? How do you keep a close relationship without creating dependence?

IV. MAINTAINING CONTACT WITH THOSE YOU HAVE RELEASED

Though Jesus left his followers physically, he assured them beforehand that he would send his Spirit—they would not be without his influence (Jn 14:16-18). As Jesus did not completely leave those he released, so for us, contact with the leaders we have released should be maintained for inspiration and accountability.

Meaningful meetings are the heart of the ongoing relationship with new leaders. For example, if the new leaders are planting a daughter church, you might meet with them monthly or weekly. During these meetings take time to do the following:

- Discuss skills, knowledge and character issues with which they are personally dealing.
- Review all the important relationships in their lives (family, ministry).
- Discuss what has happened with regard to the ministry since you last met.
- Ask where the ministry is going—what is their vision?
- Ask if there is anything you can do to help them reach their vision.

Discuss: How do you maintain contact with someone that has been released as a leader? How do you keep this deep relationship going?

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- Why is releasing so important?
- How many people in your church have ministry responsibility?
- How long did the Apostle Paul usually work with believers before he moved on and trusted them to carry on the work of the new church?
- What happens if your mother church refuses to release new leaders to new ministries?

ACTION PLAN

When and how are you planning on releasing your apprentice leader? Do you see him or her taking over some of your former responsibilities, or developing their own ministry? Make a plan, and begin to work toward releasing them to reach their full potential.

SOURCES

- Martin, Robert W. *Mentoring Guidelines for Church Planters*. Budapest, Hungary: The Alliance For Saturation Church Planting, 1997. (This *Alliance for Saturation Church Planting* publication is available from The Bible League, 16801 Van Dam Road, South Holland, IL, 60473 USA. tel 1-800-334-7017. E-mail: BibleLeague@xc.org)
- Steffen, Tom A. "Leadership: Ten Implications for Cross-Cultural Church Planters." N.p., n.d.
- Allen, Roland. *Missionary Methods - St. Paul's or Ours?* Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1962.

SPIRITUAL WARFARE



Understanding Worldview

☞ Lesson Purpose

To help the church planter understand the concept of worldview and to show how deeply one's view of the world affects his own Christian life, how he does ministry, and how he interprets his ministry situation.

☞ Main Points and Desired Outcomes

- Commonly held worldviews contrast with a biblical worldview.
- Worldview effects church planting.
- Be aware of the importance of having a proper worldview.
- Know the scriptural basics about the realms of God, angels, man and nature.
- The church planter will be able to examine his ministry situation in the light of a biblical worldview.

☞ Suggestions for Mentoring Time

1. Read Matthew 25:14-23 and use it as a basis for your opening prayer time.
2. Personal Growth Question: What is your favorite book of the Bible and why?
3. Discuss the questions in the text and at the end of the chapter.
4. Homework: Complete the Action Plan, Read the assigned Chapter(s) for the next meeting time.
5. Pray for ministry needs.

INTRODUCTION

When we speak of worldview we are speaking of the core beliefs and understandings that a person has about the world. Each person, whether he knows it or not, has beliefs deep in his soul which determine his actions and behavior and help him explain the world around him. Worldview helps people understand nature, other people and the supernatural world. As people grow, their experiences result in the formation of a worldview which may or may not accurately interpret reality.

When we speak of a biblical worldview, we are speaking of what the Scriptures say about the universe, what is real, what is true, what IS. Logically there can be ONLY one reality, one truth or explanation of what IS. We believe that Scriptures present this explanation of the world. And it is by this truth that we seek to measure or check our understanding of the world.

It is very important that church planters have a biblical worldview in order to properly interpret the circumstances of their ministry. This is especially true concerning spiritual warfare. If a person does not have a biblical worldview, he may not recognize attacks from Satan, or he may not know how to respond to the attacks. In this lesson we will explore common worldviews and how the biblical worldview is foundational to understanding spiritual warfare.

Discuss: What is a Biblical world view?

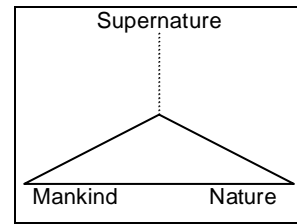
I. COMMON WORLDVIEWS

One way to understand worldviews is to look at three components of the universe: supernature, nature and mankind. We will use these three components to explain three common worldviews below.

Let's say that a person is sick. How do we interpret that event? It all depends on worldview. As we describe the worldviews below we will see how each explains this sickness.

1. Secular Worldview

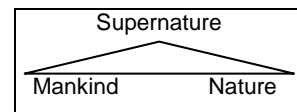
In the secular worldview, the natural world and the realm of mankind are controlled by “natural laws”, which perhaps a creator god established, but which today operate without any supernatural involvement. The existence of the supernatural world, including God and spirit beings, may be denied completely by secular people. Or, if the supernatural exists, secular people assume that it is separate from the natural/mankind world. Whatever connection there may be, it is believed to be a very distant one.



Secular people accept the premise that every phenomenon has a natural or human cause. For the one who is sick, a germ, or mosquito, or other illness infected the body. Everything can be explained scientifically. The person should seek medical treatment to get better, according to this worldview.

2. Animistic Worldview

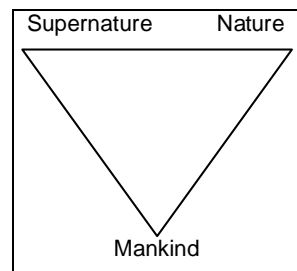
The animistic worldview is nearly the opposite of the secular worldview. In this worldview the supernatural world is extremely close to the natural and mankind realms. Spirits from the supernatural realm may live in natural objects and people and these spiritual beings have power to control things. If a person pleases these spirits he can gain merit, including protection or healing. If a spirit is angry it can cause great harm.



The sick man, according to this worldview, has upset the spirits or a spell has been put on him. In order to be well again this person will need to do something to please the spirits or break the spell. The treatment in this case may even defy medical knowledge, which is not to be trusted in the animistic worldview.

3. Fatalistic Worldview

The fatalistic worldview is based on the belief that man has no control over the world around him. Supernatural and natural forces direct the track of history, and man lives as best he can in that predestined fate. One Shinto writer put it so well: *“Life is like a leaf floating in a river. The leaf can get stuck in a little whirlpool, or it may flow along peacefully in a quiet stream, or it may come upon rapids, water of great turmoil. The leaf has no control over where it goes. So humans are trapped in their fate.”*



The treatment then for the sick man may be to do nothing. There may be no attempt to treat him as well as no attempt to determine the reason for the sickness.

Discuss: Which of these world views do you see at work in your society?

II. A BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW

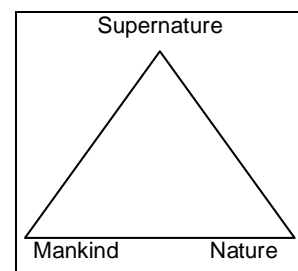
The biblical worldview, as we have already said, teaches the proper worldview. The proper worldview sees the three components as they actually interact with one another.

1. Supernature

1) God the Creator

The book of Genesis opens with the words, “In the beginning God...” This is our natural foundation for building a worldview. God Almighty, existing out of time, eternal, self sustaining, Creator of heaven and earth, without equal or rival, in His sovereignty controls the happenings of history. In contrast to the secular worldview, Scripture teaches that God is involved in history. For instance

- He directed the history of Israel in preparation for the Messiah.
- Christ came into the world and lived among mankind.
- Christ ascended into heaven and sent the Holy Spirit upon His church.



The Bible affirms the active work of the Holy Spirit in and through the lives of believers. The Holy Spirit is active today. He convicts the world concerning sin, righteousness and judgment (Jn 16:8-11). He gives the believer new life (Ro 8:11). He testifies that we are God's children (Ro 8:16). The Holy Spirit helps us to pray (Ro 8:26) and He teaches (Jn 14:26, 1Jn 2:27).

Scripture does not teach that God and Satan are equal yet opposite forces. According to the biblical worldview, God is self-existent and Satan is created. Satan does not have power equal to God's. God controls Satan as seen in Job chapter 1. Before Satan could do anything to Job, he had to receive God's permission.

2) *Created Spirit Beings (Satan and Angels)*

The story of creation continues. Though the Genesis account does not include the creation of angels, we read in Colossians 1:16 that God (in Christ) created all things, in heaven and on earth, visible and **invisible**. Though the New Testament records very little about angels, it is clear that they are active in our world today (Heb 13:2). Many evangelicals believe that Revelation 12:4 refers to the fact that when Satan fell he took one third of the angels with him. These "bad angels" are also known as demons. We know that demons also are active in our world (Jas 3:15, 1Ti 4:1). Again, this is in contrast to the secular worldview but closer to the animistic worldview in that both recognize that there is a battle between God and Satan. In the animistic worldview, the victory in battle depends on whose "god" is stronger. If two tribes war against each other, the tribe with the greater god will be victorious. In contrast, Scripture teaches that God is the victor. A seeming contradiction is found in Joshua 7. There God's people were defeated in battle. A careful look at the text shows that this was not because some other god or spirits defeated God, but because His people suffered the consequence of their sin. God was not defeated. He permitted Israel to be defeated because of disobedience.

Discuss: Why is it important to remember that God created all things, including the angels and Satan? How does this affect our understanding of the powers of good and evil in our daily lives? Which is stronger, good or evil?

We will discuss these ideas in more depth in the following lessons on Spiritual Warfare.

2. Nature

The creation account continues with how God created the material world. Here also there are many different worldviews or perceptions of the material world. Some say it does not matter—it is just an appearance (fatalistic); some identify with the earth as "mother nature" and maintain a reverent respect for it (animistic); others hold it is something man must conquer and rule over (secular).

According to the Bible, God's creation was designed to declare the glory of God (Psalm 19). Nothing is more awesome, impressive, or beautiful than the world itself—high mountains, crashing waves, waterfalls, underground caves, green fields, frost covered trees, fields of flowers, sunrises and sunsets; God's creation does declare His glory! Satan's goal is to destroy or mar God's creation. If Satan cannot destroy God then he will attempt to destroy that which glorifies God. It is interesting that God's assignment to Adam was to cultivate and keep the garden (Ge 2:15). Our worldview should reflect God's intention for His creation—that it might glorify Him.

Discuss: How does your society or religions in your society view nature? How is this different than the Biblical perspective?

3. Mankind

Finally, we come to the creation of man in the Genesis account. Man was created out of the natural world (that is, the dust) but God also breathed the breath of life into him and created man in His own image. Thus man is a complex being; he is both material and spiritual. This is the teaching of Scripture. Man is not just physical—a mix of chemicals and cells as some hold (secular). Man is not just spiritual, as some fatalistic Eastern worldviews hold. Man has a spirit and a physical body (Ge 3:7). Part of the great mystery of man is that he has a free will. God does not force man into behavior or thinking or program him as a robot. In contrast to the fatalistic worldview, man is not trapped in some "river" of life called fate. He has a will and makes choices. He may choose to love God, and he may choose to reject God (Jos 24:15).

Discuss: How does your society or religions in your society view man? How is this different than the Biblical perspective?

III. Worldview And Church Planting

The Scriptures show us that God is not battling Satan. Satan has already been conquered (1Jn 3:8, Col 2:15, Heb 2:14-15). Through the Gospel as it is declared by the Church, God seeks to reconcile man to Himself, while Satan seeks to deceive man (Rev 12:9), devour him (1Pe 5:8), tempt him (1Th 3:5), and accuse him (Rev 12:10).

Spiritual warfare takes place within the realm of man. As the apostle Paul states in 2 Corinthians 10:3-5, this war is for our minds—our worldview:

“For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”

Note how the apostle Paul makes a connection between destroying strongholds and arguments and taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. Finally, consider John 8:32, “*You will know the truth and the truth will set you free.*” The more we know the truth and act on it, the more we will be victorious. This will be explained in more detail in the next lesson, “Relationships in Spiritual Warfare.”

It is extremely important that we as church planters have an understanding of the world as it actually is—that is, as explained in Scripture. Church planting is spiritual warfare. Satan will attack in any way he can as churches are planted. If we do not have a proper worldview then Satan may attack (for example, through sending sickness) and we may not even recognize it! A correct understanding of biblical worldview helps the church planter to correctly discern what is happening in his life and ministry.

Discuss: How does worldview affect church planting?

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- As you have been exposed to the truth of this lesson, have you identified any practices in your own life that are inconsistent with the biblical worldview? What about practices of those who are in your target area?
- How do these inconsistencies in your life affect your relationship with God, your spouse, your children or the lost?
- If a church planter becomes very ill, does this mean that Satan is attacking him through sickness? When might this be the case?

ACTION PLAN

- Meet with another believer and explain the main ideas of this lesson. Share how your behavior is going to change in response to the new truths you have learned.
- Think about the worldview of the people who are in your target area. In what way is their worldview the same as the biblical worldview? In what way is it different? How will this effect your strategy for evangelism? How and what will you teach new converts in order to bring their worldview more in line with the biblical worldview?

SOURCES

- Warner, Timothy M. *Spiritual Warfare: Victory over the Powers of This Dark World*. Good News Pub. 1991.
- *Demon Possession*. Edited by John W. Montgomery. Minneapolis, MI: Bethany House, 1976.

**SPIRITUAL
WARFARE**

2

LESSON

Dynamics of Spiritual Warfare

☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to help the church planter understand the dynamics of relationships between God, man and spirit beings in spiritual warfare, and the position and authority of the believer over Satan in Christ.

☞ Main Points and Desired Outcomes

- A correct understanding of the relationship between God, man and spirit beings is essential for victory in spiritual warfare.
- The battle for the mind is won by applying God's truth to Satan's lies.
- Know that church planting is spiritual war.
- Be strong in the Lord and the power of His might by knowing his identity in Christ.
- Be able to defend himself against demonic attacks.

☞ Appendix

2A Inductive Bible Study: Ephesians 4:17- 5:21

☞ Suggestions to Trainers

This lesson contains many doctrinal concepts with many verses cited. Please study it carefully before presenting it to the trainees. Select the main points and verses which you might have them look up during the training.

Included in this lesson is a diagram (figure 2.1) showing these relationships. You may want to put this on a transparency or poster to accompany your teaching.

☞ Suggestions for Mentoring Time

1. Read Deuteronomy 6:4 and use it as a basis for your opening prayer time.
2. Personal Growth Question: What books are you reading to increase your effectiveness as a leader?
3. Discuss the questions in the text and at the end of the chapter .
4. Homework: Complete the Action Plan, Read the assigned Chapter(s) for the next meeting time.
5. Pray for ministry needs.

INTRODUCTION

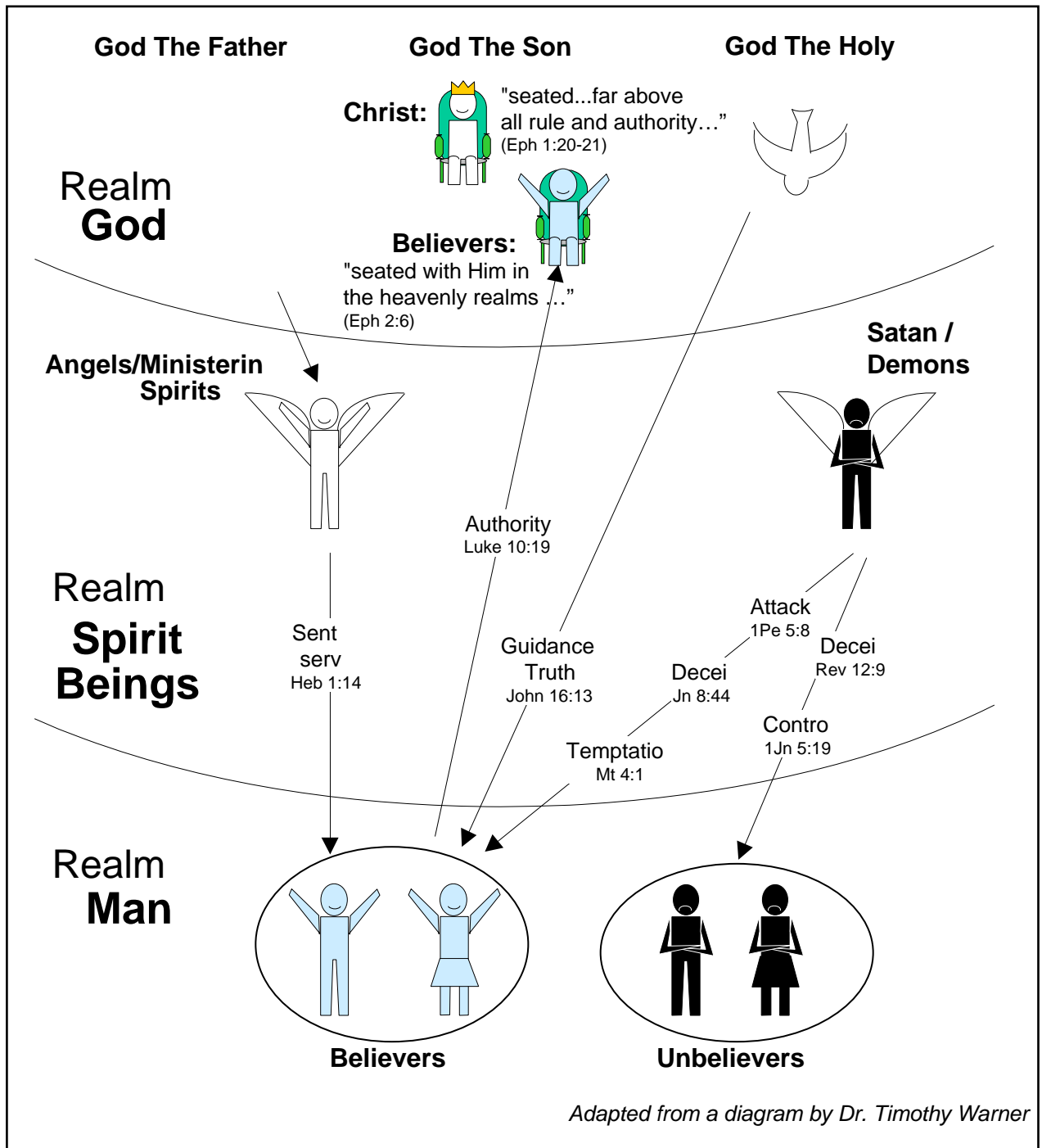
Church planters who are in the process of building up new congregations of believers find themselves invading enemy territory. Satan, the "prince of this world" (Jn 16:11), does not want the church planter to open the eyes of unbelievers so that they might turn from darkness to light and find forgiveness for their sins (Acts 26:18). There is a real spiritual battle going on, and church planters who do not realize this will find themselves woefully unprepared to deal with the attacks that come their way. Not only must they be personally prepared for spiritual warfare, they must also know how to help the new believers and emerging church stand firm against the enemy.

Every competent general who plans his tactics for battle knows his own strategies, strengths and weaknesses, as well as those of his opponent. He understands how his opponent thinks and acts. The church planter must also know his own strengths and weaknesses, and he must understand the strategies that Satan will attempt to use to attack him. In order to grasp the dynamics of the spiritual battle in which he finds himself, the church planter needs to understand the realm of God, the realm of man, and the realm of spirit beings in this world, and how they interrelate one with another. He must understand and believe the truth of who he is in Christ, as that truth will be the most important weapon he has in the spiritual battles that he will face.

Discuss: How do you view spiritual warfare?

Figure 2.1 shows the interrelationships between the realms of God, spirit beings and man. This diagram will visually help to explain some of the concepts presented in this lesson.

Figure 2.1. Relationships in Spiritual Warfare: The Realms of God, Spirit Beings, and Man



I. THE REALM OF GOD

God is the Great "I AM", the eternal, self-sustaining, self-sufficient, non-created Creator of all things and supreme Ruler of the Universe. He is all-powerful, all-knowing, everywhere-present and always Holy, Righteous, Mercy, Love, Truth and Faithful. HE HAS NO EQUAL.

God is a triune God, a unity in diversity. The three members of the Trinity—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—all share the moral attributes of the Godhead. They differ only in their role, but even that is sometimes hard to distinguish. For example, the Father is said to be the Creator (Dt 32:6). But in John 1:3, all things are said to have been created through the Word (the Son).

A. God the Father

For this study, the most important role of God the Father is centered around redemption: He loved the world and sent the Son to be the Savior (Jn 3:16; 1Jn 4:10). He raised Jesus from the dead (Col 2:12). He has "rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves" (Col 1:13) and He protects His children by the power of His name (Jn 17:11).

B. God the Son

The role of God the Son, Jesus Christ, is focused primarily on His entrance into time and space. He was one with the Father (Jn 10:30) who shared in His attributes from all eternity (Jn 1:1,2). He was "the fullness of the Deity in bodily form" (Col 2:9). He came into the world to be "God with us" (Mt 1:23). But when He came into the world, he took on the form of a servant (Php 2:6,7). He always did the Father's will (Jn 6:38). He died on the cross as a sin offering for us (Ro 8:3) and was raised on the third day (1Co. 15:4).

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father, where He makes intercession for us (Ro 8:34). He is the giver of eternal life (Jn 17:3). Now in His glory (Jn. 17:24), He has all power (authority) in heaven and on earth (Mt 28:18-20). He is the "head over everything for the church" (Eph 1:22).

With regard to the spirit world, He is greater than angels (Heb 1:5-2:9). He is the head over every power and authority (Col 2:10). Someday, every knee in heaven and on earth and under the earth shall bow before Him (Php 2:10).

C. God the Holy Spirit

The role of God the Holy Spirit is mentioned primarily in relationship to the believer. He is most often called the Holy Spirit, but also the Spirit of truth (Jn 16:13), the Spirit of life (Ro 8:2), and the Spirit of the living God (2Co 3:3).

It is He who gives new life to the believer (Ro 8:11), who controls the believer (Ro 8:9), who testifies that we are God's children (Ro 8:16), who helps us to pray (Ro 8:26-27), and who convicts the world of guilt in regard to sin (Jn 16:8-11). He is our Counselor/Helper (Jn 14:16), and our Teacher (Jn 14:26). He lives in God's children (Ro 8:9), He testifies about Jesus (Jn 15:27), and brings glory to Him. He is greater than the "world" (1Jn 4:4).

Discuss: Discribe the realm of God.

II. THE REALM OF MAN

When God created Man, he made Him male and female in His image: two individuals that would be one, thus reflecting the unity in diversity of the Godhead (Ge 1:26,27). With regard to spirit beings, Man was made "a little lower than the heavenly beings" but was "crowned with glory and honor" (Ps 8:5). He was made ruler over the works of God's hands, and everything was put under his feet (Ps 8:6).

However, Man chose to listen to the lies of the devil, sinned against God and fell into sin. So all mankind became sinners (Ro 3:23), dead in trespasses and sin (Eph 2:1), without hope and without God in the world (Eph 2:12) and condemned to death (Jn 3:17; Ro 6:23). Man's right to rule was usurped by the devil, so that now he lives in a world ruled by Satan (Mt 4:8,9).

When a person becomes a believer in Christ, he continues to live in the world but no longer belongs to it (Jn 15:19). He is delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of Christ (Col 1:13). He is hated and persecuted by the world (Jn 16:18-21) and by Satan and his demons (Eph 6:11). The believer is part of a spiritual war between God and His forces and Satan and His forces (2Co 10:3-5).

Discuss: Describe the realm of man.

III. THE REALM OF SPIRIT BEINGS

A. Angels/Ministering Spirits

Although the Bible speaks frequently of angels, there is no systematic description of them. We do know that they are created beings (Ps 148:2,5; Col 1:16) who are inferior to God (Heb 1:4), but superior to man (Ps 8:5). They have great knowledge, but are not omniscient (1Pe 1:12). They have great power, but are not omnipotent (Ac 12:7-11). Although usually not seen, when they were seen they were described as “shining” and “white as snow” (Eze 1:13,14; Mt 28:3). They are messengers of God (Ac 7:38) who “always carry out the Father’s will perfectly” (Mt 6:10). In relation to man, they are “ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation” (Heb 1:14).

B. Demons/Fallen Angels

Although nowhere explicitly stated, it is accepted by evangelicals that demons are fallen angels (2Pe 2:4). Evangelicals believe that Revelation 12:7-9 speaks of Satan and his angels being hurled from heaven to the earth. Jude 1:6 speaks of angels who did not keep their positions of authority.

Throughout the gospels we see that one of their weapons is to afflict people with various sicknesses such as blindness, deafness, dumbness, and epilepsy. Satan is their ruler (Mt 12:24). They are so united in their evil purposes that when the disciples reported that they had cast out demons, Jesus said “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven” (Lk 10:17,18).

C. Satan

Who is Satan? He is a created being, probably a fallen angel. He is a sinner whose work Jesus came to destroy (1Jn 3:8). He is called the prince of this world (Jn 16:11) and the “god of this world” (2Co 4:4). Other titles given to him are murderer and liar (Jn 8:44); a roaring lion who goes about trying to devour people (1Pe 5:8; 2Ti 4:17); deceiver of nations (Rev 12:9; 20:3,10); accuser of the brethren (Zec 3:1; Rev 12:10); angel of light (2Co 11:14); ancient serpent, devil, dragon (Rev 12:7,9; 20:2); prince of demons, Beelzebub (Mt 12:24; Lk 11:15).

What does Satan do? He leads the whole world astray (Rev 12:9). Satan has the whole world under his control (1Jn 5:19). He performs counterfeit signs and miracles (2Th 2:9). He roams the whole earth looking for prey to devour (Job 1:7; 1Pe 5:8). He wages war against God’s people (Rev 12:17). He holds the power of death (Heb 2:14).

What are Satan’s limits? He can go no further than God permits (Job 1:12). He is a defeated foe! (Rev 12:7-9). What is Satan’s final destiny? He will be crushed by God (Ro 16:20). God will destroy Satan (Heb 2:14) and will throw Him into the lake of burning sulfur (Rev 20:10).

Discuss: Describe the realm of spirit beings.

IV. THE REALM OF THE BATTLE

When we became Christians we were transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light (Col 1:13). Although we continue to live in the physical world, as citizens of the kingdom of God we are seated with Christ in the heavenlies (Eph 2:6). We are aliens and strangers in the world (1Pe 2:11). As a result, we no longer live by the standards of the world (2Co 10:12). Therefore, the world and its ruler, Satan, hate us (Jn 17:14) and war against us.

In the next Spiritual Warfare lesson “Spiritual Battles” we will look at different arenas where Satan attacks the believer. Here we look at the primary arena; the mind.

“For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” (2Co 10:3-5).

Notice that we are to use supernatural power against arguments and thoughts. Satan’s first arena of attack is the mind.

Satan is a liar and the father of lies (Jn 8:44). One of his tactics against believers is to deceive them into believing that lies are really true. The lie may be against the nature of God and His Word, as it was with Eve (Ge 3:1-4; 2Co 11:13). Jesus himself is the truth (Jn 14:6). In His prayer to the Father in John 17, He prayed "Sanctify them by the truth. Your word is truth" (Jn 17:17). We must stand firm on the truths of God's Word.

Satan's lie is often to make us believe that we are not saints saved by grace but sinners who are powerless to overcome our sinful condition. Our defense against this lie is also the truth. Jesus said "And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." When Satan tempts us to think we are nothing, we are helpless, we have no power, etc. We must fight back with truth. In Christ, we have authority over Satan and his demons. The Church, the Body of Christ, already has ultimate victory over the powers of darkness. This is a truth that church planters must live and teach. Below are some verses that tell who the believer is in Christ. Memorize these verses and when Satan tempts you to believe a lie, use these truths against him.

Discuss: What is the realm of the battle?

Figure 2.1 Who I am in Christ

As a believer in Christ, I am...

- **not under condemnation, but have passed from death to life** (Jn 3:18, Ro 8:1)
- **a new creation** (2Co 5:17)
- **set free from law of sin and death** (Ro 8:2)
- **chosen by God** (Eph 1:4)
- **adopted by God. He is my Father** (Eph 1:5)
- **accepted by God** (Eph 1:6)
- **redeemed, purchased, and valued by God** (Eph 1:7)
- **a joint heir with Christ** (Eph 1:11; Ro 8:17)
- **sealed with the Holy Spirit** (Eph 1:13)
- **spiritually alive** (Eph 2:1-7)
- **a recipient of God's grace** (Eph 2:8)
- **His workmanship** (Eph. 2:10)
- **delivered by Christ from the power of darkness and placed in the kingdom of His Son** (Col. 1:13)
- **a temple of the Living God** (2Co 6:16)
- **complete in Him** (Col 2:10)
- **salt and light in the world** (Mt 5:13,14)
- **going to be like Christ when He returns** (1Jn 3:1,2)

Discuss: Why is it important to know who you are in Christ?

CONCLUSION

The triune God is Creator and Ruler of all things, including mankind and spirit-beings (angels, Satan and demons). He is superior to all of His creation.

When God raised "Christ from the dead, he seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church ... And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms" (Eph 1:20-22; 2:6).

Our identity in Christ is the basis for our authority over those in the realm of spirit beings (Satan and his demons). We are partakers of the divine nature, saints who sometimes sin. We must resist the battle for our mind and hold fast to the truth of the victory that is already ours in Christ. As church planters, we must remember what Jesus said, **“I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.”**

Discuss: What is spiritual warfare?

ACTION PLAN:

- Take time to review this lesson and look up all of the verses cited. Note in your spiritual journal any new truths you learned or ideas that have taken on a deeper meaning for you.
- Read aloud the list “Who I am in Christ” and thank God for what He has done for you. Memorize Scripture verses for areas of your identity in Christ about which you have doubts or fears. As you memorize these Scriptures, the Holy Spirit will make those truths become real in your life.
- Do the inductive Bible study of Ephesians 4:17-5:21 found in Appendix 2A.

SOURCES

- Moreau, A. Scott. *Essentials of Spiritual Warfare*. Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1997.
- Anderson, Neil T. *Victory over the Darkness*. California: Regal Books, 1990.



Inductive Bible Study: Ephesians 4:17 - 5:21

This inductive study in Ephesians has been started for you. Carefully study what has already been done. Then complete the study, answering all questions, writing summaries when that is indicated, and filling in all spots left blank. Be sure to write out the application.

I. OBSERVATION

Study Ephesians 4:17-24. Write out the following observations:

A. Describe how the Gentiles live (17-19)

- v.17 futility of their thinking
- v.18 darkened understanding
- v.18 separated from the life of God
- v.18 ignorance caused by hardened heart
- v.19 lost sensitivity
- v.19 given themselves over to sensuality
- v.19 indulge in every kind of impurity
- v.19 continually lust for more (impurity)

In a brief paragraph, summarize in your own words how the Gentiles live.

B. Describe how you (the Ephesians) have come to know Christ (20 - 23)

- v.21 you were taught in Him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus
- v.22 to put off your old self
- v.23 to be made new in the attitude of your minds
- v.23 to put on the new self created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness

In a brief paragraph, summarize in your own words how the Ephesians came to know Christ.

II. INTERPRETATION

Answer the following interpretative questions:

- How are a person's actions determined by his thinking (mind)? (vs.17, 22, 23).
- What place did truth play in changing the Ephesian's actions? (21).
- Describe the "new self" (22). How is this new creation like God's original creation of man? (Compare Ge 1:27).

III. APPLICATION

Ephesians 4:25-5:21 is Paul's application. List the things he includes in his application. Then write a statement saying how you will apply these things to your life and ministry.

Verse	Application
4:25	Put off falsehood
4:25	
4:26	
4:26	
4:27	How does anger give the devil a foothold?
4:28	
4:28	
4:29	
4:30	Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God (How do we grieve Him?)
4:31	
4:32	
5:1	
5:2	
5:3	
5:4	
5:5	
5:6	
5:7	
5:8	
5:9	
5:10	
5:11	
5:12	

Application in my life and ministry:

SPIRITUAL
WARFARE

LESSON **3**

Spiritual Battles

CHURCH PLANTERS UNDER ATTACK

☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to help church planters discern and defend against satanic attacks and be able to help people who are suffering from demonic affliction.

☞ Main Points and Desired Outcomes

- Satan's attacks may be in the physical, material, mental/emotional or spiritual realm.
- Defending one's self against Satan requires a knowledge of Scripture and spiritual maturity.
- Know how to discern when they're under satanic attack.
- Be strong in the Lord and the power of His might.
- Begin learning how to defend against satanic attack and to take steps in offensive warfare.

☞ Appendices

- 3A Bible Study: How Did Jesus Deal With Demonized People?
- 3B Case Studies From Around the World

☞ Suggestions for Mentoring Time

1. Read 1 Corinthians 15:10 and use it as a basis for your opening prayer time.
2. Personal Growth Question: How are you spending time with your coworkers to develop good communication and unity?
3. Discuss the questions in the text and at the end of the chapter.
4. Homework: Complete the Action Plan, Read the assigned Chapter(s) for the next meeting time.
5. Pray for ministry needs.

INTRODUCTION

Spiritual warfare is a reality for every believer in Christ. When a person becomes a believer in Christ, his relationship to everything in the emotional, mental, spiritual and physical realms dramatically changes. The believer is a new creation in Christ (2Co 5:17), a citizen of heaven (Php 3:20), and God's child (Jn 1:12). Because of his new relationship with God, the believer becomes the target of attack by the enemies of God—Satan and his forces who oppose God's person, plans and purposes.

This lesson contains information which is foundational to understanding how church planters can come under spiritual attack, how to defend themselves, and how to help others who have been afflicted by demonic forces. In the ongoing battle between Satan and the forces of God, any time a new church is started Satan realizes that he is losing territory in a world that he desires to control. Because of this, he will viciously attack new churches and new believers, and do all that he can to destroy them.

Church planters must not only be prepared for spiritual battle themselves (both defensively and offensively), but they must also teach the new believers about the battle that they are a part of, whether they know it or not. Without a solid biblical understanding of the spiritual warfare that is going on around them, new churches will be more vulnerable to satanic attack that can weaken and even destroy them. Church planters have a responsibility to help prepare God's "army" of believers for the spiritual battles that lie ahead of them.

Discuss: Is it reasonable to believe that church planters would come under spiritual attack?

I. ARENAS OF SATANIC ATTACK

Satan and his host of demons are in the world, fighting against God's plans and purposes. People may experience satanic attacks in the mental, physical and spiritual realms. In the previous Spiritual Warfare lesson "Dynamics of Spiritual Warfare" we saw that the primary arena is that of the mind. In this session, we will discuss the other realms. Satan and his demons may attack directly, or may use others. An example of the latter is through persecution from the world. This indirect attack from Satan should come as no surprise to believers, since the apostle Paul wrote to Timothy "...Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2Ti 3:12). Peter wrote his first epistle to tell believers how to live under persecution. Jesus said the world would hate His followers (Jn 15:18-19). Therefore, believers should not be surprised by persecution, but should realize that is an indirect attack from Satan.

1. Attacks In The Physical Arena

1) *Physical Health*

Not every sickness is a result of satanic attack. However, we do see in the Gospels that there were cases where this was true (Mt 9:32-33; Lk 13:16; Mk 5:1-13). See Appendix 3A, "How Did Jesus Deal With Demonized People?".

2) *Physical Desires Like Food And Sex*

God created humans with physical needs and desires. When rightly fulfilled, these are good. However, Satan likes to take that which is good and tempt man to use it in ways that are harmful. In the temptation of Adam and Eve, Satan used something that appealed to the eyes (food) to cause them to sin. The sin was not because they wanted or needed food, but because they misused food—in this case food that had been forbidden by God (Ge 3:1-6). Likewise, after Jesus had been fasting for forty days and nights, Satan tempted Him to relieve His hunger by exercising supernatural power independently of His father (Mt 4:2-4).

Satan tempts people to misuse that which God created to be good. John described as part of the world (controlled by Satan) the lust of the eyes (1Jn 2:15-16). Many recent stories tell about Christian leaders around the world who have fallen into sexual sins. Church planters are on the "front lines" of ministry and as such need to guard themselves carefully against the temptations that Satan will most certainly offer them.

2. Attacks In The Material Arena

Another arena in which Satan attacks is in creating an unhealthy desire for the good things that God has given us. Satan tempted Jesus in this arena by offering Him all of the kingdoms of the world with their splendor if He would worship him (Mt 4:8).

Closely related to this is the desire for power. In Genesis 1:28-29, God told Adam and Eve that they should rule over all living creatures. But a result of their sin was that the man would rule over the woman (Ge 3:15). Thus began the struggle for power over other humans.

Church planters need to be careful that an unhealthy desire for possessions and power does not cause them to take their eyes off Jesus.

3. Attacks In The Mental/Emotional Arena

The temptation to be discouraged or to despair may be a direct attack from the enemy. See Mk 5:1-10 and Lk 9:37-42.

4. Attacks In The Spiritual Arena

Today there is an increasing interest in the occult. Many people are seeking spiritists, mediums, psychic healers, palm-readers, psychic counselors or guides, horoscopes, etc. Through these occult practices, Satan can get a hold on peoples' lives.

Church planters must be careful to avoid these occult practices, and they must teach others in their churches the dangers that are involved with these practices. It is very common for new believers to not fully understand the severity of these types of occult practices. They may have visited a fortune teller, a spiritual healer, or someone else involved in occult activity before they became a believer, and do not see the danger of returning to them.

Discuss: What are some areas you have felt spiritual attack?

II. HOW TO KNOW IF A PROBLEM IS FROM NATURAL CAUSES OR IS A SATANIC ATTACK

It is not always easy to distinguish the source of problems. For example, it is not uncommon to hear Christian workers relate stories like the following:

"I was alone in my room, sleeping soundly. Suddenly I was awakened for no apparent reason. The darkness in the room seemed oppressive and I found my heart racing, my breath coming in gasps and my body covered with sweat. Sensing that this was a satanic attack, I sat up in bed, turned on the light and in a loud voice started acknowledging Jesus Christ as LORD and asking for His protection from any evil spirits that might be trying to harm me. As I prayed, the oppression lifted and I lay down and again slept soundly."

The person relating this story suspected that he was being attacked by Satan and immediately went on a counterattack. Should you suspect you are under satanic attack, here are some biblical principles to consider. They are not listed in any particular order:

- Test the spirits to see whether they are from God (1Jn 4:1-3).
- Seek help from someone in the Body with the gift of distinguishing between spirits (1Co 12:10).
- Trials may be from the Lord to make us mature and complete (Jas 1:2-4).
- Temptations are from the devil; if we allow our own evil desire to cause us to yield, sin results (Jas 1:13-14).
- Satan attacks to cause us to sin, but God brings about good (Ge 50:19-20).
- Satan sends things into our lives which God uses to show His power in our weakness (2Co 12:7-9).

Discuss: How do you know if a problem is physical, spiritual or both?

III. HOW TO DEFEND YOURSELF AGAINST SATANIC ATTACKS

1. Take Every Thought Captive To The Mind Of Christ (2Co 10:3-5)

Memorizing and meditating on Scripture allows us to evaluate thoughts and ideas which come into our minds and reject those which are against the truths of Scripture. Scripture memorization also helps to train our thinking patterns so that we become disciplined to think and act more like Christ.

2. Renew Your Mind (Ro 12:1-2)

Ask God to search your thoughts and reveal to you any which are wicked or impure. Confess those to the Lord and turn away from them (Ps 139:23-24). Think about things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, or praiseworthy (Php. 4:8).

Beware of the deluge of sexual lies and temptations that would fill your mind with godless thoughts. *"Satan has no power over you except what you give him by failing to take every thought captive and thus being deceived into believing lies"* (N. Anderson, *Victory over the Darkness*, pg. 169 & 170).

3. Put On All The Armor Of God (Eph 6:10-18)

Acknowledge your salvation by faith in Christ, your righteousness before God by the blood of Christ, and the peace that you have with God because you are His child. Take time to praise the Father for His victory over the evil one and the fact that through Christ you have victory over the evil one.

The one offensive weapon which a believer has is the Word of the God—"the sword of the Spirit" (Eph 6:17). Believers are admonished throughout the Scriptures to stand firm in the truth of the Word of God (Jn 8:32, 1Pe 5:9).

4. Acknowledge The Covering Of The Blood Of The Lamb (Rev 12:11)

The only victory over the flesh, the world of Satan, is through the blood of Jesus on the cross. His sacrifice broke Satan's power and allowed man to fellowship with God. It is important that believers realize that they cannot overcome Satan in their own power, but only through the blood of Christ.

5. Do Not Let Sin Reign In You (Ro 6:12)

Believers are admonished to physically remove themselves from situations which can result in their yielding to sin (2Ti 2:22). Also, believers should "avoid any appearance of evil" (1Th 5:22; Eph 5:3).

Discuss: How do we fight?

IV. GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH DEMONIC AFFLICTION

Throughout the New Testament and in examples from around the world (see Appendix 3B, "Case Studies From Around The World"), we see people who are demon-possessed. Demonic possession is a reality in the world in which we live.

It is also very clear from Scripture that believers can open themselves to demonic oppression, or demonic influence. Ephesians 4:27 speaks of believers not giving Satan a "foothold" in their life. 1 Peter 5:8 was written to believers and tells us that we have an enemy who prowls around looking for someone to devour. In 2 Corinthians 2:11 Paul tells us that Satan is scheming against us, and that he wants us to fall into his trap so that he can obtain the right to afflict us with his demons.

Every Christian should be able to defend himself from satanic attack, since God has given us clear guidelines from Scripture how to live and how to wear His armor as defense. Obviously, unbelievers do not understand how to defend themselves, and they do not have the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives to give them the strength to do it. Unfortunately, there are also some believers who for various reasons choose to open themselves up to demonic influence in their lives.

Because of this, the essence of working with people who are suffering from demonic oppression and possession is a **truth** encounter, not a **power** encounter. Some Christians incorrectly believe since God is more powerful than Satan, that in Jesus' name they can remove all demonic influences in the life of someone who is suffering. While God is all-powerful and Satan is not, God has given man a free will to choose whether or not he will allow the "prince of this world" (Jn 16:11) to have influence in his life. God has given us all that we need to defend ourselves against the schemes of the Devil, but we can still choose to ignore these things and allow Satan to have some amount of control in our lives. It is the realization of the truth of the believer's identity in Christ that gives him the ability to choose to refuse the sinful activities that would otherwise give Satan the right to torment him.

The following guidelines can be used to minister to those who are suffering from some type of demonic influence in their lives.

1. Pray And Seek Wisdom From The Holy Spirit

Dealing with demonic influences requires great spiritual wisdom and dependency on the Holy Spirit. Satan is a powerful foe and confrontation with him or his forces should not be entered into lightly. The need for guidance and leading from the Holy Spirit cannot be overemphasized, since there is not a "formula" for working with people who are suffering from demonic activity in their lives. Every person is unique, every situation is different, and although there are general principles involved, each situation requires dependence on and wisdom from the Holy Spirit. Time in prayer should be spent before any type of ministry involving demonic affliction.

Discuss: Why should you ask for the Holy Spirit's help?

2. Work With Others

This type of ministry should always be done with at least one or more mature believer in Christ. If possible, have people present who have the gift of discernment and who have had prior experience with demonic oppression/possession. Take time together as a group to pray (and fast, if necessary) as you deal with the person who is suffering. If at all possible, church planters and other Christian workers should avoid doing this type of ministry by themselves.

Discuss: Why shouldn't you work alone?

3. Determine The Cause

Sometimes demonic manifestation will occur unexpectedly in public places such as a worship service, Bible study, small group meeting, or other corporate setting. In these cases the Christian leaders who are present may have no choice but to deal immediately with the situation, relying on the power and presence of the Holy Spirit to guide them.

However, it is much more common that demonic influence manifests itself over the course of time in the life of a person, and in such a way that the problem is evident to them and others around them. In these instances, it is necessary to set up a meeting between this person and those in the church who are able to help him become free from the demonic influences in his life. The purpose of the meeting is to try and understand what has happened in this person's life that may have given Satan the right to afflict him. It is also a time to determine whether the problem is demonic, or if there are other natural causes involved.

There are many ways that people can open themselves up to Satan and give him the opportunity to torment them. Some of the more common areas include:

- Occult activity: idolatry, Eastern religious practices (such as transcendental meditation), spiritism, secret "blood" pledges, participation in cults, astrology, fortune telling, some types of hypnosis, psychic healing, out-of-body experiences.
- Witchcraft and Satanism: incantations, spells, satanic rituals, dedication of children to Satan, ritual abuse, magic (white and black).
- Willful, ongoing and unconfessed sin: drugs, addictions, anger, sexual sins, hatred, an unforgiving spirit, etc.

It is vitally important that people who are suffering be completely honest with the believers who wish to help them. Are they currently, or have they in the past, been involved in the occult? How about their parents or other relatives? If they are believers, do they have some "hidden" sin in their lives that they do not want to confess? As much as possible, determine everything that could contribute to the demonic manifestation in their life.

Discuss: How does determining the cause help solve the problem?

4. Deal With Sin Issues

Whether or not the person being afflicted is a believer, he must want to be free from the demonic influence. Based on what was learned about previous or current occult activity, unconfessed sins, etc., this person must repent of these sins and each activity that may have given Satan a foothold in his life. Each item should be confessed out loud, and forgiveness asked for from God. The person should refute any past satanic practices and the stronghold(s) that these gave Satan in his life.

It is important to understand that this person does not need to be a Christian in order to be freed from the demonic forces in his life. However, without the protection and position that a believer has in Christ over Satan, this person is open to renewed demonic activity in his life, sometimes with even greater intensity (see Mt 12:43-45). As sin issues are dealt with, the Gospel should be clearly presented and the opportunity given for this person to accept Christ as Savior.

Regardless of the spiritual condition of the person, he must understand that if he returns to occult practices or willful sin, he opens himself up again to Satan's demonic activity in his life.

Discuss: How do sin issues influence demonic activity?

5. Deliverance

At this point, the believers involved should pray and ask the Holy Spirit to show them how He wants to deal with the demonic activity in this person's life. This may be as simple as casting out the demon(s) in the name of and by the authority of Jesus Christ. Other times, extended prayer and fasting may be required to break through the spiritual resistance of the demonic forces involved. Sometimes in cases where the person being afflicted is a believer, the Holy Spirit will lead them to acknowledge their position in Christ, repent of the sins that resulted in demonic oppression, and refute Satan themselves.

Note that during the process of freeing someone from demonic affliction, it is best not to communicate in any way directly with the demon(s) involved. John 8:44 tells us that the devil is a liar and the father of lies, and there is no reason for the demons to say anything less than half-truths. Many Christians in ministry with oppressed people have found that talking with demons and asking them to manifest themselves causes much more profanity, physical aggression, violence, and greatly prolongs and complicates the process of freedom from the demons involved.

In the same way that there is no "magic formula" for releasing someone from demonic influences in his life, there are also no guaranteed results from a time of intercession and deliverance ministry. Sometimes an afflicted person will be completely and totally delivered from all demonic activity. Other times there will be little or no deliverance. Sometimes the Holy Spirit desires that several problem areas in the life of the afflicted person be resolved one by one over a period of time. Sometimes more prayer and fasting is needed. In all cases, the believers should pray and ask for continued leading and direction from the Holy Spirit.

Disucss: What is deliverance? How is deliverance obtained?

6. Follow-up

If possible, one mature believer should be assigned as a counselor for this person to answer questions that he might have and to “watch over” him for several months. In instances where complete deliverance was not obtained, the counselor can continue to work with this person to look at areas in his life where there might still be unconfessed sin, occult practices, etc. Although demonic manifestation may decrease for a time after intercession or casting out of demons, if all the areas which gave Satan a foothold in the first place are not dealt with, sooner or later the demonic oppression will continue and make itself known again.

If the person received Christ as Savior during the deliverance process, the counselor can also help with discipling this new believer and reminding him of the truth of his identity in Christ. If other signs of demonic activity are noticed, the deliverance process should be repeated, looking for other “ground” that this person has given to Satan in his life. Ultimate freedom will be obtained when all of the footholds have been given up, when the person understands who he is in Christ, and when Christ has been given complete control over every area of his life.

Discuss: Why is follow-up important?

ACTION PLAN:

- In your life and ministry as a church planter, are you experiencing anything that you think might be a direct attack of the evil one? If so, list ways from this study that indicate what you should do to stand against these attacks. Share this with a mature Christian who will pray with you.
- Complete the table in Appendix 3A.
- Read the case studies in Appendix 3B.

SOURCES

- Anderson, Neil T. *The Bondage Breaker*. Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 1990,1993.
- Anderson, Neil T. *Victory over the Darkness*. California: Regal Books, 1990.
- Arnold, Clinton. *Power and Magic*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1989,1992.
- Moreau, A. Scott. *Essentials of Spiritual Warfare*. Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1997.
- Moody Bible Institute. *Demon Experiences in Many Lands; A Compilation*. Chicago, IL: 1960.

**SPIRITUAL
WARFARE
APPENDIX**

3A

Bible Study

HOW DID JESUS DEAL WITH DEMONIZED PEOPLE?

The following chart lists the places in the Gospels where Jesus dealt with demonized people. Complete the chart, and then write down how these truths apply to your life and ministry. Some of the work has been done for you.

Reference	Background & Demonized person	How did Jesus respond?	What were the results?	Interpretation:
Mt 4:24-25	From "...all over Syria people brought to him...the demon possessed."	He healed them	Large crowds followed Him.	
Mk 1:21-28	In Capernaum on Sabbath. In synagogue man – "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are – the Holy One of God"	Ordered demon to "Be quiet! Come out of him!"	Evil spirit shook the man violently and came out.	Jesus gives orders to evil spirits & they obey Him. Demons know Jesus is God and that He has power to destroy them. When He spoke, the demons obeyed. When His children speak under His authority, the demons also obey.
Mk 1:32-39 (Lk 4:40 – 41)	Same day as above. Evening; home of Simon & Andrew. People brought demon possessed to Jesus	Drove out many demons but would not let them speak because they knew who He was		Jesus did not want people to follow Him as Messiah without first accepting Him as Savior.
Mk 3:15; 6:7 (Mt 10:2-4) (Lk 6:14-16)		Jesus chose 12 apostles; gave them authority to drive out demons		
Mt 8:16-17		He drove out the spirits with a word.		
Mt 8:28-34	2 demon -possessed men came from tombs were violent and shouted to Jesus, "What do you want with us, Son of God?"...Have you come to torture us before the appointed time?"			Jesus will judge demons. They will be cast into hell.
	Begged Jesus, "If you drive us out, send us into the heard of pigs	Said, "Go"	Demons entered pigs; whole town went out to meet Jesus; pleaded with Him to leave their region.	

Reference	Background & Demonized person	How did Jesus respond?	What were the results?	Interpretation:
Mk 5:1-17	One demon possessed man broke chains & ankle irons No one strong enough to subdue him Night and day cried out & cut himself			
	Demons begged Jesus not to torture him.	"Come out of this man, you evil spirit"		
	"Legion, for we are many"	What is your name?"		
	Begged to be sent into pigs	Gave them permission to go into pigs	Pigs ran into lake and were drowned	
	Man begged to go with Jesus	"Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you and how He has had mercy on you.		
Lk 8:26-37	For a long time had not worn clothes or lived in a house		After demons driven out, man was dressed and in his right mind	
	Begged Him repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss.			Demons realize that Jesus has power to send them to the Abyss.
Mt 12:22-28	Mute & blind	Jesus healed him so that he could both see & talk	People astonished "Could this be the Son of David?" Pharisees: He does this by power of Beelzebub. Jesus' teaching followed: Mt 12:25-29 Mk 3:23-30 Lk 11:14-26	
Mt 15:21-28	Jesus withdrew to Tyre & Sidon; Canaanite woman: "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is suffering terribly from demon possession"	"I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel."		
Mk 7:24-30	Lord, help me.	"It is not right to take the children's bread & toss it to their dogs."		

Application in my life and ministry:



Case Studies From Around The World

The following are case studies showing how some missionaries have dealt with demons in ministries. Except for the missionary in study one, all names have been changed. These can help you face similar situations that you might encounter as you are engaged in the advance of the Church.

I. CASE STUDY ONE: DICK HILLIS RECOUNTS THE FOLLOWING STORY FROM CHINA

A young soldier brought his wife to me to cast out a demon, saying, "My wife is in the courtyard, and she is demon possessed. Twice the demon has ordered her to kill herself, once by hanging and once by jumping in the moat. Both times she obeyed him, but I was able to rescue her."

"We went to the compound to pray that the woman would be delivered. I confess that I prayed in doubt, wondering if I would need some special gift of healing. As we prayed, the demon-possessed woman would take words from our prayers and make ridiculous poems out of them. She would scream and yell and make fun of what we were doing. Apparently, our prayers were of no avail."

This continued for three days. We told the soldier to destroy any idols in their home, which he did. Still the demon did not leave. Then God showed my wife that we needed to acknowledge our position in Christ and command the demon to leave. When we did this, she was instantly delivered.

His conclusion was, "We learned further that it is not enough to pray or sing, though I believe that Satan hates both prayer and song. We must resist the devil and command that he depart" (from *Demon Experiences in Many Lands*, p 37-39).

II. CASE STUDY TWO: A MISSIONARY COUPLE TELLS THE FOLLOWING STORY FROM A COUNTRY IN CENTRAL/EASTERN EUROPE

Fatima, a mother of four, came from a family with many problems, the majority of which seem to have their roots in demonic activity.

At 15 she married Hysen, a man whose father was mentally ill. After several years of marriage, he also became mentally sick. He could be kept calm only with medication. Although still a Muslim, he requested prayer in the name of Jesus for deliverance from curses his family had put on him.

Fatima's mother-in-law had put a curse on her "that she would die before her time." Now at 39, she was dying of cancer. The missionary said, "When I went to see her, she told me that she had been having unbearable pain all day. When the pain gets very bad she sees her now-dead mother-in-law dressed up like a witch with a rod in her hand." Although now a Christian, she was terrified. The missionary decided he should take authority in the name of Jesus, which he did. Fatima was instructed to pray likewise. She improved spiritually, but the physical pain continued.

In spite of the prayers, Fatima died. At her funeral, Hysen's brother took charge. This brother is involved in occult practices (fortune telling, making magic charms, etc.). He brought in a Muslim priest who is somewhat of a magician to perform rituals.

A week after the funeral, the missionary's wife went with other women to visit the grave. Afterwards, she was invited to the family's home for dinner. Fatima's older daughter, a believer, asked her to pray because she had seen some relatives putting soil from the grave in the family's food. According to tradition, this will cause the same curse that fell on Fatima to fall on her family.

If you had been the missionary in this study, how would you have helped this family as they went through this crisis?

III. CASE STUDY THREE: A MISSIONARY COUPLE TELL THE FOLLOWING STORY FROM ROMANIA

A couple in their late thirties told the missionaries how they had been placed under a curse. When they were married, the husband's sister (a white witch) had sewn small slips of paper with curses on them into their clothing. The curse was that they would never be able to have children. Although they had destroyed all of the paper, they still were childless. Now nearing the end of their child-bearing years, the couple sought help. They reported that they were not able to have normal relations because every time they began to do so they heard mocking voices telling them they could not.

The missionaries read with them verses showing them that they could be free from this curse by the power of Christ. Claiming their authority in Christ, they denounced the work and power of Satan in their lives and asked God for deliverance. The next time they talked with the missionaries, they said they had been claiming this authority and had heard no more voices. Their marriage was much stronger. They thought the woman was pregnant, which proved to be incorrect.

If you had been the missionaries in this story, would you have done anything differently? What would you have said when they reported that they could still not have children?

IV. CASE STUDY FOUR: A YOUNG MISSIONARY IN AFRICA HAD THIS EXPERIENCE OF SPIRITUAL WARFARE

In 1986, I went on a short term missions trip to Senegal, West Africa. My second night in the country was enough to teach me that we indeed are in a battle against the powers of darkness.

I was staying with missionaries who lived in Ouakam, a village known for its spiritual darkness. After the morning service in another city the day after I arrived, we decided to hold the first-ever worship service in Ouakam that same night. It was a blessed time, and afterwards, we talked late into the night. The rest of the family went upstairs to bed, and I prepared for bed downstairs.

I tossed and turned until 3:00 a.m., then finally fell into a deep sleep. It was hot and muggy and I had a fan blowing across the bed. After a short time, I became extremely cold. But when I tried to get up to shut off the fan, I couldn't move. My mind was very alert, but my body was paralyzed. I tried to cry out for help, but my tongue was swollen in my mouth.

Since this was during the Muslim fast of Ramadan, it was noisy outside. Witch doctors were casting curses and shamans were praying to evil spirits. It was known that the house where we lived had been visited by a witch doctor who had tried to put curses on it to make the missionaries leave the village.

I heard the footsteps of someone coming down the stairs, but no one ever came around the corner. I saw a shadow coming toward me from the far side of the room. It looked like the outline of a man wearing a dark cloak. Then I heard the sound of an animal ripping apart flesh with its teeth.

The fear that was growing in my heart was settled by one thought: "This is the work of the evil one and Jesus is my protection." So I tried to cry out the name of Jesus. I said it once, twice, and on the third time, my mouth was loosened, the shadow disappeared, the noise stopped, and I sat up in bed free from the invisible power that held me. I bolted upstairs, awakened the older missionary and explained what had happened. She asked if I had been dreaming. I assured her that it was not a dream. We prayed for 30 minutes before I was ready to rest.

From that night on, I could sense evil in the room on many occasions, but when I would put on the armor of God and tell the spirits to go away in Jesus' name and by His authority, I could sleep in peace.

I now understand God's power in the midst of darkness. I know we are in a spiritual battle for the souls of men and women, but I am assured that He who is in us is greater than any spirit. Jesus in us is the hope of glory.

If this experience had happened to you, would you have known about the authority you have to rebuke demons? What does this say about the power of prayer?

THE FAMILY

THE FAMILY

1

LESSON

Biblical Roles in the Family

☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of the lesson is to present a clear biblical and foundational teaching for marriage and the role of the husband, wife and children in a family.

☞ Main Points and Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- In marriage, God is able to complement the strengths and weaknesses of the husband and wife to make them complete, which enables them to best serve Him.
- The ministry of a church planter includes his family, since the family is a visible and biblical indicator of leadership ability and discipling effectiveness.
- Understand the purpose of marriage from the perspective of the One who ordained it.
- Have a better understanding of the biblical teaching about the roles of the husband and the wife in the marriage relationship.
- Understand family relationships as an analogy of the Church.

☞ Suggestions for Mentoring Time

1. Read 1 Corinthians 9:16-23 and use it as a basis for your opening prayer time.
2. Personal Growth Question: What has been one of the biggest changes in your leadership in the past three months?
3. Discuss the questions in the text and at the end of the chapter.
4. Homework: Complete the Action Plan, Read the assigned Chapter(s) for the next meeting time.
5. Pray for ministry needs.

INTRODUCTION

The Church has become the centerpiece of God's kingdom on earth. Within this community of believers, God has called all of His children into loving relationships with Himself and with each other. Some have been called to serve the Lord and the Church in a state of singleness and others in a state of marriage. But whether married or single, everyone has been placed in a family.

The family is one analogy used to describe the Church. Your understanding of the relationships in physical families will influence the way you look at the family of God. It is important, therefore, that you as a church planter understand biblical roles within the family for your own life and ministry. Moreover, Paul, writing to his young leader Timothy, reminds Timothy of the responsibility of a leader within the church. Paul asks, "If a man does not know how to manage his own household well, how will he take care of the church of God?" (1Ti 3:5). This thought-provoking question challenges all church leaders, especially the church planter, to evaluate his own ministry within his family. How is his management of his family if his family is a proving ground for his leadership ability in the church?

"If a man does not know how to manage his own household well, how will he take care of the church of God?" (1 Timothy 3:5)

As you are busy with responsibilities for doing evangelism, discipling, and training leaders, seeking that the new church plant grows well, you must also remember that your own family remains the clearest indicator of leadership ability and discipling effectiveness. If the church planter develops habits that fail his ministry to his family, these may carry over to the new church as well. A church planter must give attention to his family relationships as part of his overall work of ministry.

Discuss: Is it common to forsake family for the reason of ministry?

I. BALANCING ROLES

It is important that church planters keep a proper balance between their church work and their families. All too often, church workers misunderstand Luke 14:26 as an excuse to leave their families behind for the sake of the work. "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple." If we look at the context of this passage we can see clearly that it is in reference to making a decision to become a Christian, not carrying out the ministry of the word. 1 Timothy says this about those who would be in a leadership position in the church, "He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?)" Indeed, if a man does not first manage his family well, he is not qualified for ministry in the church. In addition, to continue in the ministry, one must as well continue managing his or her household well.

Any church worker who pursues ministry to the neglect of his or her family is outside of the will of God. Paul knew that those that are single and those that are married have different priorities, for this reason he wrote, "a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world—how he can please his wife—" (1 Corinthians 7:33). This is not to say that having a spouse is wrong, or that it is in any sense bad. Paul is saying, however, that married people will, by nature, have to divide their time between their priorities. For this reason, Paul said, single individuals are free from the concern that comes from having multiple priorities.

In all truthfulness, singleness holds its own benefits as does marriage. Single individuals can choose to serve the Lord with undivided attention and passion, and this is good. Married individuals however, if we are to fully understand the Bible, have their own blessings. Titus 1:5-6 and other passages show us that having a spouse and children, in some respects, makes us more qualified for ministry, even though our time and priorities must be balanced for the needs of each.

Finding the correct balance is not easy. It is also for the sake of God's glory, that the church worker must occasionally lay down ministry for the sake of doing a Godly job of leading his or her family. What has a man gained if his ministry includes thousands saved, yet his own children and family show the scars of neglect? Titus 1 tells us: An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless". Being God's minister means first being a good minister of your own family.

Discuss: How do we practice balancing roles?

II. THE MARRIED COUPLE

The basic unit of the family is the married couple. Reading the story of creation in Genesis, we see that when God created man in His image He created him male and female. These two people living together as one (Ge 2:24) were a reflection of the image of the triune God who lives in perfect unity in diversity. As one, they were to live in a loving relationship that would result in reproducing children. They were given a task to perform: to rule over the fish, birds and animals of the earth. When they sinned, disharmony entered the loving relationship, reproduction was with pain, and instead of ruling over the earth they tried to rule over each other.

Part of the redemptive work of Christ is the restoration of the image of God within the marriage relationship. There are three principals that will serve as a foundation for the discussion of the roles within marriage.

1. Three Guiding Principles

- 1) *Husbands and wives have equal worth.*

From Galatians 3:28 we realize that God has designed *husbands and wives with equal worth*. A person's value is not based on function, or role, but rather on the fact that he or she is created in the image of God.

- 2) *The husband and wife are to be interdependent.*

In 1 Corinthians 11:11, we see that God has designed *the husband and wife to be interdependent*. The church is made up of men and women of all kinds of personalities. One of the distinguishing factors of the church is that its members coexist in unity. There are different depths in these relationships, but the marital relationship may be one of the most complex. In a Spirit-filled marriage, interdependency will be beautifully modeled. And of course this witnesses to the interdependency that exists in the Godhead.

A person's value is based on ... the fact that he or she is created in the image of God.
--

3) *There is an order of responsibility in the family.*

From 1 Corinthians 11:3, we understand that God has designed *an order of responsibility in the family*. Just as there is a functional order in the Godhead, there is as well a functional order in marriage. God is the head of Christ, who is the head of every man, who is the head of his wife.

Discuss: How do the three guiding principles influence our decisions?

II. THE ROLE OF THE HUSBAND

1. To Be the Head of the Wife: Ephesians 5:23

Paul states that the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church. This leadership involves responsibility and accountability before God for the family. Since the emphasis of the passage is on the husband's love for his wife, this is the most important part of his responsibility.

Husbands are to seek the best for their wives, even at their own expense. Headship defined this way becomes a high and holy calling. As church planters, the future of your marriage and/or of those who will be a part of your ministry depend on absolute clarity about this role. Headship is a calling to empower another human being; it's not a license to indulge one's self. One very practical outworking of this concept is in the area of spiritual gifts. The husband should be actively involved in assisting his wife discover her spiritual gifts. This will be an ongoing adventure as a wife's gifts are discovered, developed and released into ministry.

However, some people argue that according to Genesis 3, man is supposed to rule over his wife. The actual text of Genesis 3:16 does state: "...your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you." The Hebrew word translated "rule" means to dominate, to keep beneath, to rule over as an absolute sovereign. The word is used of kings and public officials throughout the Old Testament. But keep in mind that Genesis 3:16 is a statement of the curse, not of the kingdom. It foretells how fallen men will dominate women and subjugate them to positions of lower status. This has been the case in thousands of cultures over thousands of years.

Harsh dominance is not the way of Christ. So when Paul says that a man is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church, he's not supporting the curse—he's breaking it! He's showing how men can break the cycle of misery and the "me-first" mentality that the fall inaugurated.

So what was the leadership style of Christ?

This style is outlined in Luke 22:25-27 and is described as servant-leadership. "Servant" and "leader" are not terms that combine naturally. They seem to be in opposition. Yet, in God's kingdom, to be the "head" is to be this unique blend of leader and servant. It's true that men have been given authority to lead their wives, but the style is to be that of a servant, not as a lord. The aim, then, is to be a source of life to them. The husband's leadership of his wife is to be modeled after Christ's leadership of His bride, the Church. Christ doesn't exploit the Church. He doesn't dominate her, or force His leadership on her. On the contrary, He earned the right of leadership by expending Himself for His bride, and ultimately by dying for her. According to the model of Christ, leadership of the husband over his wife is characterized by:

The husband's leadership of his wife is to be modeled after Christ's leadership of His bride, the Church.

- Responsibility, not rank
- Sacrifice, not selfishness
- Duty, not domination

2. To Care for the Core Needs of the Wife

Consider Peter's admonition in 1 Peter 3:7, "Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life."

Wives need their husbands to live with them in an understanding way. This means that husbands need to relate to their wives knowledgeably, aware of the fact that they are different from men. Besides the obvious physical differences, there are vast psychological and emotional differences. Husbands should then give attention to the following three core concerns.

1) *Companionship*

The first is that wives need companionship. God designs women for deep, ongoing relationships and they expect their husbands to meet that need. They want and need the companionship, availability and interest of their husbands.

2) *Security*

The second need is security. A woman needs the security of a man. She needs to know he can protect and provide for her. She needs to be able to trust him. Biblically, these things are the responsibility of the husband (1Ti 5:8).

3) *Significance*

The third need is for significance, which is a need shared by both husband and wife. The husband often receives significance from his job, his role in the church, or other activities outside the home. But so much of what the wife does is hidden from view. The one person who can really appreciate her unique contributions, the one who can honor her accordingly, is her husband. She is a friend, a nurturer, and a soul mate. Part of the leadership role is to make her feel honored and not taken for granted.

3. To Carry Out the Duties of a Father

The main responsibility of a father is to bring up his children in the training and instruction of the Lord (Eph 6:4). This includes teaching them the ways of the Lord (De 6:7), and disciplining them as necessary (Pr 19:18, 22:6, 23:13,14, 29:17).

Discuss: Does a forsaking your role as father for the sake of planting churches please God?

Discuss: How do we teach men to be Biblical fathers and husbands?

III. THE ROLE OF THE WIFE

Proverbs 31:10 asks the compelling question, "An excellent wife, who can find?" For a woman to be an 'excellent' wife is for her to understand God's design for a wife and, by His grace, to be conformed by Him to that design.

1. A Helpmate

God created the woman to be a helpmate to man (Ge 2:18). She is the emotional and physical complement that makes a man more suited to His purposes and service before God. She does not make him whole in the spiritual, emotional or physical sense. However, she does make him more complete than he was by himself without her. She brings to him perspective, emotions, gifts, and weaknesses he himself does not possess. Together, sealed and gifted by the Holy Spirit, the husband and wife are complete and are best able to serve the Lord.

Together, sealed and gifted by the Holy Spirit, the husband and wife are complete and are best able to serve the Lord.
--

2. Supportive

As she is complementary to her husband, the wife is also a support to him. Support of him is part of her "chaste and respectful behavior" (1Pe 3:2) toward him. She knows his strengths and weaknesses, and she builds him up for his work. Proverbs 14:1 shows that a woman can build up or tear down her house. She can build up the emotional strength and resolve of her husband, or she can help to destroy him, shaming him and being as "rottenness in his bones" (Pr 12:4b).

3. Submissive

The wife also has the responsibility to be submissive to her husband. There is no more often repeated command for the wife than for her to be submissive to her husband (Eph 5:22, Col 3:18, 1Pe 3:1), a characteristic of godly women such as Abraham's wife, Sarah (1Pe 3:6). And yet, her position of submission is a very powerful one. By faith she submits to her husband and appeals to her heavenly Father. Like the king's heart (Pr 21:1), the husband's heart is in the hand of God. As she submits to her husband, she submits to God and allows His hand to move in the life of her husband. By her acts of submission, she allows God to win her husband to greater obedience to Himself (1Pe 3:1). She is not commanded to rebel to sway her husband's opinion. She is commanded to submit by faith in order to release God's hand to work in her husband's life and her own.

4. A Manager

Scripture gives the model of an industrious wife who labors for her husband's and her household's profit (Pr 31:10-31, especially verse 11). Unlike the wives of Samaria who, in Amos' time, oppressed the poor and needy and made insatiable demands upon their husbands (Am 4:1), the woman of Proverbs 31 fears the Lord (v. 30), serves her husband (v. 12), builds up her house (v. 27), causing her husband's reputation to increase (v. 23) and for him to trust in her (v.11). Her secret is that she is an able support for her husband, caring for and managing his household, making it a harmonious and profitable place that produces much good for him. She serves him, holding him in esteem, though managing his home more ably than he could. The husband can only glorify God for His goodness in giving her to him (Pr 19:14).

5. A Mother: Titus 2:4

The core role of a woman doesn't stop with loving her husband. Titus 2:4 goes on to encourage her to be a "child-lover." Children, especially young ones, need tremendous doses of personal attention, support, and of course love. Children need the awesome power of their mother's presence. According to many childcare experts, healthy, normal child development requires a close, loving, and sustained relationship with at least one person during a minimum of the first two years of life. Titus indicates that the mother should provide that care, but the dominant cultures of our day are, for the most part, abandoning these Scriptural principles and instead are *seeking their own self-interests*.

Discuss: How do we teach women to be biblical wives and mothers?

IV. THE ROLE OF CHILDREN

1. To Obey Their Parents in the Lord

Ephesians 6:1 says, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." This instruction from Paul to the church in Ephesus raises several questions that the church planter should address:

- Is he referring to minors only?
- Should adults continue to obey their parents, even if no longer living in their parents' home?
- If an adult remains in his or her father's house, does this apply?
- Does the "in the Lord" mean that if a parent is not a Christian, the child does not need to obey him or her?

2. To Honor Their Father and Mother

Paul's instruction quotes from the Old Testament and reminds the Ephesians that this is the first commandment with a promise: "that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth" (Eph 6:2-3, De 5:16).

Discuss: Do Christians do a good job of teaching their children right and wrong in your culture? How do we do a better job of this? What is the church's role?

CONCLUSION

This lesson is of value to you either as a single or married church planter. As you understand the biblical roles with the family, your own life will be strengthened, your entire congregation will be helped and the community in which you live will see the oneness and love of God modeled through you personally and through the teaching and counseling opportunities that God will give.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- If you are a single person, how can this lesson be of benefit to you in your ministry?
- If you are married, can you say that your marriage mirrors God's image by demonstrating oneness?
- Are you experiencing companionship in your marriage? What does this look like?
- What factors in society and within marriage make it difficult today to be an effective spouse? What is the greatest struggle in being a good spouse?
- What factors in society and in the Church make it difficult to live as a single person today? What is the greatest struggle in being a single person?

ACTION PLAN

- Read 1 Peter 3:8-12. The attitude of selfishness destroys unity. Taking this into consideration, read once again the passage above and then list things you should do when your mate is selfish.
- A husband's servant-leadership is the only thing that makes a wife's submission reasonable. A passive husband makes submission impossible and a domineering husband makes submission intolerable. Servant-leadership, on the other hand, makes submission a joy. In light of these thoughts, answer the following questions:
 - How would your becoming a servant-leader affect the ability of your wife to be submissive?
 - How would she respond in other areas if you were more of a servant-leader?
 - Does the Bible teach anything about to whose leadership single women are to submit? What guidelines can you find?
- In his letter to the church at Philippi, Paul addressed the issue of oneness among Christians. Read Philippians 2:1-4 and then think about how verse 2 explains how to achieve oneness in a relationship. How can you apply these principles in your family life, whether in a marriage or in other family relationships?
- As church planters you will have many opportunities to provide biblical counsel to unbelievers and believers who have suffered from failed marriages or who are presently experiencing disunity within their marriage. As well, you will have opportunity to provide counsel to men and women who are contemplating marriage. Start a small group discussion with some unmarried men and women of your age that are contemplating marriage in the future. Guide them in discovering the biblical patterns discussed in this lesson and the practical outworking of these patterns.

SOURCES

Lewis, Robert and Hendricks, William. *Rocking the Roles*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1991.

THE FAMILY

2

LESSON

Parenting

☞ Lesson Purpose

The Purpose of this lesson is to help church planters understand and apply biblical principles for parenting.

☞ Main Points and Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson have been mastered, each participant should:

- Parenting requires walking by faith.
- God's Word gives us some principles that should be applied to parenting.
- Know what the Bible teaches about parenting.
- Be able to evaluate his or her own parenting by biblical standards.
- Develop ways to improve his or her parenting

☞ Suggestions to Trainers

Use this material to give the trainees the basic biblical principles. Resist the urge to "tell them how to do it." Leave time for discussing the questions at the end, either in small groups or all together.

☞ Suggestions for Mentoring Time

1. Read 2 Timothy 4:5 and use it as a basis for your opening prayer time.
2. Personal Growth Question: What new gifts has God been developing in your life to meet the new challenges in the church?
3. Discuss the questions in the text and at the end of the chapter.
4. Homework: Complete the Action Plan, Read the assigned Chapter(s) for the next meeting time.
5. Pray for ministry needs.

INTRODUCTION

Christian bookstores are full of books with instructions for Christian parents. These books contain many specific models, each claiming to be THE biblical way. But although the Bible does give us certain directives, what it does not give is step-by-step instructions for raising children. In this lesson we will look at some biblical principles that can be applied to parenting situations. Because each child is a unique person with unique needs, how parents apply the principles is a matter of prayerfully seeking wisdom from the Lord. Like the rest of the Christian life, parenting is a walk of faith.

In the Great Commission, Jesus instructed His followers to make disciples of all nations... teaching them to obey all things He had said. The role of a parent is like that of the church planter: to make disciples and to teach them obedience to God. For church planters who are parents, the parenting role has great significance: it is significant for the family members themselves, it is significant for their testimony to the world, and it is significant for the church. The way parents relate to their children is reflected in the way they relate to the church (1Ti 3:4,5). For church planters who are not parents, this lesson is still important because the same principles apply to helping spiritual children within their ministry.

Discuss: What are the major issues of parenting in your culture?

I. SOME INITIAL OBSERVATIONS

1. No Guarantees

Contrary to what is often thought, the Bible does not make any guarantees that if parents do everything right, children will love the Lord and serve Him. A verse that is often cited as a promise from God is Proverbs 22:6, "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." If their children grow up and reject the Lord, they feel that the Lord has betrayed them.

Please notice that this verse is stating a principle of cause and effect: if you do "X" then "Y" will result. The book of Proverbs, which was written to help guide youth to righteous living, has many similar statements. Training children when they are young will start them down the path to righteousness. Rather than a promise that is true in all cases, this verse states a general principle that if parents train their children to obey the Lord when they are young, when they are old they will continue on His path. The fact that sometimes children do depart from the Lord in no way diminishes the principle or the parents' responsibility to train their children in the Lord's ways. Most children who receive such early training do continue in it.

2. No Perfect Children

Why then do some children who have started out walking in the path of righteousness "turn from it"? Every person is a sinner who has choices to make. Proverbs 1: 29 speaks of those who "...hated knowledge and did not fear the Lord." Ultimately, every person must choose for himself whether or not he will follow the Lord. Even children with good training may make the wrong choice.

3. No Perfect Parents

God is the only perfect parent; earthly parents are not perfect. No matter how much they love the Lord and their children, they will sometimes fail (1Jn 1: 8-10). No one has all the answers. Parents need to be constantly and prayerfully seeking the Lord's wisdom for training children in the way they should go.

Discuss: How do these observations help you?

II. SOME BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES

Although there are no guarantees because of the sinful nature of both children and parents, God has given us certain principles to guide us in the training of children.

1. Model Love and Obedience for the Lord (Dt 6:4-9, 17)

In the Old Testament, God commanded Israel to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength... Impress (His commandments) on your children... Be sure to keep the commands of the Lord." They were to do this at home, walking along the road, when they lay down and when they got up. Loving God and keeping His commandments was to be a lifestyle that the parents should develop and pass on to their children.

Discuss: How can parents practically model love and obedience for the Lord?

2. Direct Your Children to Keep the Way of the Lord (Ge 18: 19)

When speaking about the parents' responsibility to direct their children, the Bible often equates this with discipline. Verses like Proverbs 3:11,12 and Hebrews 12:5-11 remind us that discipline is necessary. But the reason for it is because the father (both Heavenly and earthly) loves the child. Whenever discipline is administered, it should be done with a love that has the best interest of the child in mind. The child must be able to discern that love in the midst of the discipline. The desired result is that the child learns to keep the ways of the Lord.

Discuss: How can we practically direct our children to keep the way of the Lord? What can we do when they fail?

3. Do Not Exasperate Your Children (Eph 6:4)

Many parents are so intent on the second part of Ephesians 6:4, bringing up their children in the training and instruction of the Lord, that they forget the first part, do not exasperate your children. Stories of Christian workers whose children have become bitter and turned from the Lord are numerous. These children often tell stories of parents who were overly strict, unfair, demanding and authoritarian: parents who exasperated their children in their zeal to train them to love the Lord. Unfortunately, often family devotions are seen as times the parents can preach at the children. The result is children who are bitter and resentful toward their parents and toward God.

Discuss: What does it mean to not exasperate your child?

II. PRACTICAL APPLICATION

It is extremely difficult to find balance in disciplining your children. Our parents poor parenting often skills influence our own methods. For instance if a parent felt ignored by their parent's when they were young, they may try too hard to be their child's friend, to the neglect of discipline. If a parent was frequently beaten when he or she was young, they may shy away from any discipline at all.

Other factors also influence the discipline of our children. Parents of an only child may feel the pressure to give the child everything the child wants as an apology for not having any siblings.

Biblically speaking, a parent's job is not to give the child what he/she wants, but what he/she needs.

1. Deceitful above all else.

The Bible is clear that the heart is deceitful above all else and that we are sinful, not knowing right from wrong, from the day of our birth. In fact, the Bible says that we seek to do what is wrong, not what is right. God gave parents the responsibility of training a child to know what is right and what is wrong because the child has no idea themselves. Parents, and no one else, will be held responsible to God for whether they taught their children right from wrong.

Discuss: Do parents traditionally feel responsibility for teaching children right and wrong?

2. A different kind of discipline

Even 1 year old children know how much wrong doing they can get away with. Children look to the tone of their parent's voice and the volume level to see how angry the parent is. A child will know how many times they can repeat bad behavior before punishment will come. As well, a child knows whether the punishment will be enough to deter them from the fun they want to have by breaking whatever command they are given.

It is important the discipline be consistent. If a child knows that it can do something wrong and only receive punishment 50% of the time, the child will take their chances. The child studies how to get out of punishment through crying, sad faces, saying things to alter their parent's view of the situation, etc. For these reasons, it is important that punishment be consistent.

Here are two examples:

A parent notices the child did something wrong and calmly tells the child that it is wrong. The child does it again and the parent slightly raises their voice and threatens punishment. The child does it again and the parent further raises their voice and asks if the child understood what the parent said. The child, afraid of punishment says sorry with a long face, but then turns around does the action again. Upon doing the action again, the parent, afraid to use the threatened punishment, finally says that the child is just impossible and won't listen to the parent. Truth be told, the child heard and understood the parent the first time. In most cases the child already knew from previous experience that this was wrong. The parent's parenting style allowed the action to occur 4 times, and in the end the child won – no punishment was received. In this situation, the child is in charge of the parent because the child knows how to manipulate parents and avoid punishment. The child knows he or she can get away with sin 4 times before punishment, and even then, the punishment is nothing to be afraid of. What kind of adult will this child turn into? The child has not been told right from wrong. In fact, through the parent's style of discipline, manipulation around the law is being taught. The parent is also sinning in two ways. 1, The parent has not disciplined the child (to which the parent is responsible to God). 2. The parent has exasperated the child. The parent has sustained angry disposition to the child, and in most cases the parent even calls the child names such as stupid, ignorant, etc... Christ

said we will be responsible for even saying “block head” to someone. He also said that our punishment will be more severe for sins against children.

In our next example, a child does something against the parent’s wishes. The parent, in a calm voice says, not to do what the child is doing and that a repeated action will require punishment. The child does it again. At this point the parent says, in a calm voice, that the action was wrong and the child must now receive punishment. The parent gives a firm smack to the child’s bottom and the child cries. 20 minutes the child does the action again, the parent, still in a calm voice informs the child that it was already told that the action is wrong and must now receive punishment and the child receives a firm smack on the bottom. The parent is remaining calm during the punishment and is not raising their voice or calling the child names. The child begins to learn that the action will surely lead to punishment 100% of the time and that the punishment is uncomfortable. Here, the child is finally being disciplined and being taught right from wrong.

Discuss: What is discipline?

3. Appropriate and inappropriate discipline

Let us be clear, any form of punishment that leaves bruises or permanent marks or damage on a child is wrong. A child should never be disciplined out of anger. In addition, raising your voice or calling a child names is also clearly wrong from a Biblical standpoint. God’s punishment towards us is always for our good and has the goal of building us up. Punishment that tears a child down or will leave emotional scars is wrong as well. Spankings should never have more than 3 hits and these hits may be strong to leave a slight red mark, but never hard enough to cause a bruise. Spankings should be just hard enough that it is a deterrent to doing wrong.

Discipline that does not deter the child from doing wrong is not punishment. You will need to use wisdom to know what is correct and what is not correct. Generally spankings are used for children as they grow and should become less and less until the child reaches 11 or 12. By the time the child reaches 13 discipline should mostly consist of taking away of privileges or other non harmful activities the child wishes to engage in.

Whatever the discipline, it needs to be a deterrent, but not excessive. If you find that discipline is not working, you may need to experiment with your child. The most important factors are that it is consistent and that it is a deterrent.

If a parent becomes lax in discipline and allows second and third chances for a week, they will probably find that they will need to be more vigilant for a time, as the child in this short of time will again realize that they can get away with certain actions. Do not be ignorant, the child’s heart is deceitful and is always looking for ways to be able do the wrong they wish to do. It is our job to train them in the path of righteousness until they leave home and have to rely on all you have taught them.

Discuss: What is the difference between appropriate and inappropriate discipline?

Discuss: What are our hindrances to good discipline? How can we deal with these?

Discuss: How does your parents influence – both good and bad – influence the way we discipline our children?

Discuss: What must we do to become better parents?

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- What are some practical ways you can make love for and obedience to the Lord a lifestyle in your home?
- What are some practical ways you can check to see if your discipline is done out of love? What do you consider the biggest hindrance to that kind of discipline?
- What are some practical things you can do to make your family devotions a time the children will enjoy?

ACTION PLAN

List some characteristics you desire your children to have spiritually, socially, mentally and physically when they are 18 years old. Then write the name of each child on a separate sheet of paper. List what you are doing or need to do to help that child attain each of these characteristics.

SOURCES

- Kimmel, Tim. *Raising Kids Who Turn Out Right*. Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 1993.
- Phillips, Mike. *Building Respect, Responsibility & Spiritual Values in Your Child*. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 1981.
- Stanley, Charles. *How to Keep Your Kids on Your Team*. Nashville, TN: Oliver Nelson, 1986.

THE FAMILY

3

LESSON

Ministry to the Family

A WORKSHOP

☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to provide an opportunity for an open and honest discussion of issues that may have an impact for the church planter and the balance between ministry and family.

☞ Main Points

- There must be a balance between the time spent in ministry to the family and ministry to the church.
- In the life and ministry of a church planter, problems will arise which relate directly to the spouse and children. These problems must be recognized, openly discussed, and a commitment must be made on the part of the church planter to prayerfully resolve them.

☞ Desired Outcomes

As a result of this workshop, each participant should:

- Understand that as a church planter, balance and unity in a marital relationship as well as in the home are foundational concepts to a healthy ministry.
- Practice a commitment to understanding one's family members and how their lives are impacted and have an impact on the ministry of the church planter. Strive to obtain balance and unity in family and marriage.

☞ Suggestions To Trainers

The examples presented here are used merely to stimulate discussion about the need to seek balance between a church planter's ministry, and marriage and family. Please feel free to utilize your own examples and discussion questions but make sure that your discussions touch on issues such as servant leadership, conflict resolution, proper decision-making in the home, appropriate ways to express love to one's spouse, accepting one's own and one's spouse's weaknesses and strengths, etc. Carefully prepare for this session by reading all of the scenarios and then develop your lesson time according to issues that are of concern to your trainees. The scenarios and questions provided may or may not be adequate to meet the needs of your particular context. In this case, feel free to develop your own examples and questions.

☞ Suggestions for Mentoring Time

1. Read Matthew 26:40 and use it as a basis for your opening prayer time.
2. Personal Growth Question: What specific prayer has God answered in relation to the developing of leaders in your church?
3. Discuss the questions in the text and at the end of the chapter.
4. Homework: Complete the Action Plan, Read the assigned Chapter(s) for the next meeting time.
5. Pray for ministry needs.

INTRODUCTION

Often the question is asked, "Which comes first, family or the ministry?" The answer is neither. GOD comes first. Because we love Him, we serve Him. He has given us certain tasks to perform, all of which are part of our ministry to Him. To try and separate family and ministry is like trying to separate our spiritual life from our ministry. It is impossible, because they are interwoven. Our family is a part of our ministry.

The key to effective ministry in a church plant and in a family is balance. Some church planters and pastors take their commitment to ministry in the church to an extreme, and they effectively ignore their family. This is in direct contrast to the commands in the Bible for a father to instruct and discipline his children (De 6:7, Pr 22:6). How can a father do these things if he never sees his children or spends time with them? Consider Eli the priest, whose two sons were so wicked that God put them to death (1 Sa 2:34). God has given us the responsibility to raise our children because He knows that on their own, they will not make right choices.

Some church planters take the other extreme—they are overly preoccupied with their family, to the extent that they are not fulfilling the calling that God has given them as pastors and/or church planters. It can be very easy for the family to become something that takes away our devotion from God. Jesus warned in Matthew 10:37 that anyone who loves his family more than Christ is not worthy of Him.

The qualifications for both overseers and deacons in 1 Timothy 3 require a more balanced view—a leader in the church is to be a man of one wife, who manages his children and household well. Just as individuals who fail morally disqualify themselves from ministry, so individuals who fail in their family lives also disqualify themselves from ministry. Every church planter who is married must strive to maintain a proper balance between the time that he spends with his wife and children, and the time that he spends with the church. Both are ministries, and both are his calling.

GUIDELINES TO THIS WORKSHOP

The following scenarios discuss situations and problems that are common among church planters. As you work through them, look for similarities in your own life and ministry.

- Break into small groups at the beginning of the lesson time. Each group should deal with just one of the scenarios.
- Come up with biblical principles that could have been applied to the situation.
- At the end of the small group time, have everyone gather as a larger group and have each group present its findings.

I. SCENARIO ONE—IGOR AND LUBA

Rocked by the swaying of the train, Igor settled down for a welcome night's sleep. While it had been a busy five days during the training seminar, he was very encouraged by what he had learned and by the fellowship of others who had the same desire as his own: to start new churches. There had been such unity during the seminar. Everyone understood his struggles and concerns as they were all in the initial stage of establishing churches. Their times of prayer had been worshipful and empowering.

As Igor drifted off to sleep, contemplating the continuation of his church planting ministry, he felt a beautiful peace and a renewed sense of the powerful presence of God in his life. He couldn't wait to share his new ideas with his church planting team and start implementing them in his ministry.

Luba, at about the same time that Igor was drifting off to sleep, was in the middle of another of many family catastrophes since Igor's departure. As she rocked her and Igor's youngest baby (an 8 month old girl) she felt frantic. The flu had hit all three of her children in the last two days and now the baby Katya had a high fever and had been vomiting. Luba was exhausted. The continual needs of her children and the non-stop cleanup of messes related to the flu had brought her to the limit of her physical strength.

But flu was only the last of several problems since Igor left. Besides the extra work that his absence brought about, their refrigerator had broken down and a leak in the roof had damaged some of the living room wall paper during a recent rainstorm.

Having lived in this new town for just a few months, she had no one to turn to for help or even to talk to. She was looking forward to Igor's return. His help would be welcome, but even more than that she wanted to talk with someone about the burdens of her heart and soul related to the living in this remote area away from her family and friends and an easier lifestyle.

When Igor and Luba greeted one another at the front door they were very glad to see one another. He couldn't wait to talk about the previous week's events but there were more immediate problems that needed Igor's attention.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What are some immediate things that Igor could do to make the situation better?
2. How should Igor respond to the situation he finds at home?
3. Please state what you think Igor will want to talk about when he and Luba sit down for their talk.
4. What kind of burdens could Luba be carrying that she wanted to share with someone?
5. Igor's ministry requires him to be away from home frequently- sometimes for as much as a full week. How can he prevent another stressful occurrence like this?

6. How can he encourage her and help her to see herself as his partner in ministry?
7. How can a church planter with a family determine how much time he needs to reserve/set aside for caring for his family's needs?

II. SCENARIO TWO—ANDREA AND TIBOR

Andrea was rejoicing about the young father whom her husband, Tibor, had just led to the Lord. She was so happy for Tibor because he was being used greatly by the Lord. In the last six months the new church had grown from a couple of families to 15. They were encouraged in this ministry but Andrea still had these haunting concerns and feelings. She had told Tibor about her need to talk but it seemed as if he was always so busy with his ministry that they never had time to talk. He came home almost every evening very late and dead tired. He said that it would be better if they talked when he was alert, but then he was up and out of the house early in the morning to go to some meeting or to talk to some new convert or to teach a class at one of the several house churches which were meeting in their neighborhood. Besides her initial concerns, she was beginning to feel jealous. This church planting ministry was becoming a totally consuming love for Tibor that was taking her place in his life. She was feeling things that she didn't want to feel. She wanted to be supportive of Tibor and his ministry. That was her commitment to the Lord and to her husband. But she felt so isolated. This was a city that had no church before they came and until recently there were no believers. Now there were some women converts who were being disciplined but they would never be able to understand her life as the pastor's wife. She wanted to feel like she was a contributing part of Tibor's ministry, but up to this point she hadn't been involved and she hadn't been asked to be involved. What could she do to get Tibor to slow down long enough to talk about these burdens on her heart?

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. From the facts of the story does it seem that Tibor was communicating with Andrea about her needs as a wife and mother?
2. Do you think Tibor was involving Andrea in his church planting ministry? Was there partnership and unity in their lives?
3. In what ways is Tibor failing as a husband?
4. What practical advice can you suggest that would help Tibor to become better at communicating with his wife?
5. What do you have to say concerning "balance" in this marriage?
6. How is Tibor living out Ephesians 5:25-26?
7. How can Tibor involve Andrea effectively in his ministry?

III. SCENARIO THREE—NICU AND HIS FAMILY

Nicu had had a long week. He had made some major mistakes as a husband and a father. He had been humbled by his own sinful ways and now, after confession and repentance, life was taking on a positive look once again. But if anyone had asked him how he was doing these days, he would have had to admit that he was still angry. Here is the story:

One day his oldest son, Razvan, age 18 was watching a movie on their VCR in their home. He had borrowed it from one of his friends. Nicu walked into the room and sat down and joined Razvan. Soon after Lina, Nicu's wife, came into the room and joined them. After just a few minutes it became apparent to Lina that this movie was not appropriate for Christians to watch. She made her view known to Nicu and then left the room. Nicu followed her and explained that Razvan was old enough now to make decisions on his own about what he should watch and what he shouldn't watch. Lina argued that it was their responsibility as parents while any of their children lived in their home to determine what should be watched, read or talked about in their home. Nicu was angry with Lina for confronting him about this, especially in front of Razvan. It was embarrassing as the head of the house to be confronted by his wife. So in somewhat of a vengeful way he didn't agree with her point of view and allowed Razvan to finish the movie.

That night when they were ready to go to bed, Lina raised the issue again but Nicu refused to budge from his position. He was even angrier with Lina now and he refused to pray with her before going to sleep. The next morning after a very miserable night of sleep, Nicu got up to have his devotions. He couldn't concentrate on his Bible reading, he couldn't pray because he was so angry. At the breakfast table, he made the announcement to the entire family that no videos would be allowed to be shown in his home again and there were to be no exceptions. The other children had no idea what was going on but they could tell by their father's voice and the tears in their mother's eyes that there was something wrong between them. Nicu had felt terrible about the whole situation. He was a pastor. He was involved in starting a new church and telling people about the love of Christ and the joy of the Christian life. He had no love and joy in his life due to this problem. But there was more to it than that. He knew that his wife was right about his responsibility to set the spiritual tone in the home. He was just too proud to admit his failure. He also knew that he was disobeying Scripture because he was not loving his wife as Christ loves the Church. This anger he had been feeling was in fact anger at his own body because they were one flesh. He had to correct the situation. So at the next meal, when the entire family was together again, he apologized for several things he had done that were wrong. He did so in brokenness and tears and asked for forgiveness from his family. They prayed together and good healthy discussion followed about the place of videos in their home.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Razvan is 18 years old, a young man! Why does he feel free to show improper movies on his parent's TV?
2. As evidenced in Nicu's response to Lina, what essential Christian attribute is missing in his life?
3. Was family meal time an appropriate "meeting" time to discuss this, or any significant family problem?
4. What can you say about the communication and understanding between Nicu and Lina up to this point?
5. Should Nicu have been embarrassed by Lina's confronting him?
6. How can such occurrences be prevented in the future?

IV. SCENARIO FOUR—ANICKA AND MIREK

"See you soon!" Anicka called as she shut the door behind the last visitor. It was past midnight, and she had just enough energy to gather up the teacups and put them in the sink before slumping onto her bed. Her husband Mirek was already preparing for bed.

The phone rang early the next morning. Anicka ran to get it so that it wouldn't interrupt Mirek's study time. It was a friend from a neighboring city who was passing through town. "Could I stay at your house tonight?" he asked. It would mean extra work for her, but how could she say no?

Their life had certainly changed in the six months since they'd started planting the church. Anicka couldn't remember another time that had been so busy. When they weren't out in the neighborhood, it seemed as though the neighborhood was in their apartment. People were arriving for Bible studies, counseling, or meetings nearly every hour of the day. Anicka didn't resent that: other people were realizing what she already knew—that Mirek had a shepherd's heart. She tried to tell herself that she needed to be a supportive wife. But just because Mirek needed to be free to talk to people and help with their needs, did that mean that Anicka had to pick up all the rest of the duties?

Anicka thought back to the previous June, when they were sent out as church planters. Their pastor had encouraged them to work together and complement each other. The pastor knew that Anicka's gift of evangelism would be important in church planting. It proved to be true—the first new believers in their church were people Anicka had met and witnessed to. But now, she admitted to herself, she had little time to go out and do what she loved most: talk to others about Christ. Something had to change, and quickly.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Does Mirek and Anicka's lifestyle suggest that there is balance in their lives? Explain your answer.
2. What are Anicka's unvoiced expectations? What about Mirek's?
3. How could Mirek help his wife use her gifts?
4. Is it possible for spouses to be equal "partners in ministry?" (see Ac 18:24-26).

V. SCENARIO FIVE—RENATA AND HER FAMILY

Renata could tell by the look on her father's face that she had done something wrong. Did she forget a chore, or was this just his ongoing disapproval of her decision to follow Christ? She always tried to be careful to help around the house before going out to work with the church planting team. After all, her father made it clear that he felt a 26-year-old could better spend her time looking for a husband than leading a women's discipleship group.

Just that evening, the discipleship group had gone so well. Her co-worker Matthias had encouraged her to continue teaching women how to build the church and know Christ better. "I don't know what we would do without your help," he had said. "There's no way my wife could have led the group with two babies at home. We're so thankful that you're available."

Renata's mother entered the room and called her back to reality. "Renata," she started, "we need you to be home tomorrow night."

"Mom," Renata replied, "you know that's the night I meet with my team."

"Oh yes," her mother returned, sarcastically, "the important people in your life. How could I forget?"

Renata tried to control her temper and quickly stepped out of the room. She knew she was supposed to honor her parents, but the words she was tempted to say were far from respectful. Her feelings were a jumbled combination of anger and guilt. Why did she always react badly to her parents' comments? Why did they deliberately plan activities to keep her from what God had called her to?

More than anything, she wished she could afford to live on her own, but her work as a church planter meant she could only work part-time as a bookkeeper. Besides, it was still considered strange for a young, single woman to live outside of the shelter of her parents' household.

Sometimes Renata felt like she lived in two worlds: on the church planting team, she was praised and valued as a key player, and at home, she was criticized and treated like a slave. She knew which world she preferred, but she knew that, at least for now, she had to live in both of them.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Does the problem stem only from Renata's parents, or is she doing something to contribute to it? If so, what?
2. How can she honor her parents when they object to how she spends her time?
3. What would you suggest to Renata if she came to you seeking advice on her living situation?
4. What unique things must be considered when a single woman is helping to plant a church? How can other church planters be sensitive to those things?

STEWARDSHIP

STEWARDSHIP

1

LESSON

Introduction to Stewardship

Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to explain the significance of our stewardship before God. All that we have is His. Therefore we are not merely required to give a portion back to Him, but rather to use all that we have for His work and glory.

Main Points and Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- The key issue in stewardship is our faithfulness.
- Stewardship extends far beyond our money to include our possessions, our time, our spiritual gifts, etc.
- Know the principle of being a steward of God's possessions for Him.
- Understand that values are foundational to stewardship.

Suggestions to Trainers

Begin the session by asking trainees what things God has given to them. List these things on a chalkboard or overhead transparency.

Suggestions for Mentoring Time

1. Read 1 Timothy 4:11,12,16 and use it as a basis for your opening prayer time.
2. Personal Growth Question: How are you developing yourself physically, emotionally and mentally?
3. Discuss the questions in the text and at the end of the chapter.
4. Homework: Complete the Action Plan, Read the assigned Chapter(s) for the next meeting time.
5. Pray for ministry needs.

I. WHAT IS STEWARDSHIP?

Stewardship is the term used to describe the activity of a steward. A steward was one who controlled the possessions of his master. His role was a very responsible one, and it was vital that he be a person of honest character. The possibilities for theft or misuse of his master's possessions were great.

As we look at the principles concerning the steward we will see that true stewardship involves how we deal with the resources God has entrusted to us. This includes our:

- money
- time
- possessions
- bodies
- families
- ministry

II. WHY TALK ABOUT STEWARDSHIP? TWO ISSUES

A. The Issue of Faithfulness

Stewardship is being responsible with what God has given us. From man's first day on earth, we have been stewards of God. Man was created to have dominion over creation (Ge 1:28). The Lord placed Adam in the garden to till and to keep it for Him (Ge 2:15). Although man usually does not understand that he is simply a steward of the Lord's creation, the Scriptures clearly state that the earth and everything in it belongs to God (1Co 10:26). Whatever we possess is given to us by God to use for His glory. He is watching our faithfulness, and will reward us accordingly.

Discuss: What is faithfulness in regard to stewardship?

B. The Issue of Values

How people relate to the items listed before (in point I) shows where their heart is. As Jesus said "Where your treasure is there will be your heart also." In other words you can tell a lot about a person's heart by the way he treats his money or his valuable things.

Our values are the ideals or things that we think are important in life. Some people value possessions or comfort. Others value family or service to the community. We literally spend our life and our time on those things that seem essential and vital to us personally. In Matthew 22:37-39 we find what is sometimes called the 'Great Commandment', in which Jesus summarized all of the Bible's values in a two-part statement.

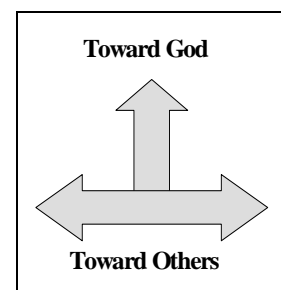
Our values are the ideals or things that we think are important in life.

1. *Our Highest Value Concerns Relationships with God—"Love the Lord Your God"*

Vertically speaking, we are to serve God. Loving and relating to God is our highest value. Since it is natural for us to spend time with those we love, each believer should spend personal time in study of God's Word and prayer. When we lose personal intimacy with the Lord, we miss God's blessing and lack power in ministry.

Serving God with all our ability is not an emotion for the moment, but a daily decision that involves all our resources. The more efficiently a believer utilizes his time, possessions, etc., the more effective he is in serving his Lord. Personal time with the Lord is something that needs to be planned into a church planter's busy schedule or it just won't happen. A healthy relationship with God is an essential prerequisite before moving on to serving others.

Fig. 1.1



2. *Our Other Values Concern Relationships with Others—"Love Your Neighbor As Yourself"*

Horizontally, we are to serve others. The relationship of love we have with God should spill over into love for others. 'Others' includes our families, co-workers, members of the church we belong to, and the lost with whom we share Christ. As stewards we should manage resources so that the needs of these 'others', those God has put in our care, are met.

Church planters are some of the busiest people in a community. Properly managing time, money and other resources will help a church planter be a better servant to others, by enabling purposeful ministry instead of allowing circumstances to control progress.

Before we can discuss stewardship in any more detail, we must check our values. The Great Commandment should be our guide concerning our values and priorities. Are you a person who loves God with all your heart and also loves others as yourself? If this is so, your stewardship should give evidence to that.

Discuss the above values in regard to stewardship.

III. STEWARDSHIP PRINCIPLES IN THE BIBLE

There are many examples of stewards in the Bible. Most of the wealthy people had stewards. Rather than personally concern themselves with administrating their daily affairs, they would hire a reliable, capable man as a steward. The steward did not have his own possessions. Rather, he was permitted to live in the master's house, eat at his master's table, and clothe himself from his master's possessions. Rather than have his own possessions, the steward had access to all the wealth of his master.

1. The Meaning of Stewardship

Several words are used in the Bible for the concept of stewardship. Translations vary, but the general meaning is still clear. Some of the terms used are as follows:

1) *Steward (oikonomos²)*

This is the most specific word for one who acted as a steward. He was responsible for the administration of his master's wealth. He had great authority in the household. The root of the word 'steward' is the same as the root of 'household.' This person was normally a slave, but was considered reliable enough to be chosen for this important task. This word is used in Luke 12:42, Luke 16:1-3, and 1 Corinthians 4:1.

2) *Overseer (epitropos³)*

This term seems to be used when the person is in a position of authority over other people. In Matthew 20:8 he is the paymaster for the workers. In Galatians 4:2 it refers to one who was responsible to tutor a child to maturity.

3) *Slave (doulos⁴)*

The slave belonged to another person. The steward was usually a slave, but not all slaves were called stewards. The slave did not necessarily have any authority over other slaves or over his master's wealth. If he did have this authority, the term 'steward' was appropriate. Examples of slaves who functioned as stewards are found in Matthew 24:45 and Matthew 25:14.

4) *Servant (doulos)*

In many translations, the same word is rendered as both 'slave' and 'servant.' It can carry both meanings. In the Bible times, there were slaves who existed in abject poverty and misery, and there were also servants who led a much better life. However, both belonged to another person, and so the same word was used.

5) *Stewardship (oikonomia⁵)*

Stewardship is the office or function of the steward, rather than the person. When we speak of our stewardship, we are referring to our responsibility to administrate something. Examples of this word are found in Luke 16:2, 1 Corinthians 9:17 and Ephesians 3:2.

From the usage of these words, we can form a reasonable picture of what stewardship means. The steward was normally a slave who was entrusted with the authority to administrate and care for his master's wealth, household, fields, business, other servants, or even to tutor his son.

The steward was a slave who was entrusted with the authority to administrate and care for his master's wealth.
--

Discuss: What is stewardship?

² οικονομον

³ επιτροπον

⁴ δουλον

⁵ οικονομια

2. Joseph—An Example of Stewardship

Joseph may be the best example of a good steward. He first managed the household of Potiphar, the Egyptian official who had purchased him as a slave (Ge 39). Although Potiphar was not a believer, he soon saw that God was with Joseph and prospered all that he did. Therefore Potiphar committed all that he had into Joseph's hands, except for his wife (Ge 39:9).

As the steward of Potiphar, Joseph was able to feed and clothe himself from his master's goods. He lived in Potiphar's house and directed both Potiphar's household and his fields. But the story of his temptation by Potiphar's wife clearly shows that Joseph never forgot that all these things belonged to his master and that there were limits to what he could do. He could enjoy the fruits of his labor as long as his master was pleased with his stewardship, and as long as he did not sin against Potiphar.

Later, Joseph again was made a steward, first of the jailer and then of Pharaoh himself. As steward of Pharaoh, he was the wealthiest man in Egypt after Pharaoh. However his position depended on his faithfulness to administrate the affairs of Pharaoh in a manner that pleased Pharaoh.

Discuss: What is Joseph's example of stewardship?

3. Stewardship in Parables

Because the steward was so common in biblical times, Jesus used parables about stewards to convey truth about the believer's relationship to God. What is the truth that Jesus wants to communicate to us through the image of the steward?

1) *The Good Steward Is Faithful*

In Luke 12:42-48 Jesus teaches that a steward must be faithful even when his master is not present. If his master returns suddenly to find him occupied with his master's business, he will be rewarded. But if he is not prepared for his master's return, he will be dealt with severely. This parallels the situation of the believer. Our Lord is gone, and will return suddenly. We need to be faithful in His absence.

2) *The Shrewd Steward Uses His Position to Prepare for the Future*

Jesus told another stewardship parable in Luke 16:1-12. This parable is a bit surprising, since the steward is praised for cheating his master. The parable certainly is not intended to promote dishonesty. Rather, it teaches a very clear message about the wisdom of using the things in our possession now to prepare for the future. The wicked steward realizes that his position is temporary, as is our life on this earth. He decides to use everything in his power to prepare for a good reception for himself when his job is over. Jesus said that he acted more wisely than we often do. We should be using all we have on earth to lay up treasure in heaven.

3) *Stewards Will Be Evaluated According to Their Ability*

The parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30 is very familiar to us. Each servant is entrusted with money while his master is gone. They are therefore stewards of those talents. However, they are not given equal amounts. Rather, each one received according to his master's evaluation of his ability. When the master returned, he rewarded each one for his faithfulness. The one who was given two talents received exactly the same praise as the one who received five. Only the one who squandered his talent was judged. The key issue was the steward's faithfulness and not the amount of things that he was given.

Discuss: How is stewardship portrayed in the parables?

4. The Accounting

The Apostle Paul also clearly taught that we are stewards of Christ. Church planters and leaders are especially responsible to minister the mysteries of God (1Co 4:1-2; Eph 3:2; Tit 1:7). He also taught that our master is coming back suddenly, at a time when we do not expect him (1Th 5:2). When Jesus returns for His church, He will judge whether we have been faithful in our service for Him (Ro 14:4-12; 2Co 5:10). Each of these passages is specifically addressed to Christians. The fact that Jesus will judge believers is even more clear in 1Corinthians 3:10-15. In that text, Paul describes how fire will test our works, and we will either receive a reward or suffer loss, depending on how we have served. This obviously refers to believers, since even the one who has nothing worthy of reward will be saved (v. 15).

IV. OUR STEWARDSHIP

1. Our Money

Most believers know that they should give a portion of their money to the Lord. However, a true understanding of stewardship results in a different attitude. Not only should we give, but we should not waste money nor should we spend it on things that are not pleasing to God. After all, it is His money. We do not have any money. We only have God's money entrusted to us. Either by giving it to the church or by spending it on the things that would please Him, we in essence give it back to God.

We do not have any money. We only have God's money entrusted to us.

2. Our Time

Our time is perhaps our most precious possession because there is no way we can increase it. We all have a certain number of days which have been given to us by God (Ps 139:16). He expects us to use them for His glory. When Jesus was taken up, the angels rebuked the disciples for standing around looking at the sky (Ac 1:11). They were to get busy with keeping His command to wait for the Holy Spirit and then to take the Gospel to all nations. Paul reminds us to be diligent to live godly lives, as the day of our salvation is drawing near (Ro 13:11-14). He also tells us to make use of every opportunity in these evil days (Eph 5:15-17). God has appointed tasks for each of us to do, and given us a limited time in which to accomplish them (Eph 2:10). We must carefully evaluate how we spend our time to make sure we do all that He desires for us to do.

3. Our Possessions

Even sincere believers often neglect this area. They may think that God wants a portion of their money, but that is all. If they have a very small monetary income, they may feel they need not give. In reality, the Bible never limits our giving to our money. The Old Testament tithe was normally given from the increase in livestock or crops. A large portion of the sustenance of the New Testament believers would also have been in a form other than cash. God desires for us to give a portion of *whatever* we receive. It may be a salary, potatoes from our garden, milk from our cow, or some other kind of income. The source is not important. God is the ultimate source of all we have, and He expects us to remember that and to honor Him from it.

A large portion of the sustenance of the NT believers would also have been in a form other than cash.

Are you willing to use the possessions God has entrusted to you to please Him and minister to others? The members of the Jerusalem church sold the things they possessed in order to be able to give to those in need (Ac 2:44). We are first introduced to Barnabas in Scripture when he sells his land to give its value to the church (Ac 4:36-37). God richly blessed him and chose him as the companion for the Apostle Paul.

4. Our Bodies

Few Christians think about this responsibility, but it is important. Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit (1Co 6:19), and for God's glory. Even though the Bible does not prohibit drinking alcohol, smoking or taking drugs, these things can damage that temple and hinder our ability to serve the Lord. Stewardship of this temple requires that we be careful to avoid that which is harmful to our health. This would also include lack of exercise or sleep, poor diet, or anything else that is harmful.

5. Our Families

Our families are our greatest gifts from God. If we cannot manage our families well, then we are not qualified to manage the church (1Ti 3:4-5). Our families do not interfere with our ministry. They are to be a part of it, and our family life should prepare us to minister effectively. As we grow in our ability to care for our families and lovingly instruct them in the Word, we learn to more effectively care for and instruct our brothers and sisters in Christ.

6. Our Ministry

1 Peter 4:10 tells us that all believers are to be faithful stewards of the grace of God by using their spiritual gifts to minister to others. A proper view of ministry will lift a burden from the shoulders of most church leaders. The ministry is God's ministry. It is His work and not ours. We are merely His servants, using His resources to complete the task. If we lack resources, He will supply them. If we are faithful, we will accomplish all that God desires. We need not feel a crushing burden if things are difficult. Rather, we need to wait on the Lord for His direction and strength.

It is imperative that we spend time with God each day. When we are sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading, we will make better choices, and the ministry will be more effective. Even Jesus felt the need to commune with the Father for wisdom. This is especially evident when He had a major decision to make, such as where to work (Lk 4:42-44) or who to choose as a disciple (Lk 6:12-16). We need the same wisdom. If we never forget that we are merely servants doing God's will, we will listen to Him often.

Discuss: For you, what is the easiest and hardest item to be a faithful steward toward?

V. STEWARDSHIP AND THE CHURCH PLANTER

Good stewardship is extremely important for church planters. They will need to use all their gifts, possessions, time and money well in order to plant a new church. They will also need to understand their responsibilities to care for their bodies and families as they balance them with ministry. They must apply stewardship principles to themselves and teach them to others.

1. Applied to Themselves

Church planters face a difficult task. They must rescue captives from the hand of a powerful unseen enemy and establish new strongholds for the Lord. They are not capable of such things in their own strength. But they are God's servants using His resources that He has provided for them to accomplish His work. He will provide all that is needed. Their responsibility is to use it carefully. Everything that they do, from giving to use of time, should be weighed in light of their need for His blessing and their role as His stewards.

Your example and consistent teaching will help new believers understand how to be good stewards.

If you have difficulty with stewardship it may be due to a lack of focus. Checking values can help bring focus. Are you characterized as a person who loves God and others? (Mt 22:37-39). Is the way you treat your time, possessions, body, family, ministry, etc. in harmony with this?

2. Taught to Others

Effective church planting requires the involvement of each member. From the time of their conversion, we need to teach each new Christian about his responsibility as a steward before God. Do not assume that others will learn to be good stewards on their own. **Our example and consistent teaching** will help new believers understand how to be good stewards.

Specifically, new believers should be taught to:

- Give generously from their money and other possessions.
- Find and use their spiritual gifts in ministry to build up the church.
- Give of their time for the ministry to believers and unbelievers alike.
- Care for their families in order to know how to care for other believers.

CONCLUSION

The Christian is a steward whether he knows it or not. All that we have is the Lord's and we are expected to use it for His glory. This principle applies to all believers—not just to church planters. But church planters have a special responsibility because we are the ones who must demonstrate this principle in our lives and teach it to others. To whom much is given, much will be required.

Discuss: What did you learn in this lesson?

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- What are the resources that God has supplied for you? List them.
- What areas described in point IV are the hardest to manage? Why?
- Can a poor person really give to the Lord? Should he or she? How much?
- What should new Christians be taught concerning stewardship?
- How are values important in the discussion of stewardship?

STEWARDSHIP

2

LESSON

Financial Stewardship

☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to show how sacrificial giving and self-supporting churches can enhance church planting success.

☞ Main Points and Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should

- God desires that we have the faith to give sacrificially to His work.
- Self-supporting churches grow faster than others.
- Understand how being self-supporting helps a church grow and mature.

☞ Suggestions to Trainers

Try to avoid a heated debate on the issue of tithing. The main point of this lesson is that we are responsible to use money for God's glory. Focus on that issue, which is relevant no matter what someone believes concerning tithing.

Be alert in the event that some in the training have experience in budgeting and could share it with others.

☞ Suggestions for Mentoring Time

1. Read James 2:1-9 and use it as a basis for your opening prayer time.
2. Personal Growth Question: What do you like to do in your free time?
3. Discuss the questions in the text and at the end of the chapter.
4. Homework: Complete the Action Plan, Read the assigned Chapter(s) for the next meeting time.
5. Pray for ministry needs.

I. EXPLORING THE BIBLE

The Bible has a lot to say about money. We have selected the following passages to help us understand God's mind concerning our financial giving.

1. Tithing in The Old Testament Law

The people of Israel were required to give a tithe, or ten percent of their produce, to the Lord and His work (Lev 27:30-32; Nu 18:23-24). In addition to these required tithes, there were also many other offerings and taxes that are called tithes. A serious Old Testament believer who attempted to keep the Law probably gave somewhere around 28 percent of his income back to God. This consisted mainly of livestock and produce from his fields.

Technical aspects of Old Testament tithing aside, the tithe was a personal spiritual discipline that God promised to respond to. Failure to give the tithe was considered by God to be robbery, since it belonged to Him. God challenged the Israelites to test Him on this, promising to pour out His blessing on those who brought the whole tithe to Him (Mal 3:8-12).

2. The Free-Will Offering for the Tabernacle

The tithe was by no means the only method for collecting funds in the Old Testament. During the wandering in the wilderness, God instructed Moses to collect a free-will offering from the people to build the tabernacle (Ex 25:1-8). The people gave of their livestock, their personal things, and even their labor in response to this call (Ex 35:4-29). They were not compelled to give but gave willingly. In fact, they gave far more than was necessary, so that Moses had to ask people to stop giving! (Ex 36:4-7).

3. David Models Giving for the Building of the Temple

David understood sacrificial giving, so much so that he refused to give to God that which cost him "nothing" (1Ch 21:24). King David sacrificially gave of his riches so the temple of the Lord could later be built by his son Solomon (1Ch 29:1-5). David's giving was an inspiring example to others, and after him the leaders of Israel gave (1Ch 29:6-9). David's prayer following this offering indicates his attitude about giving (1Ch 29:10-20). We learn that David gave with a spirit of praise and thanksgiving unto God. David also indicates that riches and wealth—everything belongs to the Lord (1Ch 29:16). Giving is simply an opportunity to return to God a small portion of what He has given. David even wonders out loud how God could allow him such a privilege as giving (1Ch 29:14).

4. Giving Out of Poverty

Jesus praised the widow who gave a tiny amount (Lk 21:1-4). He did this because her two small coins amounted to one hundred percent of her wealth. This event occurred before the church was established at Pentecost. Therefore even before the church age, when there is no question that God required a tithe, the Lord was pleased when believers freely offered more than that amount. It is also clear that He is interested and is watching to see how much we give.

There is another clear principle in this passage. The temple was an expensive building covered with gold (Mk 13:1; Mt 23:16). Certainly the temple did not need the poor widow's money. But Jesus was pleased that she gave it anyway because He considered that she gave it to God rather than to the temple. It did not matter that the religious rulers were hypocrites, or that He knew the Romans would destroy the temple in a few years. We give to God rather than to man. But we give to God through the church.

5. The Financing of New Testament Church Leaders

Spiritual leaders in the New Testament were supported in a variety of means. Jesus and the disciples were supported, in part at least, by the women who traveled with them (Lk 8:1-3). When Jesus sent his disciples to preach the Gospel in Galilee He instructed them to expect to be provided for by those to whom they would minister (Mt 10:10; Lk 10:5-8). As a servant of God, the Apostle Paul had the right to be supported financially by those among whom he ministered just as the Old Testament priests were supported (1Co 9:4-14). Here and elsewhere (1Ti 5:18). Paul encourages churches to support those who minister to them. For his own reasons, Paul did not always exercise his right to receive financial support from those to whom he ministered. For example, Paul received no financial support from the Corinthians, even though he could have requested it (1Co 9:12). Instead, Paul mostly supported himself through tentmaking in order to not be a burden on the church (Ac 8:2,3; 1Co 4:12).

We learn as well that the Philippians gave to Paul's ministry (Php 4:15-20). It is interesting to note that the often repeated phrase "*my God will meet all your needs*" is found in the context of Paul congratulating the Philippians for their giving. Paul knew that God would supply all the needs of the Philippians because they had given generously to his ministry. In other words, God will supply when we have faithfully given.

6. The Collection for the Jerusalem Saints

Paul set out to collect a special offering for the needy saints in Jerusalem who were experiencing a famine. In his first letter to the Corinthian believers he described exactly how the offering should be collected (1Co 16:1-2). He expected every believer to give willingly on the first day of each week (Sunday). No exact percentage was stated. Rather Paul asked for an amount "in keeping with their income."

In Paul's second letter to the Corinthians he again taught on this offering. Second Corinthians 8:1-6 and 9:6-11 contain perhaps the most challenging principles on giving in the New Testament. Paul begins by using the example of the giving of the Macedonian churches (2Co 8:1-6). They gave generously out of poverty, even more than they could humanly give (trusting God). The Macedonians were inspired by the fact that they had first given themselves to God.

Those who give this way enjoy a wonderful promise from God that He will reward them in proportion to their giving. Indeed, God will generously provide for our needs if we have the faith to give generously to Him (2Co 9:6-11; Lk 6:38).

Discuss: Why or why isn't tithing a problem in your church? How can people be influenced to tithe more?

II. PERSONAL GIVING

There is an important spiritual principle that runs through the Bible that every Christian should learn. The principle is very simple. In God's economy the ability to give and receive is not restricted to the available resources. In other words every believer, no matter how poor, should give. As explained in the treatment of many passages above, poverty is no excuse. Everyone is to give to God. Furthermore, when God's people give all they can in faith, it is always enough. God uses these gifts in miraculous ways multiplying them several times over. This is illustrated in the story of the widow of Zarephath (1Ki 17:7-16) and in the feeding of the 5,000 (Mk 6:30-44). In both cases, what was given was not much but it was all there was—and that was enough when in God's hands.

In God's economy the ability to give and receive is not restricted to the available resources.

Giving to God's work should be a regular practice of every believer's life. While most Christians are aware of this responsibility, opinions vary as to how much should be given. Is the tithe still required in the church age? If not, how much should we give? Many believe that tithing was a practice prescribed in the Mosaic law which, like the dietary laws, was not carried over to the New Testament (Ro 10:4; Gal 3:25). Others believe that since tithing pre-dated the Mosaic Law (Ge 14:19-20) and Jesus affirmed the practice, though showed concern about the motivation (Mt 23:23), that God expects us to observe the practice today.

All believers who have studied the New Testament passages on giving would probably agree that ten percent, a tithe, might be a good minimum for our giving to the Lord. It would seem that if a percentage was required in the Old Testament, the New Testament believer with his greater understanding of salvation might want to give more.

Regardless of the percentage of income that a believer decides to give, it is important to realize that income does not consist only of cash that is received as wages or salary. If all that we have belongs to the Lord, then a tithe should be given also for other types of income such as crops, livestock, etc. If a person receives little or no cash income, this does not mean that he is somehow exempt from tithing. He has other means by which he lives, and these resources should also be taken into consideration when he brings his tithe to the Lord.

The following principles guide giving for believers:

- Every believer should give.
- Our giving should be in proportion to our income, both cash and non-cash. Imagine if God made your income proportional to your giving!
- We are to give even in our poverty.
- We are to give with generosity and because we desire to – not because someone forces us. Giving must be from a willing heart in order to please God.
- We are to give more than we are able (trusting God).
- Our financial giving should follow the giving of ourselves to God. Giving is a demonstration of devotion to the Lord.
- God rewards us in proportion to our giving. God promises to generously provide for our needs if we have the faith to give generously to Him.

In Malachi, God promised the Israelites that He would open the storehouses of heaven and pour out His blessing if they gave. Today we have the same kind of promise. Stewardship means that all resources that have been entrusted to us belong to God. If we are faithful to give back to Him, then He will bless us beyond our need. If we forget to whom it belongs, and are stingy with Him, we will miss out on blessings from God. We have no guarantee that the blessing from God will be financial. God may bless the giver spiritually.

Discuss: How is personal giving different than tithing?

III. LOCAL CHURCH FINANCES

One of the responsibilities of the church is to handle the tithes and offerings of God's people with care and integrity.

1. Self-Supporting Churches

The tithe in the Old Testament enabled the temple, and later the synagogues, to support themselves financially. When all households gave 10% then, even with as few as 10 families, a new household, the household of God, could be established. With this in mind, it has been a Jewish custom to build a synagogue in any city that has 10 or more Jewish families.

Whatever one believes about tithing in the New Testament, the principle behind tithing, that a church can and should support itself, remains true. With the exception of the offering to Jerusalem due to a famine, it was normal in the New Testament for each church to take care of its own financial needs. For example, Paul told the Galatians to support their own teachers (Gal 6:6). He told Timothy to teach churches to care for their poor and widows (1Ti 5:3-10), and to pay their teachers of God's word (1Ti 5:18).

Churches which take the responsibility to support themselves tend to grow and multiply faster.

Research will show that churches who take the responsibility to support themselves tend to grow and multiply faster than those which do not. There are several advantages to self support:

1) *Self Support Develops Maturity*

Dependency on others outside the local church can lead to a poor sense of dignity and lack of opportunity to develop. However, when a church supports its own ministry and manages its finances, it develops maturity through the decisions that come with such a responsibility.

2) *Self Support Builds Responsibility*

It is common for a worker who receives funds from another church or agency to feel more responsible to those who pay his salary than to the church he ministers to. In such a situation, needs can go unmet as the leader focuses on the needs of his "employer" rather than the needs of the flock. The opposite is likely to be true as well. Church members may not feel responsible for the needs of their leaders and may take the leaders for granted. For whatever reason, givers tend to feel a sense of ownership for the things they give to (Mt 6:19-21). In other words, people highly value what they invest in. It is essential that local people own the ministry of the church for it to flourish in their community.

3) *Self Support Exercises Faith*

Self-support may bring many trials and difficulties. However, the trials are opportunities to grow in faith (1Pe 1:6-7, Jas 1:3-4). Self-support really is a faith issue. The absence of self-support is often not due to poverty, but is due to lack of faith. There are examples of both poor people who are able to support their own churches, as well as people with riches who expect outsiders to support their church. The question is "Will God provide for His people or won't He"? People of faith will answer that affirmatively. Is it wise to pray for God's provision and not be willing to be the answer to that request? Obviously it is not wise. To do so would be "faith without works." However, when God's people give sacrificially and with faith, believing that God is faithful, God gives back in ways that they could not have imagined.

4) *Self Support Improves Testimony to the Lost*

When a church is supported by foreign funds then the perception is that the faith proclaimed by the church is a foreign faith. This often hinders the community witness. This is especially true for salaries. When people receive salaries from a foreign source they may be considered hired salesmen instead of true believers with an authentic faith. On the other hand, when members of the church support the ministry sacrificially there can be little doubt about their loyalty.

If a church expects outsiders to pay the bills, will they also expect outsiders to evangelize the community?

5) *Self Support Allows for Unlimited Growth*

When funds come from an outside source then there is nearly always a limit to the funds. Often the system requires investing resources to promote the ministry to potential supporters. In other words, it costs money to receive money. There is also the fear that funds could be cut off at any time. The result is that there is a limit to how much money can be received, and the church does not grow. On the other hand, in a self-supporting church where people are taught to give, funds will increase as new people are won to Christ and incorporated into the church. As the church grows the giving increases so that there is no limit on what can be done.

When a butterfly is born it must endure a great struggle to escape from the cocoon. A well meaning observer may wish to help the butterfly out of the cocoon. But if he does, he actually hinders the growth and development of the butterfly so that the butterfly is likely to die soon after emerging from the cocoon. According to God's design, the exercise of climbing out of the cocoon is just the exercise needed to develop the strength necessary for life as a butterfly.

The same can be true of a new church. If it does not learn to support itself early on, it may remain dysfunctional forever, never learning the joy and strength of self-support. Each new church should have the opportunity to mature in its own faith and follow God's plan of support and growth.

Discuss: How do finances affect church growth?

2. **Managing Church Finances**

Managing finances in the church must be seen not as normal business or administration, but as a spiritual ministry.

1) *Teach Systematic Giving*

Whatever you believe about tithing, emphasize the joy of giving, not the law of tithing! Biblical giving, whether a tithe or not, is an act of faith, a symbol that all one has belongs to God. When people give willingly they often give more and receive a greater blessing.

Leaders should give as an example to others. Recall how King David's giving was an example to other leaders and to the whole nation of Israel (1Ch 29:1-20). The pastor or church planter who does not emphasize giving in order not to appear greedy does not do others any favor. He deprives his people of the privilege of participating in the ministry, and the church loses the resources that God in His wisdom has provided.

Lack of stewardship can also hinder the planting of other churches. Small groups of even ten families who are giving ten percent or more of their income can easily support a pastor at the same level at which they live. However, if they do not understand their responsibility to give, the church planter will need to find resources elsewhere that could be used to plant another new church. It should be clear that this is not pleasing to the Lord, who wants us to saturate our countries with churches and disciples and thus fulfill the Great Commission.

The pastor or church planter who does not emphasize giving in order not to appear greedy does not do others any favor

2) *Develop an Acceptable System for Expenses*

Christians around the world have different methods for managing church finances. Regardless of the method, it is important that Church leaders estimate the cost (Lk 14:28-30) in planning for ministry. Many churches, taking this responsibility seriously, write a budget which is simply an estimate of how much money will be needed for a certain period of time. A budget might include expected expenses for the following:

- Administration/planning
- Charitable ministries
- Discipleship/training ministries
- Evangelism
- Facilities/equipment
- Missions
- Salaries
- Worship

Budgets may be written (perhaps annually) by those who handle the finances (finance committee) but should be approved by the spiritual leaders of the fellowship. Budgets should be written prayerfully with ministry goals in focus.

3) *Train and Release the Church Treasurer*

People will hesitate to give if they feel that the money will not be managed well. The guidelines in (Figure 2.1) are suggestions for managing finances in a responsible, honest fashion.

In your ministry you may or may not choose to write a budget. You may not choose to use the guidelines suggested. The important thing is not the form, but the function. A system for collecting and distributing funds should include: several people, prayerful planning, accountability, regular collecting, careful record keeping, and regular reporting.

Discuss: How do we manage church finances?

IV. FINANCING AND CHURCH PLANTING MOVEMENTS

Church planting movements normally require finances to support ministry at a variety of levels, from the local mobilization level to the infrastructure at the highest levels. People must be trained and mobilized, material must be produced and disseminated, leaders must meet to pray and sharpen vision, research must be done, churches must be planted. All this requires finances. Where do these finances come from?

Since the advance of the Gospel requires funding, giving is an important component of church planting movements. A movement is driven by faith, and people of faith give or their faith is dead. Jesus described a spiritual mystery related to financial giving when he said, "*For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also*" (Mt 6:21). As a person gives financially and substantially *according to one's means*, the person becomes committed in the heart to their investment. If someone saves money and pours it into a house, or a car, or education—whatever they paid for—this is what they will treasure and love. The same will happen if someone gives to advance the Gospel from a heart of love for Jesus. Giving to God's work increases a person's interest in it *from the heart*, transforming them inwardly and outwardly.

Those who are involved in a movement must be willing to give sacrificially to it, or the movement has no heart-felt following. Something very powerful happens when people decide that a ministry or program is *theirs* and that its success or failure depends on God's work through them alone. Foreign financial support can help church planting movements, but in the long run foreign support means the agenda is set by outsiders. In essence then it belongs to someone else. This can kill a movement.

Figure 2.1 Guidelines for Managing Tithes and Offerings

- Offerings should be received and accounted for by at least two members of the church.
- Accurate records should be kept detailing the amounts given at all offerings.
- All persons who count offerings should sign their names, indicating that the amount is correct.
- A finance committee of at least three members should be responsible for overseeing the disbursements of the offerings according to the guidelines established by the official church leaders.
- A treasurer should be appointed from the membership to keep a careful record of all church funds. The treasurer should keep church money in a safe place for future use.
- Offerings that are given for specific purposes should be used for only that purpose.
- Annual financial reports showing what was received and how it was disbursed should be made available to all members.

Is it possible for movements to be sustained by local financial support? The answer, as you might expect, is "*Yes, it is possible.*" Where people have a burning vision and driving faith for church planting movements, God provides the resources, as can be testified to by believers around the world. India, one of the poorest nations in the world by most economic standards has several examples. The Friends Missionary Prayer Band is an indigenous movement that supports 1,000 Indian missionaries and has 30,000 prayer supporters. The ministry operates without outside funding. Instead, 10 members of a prayer band support their own evangelist.

CONCLUSION

In God's design, individuals as well as churches are to develop in maturity and faithfulness before God. Remaining in a state of dependency does not promote the maturity and faith that is necessary for the mission God has given to us. Many believers find it difficult to trust God with financial matters. But God invites us to put Him to the test in this area. If you find it difficult to give to God's work then bring that before the Lord. He will prove faithful.

Discuss: How does finances relate to church planting?

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- Are you willing to give above your means, like the Macedonians?
- What should new Christians be taught concerning giving?
- Do you determine the amount of your tithe based on your cash income only, or also on other resources with which God has blessed you?
- How would you explain giving to a non-Christian who thinks that churches only ask for money?
- What effect does outside funding have on a local church?

ACTION PLAN

- Record your income from all sources (including non-cash) and your giving for a week or a month. This is between you and God. Calculate what percentage you give to Him. Are you pleased with this? Is He?
- Divide your church's total offerings for a month by the number of adults represented to find the average monthly giving per adult. Multiply that figure by ten to see how much each adult would have to live on each month if their giving really represented a tithe. How do you think your church is doing? Do they need more instruction in this area? If so, develop a plan to teach them. Remember that the purpose of this is to help them understand stewardship, and not to enact a legalistic requirement of giving which you will enforce. God loves those who give freely.

SOURCES

- Pate, Larry. *Starting New Churches*. International Correspondence Institute. Irving, TX: 1984.
- Swartz, Glenn. *Dependency Among Mission Established Institutions; Exploring the Issues*. Lancaster, PA: World Missions Associates, 1996.

MULTIPLYING CHURCHES

**MULTIPLYING
CHURCHES**

7

LESSON

Church Multiplication

☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to equip the trainee with the skills and knowledge which are necessary to be able to facilitate church multiplication.

☞ Main Points and Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Multiplication in churches must be intentional.
- Clusters facilitate the natural process of multiplication.
- Understand why it is necessary for a church to reproduce itself.
- Understand how to use “clusters” to help with the multiplication process.
- Learn how to deal with several typical barriers which can make it difficult for a church to multiply.

☞ Suggestions for Mentoring Time

1. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:4-6 and use it as a basis for your opening prayer time.
2. Personal Growth Question: Are there any situations that you have not been able to solve that are affecting your joy and peace?
3. Discuss the questions in the text and at the end of the chapter.
4. Homework: Complete the Action Plan, Read the assigned Chapter(s) for the next meeting time.
5. Pray for ministry needs.

I. THE GOAL OF MULTIPLICATION

The group was meeting together for the last time. Things couldn't have been worse. Their leader was leaving, the apprentice was unreliable, others in the group were squabbling and vying for positions of prominence, and one member was about to be exposed for embezzlement, fraud, and disloyalty. Defeat and fear permeated the atmosphere of the room as the leader stood to speak. He said,

"Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God . . ."

The leader was Jesus, the dysfunctional group was the twelve disciples, and the meeting took place just hours before His arrest, trial, and execution. In spite of the advanced deterioration of this group's morale during the multiplication stage, by the power of the Holy Spirit, it survived to multiply again and again. Within a generation, its numbers had increased exponentially to fill the Roman Empire.

In the same way, each church which is approaching the multiplication phase needs to consider Jesus' words: *"Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God..."* (Jn 14:1).

No matter how difficult this transition may seem, multiplication in a church is for the greater good of the Kingdom of God. Our ultimate goal in church ministry is the fulfillment of the Great Commission. Our method of approaching that goal is through churches which evangelize, disciple believers, equip leaders, and reproduce. Without reproduction, this goal will never be reached.

Our ultimate goal in church ministry is the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

Multiplying churches makes it possible not only to see new churches started, but also to help develop and advance a saturation church planting movement in a region or nation. Multiplying churches naturally contribute to the small “grassroots” activities of evangelism, discipleship and leadership development which are necessary in order to see a movement of new churches started.

In many ways, multiplication is the culmination of many months of effort. It is an important occasion for the group, and one which should be encouraged and celebrated. Although there are several things that the leader can and should do to prepare the group for multiplication, perhaps the most important is simply to trust in God, that He will lead the one group to become two. By His power and the leading of the Holy Spirit, multiplication is a process which will happen over and over again in the churches.

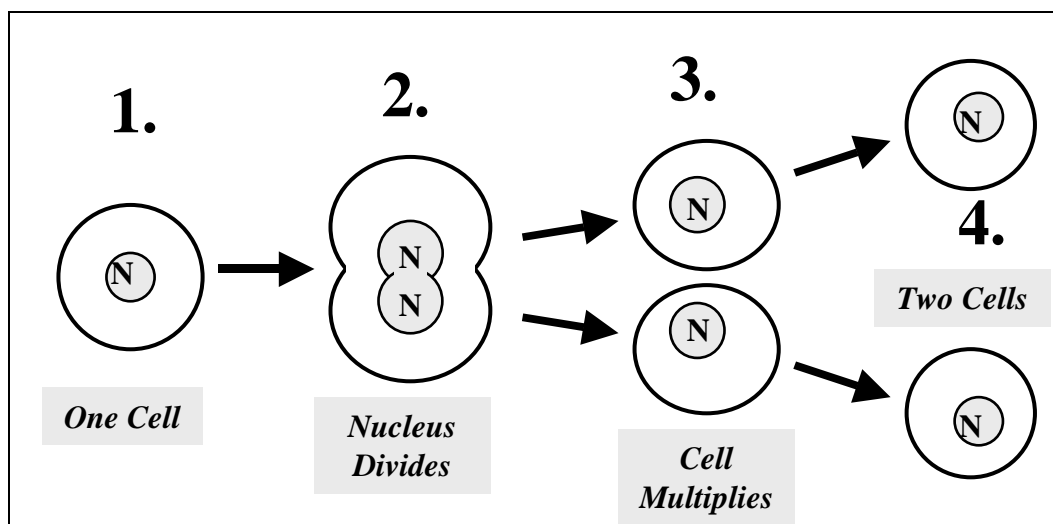
Discuss: What is the goal of multiplication?

II. THE PROCESS OF “NATURAL” MULTIPLICATION

1. Biological Multiplication

In biology, cells multiply by a process of growing and duplicating themselves. Each cell has a nucleus (shown as “N” in Figure 7.1), which controls the activity of the cell. As the cell is nourished and grows, the one nucleus begins to grow and develop into two nuclei. When the right amount of growth has taken place, the one cell multiplies into two, each with its own nucleus. This process of growth and duplication continues over and over again, as long as the cells are nourished and can grow.

Figure 7.1. Biological Cell Multiplication



Multiplication in churches also happens in a way similar to biological cell reproduction. Each group has a leader, who provides the right “conditions” for the group to grow and be nourished. If the group is not nurtured and developed (i.e. spiritual growth and evangelistic outreach), the group will not grow. The leader provides the example, teaching, and incentive to the group members to reach out to the people around them. Through the working of the Holy Spirit, these friends and acquaintances are brought into the group and have opportunity to learn about Jesus and receive Him as their Savior.

As the group continues to grow in maturity, the leader also begins to work with an apprentice leader. This new leader learns from the words and actions of his mentor, and in many ways becomes an imitator (1 Co. 11:1) of the mentor. When the apprentice leader is mentally and spiritually prepared to lead his own group, the original group will multiply into two groups. Each group has its own leader, and can begin the process of growing and multiplying again.

When the apprentice leader is mentally and spiritually prepared to lead his own group, the original church will multiply into two groups.

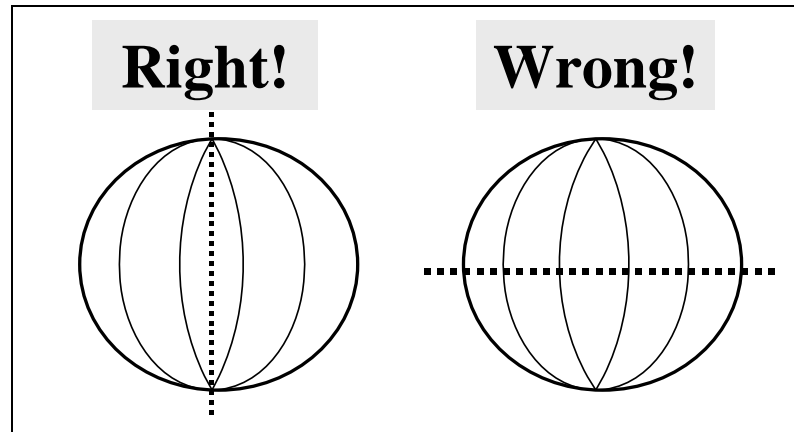
God created biological cells with the purpose and ability to duplicate themselves. However, without the right conditions for growth and development, this will not happen, and the cells will eventually die. Churches also have the potential to grow, develop and duplicate themselves. In the same way as a biological cell, without the right conditions for growth, this will not happen in a church.

Discuss: What is natural multiplication?

2. Natural Clusters

Imagine a church where the leader is holding two large, juicy oranges. He asks for two volunteers from the group to each peel one of the oranges and then divide it in half. However, they each must use a different method to do this. The first person must divide his orange in half crosswise, along its equator. The second person must divide his on the north-south axis, along the naturally occurring segments.

Figure 7.2 Dividing an Orange



You can imagine what will happen with each orange. A parallel can be drawn to what can happen in churches when it is time to form two groups from the one. A group torn apart, without regard for the naturally occurring friendships within the group, can make a big mess. If you split a group arbitrarily, by numbers, by geographical boundaries, or by some means other than natural relationships, you may end up with many injured group members.

However, if you identify naturally occurring clusters of relationships within your group and then divide the group by these clusters, the result will be much more beneficial. To encourage the formation of these clusters, start early in the group's life to experiment with different compositions. Observe how your members naturally divide into sub-groups of three, four, or five members. Note who gravitated toward whom, and who took leadership. Try this for three or four weeks to see if any specific clusters are naturally developing.

Identify naturally occurring clusters of relationships within your group and then divide the group by these clusters.

You may wish to plan for the formation of these sub-groups by drawing a diagram of the relationships. What groups of three, four, or five people are most alike? Who has children with similar ages? Similar jobs? Similar interests? Who has previously developed friendships or networks of relationships? You can allow these sub-groups to form on their own, or you can encourage certain people in the church to form a sub-group based on what you know about their personalities and interests. Clusters will be, in a sense, "mini churches." You will want to meet as a large group for most of the meeting, but you can dismiss into clusters for Bible study, for prayer or for sharing.

Your apprentice leader should either naturally, or by your suggestion, begin to work with one of the clusters. If there are several clusters in your church, have your apprentice work with the cluster which seems to have the greatest potential for becoming a new "daughter" church. By being involved, the apprentice leader will develop closer relationships with these members and will be better prepared to lead them when it is time to start a new group. This also contributes to a better pastoral care within your group. Many people will talk more freely in a smaller group of three to five than they would before a larger group of ten or more people. Linking people into a cluster means that their absence will be noticed more quickly. They will realize that their presence is needed, and they will be touched by the others in such a way that they will become more committed to the group.

Clusters can also be used to help identify potential apprentice leaders. Experience has shown that in a small group of people, one person will always naturally emerge as the leader if no one has been assigned that role. As a leader is prayerfully determining who might become the apprentice leader, he or she can examine the clusters to see which members are naturally emerging as "leaders" of the clusters. These are people whom the leader should pray about and perhaps approach about becoming an apprentice leader.

Discuss: What is the main point of this section?

3. Steps to Multiplication

Multiplication is intentional – the leader and members of the group must set this goal before themselves, and actively work towards reaching that goal. This is the only way that multiplication will be seen as a natural part of the life cycle. If the leader does not make multiplication a priority, the members of the group will not make it a priority, either.

1) *Preparing Ahead for Multiplication of the Cell Group*

The leader should prepare the church for multiplication throughout the life of the church. In order to provide the right “conditions” for growth and multiplication, the leader has several responsibilities:

- The leader must continually give a vision to the members that their one group will develop into two. This vision must start when the group starts, not several weeks before it is time to multiply. He should explain why multiplication is good and necessary to help fulfill the mandate which Christ gave us in the Great Commission.
- The leader must encourage the group to reach out to the unbelievers in their network of relationships. Without numerical growth, there is no need to multiply.
- The leader must provide an environment in the group where discipleship takes place between the believers. Without spiritual growth, the need to multiply may not be clearly understood.
- The leader must mentor an apprentice leader who will take the responsibility for leading one of the two groups. As the time for multiplication approaches, the apprentice must develop an overall goal for his new group, as well as a plan for at least the first several meetings. The leader should review this with the apprentice and offer advice or suggestions.
- There must be a planned date when multiplication will happen. The leader must hold the group accountable to completing the process of multiplication on or near that date.

2) *Implementing the Multiplication of the Cell Group*

Assuming that a leader has done all these things, how should the church actually be multiplied?

- Discuss the upcoming changes with the group. People who have never before been in a group which has multiplied will be, in varying degrees, apprehensive about multiplication. They mistakenly believe that the strength of the group consists in who belongs to it rather than to Whom it belongs. Take their fears seriously and help them through. During the multiplication process, LISTEN, PRAY, & ENCOURAGE. Do all you can to keep discouragement or negativity from becoming the dominant force. Read and meditate on John 14-17 to gain spiritual insight on how Jesus handled the multiplication stage with his group of disciples.
- Determine who will lead which group. In some cases, when a church multiplies, the apprentice leader will become the leader of the “daughter” church. However, this depends entirely on the group itself, and it is just as acceptable for the current leader to begin working with the new group, while the apprentice leader becomes the leader of the original group. This sometimes works well when the members of the new group are not as spiritually mature as are the members who stay with the original group.
- Decide who will join the new group and who will stay with the original group. The leader needs to ask the group members to pray and decide which group God wants them to be a part of. He or she should not ask which leader they would like better. This can create competition, disunity, stress and an uncomfortable situation for everyone involved. The leader should not presume or choose which members will go with which groups. Any suggestions should be made carefully without even the appearance of coercion or manipulation. Rely on the Holy Spirit to arrange the groups the way He wants.

Sometimes when a group multiplies, the apprentice leader becomes the leader of the “daughter” church.

- Choose a meeting location for the new group. The new group needs to decide where it will meet. This might be in the home of the new leader or in the home of one of the new group members. It is important to decide on a location and to make arrangements to use it. The new group members need to feel a sense of stability, security and identity in the place where they will meet together.
- Plan to meet with the apprentice leader to continue to mentor him/her in the new group. The leader must plan to spend time with his apprentice leader after multiplication happens. The first several weeks and months of the new group will be the most difficult for the new leader. Having a mentor close by to pray with and discuss problems with will be immensely helpful for the new leader.
- As a group, decide when the last meeting date of the original group will be, and plan to make it a celebration! Review and give thanks for all the things God has done in and through the group. Pray for each other and for the future of both groups. Rejoice that through two groups, more people can be reached with the love of Christ. Show the group the importance of this step in helping to fulfill the Great Commission. Have a special "commissioning" for the new leader and group members – gather them together and pray for them, that God will use them mightily in their new group.

Each time a new church is started, there are naturally some doubts, fears and uncertainties. What if the new group is not as "good" as the original group? What will change? How will the relationships be different? It is important to remember that the new group will be significantly different from the old one. Don't expect that everything will be the same as it was in the original group, because it won't. The Holy Spirit desires to work through the lives of the believers in the new group in a unique and special way.

Perhaps most important is simply to trust that God is in control and that He will guide and direct both the old and the new groups. Jesus said in John 14:27, "*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.*" These are words to live by, and especially during the time when a group has reached the phase of multiplication.

Discuss: What are the steps to multiplication?

III. BARRIERS TO MULTIPLICATION

The topic of multiplying churches is of great interest among members and leaders. Two dynamics in churches wage war one against the other. The first is the fact that multiplying a group is healthy for both the group and the kingdom. The second is the fact that, left to their own devices, very few groups ever would multiply. Multiplying is perceived as a potentially painful event, a split which severs relationships. People want to get together and stay together. They rarely realize that the group that focuses only on its own members and needs will grow stale or die within one or two years.

Left to their own devices, very few groups ever would multiply. People want to stay together.

In any group, there are some common barriers which can prevent multiplication from happening. The following table describes some of these barriers, and offers suggestions to the leader as to how he or she can overcome them. Of course, there may be other barriers or hindrances which are unique for your culture or context. If so, try to think about how you could possibly overcome those barriers so that multiplication can happen in your churches.

Table 7.1 Barriers to Cell Multiplication

Problem	Suggestions
The group does not understand the importance of multiplication.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The leader must not only give a vision for multiplication, but he or she must also explain <u>why</u> multiplication is so important. The members must understand what benefits there are for the group and for the advancement of the Kingdom of God.
The group understands the need to multiply, but they are comfortable with each other and do not want to split.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pray that the Holy Spirit will give you wisdom in understanding your group and your unique situation. Stress the importance of multiplication and explain that it is the next step in the natural progression of the life of the group. Demonstrate how multiplication is being obedient to God's command to "go and make disciples" in Mt. 28:19. Through multiplication, your church has an important and active role in helping to fulfill the Great Commission. Pray about dividing the group along natural lines, using the cluster concept.
There is no apprentice leader.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First, the leader must spend time in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to give him wisdom about whom to choose. Then, he must purposefully make this choice and begin to disciple and mentor the apprentice. Use clusters in your church to possibly identify naturally emerging leaders. Pray about these people as potential apprentice leaders for a new church. For guidelines on choosing an apprentice leader, review the Multiplying Churches lesson in Manual 2, "Training New Church Leaders"
There is disagreement about who goes with which group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If your group has several clusters, consider using one or more clusters to start the new group. Consider lines of natural relationships in the group. Ask each group member to pray and ask the Holy Spirit to make it clear to him/her which group to be with. Conduct an open and honest discussion in the meeting to find out the reasons for the lack of unity in this decision.
The members feel the apprentice is not yet qualified to be a leader.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wait to start the new group until the apprentice is ready. Involve the apprentice in ALL aspects of ministry with you. Have the apprentice do more and more of the ministry in the group. Have the leader do less and less ministry. Set a new date for the apprentice to become a leader and strive to develop him or her mentally, emotionally and spiritually before that time.

There can be barriers to multiplication in any church, but if the leader thinks about the possible problems beforehand and works proactively to overcome the barriers before they become problems, many of them can be avoided altogether. The most proactive thing which the leader can do is to continually keep the vision and benefits of multiplication before the group from day one.

Discuss: Which of the above barriers are you currently facing?

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- How does multiplication help to advance a saturation church planting movement?
- What are "natural clusters"? How can they be used to help a group move through the multiplication phase? What can happen when a group is ready to multiply and the members are divided arbitrarily, without consideration for the relationships in the group?
- How can clusters be used to help identify potential new leaders?
- What is the most common barrier to multiplication? How can it be overcome?

ACTION PLAN

- Clusters will sometimes just naturally occur. If your groups do not already have clusters in them, consider using them during different parts of the meeting. Do you see any benefits to using clusters in your groups?
- Begin to think about what needs to happen in each of your groups in order to reach the goal of multiplication. Write down five things that you will do in the next three months in order to move your groups closer to multiplication.
- Think about potential barriers to multiplication in each of your groups. What can you do ahead of time to overcome them and to avoid problems when it is time to multiply?
- Develop a plan for multiplication in your groups. Be sure to include your apprentice leaders in this process so that they will also be equipped to plan for the multiplication of their groups. Pray about and include in your plan a multiplication date for each group. Find someone that will hold you accountable to implementing this plan for multiplication.

SOURCES

- Portions of this lesson were quoted with permission from an article entitled, *Multiplication* by Dan Smith (Small Group Network, 1996. <http://smallgroups.com>).
- Logan, Robert. *Multiplication of Cell Groups*. Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co., n.d.

PREACHING

PREACHING
1
LESSON

Biblical Preaching

UNDERSTANDING THE MESSAGE

☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to explain how to compose a message that will be faithful to the intent of the text and communicate the main point of the passage clearly.

☞ Main Points Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- A message should identify and communicate the message of the Bible rather than the speaker's own thoughts.
- There are many possible kinds of message structures. The choice is influenced by the text, the audience, and the speaker.
- Understand how to use the *subject* and *complement* in order to simplify and clarify the main point of the passage.
- Know the main structural points of a message.
- Know some of the various kinds of messages that can be presented.

☞ Suggestions for Mentoring Time

1. Read Hebrews 11:1-3, 6 and use it as a basis for your opening prayer time.
2. Personal Growth Question: If you could change one thing in your church what would that be?
3. Discuss the questions in the text and at the end of the chapter.
4. Homework: Complete the Action Plan, Read the assigned Chapter(s) for the next meeting time.
5. Pray for ministry needs.

INTRODUCTION

Biblical preaching is a divine and human enterprise. In preaching, God speaks to the minds and hearts of people bringing them to faith and maturity in Christ, but He does so through human communicators. The three primary agents in the process are the Word of God, the Holy Spirit, and the preacher. *The preacher's responsibility is to make sure that he is communicating God's message in the power of the Holy Spirit.*

The overall purpose of a biblical message is to persuade people to believe the information presented and act on it. For that to happen, the preacher's objectives are to communicate the truth of the Word in a way that will:

- convince the mind
- awake the imagination
- move the will
- prick the conscience
- touch the emotions

Discuss the above preaching objectives.

There are three main factors that affect whether or not these objectives will be achieved. They are 1) the message, 2) the audience, and 3) the speaker. The message must accurately reflect what God wants to communicate. The audience must see the relevance of the message to their lives. And the speaker must present the message in such a way that makes it clear and does not detract from it. Each of the lessons in this track will focus on one of these three aspects.

As we consider constructing and delivering a biblical message, we are making several assumptions:

- We want the message to be based on the meaning of God's Word, rather than on our own thoughts, or ideas that we may have heard from others.
- We have used the inductive method to discover the meaning of the passage that we will preach to others.
- We are in a situation where a 'one-way' form of communication such as preaching will be more effective than a 'two-way' method such as leading an inductive Bible study or simply having a conversation about the Lord.
- Some, but not all of the trainees will need to deliver sermons in a normal preaching context. However, principles of good biblical preaching are applicable in many settings: church congregations, youth meetings, women's groups, evangelistic meetings etc. Female as well as male communicators will benefit from them.

Some, but not all, of the trainees will need to deliver sermons in a normal preaching context.

I. INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY—A SOLID BASE

Basing the message on an inductive study of a biblical passage is the best way to ensure that we are presenting God's message and not our own thoughts. Therefore, a prayerful disciplined study of the passage is essential if the preacher is to be certain that he is indeed presenting God's message. Remember that we study the Bible inductively in order to discern the original intent of the author.

In as much as we understand and then preach the original intent of Scripture, then we are preaching the Word of God and not our own ideas. Bible Study Methods Lessons 2-7 in Manual One explain how to do an inductive Bible study. Review the principles of observation, interpretation and application from those lessons.

Discuss: How does inductive study give a solid base?

II. THE MAIN IDEA OF THE MESSAGE

One common thread is woven throughout all of the discussions regarding effective public speaking. An effective speaker constructs his message around a single significant idea. This has been true of classical rhetoricians, modern communication theorists and accomplished preachers. Because our minds seek unity and order, it is essential that we preach in such a way that these characteristics are obvious to our listeners.

We build our sermons around one central idea, and everything that is said should directly or indirectly support that theme. Thus it is important to select a passage of Scripture that does have a central idea. If your chosen passage has several central ideas, you probably have material for several sermons instead of just one.

We build our sermons around one central idea, and everything that is said should directly or indirectly support that theme.

1. Clarify the Main Idea (Theme)

It is often helpful to state the central idea of a passage by identifying two essential elements: the *subject*, and the *complement*. This method is similar to stating the biblical principle in the interpretation stage of the inductive method. However, 'biblical principles' that result from inductive study often tend to be somewhat long or complex. By starting with the principle of the passage, and identifying the *subject* and *complement*, we can often make the main idea shorter and easier to handle in a message, while retaining the meaning of the text.

The *subject* defines the topic or object that the passage talks about. This is normally a person, place, thing, or idea. It can be expressed by a simple noun, and as such, does not usually form a complete thought. The *subject* of a particular passage might be love, discipleship, Jesus, the Church, repentance, etc. In some cases, the *subject* might be a phrase that functions like a noun. Examples of these kinds of subjects are: "Loving God," "forgiving others," "being filled with the Holy Spirit," or "a desire to please the Lord in everything."

The *complement* is a phrase which 'completes' the subject by explaining what the passage is saying 'about the subject.' A *complement* also may not make sense by itself, but when added to a *subject*, it forms a complete thought or idea that makes sense and is easily communicated.

Discuss: How do you clarify the main idea?

Table 1.1 Subject and Complement

Text:	Subject:	Complement:	Main Idea:
Pr 9:10	The fear of the Lord	... is the beginning of wisdom.	The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.
Ro 8:32	God, Who gave us His Son	... will give us everything we need.	God, Who gave us His Son, will give us everything we need.
Heb 10:14	Christ's one sacrifice	... has made us perfect forever.	Christ's one sacrifice has made us perfect forever.
Ro 1:16	The Gospel	... is the power for God for salvation.	The Gospel is the power for God for salvation.
1Co 15:55	Death	... has lost its power over the believer.	Death has lost its power over the believer.

2. Decide the Purpose of the Message

Once you have discovered the main idea that the biblical writer was trying to communicate, you have the core around which you will develop your sermon. The next step is to determine the purpose for the sermon. You want the sermon to cause the hearer to believe the message and act upon it. The specific action that you want the hearer to take is your message purpose. You should not try to create this response through your own efforts—that is the job of the Holy Spirit. However, since you have identified the response that you believe the Lord wants from the passage, you should try to structure the message in such a way that it works toward the Lord's purpose.

Figure 1.2 Three Factors in Preaching

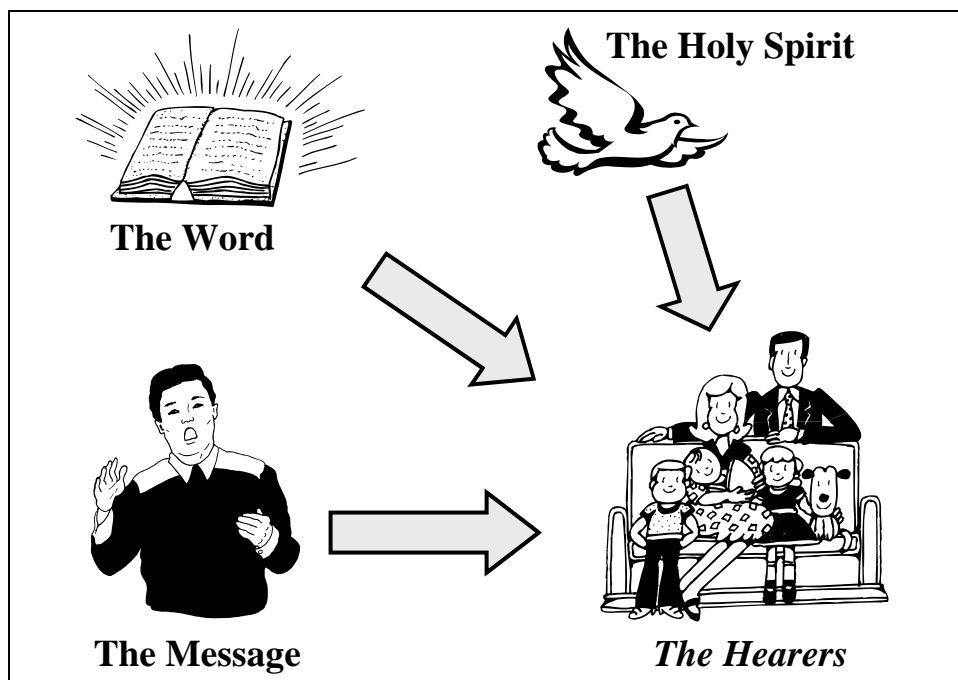


Figure 1.2 illustrates how the Word, the Holy Spirit, and the message should work together to influence the hearer. This is the case only when the preacher is sensitive to both the meaning of the text and to the leading of the Spirit. A speaker that is faithful to prayerfully seek the meaning of the passage should expect that this will happen.

Discuss: How do you decide a purpose for the message?

III. STRUCTURE OF THE MESSAGE

A good message, like any public address, will normally be comprised of the several parts. These parts are like building blocks. They are almost always present, although the order or relative importance of each may change. Again, this is closely related to the skill of the preacher. It takes practice to decide how best to arrange them. It is more of an art than a science.

1. The Introduction

A message should have some kind of introduction, whether or not it is labeled as such. If, in the introduction, you don't gain the attention of the audience, and their interest in the message you are presenting, you are really wasting your time preaching. Their bodies may be present with you in the room, but their minds are far away.

The introduction should therefore accomplish three things:

- 1) *Secure the attention of the audience.*
- 2) *Present the subject of the sermon.*
- 3) *Relate the subject of needs felt by the audience.*

The hearers may decide whether to listen to or ignore the speaker in the first few moments of the message. A well thought-out introduction can go a long way toward convincing them that you have something to say, and that it would be worth listening to you. A poor introduction can accomplish the opposite. Good introductions require an understanding of the audience. This will be the subject of the next lesson.

Hearers may decide whether to listen to or ignore the speaker in the first few moments of the message.

Discuss: What should the introduction accomplish?

2. The Body

The body of the message is the basic content. During this section, the meaning of the Scripture passage is usually explained, as well as its relevance to the current situation of the hearer. This is where you should help the audience discover the same main point that you found during your inductive study. Since there probably will not be enough time to go through the entire process or to bring out all of your observations, you will need to carefully choose the few that are the most important. Focus on facts that quickly and clearly demonstrate the main point, and that fit the purpose as you understand it.

The body is the heart of the message. It should come from the Word. If the Scriptures are overpowered by illustrations, personal commentary, quoted stories, or anything else, it is not a biblical message. Keep the text central.

Discuss: What is the body of the message?

3. The Conclusion

The conclusion is the time when you summarize what you have said in the message and call for commitment or response. This does not mean that you will always wait to apply the sermon until the end. You can bring out application at any point. In fact, some preachers feel that an effective message can be structured as follows:

- 1) *Tell them what you are going to tell them = Introduction*
- 2) *Tell them = Body*
- 3) *Tell them what you have told them = Conclusion*

Repetition can be a wonderful learning device if it is presented in an interesting way. However, the message should always end with an explanation of the desired response, whether or not it was introduced earlier in the message. This should be the last thing that they hear, and the most important thing that they take home with them after the message is over.

A conclusion should contain one or more of the following components:

- A summary of the main points.
- An illustration that brings together the main points and the central idea.
- A quotation that accomplishes the same purpose as an illustration.
- A question.
- A prayer.
- Specific directions or an appeal to action

Discuss: Why is the conclusion important? What are different ways to conclude a message?

4. The Illustrations

An illustration is designed to shed light or make more understandable an idea, teaching or issue raised in the message. It may be used at any point in the message—the introduction, the body, or the conclusion. It is particularly helpful when you want to give emphasis to a teaching or to explain a difficult passage. But remember: illustrations must contribute to the understanding of the message being presented. Do not include illustrations just for the sake of having an illustration.

There are three main types of illustrations for use in preaching: biblical illustrations, non-biblical illustrations, and object lessons.

1) *Biblical Illustrations*

The Bible is full of wonderful, clear illustrations. Sometimes we can find a modern illustration that serves as well or better, but often we cannot. Who can improve on the parable of the lost sheep, or the examples of the lilies of the field, or the man who built his house on the sand? When these illustrations speak clearly, we should use them. Examples of biblical illustrations include:

- The lives of persons mentioned in the passage. For example see Philippians 2:19-30.
- Cross-references. A concordance will help you to find other biblical passages that deal with the same subject and may help explain it. The principle here is to use Scripture to interpret Scripture.
- Biblical stories. Many stories from the Old Testament are helpful to explain principles mentioned in the New Testament. For example, the life of Jonah is an excellent illustration of the principle that God requires our complete obedience.
- Maps. A map of an area where the action is taking place is often helpful to understand the biblical passage.
- Information gained from the context. The material just before and after Ephesians 5:15-21 helps us to understand the concept of being filled with the Spirit.

Discuss: Give a Biblical illustration on any topic.

2) *Non-Biblical Illustrations*

Do not be afraid to use illustrations that do not come from the Scriptures, as long as they effectively make the same point. Many times, these illustrations will connect more deeply with your audience. This is especially true when the audience is not particularly familiar with the Bible. In such cases, the meaning of many passages or examples would be lost on them, and it is better to choose something they understand. Non-biblical illustrations include:

- Current events. Biblical truths are timeless. However, they are often understood better when a current event illustrates them. Often articles in newspapers and magazines are very useful.
- Observations of everyday life.
- Personal experiences. Personal experiences are often the most powerful illustrations; however, be careful not to always make yourself the hero.
- Illustrations from nature. The picture of a seagull at peace, standing on a rock with waves crashing around it, is a beautiful illustration of the Christian standing on his rock, the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Historical backgrounds. It is important to know about the immoral life of the city of Ephesus to understand fully the concerns of Paul in the Ephesians chapter 5.

Discuss: Give a non-Biblical illustration on any topic.

3) Object Lessons

Object lessons are an effective tool in communication because they are based on the principle that learning a new concept is made easier when a bridge is made between the known and the unknown. An object that is common to the experience of the learners is shown and described. Then a comparison is made between it and the new concept that is being presented. The object is not exactly like the concept being introduced, rather in some way it is like it. The learner will then understand some aspect of the new truth and be ready to appreciate other aspects.

One great advantage of object lessons is that they are very effective in securing the attention of the learner. Christ often used object lessons in his teaching ministry. All of nature for Him reflected truths about God. Some of the object lessons He used are as follows:

- Physical water and living water (Jn 4:7-15, the woman at the well)
- A child and simplicity of faith (Mt 19:13-15)
- The feeding of the five thousand and "the bread of life" (Jn 6)

Some other ideas for object lessons that we might use are:

- A road map (Jn 14:6)
- A glass of milk (1Pe 2:2, Heb 5:12,13)
- A bar of soap (1Jn 1:9)
- A glass of water and loaf of bread (Jn 4, 6)
- A candle or flashlight (Jn 8:12)
- A door or gate (Jn 10:1-10)
- The picture of a sheep or a real one (Isa 53:6; Ps 23)
- A sword (Heb 4:12)
- A piece of money and a wrapped present (Ro 6:23)
- A cassette player unplugged—unconnected to the source of our spiritual power we can do nothing (Jn 15:5)

Discuss: What is an object lesson. Can you think of any yourself?

Discuss: Why are illustrations critical to a message?

IV. TYPES OF MESSAGES

There are many kinds of messages. A good speaker should be able to use several of them as the need arises. They are like tools in the hands of a craftsman. Each is appropriate for a particular situation and task. The preacher, like the craftsman, needs to know when and where each one might be most effectively used. The forms listed below are not exhaustive. The variations are too numerous to list. Also, a message might effectively combine more than one form.

1. Didactic

This kind of message basically presents facts. It is typically used to explain doctrine. It is very effective when the main purpose of the message is to *inform*. It can help to bring about a change in *understanding*. Many of the New Testament epistles are didactic in style. They tend to emphasize logic and reason.

2. Devotional

A devotional message focuses more on spiritual response than on facts or knowledge. If the didactic message is aimed more for the 'head,' the devotional message is aimed for the 'heart' of the hearer. This kind of message emphasizes the emotions, and often includes very emotional illustrations. Psalms is a good example of a devotional book.

3. Narrative

Narrative messages are built upon one or more stories. These stories might or might not be biblical. The truth of the Word is woven into the story. The story serves as the framework that helps the hearer organize and understand the truth being taught. Such messages can be very memorable. In fact, care must be exercised so that the story does not overwhelm the truth of the Word, and become the authority. The historical books of the Bible are narrative.

4. Interrogative

While many messages focus on providing answers, an interrogative style can also be very effective. Often, preachers answer questions that no one is asking, and the interest is therefore low. If the speaker can clearly articulate relevant questions that are of concern to the audience, they can become more involved in the message. Rather than being passive 'hearers,' they can begin to anticipate and seek answers to the questions raised by the message. When they discover the answers in the Word through the message, the effect can be very positive.

5. Circular or Linear

The majority of sermons in the West are linear in development, and therefore many of the texts on preaching emphasize outlining or systematically developing a sermon. In many countries, however, a circular type of message is better understood. Linear messages deal with one point, and move on to the next. Circular reasoning, by contrast, repeatedly revisits the same point from a different angle or approach. The two types might be compared to viewing art in a museum. Moving progressively from painting to painting would be a linear approach. But walking around an interesting statue and viewing it from several different perspectives would be a circular approach. Both types have value, depending on the subject under consideration and the interest of the audience.

Discuss: What are the various types of messages? How do they differ?

CONCLUSION

God's Word is "living and active" (Heb 4:12). Biblical preaching is clearly communicating the Word of God in such a way that its power will transform all who hear. The preacher has a great responsibility to make sure that he communicates God's message and not his own ideas. Understanding God's Word through careful and prayerful study is the first step in preparing a sermon. Be sure to take the time necessary to study and understand God's Word when you preach it.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- Think about one of the best preachers you have heard. What characteristics of their preaching style or content made it effective? How did people respond to their preaching?
- Why should sermons be based on inductive Bible study?
- What is the function of biblical preaching? Are there different forms to accomplish this function?

ACTION PLAN

- Choose one of the Gospels, and as you read through it, make a list of the illustrations or object lessons you see used.
- Pick a room in your apartment or house and look around in it for things that might be object lessons of spiritual truth. Be creative. Examine even simple things might be able to powerfully illustrate difficult biblical concepts.