



Advanced Ministerial Development

James G. Poitras

A Global Association of Theological Studies Publication

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Dedicated in Honor of the Family of Bruce and Diane Howell

Our family has always been committed to global missions, and it is fitting that this book, *Advanced Ministerial Development*, be for the purpose of developing ministers globally and advancing God's kingdom. It is dedicated to our children and their families: Jared and Loida Howell, Zoe, Bella, and Judah; Leah and Andrew Arrowood, Zion, Lucia, and Mimi; along with Amy and Dennis Uecker. We also include any future grandchildren that may be added.

When our children and grandchildren were young Diane and I held them in our arms. As they continue to grow and develop we rejoice that God holds them in His loving arms forever. We pass to them and others our treasured heritage and legacy of apostolic truth. The greatest knowledge I can pass on is the apostolic doctrine of salvation, a revelation of who God is, and what a mighty, powerful God He is and always will be. May all who come behind us find us faithful.

"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (3 John 1:4).
"For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth...in every place" (1 Thessalonians 1:8, NKJV).



From left to right: Mimi Arrowood, Zoe Howell, Lucia Arrowood,
Zion Arrowood, Bella Howell, Judah Howell

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Chapter 1

Ministers and Their Dreams

From *Ministerial Development* by James G. Poitras

“And Joseph dreamed a dream . . . And he dreamed yet another dream” (Genesis 37:5, 9).

Three and one-half minutes rocked the world. The memorable rendezvous was January 21, 2009. It was the day Susan Boyle, with her Celtic twang, encumbered by learning difficulties and shyness, stepped out of obscurity onto the stage of *Britain’s Got Talent* in Glasgow. She literally shocked the panel and mocking crowd when she started to sing eight words, “I dreamed a dream in time gone by . . .” One of the judges gave her the biggest yes ever awarded in three years of the contest. She captured and then liberated the hearts of millions. There have been more than three hundred million hits on the YouTube video capturing those short moments. Susan’s “I Dreamed a Dream” holds the global record for the most preordered albums of all time. She defied preconceptions and probabilities, and set the stage for anyone and everyone with a dream. Susan brings modern meaning to the ancient proverb, “A man’s gift makes room for him and brings him before the great” (Proverbs 18:16, *English Standard Version*).

The Nissan Terrano crept, tossing and turning, through the twisting rustic roads. It glided past an African village with a dozen or so weather-beaten huts sporting dried grass-covered roofs. The ocean—with rocks protruding and waves crashing—served as its only backdrop. A few scattered sheep scurried for cover at the sound of the approaching vehicle’s engine. A tiny boy, perhaps three or four years old, naked apart from a dirty pair of stained briefs, roused and raced from his perch on a nearby tree trunk. He boldly ran toward us. He was all smiles, waving wildly. With his free hand, he firmly grasped an unusual, unique treasure: a red convertible car. A real toy; not one fashioned from a discarded tin

can. Happily, he extended it toward us, shouting friendly words in his local dialect. He arrested my attention. I longed to understand what he was saying. Because I could not understand his words, I imagined what they might be. Perhaps he wanted us, the six foreigners tightly packed in the huge gray machine, to know he had a car too. Or, maybe he had a dream that one day he would grow up and drive a vehicle similar to ours. I will never really know. Such was my short-lived meeting with a merry miniature visionary. You see, everyone dreams. Everyone wants a better future. A billboard I saw encapsulated this thinking. It pictured a boy playing soccer in his neighborhood. The potent words read, "Twelve-year-old Kofi; nation's best striker, 2022. Yes, we believe in the future."

I'm sure we all believe in the future. Yet, too many meander through life's twisting roads, tossing and turning, with no direction and—in the end—no enduring legacy. What a tragedy to live and leave without anyone noticing you ever existed. A Middle Eastern blessing says, "When you were born, you cried, and the world rejoiced. May you live your life so that when you die, the world will cry, and you will rejoice."

All I have ever wanted was to make a difference! To take my talents and place them in the Master's hands, use them for His glory, and hear Him say, "Well done!" That aspiration took me to West Africa over twenty-seven years ago, a week before my twenty-third birthday. I was armed with a degree in education, only three years in the United Pentecostal Church International, lacking religious ancestry, but with a vision of "teaching all nations" beginning in thickly populated Nigeria. I was so naïve back then. I had never traveled overseas. I couldn't sleep that first night thinking that a powerful python was going to crash through the hotel window and rob me of my dream and my life. I survived!

A couple years later, in Africa, I met my wife, a teacher from Alabama. We've been on a journey ever since. Our mutual heartbeat has been unwavering: teach others so they can reach their own people. My relentless dream is to entrust, empower, and equip the next generation. I still dream of taking God's Word to the world, touching people, transmitting truth, and transforming nations. More than that, I get to live out that dream. I am so thankful that God has chosen me to be a minister.

Dear friends and former leaders in Africa, John Paul and June Hughes sent me these words in a card on my fiftieth birthday: "Just think, you're here not by chance, but by God's choosing. His hand formed you and made you the person you are. He compares you to no one else. You are one of a kind. You lack

nothing that His grace can't give you. He has allowed you to be here at this time in history to fulfill His special purpose for this generation" (Roy Lessin). Half a century and climbing, I still possess a dream to reach our world.

A. W. Tozer said, "A man by his sin may waste himself, which is to waste that which on earth is most like God. That is man's greatest tragedy and God's heaviest grief." God grieves when I waste my split second in eternity and fail to attempt to measure up to my full potential in accomplishing His divine plan and purpose. An Arabic proverb teaches that the dawn does not come twice to awaken a person. Opportunity knocks but once. An opportunity missed will eventually bring ample repentance. I have one chance to affect my world.

Someone asked, "How will you spend your life?" Life is a currency. Once spent, it can never be recovered. It is gone forever unless you invest it in the afterlife. There, stored treasures are more valuable than hand-held red convertibles that will ruin, rust, and ripple away. No wonder Jesus said, "Don't hoard treasure down here where it gets eaten by moths and corroded by rust or—worse!—stolen by burglars. Stockpile treasure in heaven, where it's safe from moth and rust and burglars. It's obvious, isn't it? The place where your treasure is, is the place you will most want to be, and end up being" (Matthew 6:19-21, THE MESSAGE).

The dream expressed and experienced by great men and women changed and charted the course of history. Nick Sisco, in his *Pentecostal Herald* (July 2010) article "The Dream Beats On," said, "The dream drove them towards destiny. A dream is a powerful commodity full of possibility. It pushes you forward, giving life, energy, and focus." He went on to say, "Imagination creates the soil in which the dream can germinate, grow, and come to life."

You may struggle, wondering when your dream will happen. You may speculate you are wasting your time preparing for a lifetime of ministry from a wooden writing desk in a classroom. You may lament with the amount of your life you feel you have wasted. You may get frustrated performing (what you imagine are) menial tasks for a seasoned senior minister. Remember, all of this has brought you into God's kingdom for such a time as this. Nothing will stop the fulfillment of a God-given dream—unless it is the one presently operating in your skin. Avoid the pain of regret and go for the pain of discipline. "Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do. . . . Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover" (Mark Twain).

Face it: in our gigantic world, you may feel small and insignificant. Like a butterfly struggling in a cocoon, through ministerial development you are about to be launched into a lifetime of effective ministry. The world anxiously awaits! Heaven is preparing its animated applause!

Are you ready to embark on the most exhilarating undertaking of a lifetime? Turn the page. Let the journey begin.

Note: Throughout the Bible, God used women—as well as men—to advance His kingdom. Consider Miriam, Deborah, Anna, and the four daughters of Philip the evangelist. *Ministry* has never been gender specific. Therefore, *minister*, as used in this book, is not gender specific. Global Missions is happy to recognize the call God has placed on many women who labor as pastors, teachers, and evangelists. Together they join their ministering brethren and form a mighty band of truly Apostolic ministers.

Chapter 2

Ministers God Uses

“But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:4).

God is searching for men and women who will return to the established priorities found in the Word of God. These are:

- Prayer
- Ministry of the Word

Ministers in God’s kingdom have many responsibilities, but none as important as these. The Word of God and prayer can be compared to the two wings that lift and carry a bird in flight. They provide a balance in our lives and ministries. Prayer and the Word of God keep us moving forward and upward.

The devil is in constant conspiracy against a preacher who really prays, for it has been said that what a minister is in his prayer closet is what he is, no more, no less. — Vance Havner

God is looking for a few good men and women. They seem to be in short supply. Why? Could it be that they do not want to be trained? Could it be that leaders do not do their best at passing the truth to the next generation? There must be a reason.

Harry E. Scism, a long-time general director of Foreign Missions, UPCI, said to a group of leaders, “God sought for a man. Not a program. Not a plan. Not a book. God sought for a man.”

Warren Wiersbe points out:

- God sought for a man (I Samuel 13:14)
- God found him (Psalm 89:20)
- Chose him (Psalm 78:70)
- Appointed him (I Samuel 13:14)
- Provided a king (I Samuel 16:1)

God is looking for “the man of God, with the Word of God, in the Spirit of God, for the glory of God” (T. J. Bach).

John Wesley said, “Give me one hundred preachers who fear nothing but sin and desire nothing but God, and I care not a straw whether they be clergymen or laymen; such alone will shake the gates of hell and set up the kingdom of heaven on earth.”

Randy Adams, a missionary to West Africa, says that a true man of God is

- God’s man,
- doing God’s Work,
- in God’s Way,
- in God’s Time.

“By the grace of God, I’ll be that man.”

Years ago, a young sales clerk heard a preacher make what seemed an incredible statement: “The world has yet to see what God could accomplish through one man wholly dedicated to Him.” As incredible as the statement seemed, it stirred a sense of challenge deep within his being. As he left the meeting that night, young Dwight L. Moody made a personal commitment: “By the grace of God, I’ll be that man,” he purposed. The subsequent influence of his life through his preaching and publications was such that the English-speaking world was compelled to hear about God” (*Rivers of God* by Dutch Sheets, 233).

A. W. Tozer said, “God is looking for (people) through whom He can do the impossible—what a pity that we plan only the things we can do ourselves.”

Paul was the type of person God could use to accomplish the impossible. The world felt the impact and influence of his ministry. He was firmly committed to the Lord and constantly in touch with the Spirit.

E. M. Bounds said, "The Church is looking for better methods; God is looking for better men. If we have the right people almost any method will work, but if we have the wrong people then no method will work. Great ministries begin with great people who develop great programs."

"The only hope for a better world is that men in the world become better men." (Anonymous)

Prayer of the Minister God Uses

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:1-2).

This prayer is mentioned in other lessons. It is important to commit it to heart and pray it on a daily basis.

Keeping Our Sacrifice on the Altar

"Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now perfected in the flesh?" (Galatians 3:3).

Craig Sully wrote:

Like the Galatians, we began our ministry in the Spirit. Every sermon we preached was a result of hours of prayer, study, and thought. When we stepped into a pulpit, we were full of godly fear. Every word we spoke was uttered under the anointing of the Spirit of God. Few of us had natural preaching ability. We begged God to bless our small sermons. When God filled someone with the Holy Ghost, we were almost shocked with such a blessing on our

ministry. Every day, every sermon, we were completely dependent upon the Lord. In the beginning we had nothing to depend upon but God. Now we can depend upon our own talents . . . We do not have to prepare for hours to teach a Bible study. We pride ourselves on being 'instant in season and out of season.' When we started our ministry, we truly were in the Spirit. We prayed, we fasted, and we begged God to use us. For some, it is not that way anymore. It is time for us to get back in the Spirit. It is time to make up our minds. We are going to stay in the Spirit. We will pray. We will fast. We will wait on God. We will fear God. We will seek God's face until we have a fresh word. What is needed now is spiritual ministry. God needs anointed men, not carnal men. God needs praying men, not talented men. Hear Paul's cry to the church in Galatia. Do not be so foolish. You started the right way. Get back to the basics with which you started your ministry. Back to prayer. Back to study. Back to fasting. With such a spirit, we will reach and change our world. (*Avoiding the Trap of a Carnal Ministry*)

A Personal Commitment

"But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4, ESV).

"I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you" (Philippians 3:14-15, ESV).

Lesson in Review

1. What established ministerial priorities are found in the Word of God? _____

2. Compare priorities to the wings of a bird. _____

3. Whom or what did Vance Havner claim the devil is in constant conspiracy against? _____

4. According to Ezekiel 22:30, what is God looking for? _____

5. What type of man does T. J. Bach say that God is looking for? _____

6. What did John Wesley think he could do with one hundred preachers who desire nothing but God? _____

7. According to E. M Bounds, what is the difference between what God is looking for and what the church is looking for? _____

8. According to Craig Sully, the church needs what type of ministers today?

9. What does Craig Sully consider to be the basics of ministry? _____

10. What is the only hope for a better world? _____

Chapter 3

Ministers as Servants

At the heart of our understanding of leadership in ministry should be the awareness that people are essential for growth and success. The vision of world evangelism and discipleship cannot be achieved without people. Leadership is more than getting things done through others, being served, or accomplishing tasks. It goes beyond the pursuit for prestige (desire for recognition), position (desire to be number one), and power (desire to control others). Effective ministers are people-sensitive. They motivate followers to set goals and to achieve them. They develop and influence others for successful apostolic ministry.

Ideal word pictures for a minister are:

- Servant
- Steward
- Shepherd

In their excellent book *10 Power Principles for Christian Service: Ministry Dynamics for a New Century*, Warren W. and David W. Wiersbe explain:

The great leaders of Bible history began as servants—Moses and David as shepherds, Joshua as Moses' assistant, Joseph as a household servant, Elisha as Elijah's servant, and Timothy as Paul's attendant. If we want to hold a scepter, we must begin with a towel. But that list of names—which could be expanded—reveals something else: true servant/rulers produce other servant/rulers because we all reproduce after our kind. . . . [We must be a] servant who leads and a leader who serves. . . . It

demands mature faith to believe that you win by surrendering, gain by losing, and lead by serving but that's what Jesus promised.

Model for the Servant Minister

Robert Greenleaf (1904-1990) is considered the father of the modern servant-leadership concept. He viewed leadership as helping people grow, lifting them to higher levels of possibilities. He thought that churches, Bible schools, and seminaries were distinctively suited to producing servant-leaders for society. They are given the task of preparing students and members for lifetime service to God and to others. Unfortunately, he never had much response from Bible schools or churches that were ready to adopt servant-leadership as their working philosophy (Jack Collins, 2003). This is ironic since servant leadership was originally taught and exemplified by Jesus Christ more than two thousand years ago. It transcends time and culture and should be the administrative standard today.

Biblical Example for the Servant Minister

Servant leadership is foundational in the ministry because it is the leadership model that our Lord Jesus Christ advocated and one that works best. Jesus provided the greatest leadership model for all times. In Him "we have a *practical and effective leadership model* for all organizations, for all people, for all situations" (Blanchard and Hodges, 2003, 10). Jesus set the example for all of us to follow. He came in the form of a servant (Philippians 2:7). He testified, "I am among you as one who serves" (Luke 22:27, NIV). During the final night that He had with His disciples He picked up a towel and basin and washed their feet. Why? He explained, "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you" (John 13:15). Jesus is the real leader of the church and its ministries. We are His servants and we please Him when we facilitate others in reaching their potential. We are called to "prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up" (Ephesians 4:12, NIV).

Jesus taught James and John, the sons of thunder, a vital leadership lesson—*leadership is an act of service*. They came to Him with a request: "We want you to do for us whatever we ask." This statement demonstrates not only ignorance but also a selfish attitude. Leadership is not about being served (receiving) but serving others (giving). They went on to say, "Let one of us sit on

your right and the other on your left in glory.” The world today would likely applaud James and John, but Jesus corrected them. They mistakenly thought that the Lord’s kingdom was the same as all the others. Jesus explained that His kingdom was not like those of this world that exercise authority over others, but that the greatest is the servant of all. (See Mark 10:35-37, 41-45.) Jesus said, “The Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve” (Matthew 20:28, NIV).

Jesus was the greatest leader of all times. He possessed unlimited power and used these resources to serve others instead of serving Himself. He set the example and has given His power to us (Acts 1:8). He requires that we be servants (Matthew 20:26; Mark 10:43-45; John 13:15). Notice the psalmist’s words about David, the leader after God’s heart:

“He chose David . . . his servant, and took him from the sheep-folds: from following the ewes great with young he brought him to feed . . . his people . . . he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skillfulness of his hands” (Psalm 78:70-72).

Attitude of the Servant Minister

Authoritative, autocratic, or power leadership, although a popular and the predominantly used model of leadership, does not work within the ministry setting. It is diametrically opposite to servant leadership—the leadership style that works best in service organizations. Its premise is to demand and control using power. It has been utilized by the military in time of war and is still adopted in secular leadership. Servant leadership creates an environment of teamwork and fosters interdependence. It encourages people to work together as a body. It builds mutual respect and relationships that last throughout a lifetime. Servant leadership is not based on power but on love. “Today’s successful administrators are more likely to be those who work with and for their people, empowering and inspiring them to achieve personal and corporate goals” (Clarence Dunbebin, 1999). We are people builders.

A servant-minister equips others to reach their God-given maximum potential and helps them fulfill God’s call, will, and vision for their lives. He establishes relationships now that will last throughout a lifetime. He is not self-serving but deliberately chooses to serve others. Someone has said that you never diminish the flame of your own candle by lighting the flame of someone

else. As a servant-minister helps others, he is also enriched. A godly servant-teacher exemplifies a self-sacrificing attitude of, “How can I help you achieve your best for God? I’m here for you!” His ultimate accomplishment comes through encouraging and empowering those under his leadership to be successful. Lee Brase states, “I have discovered if you train a man, he will become what you are . . . But if you serve him, the sky is the limit as to what he can become” (Rush, 1983, 13-14). A fitting purpose statement for a servant-minister is (among other things) “helping people become what God wants them to be by directing them to do what God wants them to do” (David R. Shumate, July/August 1998).

In *The Power of the Call*, Henry Blackaby tells us, “Your ministry is fulfilled when the people of God become what God intended each of them to be.” He also says, “The people are your ministry, not the means you use to fulfill your ministry.”

Servant-ministers view their ministry as an act of service. They “look beyond their own season of leadership and prepare the next generation of leaders. Jesus modeled the true servant leader by investing most of His time training and equipping the disciples for leadership when His earthly ministry was over” (Blanchard and Hodges, 2003, 21). Jesus made sure that He taught and led in such a way that His students were equipped to carry on the task of taking the life-transforming truth to a waiting world.

The chart that follows shows insights gained from various readings. It serves to contrast the biblical approach to leadership with secular leadership. It is hoped that the information gleaned will assist the reader in becoming an effective servant-leader or servant-teacher.

Christian Leadership	Secular Leadership
Servant-first.	Leader-first.
Chooses interest in others over self-interest.	Chooses self-interest or corporate-interest.
Emphasis on meeting goals and needs of others.	Emphasis on meeting personal goals and needs.
People oriented.	Task oriented.
Committed to growth of people.	Committed to growth of the organization and of the leadership.
Wants others to succeed as well as himself.	Wants to achieve personal success.

Making disciples is paramount.	Profit (making money) is paramount.
Stimulates unity and being content.	Creates relationship problems and discontent.
Concentrates on doing the will of God.	Concentrates on doing his own will.
Encourages effective communication.	Real feelings of subordinates often remain hidden.
Advocates teamwork, participative management, and the understanding that we are part of the body of Christ. Each has a function and none is more important than others. Promotes a sense of community.	Exerts authority from the top. Encourages rivalry and jealousy as people try to climb the leadership ladder.
Creates an environment of interdependence.	Creates an environment of dependence. Subordinate needs the organization to meet his needs.
Shares power in decision-making.	Makes decisions on his own.
Leader asks, "How can I help you accomplish your dreams?"	Subordinate asks, "How can I help you accomplish your dreams and keep my job?"
Encourages trust. People believe the leader will do what is best for all of them.	Discourages trust. People believe the leaders will do what is best for them and/or the organization.
Uses persuasion.	Makes demands, commands, and uses coercion and manipulation.
Asks others what would be best for them.	Decides what is best for himself and then others.
Listens to others.	Expects others to listen to him.
Maintains leadership based on people and serving others.	Maintains leadership based on power, and position.
Leadership is based on the Word of God.	Leadership is based on modern methods and philosophy.
Leader is interested in giving God glory.	Leader is interested in being lifted up, given prestige and honor.

Servant leadership is the correct model for the servant-ministers and their ministry. Reaching this conclusion is simple. Following it is a problem. Knowing is easy. Doing it is difficult. It does not fit into the worldly view of leadership, and it does not please the desires of the flesh. We must constantly strive to be the servant-teacher that God wants us to be. In the end we will hear the Master say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:21).

Please note: This lesson was originally part of *Achieving Excellence in Bible School Administration*, by James Poitras and has been adapted here.

Lesson in Review

1. What three ideal word pictures of a minister are mentioned in this lesson?
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____

2. Ministry and leadership go beyond the pursuit of what three things?
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____

3. How did the great leaders of biblical history begin? _____

4. Who is the best biblical example of a servant-minister? _____

5. Where did servant leadership originate? _____

6. Prove using Scriptures, that Jesus was a servant. _____

7. What valuable lesson did Jesus teach James and John, the sons of thunder?

8. What type of environment does servant leadership create? _____

9. What does a servant-minister equip others to do? _____

10. What is a good purpose statement for servant-ministers? _____

11. How do servant-ministers view their ministry? _____

12. According to Blanchard and Hodges how did Jesus model the true servant ministry? _____

13. List five qualities of a servant-first Christian leader.

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____
- E. _____

Chapter 4

Ministers and Mentoring

“Behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus . . . which was well reported of by the brethren. . . . Him would Paul have to go forth with him” (Acts 16:1-3).

There were many disciples in Derbe and Lystra, but Paul focused on a *certain* disciple, Timothy. The Bible records the depth of their mentoring rendezvous: “Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith” (I Timothy 1:2). It is an awesome opportunity when a senior minister chooses to focus on and develop a younger minister. It is time well spent for both.

Where Did Mentoring Originate?

The concept of mentoring dates back to at least Moses being mentored by his father-in-law, Jethro (Exodus 18). It shows itself when a father was commanded to mentor his sons, passing the truth from one generation to the next (Deuteronomy 6:1-2). Mentoring relationships are scattered throughout the Bible. However, a Greek story is credited with the term “mentor” and the concept we now know as “mentoring.”

Long ago, when a Greek warrior named Odysseus went off to war, he left his young son in the hands of a man named Mentor. When the warrior father returned, his son had grown into a man, thanks to Mentor.

What Is Mentoring?

Mentoring occurs when someone more experienced is willing to help someone less experienced. This does not necessarily mean that the mentor must be older. Interaction exists between two people, usually one-on-one where one person empowers another. One is guided, taught, and influenced by another. It is an effort to assist one in developing God-given potential, and preparing him or her to function in the same kind of ministry. Fred Childs said, "Mentoring is transferring knowledge, understanding, wisdom, skills, insight, vision, and expertise."

What Is a Mentor?

Kenneth Gangel, in *Team Leadership in Christian Ministry*, said a mentor is "a teacher and leader who uses his or her experience to show others how best to walk life's path, to accomplish goals and meet life's challenges." Sondra Higgins Matthaei, in "Faith-Mentoring in the Classroom," likened a mentor to a guide, "a person who journeys through life with another, pointing out landmarks, modeling alternatives, supporting choices, and interpreting life events." The mentor becomes a guide, a lead-learner. He or she provides—among other things—guidance, accountability, and encouragement. In other words, a mentor is a coach, guide, wise/helpful friend, counselor, advisor, teacher, guardian, encourager, and parental figure.

Thank God for those who guide us along the road of life, becoming companions in the journey. Mentors have traveled that road before us, know the obstacles, and can provide guidance for development. Like a little Nigerian chorus says, "The road is rough and there are many dangers."

Viv Thomas, in *Future Leader*, wrote:

Leaders are in desperate need of friends and mentors, people who will direct us towards God and show us the way. One good and able mentor is worth a hundred consultants, a thousand motivational 'how to' seminars and only God knows how many sermons. Soul drought, which is the experience of many leaders, is often related to a lack of mentoring.

A touching story surfaced at the Commonwealth Games in Fiji. The crowd waited anxiously for the first of the marathon runners to appear. Finally, they caught a glimpse of the first runner. He was running well and seemed to be full of energy. Surely, he would finish the race and win. The second runner also came into view. He appeared weak and couldn't keep straight. The crowd stood and shouted, "Go on, you can make it!" He fell. Several spectators ran to the side of the track to urge him on verbally. "The end is in sight. Don't quit now. You can do it!" The runner mustered his strength and crawled across the finish line. The man had to run his own race, but others could encourage him from the sidelines. Encouragers help keep us going when times are tough and life's road is rough.

A mentor pours himself into others – intentionally investing in the next generation of leaders – and adapts a supportive, guiding role. So, mentoring involves a minimum – and many times preferably – of two people.



Mentor	More experienced
Mentoree, Protégé, or mentee	Less experienced

How Is Mentoring Different from Discipleship?

The mentoring relationship is similar to discipleship but noticeably different. Discipleship focuses on ongoing growth of the disciple as a Christian, and is concerned with the commands of Christ. The intent is for the disciple to become like Jesus Christ. Certainly, a mentor hopes for the same to take place, but is specifically concerned with focusing on elements pertaining to the development of expert skills and practices. Mentoring and discipleship are interrelated; both are growth-oriented and developmental in nature.

What Are the Basics of Mentoring?

In "Teaching by Coming Alongside," Donald Bubna provides five steps in equipping anyone to do anything.

Steps	Jesus as Master Mentor
Step One	Jesus showed them what to do.
Step Two	Jesus showed them how to do it.

Step Three	Jesus let them try it.
Step Four	Jesus sent them out alone.
Step Five	Jesus evaluated what they did.

L. Thomas Strong, in *Mentoring in a Seminary Community*, speaks of doctors in rural areas who were taught through the practice and lifestyle of being a doctor through *modeling* and *mentoring*. Often, an older doctor would select a successor and would invest time and effort in training him to continue the practice. Most manual labor skills are taught through mentoring. Long ago pastors were trained in the same way. Those that desired to be pastors would be invited into the home of a senior minister and he would teach them by *lecture* and *lifestyle*.

Mentoring is a precious gift. The table that follows indicates some of the benefits of having a mentor and the mentoring process.

Benefit	Comments
Encourages . . .	career development, perseverance, and reaching for dreams and vision. Mentors are friends, like Barnabas, a source of encouragement.
Enhances . . .	confidence in one's ministry and abilities.
Empowers . . .	a speedier adjustment to new role.
Equips . . .	with skills, research.
Establishes . . .	protégé in his ministry or profession.
Exposes . . .	new ideas, suggestions, and people to network with for achievement of goals and effective ministry.
Engages . . .	one in active, progressive, measurable development.
Examples . . .	provide a role model for one to follow.
Enthuses . . .	or stirs excitement for both the protégé and the mentor.
Enables . . .	protégé to reach his God-given potential.
Educates . . .	through continuous learning.

When looking for a mentor, one needs to find someone with character, capabilities, confidence, competence, and commitment. Mentoring is an intentional *investment* into the next generation. It is a God-given opportunity to *influence* others to reach their maximum potential. It is possible to have more than one mentor at a time and it is likely that each mentoring relationship will last only for a season. However, when that time is completed the young leader emerges equipped to minister more effectively to his generation.

Rick Warren said, “Learning from mistakes is slow and painful. Learning from mentors is faster and easier – but it requires humility and teachability.” Put on your cloak of humility and find a mentor or two immediately!

Please Note: This lesson is adapted from a lesson in the *Advance Educators Series*, and is written by James Poitras.

Lesson in Review

1. What is a mentor? _____

2. What is mentoring? _____

3. Viv Thomas stated one good mentor is worth what? _____

4. How many people are involved in a mentoring relationship? _____

5. What is the difference between mentoring and discipleship? _____

6. What are the five steps in equipping anyone to do anything?

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

D. _____

E. _____

7. List and explain five benefits to mentoring.

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

D. _____

E. _____

8. Explain the differences between discipleship and mentoring. _____

9. What approach did rural doctors use in training young potential doctors?

Chapter 5

Ministers and Greater Vision

“But my life is worth nothing unless I use it for doing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus – the work of telling others the Good News about God’s wonderful kindness and love. And now I know that none of you to whom I have preached the Kingdom will ever see me again. Let me say plainly that I have been faithful. No one’s damnation can be blamed on me, for I didn’t shrink from declaring all that God wants for you” (Acts 20:24-27, NLT).

In *Grace-Full Leadership*, John C. Bowling relates a story of a sculptor who worked vigorously on carving the head of Abraham Lincoln from a large piece of marble. The woman who cleaned his work area swept around the large stone daily. One day, as the sculptor’s work progressed, she began to see Lincoln’s face emerging from the marble. She quickly stopped, turned, and asked the sculptor, “Is that Master Lincoln?”

“Yes,” he answered.

“How did you know he was in there?” she asked.

When God looked at Saul, He saw the chief persecutor of His church. He envisioned what could be. He saw the apostle Paul (then Saul) as one of the greatest missionaries and church planters of all time. How was this possible? He utilized “double vision” – the ability to see both what is and what can be. All great leaders possess this ability. Bowling said, “This double vision helps enable us to keep our sights set on the future as we deal with the daily demands of leadership.” It also enables us to see great potential in others. Stephen R.

Covey, in *Principle-Centered Leadership*, said, "They see the oak tree in the acorn and understand the process of helping the acorn become a great oak."

H. Dale Burke reminds us that "faith always focuses beyond the present, beyond 'what is' to 'what could be.'" Faith and vision are inseparable.

Walt Disney had a vision for Disney World and Epcot (Florida) that superseded his original Disneyland (California). He passed away before its opening. Walt's widow was asked to speak at the opening ceremonies. The man doing the introduction said, "Mrs. Disney, I just wish Walt could have seen this." She stood up and simply said, "He did," and sat down.

One of the executives remarked to the press, "You know it's precisely because Walt could see Disney World that it's a reality today." Walt could see each detail of the final blueprint in his mind before the ground was ever broken. Walt was a great visionary. Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus studied ninety top leaders. They discovered they had something in common: they all had a gripping vision.

Receiving the Vision

"And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do" (Acts 9:5-6).

Saul's vision began with a knockdown experience on the Damascus Road. He asked two questions:

1. Who are you, Lord?
2. What do you want me to do?

Once he understood the answer to the first, He spent the rest of his life asking the second. He constantly endeavored to be in line with the Master's will.

Those two questions lead to three more. H. Dale Burke supplied these in his book *Less Is More*:

Destination Question	Where are you going?
Road Map Question	How will you get there?
Value versus Cost Question	What is the cost of making the trip?

As quoted in *The Power Principle*, Ayn Rand said, "Throughout history, brave men and women have gone down new paths armed with nothing more than their own vision." Visionary leaders are pathfinders and pacesetters.

Spiritual vision is a God-sized thing. It takes God's help to accomplish. It will also take the help of others. "But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: for I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake" (Acts 9:15-16).

Vision is the plan God has prepared for His servants. "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (I Corinthians 2:9-10).

Vision (many times) outlives the visionary. Paul was a recipient of the vision given to Abraham. It was passed from generation to generation. God's plan to bless the nations can be seen throughout His Word.

"I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house" (Isaiah 42:6-7).

"And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, 'Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed'" (Acts 3:25, NIV).

Your vision will make room for you. It will be identified by others. It will pass their test: "On the contrary, they saw that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, just as Peter had been to the Jews. For God, who was at work in the ministry of Peter as an apostle to the Jews, was also at work in my ministry as an apostle to the Gentiles. James, Peter and John, those reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews" (Galatians 2:7-10, NIV).

Realigning the Vision

Is this aligned with my vision? Everything should pass this test. Ever notice what happens when a driver takes his hands off a steering wheel or handlebars? The vehicle or bicycle will start drifting a bit to the left or right. Realignment is needed to avoid an accident. A firm grip on the steering wheel helps too.

Obedience to the vision is a daily decision.

"To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision" (Acts 26:18-19).

Repeating the Vision

Nehemiah understood the value of repeating the vision. He repeated it after twenty-eight days. There is safety in repetition.

Paul Atwater explains in his article "How to Start Casting a Vision for Your Church" that "communicators get tired of repeating the vision just about the time when people are starting to internalize it." He also said, "The biggest mistake I have made over the years is failing to reiterate the vision enough. Every time I go back to communicating the vision, my best leaders get fired up. They tell me that they needed the reminder."

He suggested the following ways to remind people of the vision.

1. Commit to preaching about the vision at set times in the year.
2. Make the vision so simple it can be inserted anywhere in a message. For example, John Maxwell said, "Everything rises and falls on leadership."
3. Experiment with your own ideas. Atwater uses "Sixty seconds of vision" just before the morning sermon. Repeat key phrases or slogans.
4. Tie the vision to life-change stories.

In "Tips on Developing and Communicating Vision," Nelson Searcy adds, "Verbalize clearly. If you can't say it clearly, you don't know it completely. If you can't say it—how do you expect them to say it? Make it short. Here's an example: "Pass the truth to the next generation!" (Jim Poitras). Simpler still: "Entrust."

Searcy also made another interesting point: "You cannot lead without a vision of the future. Show me a person with vision and I'll show you a future leader. (I say a future leader because vision must be cultivated, defined, and cast)." John C. Bowling said, "You tell me your vision, and I will tell you your future."

Maybe that is one of the reasons God said to Habakkuk, "Write my answer in large, clear letters on a tablet, so that a runner can read it and tell everyone else. But these things I plan won't happen right away. Slowly, steadily, surely, the time approaches when the vision will be fulfilled. If it seems slow, wait patiently, for it will surely take place. It will not be delayed" (Habakkuk 2:2-3, NLT).

I love that verse of Scripture, except the part that says the vision won't happen right away. I like the idea of running with the vision. Words like *slow*, *wait*, and *patiently* are not usually in my vocabulary. I guess that is another reason for repeating the vision. People may forget. I may forget. The good things in life are worth waiting for, working for, and worth repeating.

You can place the vision on banners, bookmarks, and bulletins. Use creative ways to keep the vision alive and before your people.

In "Developing and Communicating a Vision," Mary Axner states that sharing the vision is the central role of a leader. She said, "As a leader, you have to help people take your vision and make it their own."

I enjoyed an article entitled "Vision Testers" by Melinda Poitras. She writes, "Vision often causes change no one else can even believe possible (or

even want, for that matter) . . . No good change comes without opposition. There are going to be people who criticize you, make fun of you, and more likely than not, try to stop you.” Sanballat became incensed and ridiculed the wall-builders, throwing insults in their faces. Melinda points out their apt response: They prayed. And they kept right on working. They knew they had a good work to accomplish. Nothing could stop them. Sanballat and a few others even tried attacking them, but they “trusted in God, knowing that everything would turn out all right, and it did.” Nehemiah remained aligned to his vision!

Another word for “realignment” is *focus*. Vision provides focus. Unfortunately, we cannot set our vision on “auto-focus.” Obtaining and maintaining correct focus doesn’t just happen. It takes realignment and refocusing. Otherwise, our vision will become blurred. Paul advised that we stay in focus: “keep our eyes fixed.” Jesus pursued His vision with focus; He endured the cross, scorned shame, and fulfilled His purpose: providing salvation for all who believe. “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:1-3, NIV).

Reviving the Vision

Revival refers to bringing something back to life. Do not allow your vision to die. Breathe new life into it! Wake up your dreams!

“But this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:13-14).

Kofi Annan, the former secretary-general of the United Nations, is a native of Ghana. He recently returned home a hero. Billboards projected his picture and the United Nations logo and proclaimed, “Welcome home. You have made Ghana proud!”

In 1997 Kofi Annan addressed MIT graduates and told of his own experience as an MIT student. Walking along the Charles River in his first term, he reflected on survival in the midst of over-achievers. The answer came to him: “Follow your own inner compass. . . . Listen to your own drummer. To live is to choose. But to choose well, you must know who you are and what you stand for, where you want to go and why you want to go there” (Sales, 1997). Kofi Annan was able to realign himself with his vision throughout his forty-year tenure with the United Nations.

H. Dale Burke said, “When your memories are more exciting than your dreams, you’ve begun to die.” It’s time to revive your vision!

I like talking about the future. I plan to live there. Bill Allen, in *Built to Last*, said, “Boeing (*great airplane builders*) is always reaching out to tomorrow. This can only be accomplished by people who live, breathe, eat and sleep what they are doing” (*italics added*).

We need to be consumed by the vision. We should possess a burning desire or passion to see the vision come to pass. There must be fire in our souls.

Realizing the Vision

Realizing your vision will be costly. It will require many things.

Commitment

It’s a daily decision and struggle. “Then Jesus said to His disciples, If any one desires to be My disciple, let him deny himself [disregard, lose sight of, and forget himself and his own interests] and take up his cross and follow Me [cleave steadfastly to Me, conform wholly to My example in living and, if need be, in dying, also]. For whoever is bent on saving his [temporal] life [his comfort and security here] shall lose it [eternal life]; and whoever loses his life [his comfort and security here] for My sake shall find it [life everlasting]” (Matthew 16:24-25, AMP).

Sacrifice

To the Roman church, Paul wrote, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to

this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:1-2).

Willingness to change

Paul stated, "To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings" (I Corinthians 9:22-23, NIV).

Discipline

Paul penned to the Corinthians, "Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize" (I Corinthians 9:24-27, NIV).

Willingness to improve/continuous improvement

Paul stated, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended . . ." (Philippians 3:12-13).

Contentment

Paul wrote to the church at Philippi, "I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:11-13, NIV).

Faithful

"Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (I Corinthians 4:1-2).

Hard work

Good things don't just happen. You get what you have planned and worked for. Stephen Covey, in *Principle-Centered Leadership*, refers to the law of

the farm: “The quick easy, free, and fun approach won’t work on the farm because there we’re subject to natural laws and governing principles . . . The only thing that endures over time is the law of the farm: I must prepare the ground, put in the seed, cultivate it, weed it, water it, then gradually nurture growth and development to full maturity . . . There is no quick fix, where you can just move in and make everything right with a positive mental attitude and a bunch of success formulas. The law of the harvest governs.”

“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Galatians 6:7-10).

Rejoicing the Vision

The close of Paul’s life found him in a damp, dark, dirty prison cell. Yet he was not discouraged, defeated, or demoralized. He remained faithful!

“As for me, my life has already been poured out as an offering to God. The time of my death is near. I have fought a good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful. And now the prize awaits me—the crown of righteousness that the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on that great day of his return. And the prize is not just for me but for all who eagerly look forward to his glorious return” (II Timothy 4:6-8, NLT).

In *Children at Risk*, James Dobson and Gary Bauer share a story that illustrates the point. A Sunday morning terrorist bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut left hundreds of Americans killed or wounded as they slept. A few days later, the Marine commandant visited some of the wounded soldiers in the hospital. Among them was a corporal who was severely wounded in the incident. He had so many tubes running in and out of his body that he looked more like a machine than a man. As the commandant visited him, he motioned for a piece of paper and a pen. Racked with pain, he struggled to write a brief note. On it were two simple words—“Semper Fi”—the Latin motto of the Marines meaning “forever faithful.”

Here is a glimpse of the end result of Paul's vision (in John's words): "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb" (Revelation 7:9-10).

Surely Paul heard those treasured words, "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful . . . Come and share your master's happiness!" (Matthew 25:23, NIV).

Paul was faithful to his vision. He passed it on to the next generation. Eventually it has been passed to you and me. May those that follow us find us forever faithful!

"O may all who come behind us find us faithful, may the fire of our devotion light their way. May the footprints that we leave, lead them to believe, and the lives we live inspire them to obey. O may all who come behind us find us faithful" (Jon Mohr).

Lesson in Review

1. What is double vision? _____

2. Saul's vision began with what two questions?
 - A. _____
 - B. _____

3. The questions mentioned in answering question 2 above lead us to three more questions. What are they?
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____

4. What is vision? _____

5. Explain how vision (at times) outlives us. _____

6. Express what is meant by "realigning with the vision." _____

7. What was Paul's vision? _____

8. What happens when a leader repeats the vision on a regular basis? _____

9. Identify three ways to remind people of the vision.

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____

10. Why is it important to be able to state one's vision clearly? _____

11. List some of the things vision costs or requires. _____

12. List the steps from receiving the vision to rejoicing the vision. _____

13. What was the end result of Paul's vision? _____

Chapter 6

Ministers and Core Values for Ministry

“A good reputation is more valuable than costly perfume”
(Ecclesiastes 7:1, NLT).

“A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold” (Proverbs 22:1, NIV).

“Choose my instruction rather than silver, and knowledge rather than pure gold” (Proverbs 8:10, NLT).

You and your team have been dropped into a jungle of opportunities. You have limited time to make an impact and leave a legacy. Your final destination is Heaven. You are determined to please your Maker. You are destined to make a difference. But, you must first discern what is important, your mode of operation, and your route on the expedition. Your charter (mission) is to evangelize the world. You are tasked with transforming and training next generation leaders. What tools are given? A set of binoculars will establish vision. Your map is the Word of God. Last but not least, carefully accept and protect a compass demarcating your core values. Our prayer is that you will finish the voyage and hear, “Well done!” Welcome to the journey called Ministry!

This lesson focuses on core values. “Core” speaks of something essential, fundamental, or central. “Value” speaks of what is significant, useful, or important. What is valuable to one person may not be so to another. An elderly missionary lady I worked with once bought me a tiny crystal globe. Her

message was as valuable as the gift. She said, “I bought you this globe because your vision is as big as the world.” That little globe is priceless and precious. However, someone ransacking my room probably would toss it aside, looking for greater treasures. I also have a little box of papers colored, created, or crafted by my children and loved ones. Perhaps to others these have minimal worth. Yet there *are* things in life and ministry that we *all* could—and should—value. We can’t succeed without them. They are core values that exist at the heart of all we do, think, and speak. If removed, the context of everything that surrounds them is destroyed. There can be no solid system or structure without a set of core values.

Let’s pause for a minute for some tech-talk. A compass is a direction finder used for navigational purposes. It is a proven lifesaver and instrument of survival. A compass is always used in connection with a map. It contains a magnetic needle that points to the true north. There are four cardinal points on the compass. In our study we propose four core values. They are like the points on the compass. Core values help determine what is important in our lives. Ray Disney, the nephew of Walt Disney, once said, “It’s not hard to make decisions when you know what your values are.”

Defining Core Values

Core Values:

1. Create the organization and church culture/community.
2. Guide organizational and personal behavior.
3. Assist in making decisions.
4. Anchor all that is central to life, mission, and vision.
5. Are rooted in principles that do not change based on circumstances, culture, or time.
6. Outline the never-changing definition of what we stand for.
7. Declare what we are willing to live and die for.
8. Are pivotal to the organization’s success or failure.
9. Provide a lens through which we accomplish our goals.
10. Advise us what we need to be and do every day, in every action.
11. Are clear. You don’t have to wait around for someone else in order to know what to do.
12. Identify the common core of understanding.

Describing Core Values

Core values describe the following:

1. What matters most and how we go about our lives and responsibilities.
2. A common language and culture for all to understand.
3. The soul of the leader and the organization.
4. The organization's DNA; its life's blood.
5. The heart or foundation by which we conduct ourselves.
6. The values and ideals we embrace.
7. Our reason for existence.

Discovering Core Values

Andrew Seidel in *Charting a New Course* revealed, "We all have values that we live by, whether we are conscious of them or not. Our values energize the motives that drive our actions. The important thing is that we consciously choose the values we live by."

I propose that every spiritual organization—church and theological school—along with every minister shares at least these four values:

- We value truth.
- We value spiritual growth.
- We value evangelism.
- We value relationships.

The following chart gives a deeper overview of the personal and organizational values/habits we stand for.

We value <i>truth</i> .	This includes: (a) doctrinal correctness; (b) telling the truth; (c) willingness to take a stand for what is right; (d) possessing integrity; (e) being sincere; (f) having a blameless character; (g) practicing financial accountability; and (h) refusing to be captivated by compromise and pressured into tolerance.
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We value <i>spiritual growth</i> .	This encompasses: (a) setting a standard of excellence; (b) being involved in lifelong learning and continuous improvement; (c) possessing a servant’s heart; (d) providing stewardship in every aspect of life; (e) being faithful, reliable, and dependable; (f) being committed; (g) staying obedient to God’s Word, commandments, and principles; (h) being responsible; (i) utilizing spiritual wisdom; (j) being willing to sacrifice for the sake of others and God’s kingdom; (k) developing Christian leadership; (l) mentoring; (m) discipling; and, last but certainly not least; (n) being an avid reader and student of God’s Word.
We value <i>evangelism</i> .	This entails: (a) having a God-directed vision, purpose, and mission; (b) being involved in evangelism – the priority of the church; (c) participating in world missions; (d) focusing on church growth; (e) promoting revival; (f) preparing saints for ministry; and (g) equipping the next generation of leaders.
We value <i>relationships</i> .	This includes relationships with: (a) God; (b) spouse; (c) family; (d) others; and (e) society. It involves: (a) unity; (b) love; (c) fellowship/sense of community; (d) caring for others; (e) humility; (f) ability to work with a team; (g) proper communications; (h) respect; (i) openness; (j) compassion; (k) moral purity; and (l) embodying proper ethics.

Developing Core Values

Values are planned, proclaimed, and practiced. They don’t just appear. They must be planned. This requires work. Doug Fields, in *Purpose Driven Youth Ministry*, says planned values reveal what is important to our ministry. They are our keys to success because they influence all we do. Proclaimed values are those we say we hold. Practiced values are the ones we actually live by. The difference between the two is sometimes referred to as hypocrisy.

Your personal and organizational values need not be limited to four. One can have many values, but only a few values can legitimately be considered as core. We have selected the values we feel are evident in every church,

theological institution, and Christian ministry. These are made up of any number of sub-points capable of standing on their own as values. Additionally, using four core values will enable everyone to be able to remember them. Some organizations use as few as two. Other ministries have ten or twenty. Some distinguish between (a) biblical, (b) cultural, (c) personal, and (d) family core values. We want to make our study as easy, as practical, and as applicable as possible.

Core values, in order to be relevant and have cross-cultural acceptance, should be deeply connected with principles. Principles are consistent. They do not change. They are applicable in any culture, anywhere in the world, and at any time. Core values are lived out through the application of principles and in obedience to God's Word. Core values and principles operate hand in hand. Our values need to be rooted in principles so they do not change based on the situation.

Lately, I have been captivated by the potential of core values in our churches and ministries. In the past, this subject has confused me. It is usually tackled from a secular point of view. Organizational values tend to change based on the type of product or service rendered. The church is universal and therefore has a set of core values that do not change based on location. They are worldwide, timeless, and vital. We simply cannot survive without them. They serve as the compass for all we do. If handled properly and consistently, they can not only affect, but also transform, the cultures we work in. There is no need for us to testify, "We will never be able to change the culture!" Take a look at history. Such statements do not hold true with someone whose distant ancestor was a cannibal, slave trader, or headhunter.

Admittedly, I do not see all of these values often displayed in my cultural context. There is a drought of commitment to integrity, honesty, accountability, and faithfulness. The church operates in maintenance mode instead of evangelistic enthusiasm. It is not time to declare defeat but to take action. Graffiti on the Berlin Wall read, "When you change points of view you can change the world." We can change the world for Jesus Christ. One helpful way is to institute core values in our organization. Great leaders are agents of positive, progressive change. We can create a biblical and spiritual culture.

H. B. London Jr. and Neil Wiseman, in *The Shepherd's Covenant for Pastors*, said, "One social scientist recently expressed . . . the quality of a whole culture

can be changed if just two percent of the population has a new vision of what needs to be done and starts doing it.”

Our values not only define (organizational) culture but also create it. Culture in its simplest terms is the way we do things around here. It includes values shared by old members and taught to new ones. Plato said that a society cultivates whatever is honored there. Make no mistake about what we honor. We honor truth. We honor spiritual growth. We honor evangelism. We honor relationships. We pass along values to the new, and reaffirm them to the old. A prerequisite for exemplifying and embodying core values is that people in our organization need to understand them.

In *Principle Centered Leadership*, Stephen Covey states, “The people who are transforming education today are doing it by building consensus around a common set of principles, values, and priorities.” Our aim exceeds transforming education. We transform lives. Our curriculum with the Global Association of Theological Studies is value-driven. It is organized around core values. It also is an objective-based, criterion-referenced, transformation-oriented delivery system.

Distributing Core Values

In *Leadership Theory and Practice*, Richard L. Daft states that culture consists of assumed values, understandings, and way of thinking shared by members of the organization and taught to new members as correct. We pass on values to new members and reaffirm and reconfirm them to the old ones. It is important to build an organization that preserves core ideology in tangible ways. We can shape our Bible school culture through core values by utilizing ceremonies, stories, symbols, songs, quotations, and examples.

According to John W. Gardner in *On Leadership*, “Every healthy society celebrates its values. They are expressed in art, in song, in ritual. They are stated explicitly in historical documents, in ceremonial speeches, in textbooks. They are reflected in stories told around the campfire, in legends kept alive by old folks, in the fables told to children.”

In *Leadership Is an Art*, Max DePree tells of a friend, Dr. Carl Frost, who had an interesting experience in Nigeria during the sixties. Electricity had newly been introduced to the village where Dr. Frost and his family were living.

Each family received one lightbulb in its home. This was progress. Problems came at night. Families would sit in their little houses and stare at the lonely lightbulb. Lightbulb watching replaced gathering around the fire, where storytellers would pass along history. The people “were losing [their] history in the light of a few electric bulbs.” DePree concludes that every family, college, and institution needs storytellers. “The penalty for refusing to listen is to lose one’s history, one’s historical context, one’s binding values. Like the Nigerian tribe, without the continuity brought by custom, any group of people will begin to forget who they are.” It has been said, “We teach what we know. We reproduce what we are.” I would like to rephrase that. “We teach what we know. We reproduce what we value.”

Leaders and ministers should:

1. Confirm shared values.
2. Retain, refine, and redefine core values.
3. Stress them.
4. Reject values not appropriate to the organization.
5. Celebrate value victories.
6. Embody the values; walk the talk. We lead others based on the values we embrace as leaders.
7. Reflect on and review values regularly.
8. Align actions with values.
9. Evaluate students based on core values.
10. Teach values.
11. Become men and women of value – valuable.
12. Define acceptable and unacceptable behavior based on core values.

Defending Core Values

Each (core) value should be put to the test. Ask the following questions:

1. Is it biblical?
2. Does it engender passion? Am I willing to fight for it?
3. Is it shared?
4. Is it constant?
5. Will it pass the test of time?
6. Is it clearly expressed?
7. Is it harmonious with other values?

8. Can it be implemented? (Above points adapted from a list by Aubrey Malphurs.)

Discussing Core Values

- A. Can you think of ways to remember core values?
- B. Provide examples from song, proverbs, history, speeches, or the Bible that reveal cultural, biblical, and family values in your context.
- C. Reflect over the past month of your preaching, teaching, and writing. What were your messages? What core values are attached to each?
- D. Mention a lesson taught or message preached that touched your life in a special way. Which core value would be associated with it?
- E. What can be done to secure an understanding of core values taking a top-down approach within the church organization? This would be from national leadership, moving to regional or district leadership, to the local pastors, local church lay leaders, all the way down to membership in the local church.
- F. How can we prevent corrosion of core values?

Conclusion

In *Staying Found: The Complete Map and Compass Handbook*, Jane Fleming provides different methods of route-finding. She says, “When searchers eventually locate lost hikers, alive or dead, they sometimes have with them compasses they never learned to use.” It is imperative that each learn how to use our *core values compass*. Otherwise we risk wandering lost, unmindful of what should guide us in life and ministry. We lose focus of what is truly important and fail to have a guiding compass pointing us in the right direction when making key decisions.

Please note: This lesson was originally part of the *Advance Educators Series*, written by James Poitras, and adapted for this lesson.

Lesson in Review

1. Using your own words, define core values. _____

2. Why is a compass a good metaphor in studying core values? _____

3. Why is it important to select only a few core values? _____

4. What are four types of core values mentioned in this lesson?

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____

5. List several ways one can share core values within the organization. _____

6. What are the four core values proposed to be applicable and/or shared by every spiritual organization?

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____

7. According to Stephen Covey, how is education being transformed today?

8. What process can one follow when determining/discovering core values?

9. What percentage of the population does it supposedly take to change a whole culture? _____

Chapter 7

Ministers and Excellence

“By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice” (Hebrews 11:4).

“And yet shew I unto you a more excellent way” (I Corinthians 12:31).

Growing up, I had an attraction to islands. Come to think about it, I still do! An island is any piece of land surrounded by water, separated from other landmasses. On my island, I knew I would be isolated and insulated from all of life’s negatives—poverty, a dysfunctional family, abuse, confusion, and inferiority—to name a few. Islands seem so peaceful, stuck out in the middle of nowhere disturbed by no one. At the edge of our property was a large river that separates Canada and the United States. In the middle was a tiny island. I imagined I would escape to that little island, become its king, and live happily ever after. Unfortunately, there were flaws in my thinking. I would become a lonely king to a community of one. And no matter where one goes he still manages to take his problems with him. I’m still fascinated by islands and get energized when I catch a glimpse of one along the coastline. However, instead of moving to an island, I’ve decided to create one of my own. I call it my *island of excellence*. You can create one too. This lesson explains how.

Not an Island unto Yourself

John Donne wrote the often-quoted statement, “No man is an island unto himself. Every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main.” This captures the nugget of truth that we are all connected; part of the fellowship of all

humanity. All men are created equal. There are no lone rangers (Ghanaians call it the Mister-I-Walk-Alone attitude) in the body of Christ (Romans 12:4-5; I Corinthians 12:12-27). We are a building fitly framed together (Ephesians 2:21). A person who cuts himself off from everyone else will soon be wandering lost. It isn't good to be alone (Genesis 2:18; Proverbs 18:1; Psalm 133:1). One *can* be an island, just not *unto* himself, encompassed by selfish thinking and massing benefits only for ourselves. We are all interconnected, and have individual responsibilities and functions. In speaking of an *island of excellence* I am referring to doing our work—and conducting our life—according to a high standard of distinction, despite or regardless what others do.

An Island unto Others

The sense of community permeates African life and is one of its enduring, crowning achievements. It can also be seen in other areas of the world. Africans foster *communalism*, not to be confused with *communism*. They advocate the worth and importance of the community. The group is the focus of its individual members. As we create an island of personal excellence we receive a double blessing—one for ourselves and one for the community at large. Kwame Gyekye said, “The people hold that the welfare of each individual is dependent on the welfare of all.” Communalism and individualism are both encouraged. He provides the following proverbs. See if you can discern those that speak of a sense of community, individuality, or both.

- “The clan is like a cluster of trees which, when seen from afar, appear huddled together, but which would be seen to stand individually when closely approached.”
- “Life is mutual aid.”
- “Walking alone is a pitiable condition.”
- “One finger alone cannot lift a thing.”
- “The left arm washes the right arm and the right arm washes the left arm.”
- “Life is as you yourself make it.”

Gyekye also states, “The individual is responsible for the life he or she fashions for himself or herself.” We can't lazily sit back and expect others to do everything for us. That's a good quotation, but there is one word I especially like: “responsible.” Each is responsible for creating an island of excellence. Stephen Covey plays on that English word when he speaks of being “response-

able." Each individual is response-able for making a positive impact in the community. We are more than willing to receive prosperity, blessings, gifts, but what are we willing to give? John F. Kennedy, in his presidential inaugural speech said, "Ask not what your country can do for you—rather ask, what you can do for your country."

We are encouraged to excel in everything we do.

"Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also. I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love" (II Corinthians 8:7-8).

Notice the word *sincerity* in that Bible verse. It is said that in ancient times Roman sculptors would cover flaws in their work in order to deceive the viewer. Potters covered mistakes in pottery with wax. The happy buyer would take it home, pour in hot water, the wax would melt, and the pot would leak. Therefore, honest potters would hang a sign *Sincerus*, being interpreted "without wax." That act of deception would never happen today, right? Wrong! What about the tomato seller who places the best product on top of the basket and the nearly rotten ones on the bottom, hoping the shopper will never realize; at least until she gets home. Or consider furniture makers who cover defects or use cheap materials. You may live in the midst of corruption and where dishonesty is the daily special. Doing your best is a personal decision. Create an island of excellence regardless of what others do or whether they even notice your good deeds.

What Is Excellence?

What is excellence, anyway? It is doing something in which one excels; an outstanding feature or quality; and speaks of one who exceeds in his actions. John Gardner said, "Excellence is doing ordinary things extraordinarily well." Excellence is not only a skill; it is an attitude. It is about being; not merely doing. A poster at the Lake Williamson Retreat Center defines excellence as the ability "to surpass others or be superior in some respect or area; do extremely well." The poster continued, "Excellence can be obtained if you *care* more than others think is wise; *risk* more than others think is safe; *dream* more than others think is practical; *expect* more than others think is possible."

Creating an island of excellence is not about competition—trying to be better than someone else is. Brian Harbour, in *Rising above the Crowd*, says, “Success means being the best. Excellence means being your best. Success, to many, means being better than everyone else is. Excellence means being better tomorrow than you were yesterday. Success means exceeding the achievements of other people. Excellence means matching your practice with your potential.”

“Not that we dare to classify or compare ourselves with some of those who are commending themselves. But when they measure themselves by one another and compare themselves with one another, they are without understanding.” (II Corinthians 10:12, ESV).

J. Hampton Keathley adds, “The pursuit of excellence refers to pursuing and doing the best we can with the gifts and abilities God gives, giving our best to the glory of God.”

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be firm (steadfast), immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord [always being superior, excelling, doing more than enough in the service of the Lord], knowing and being continually aware that your labor in the Lord is not futile [it is never wasted or to no purpose]” (I Corinthians 15:58, AMP).

Many organizations and educational institutions consider excellence a core value. Remember, core values describe what matters most and how we go about our lives and responsibilities.

How does one achieve excellence? Thomas Watson encouraged, “Stop doing less-than-excellent work.” That is a great place to begin.

Don’t you detest it when people are racist, sexist, or tribalistic? Oprah Winfrey said she grew up being taught, “Excellence is the best deterrent to racism or sexism.” If one achieves high-level excellence, another will not care if he is black or white, male or female, or from this place or that. Excellence breaks through barriers!

One of the biggest problems today is people excuse themselves from doing their best because of their circumstances. No one can stop you from creating an island of excellence, doing your best, and reaching your God-given potential except *you*.

Dr. Benjamin S. Carson Sr. is the director of Pediatric Neurosurgery at the esteemed John Hopkins Hospital. He shared his story in a series of inspiring books that explain his rise from poverty, hopelessness, and a single parent home in the poor section of Detroit to become one of the world's top brain surgeons. Like his other books, *Think Big: Unleashing Your Potential for Excellence* shares Ben's philosophy that it is not where you come from that matters, but where you are going and how you plan to get there. His mother, Sonya, was an enormous influence in his life. She had only a primary three education, was married at thirteen, and had heart problems. She found out that her husband, a minister, already had a wife and five children. But she determined that her two boys would excel and worked untiringly toward her goal. She stressed that education was the only way they would ever escape poverty. She insisted that if Ben achieved excellence, it would overcome and surpass any concern anyone would have with the color of his skin or his ethnic background. Ben is living proof that we are more than products of our surroundings, that we can build an island of excellence.

Joseph was sold by his brothers into slavery. It was certainly not an ideal situation. However, Joseph did his best and God was with him. He still used all of his talents and abilities for God's glory. Eventually, he was thrown into prison. Even there, Joseph did his best and applied himself. Ultimately, Joseph rose to the second most powerful in all the land, next to Pharaoh himself. The pit couldn't stop him. Slavery couldn't stop him. Prison couldn't stop him. He created an island of excellence in each pitiful situation he found himself.

"The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph's care, because the LORD was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did" (Genesis 39:23, NIV).

An Island unto God

Excellence in the ministry is all about serving others in the same way that Christ served us. We serve Jesus Christ. He is our real Master.

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters" (Colossians 3:23, NIV).

The pursuit of excellence is an appropriate response to the first and second great commandment. "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy

God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:37-39).

According to J. Hampton Keathley in his lesson "The Pursuit of Excellence," these verses show that God wants us to excel in both what we *are* (our inward character) and what we *do* (our behavior). Pursuing excellence is a goal and mark of spiritual maturity. It must be motivated by the right values, priorities, and motives. Otherwise, the pursuit of excellence can become a mark of spiritual immaturity as people are possessed with their own significance.

How to Create an Island of Excellence

Value it.

Make the decision that excellence is one of your core values.

Care about it.

It all starts with caring about what you are doing. Refuse to have an I-Don't-Care attitude. Eric Liddell, known as the Flying Scotsman and a 1924 gold medal runner once said, "I believe God made me for a purpose, but he also made me fast. And when I run I feel His pleasure." He cared that he pleased God.

Decide it.

Set the standard. Know what you want. Set goals and rules of conduct. Know the main thing. Do the main thing. Be committed. Be passionate. Decide today, I will create an island of excellence. With the help of God, I will do my best!

In *The White House Years*, Henry Kissinger tells a story of a university professor who gave an assignment. Students handed in their papers, and days later they were returned. One student searched his paper for a grade or a comment. The only remark was, "Is this the best you can do?"

The student pondered the question, looked for ways to improve his paper, and returned it to the professor. It came back again after a few days with the same comment, "Is this the best you can do?"

He knew it was better than the first, but he could add a few quotes and even make it a bit longer. He rewrote the paper again and passed it in. When returned the comment remained, "Is this the best you can do?"

This went on ten times. Finally, the student was exasperated and went to the professor and said sternly, “Yes, this is the best I can do!”

The professor responded, “Good! Now I will read it!”

That story highlights two things. We should work until we reach a high standard of excellence. And then, and only then, have we earned the right for someone to sit up and take notice of what we have done. When you create an island of excellence, believe me, people will notice.

Repeat it.

Form good habits. Right decisions that are done repeatedly over time compound success.

Aristotle said that excellence is not an act, but a habit. Excellence is a result of what we repeatedly do. I might add; what we repeatedly do *correctly*. They say, “Practice makes perfect.”

A professional athlete or gifted musician spends more time in preparing than in performance. A preacher spends more time in preparation than in preaching (hopefully). Excellence requires repeated practice and discipline.

Pray it.

God is able to help. Pray, “Lord, help me be all I can for your glory. Without you I can do nothing of any lasting or eternal value.” Prayer is talking to God concerning what He wants. It is an attempt to be pleasing to God. What made Abel’s sacrifice a more excellent one? Abel was trying to please God and to be obedient to what God instructed.

“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. *For then* you will make your way prosperous, *and then* you will have good success” (Joshua 1:8, NKJV, emphasis mine).

Deliver it.

Do what you say. Make promises and keep them. Deliver more, and deliver it sooner. Go beyond the expectations of others. Be realistic about telling people when you will have something done. Make promises based on your current capacity to fulfill.

Learn it.

Find continuous improvement opportunities. Grow through acquiring new knowledge. Research. Become an expert in your field. In addition, don't be afraid to teach others. Pass on what you know to the next generation.

Review it.

Allow for positive feedback and input from your peers, your students, or your followers. Permit evaluation by others and conduct self-evaluation. How am I doing? How can I improve? Am I staying true to my God, my family, and my clients or customers? Ask, "What am I doing that is not excellent?" If you were the recipient of your work, would you be satisfied and/or impressed? Find ways to improve.

Specialize in it.

Determine your gift mix and how it can be best used for the kingdom of God. Put the accent on strengths. People notice negatives first, and become captured by them. Determine your strengths and allow them to open doors to freedom to do what you want for God's glory. God expects us to use what we have been given to its fullest potential. Remember Paul said, "This one thing I do" (Philippians 3:13).

Focus on it.

Keep your mind on your priorities and goals. Those that chase two rabbits end up catching none. Doing a little of everything usually means ending up with a whole lot of nothing. We don't need a Jack-of-all-trades. He's usually master of none. Be careful of how you manage your time.

"But few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:42, NIV).

Expose it.

Be willing to serve others. Give your excellence away. Be helpful. Hang around or be exposed to other people of excellence. This will challenge and encourage you to excel.

Finish it.

Begin by doing your best in little things. Follow through. And remember to finish well. It is important not only how you begin the race, but how you finish it.

Colin Powell said, "If you are going to achieve excellence in big things, you develop the habit in little matters. Excellence is not an exception, it is a prevailing attitude."

"Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the realm of the dead, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom" (Ecclesiastes 9:10, NIV).

One company advertises, "If it must be done; it must be done well."

It is often said, "If it is worth doing, it is worth doing right." It's worth creating an island of excellence.

Rest from it.

Take time to rest and reflect. This refreshes and restores.

James Michener said, "One who has mastered the art of living simply pursues his vision of excellence at whatever he does, leaving others to decide whether he is working or playing."

Please Note: Originally this lesson, by James Poitras, was a part of the *Advance Educators Series* and has been adapted here.

Lesson in Review

1. Using verses of Scripture, prove we should excel in everything we do. ____

2. What is *excellence*? _____

3. According to the poster at the Lake Williamson Christian Center, how is excellence achieved? _____

4. How is excellence the best deterrent to racism and sexism? _____

5. What did Ben Carson's mother promise him? _____

6. Explain five ways we can create an island of excellence.

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____
- E. _____

7. How can one develop a specialization? _____

Chapter 8

Ministers and Seven Landmarks to Fuller Potential in Ministry

Effectiveness comes through reaching your full potential. Sounds easy, but how do you arrive at this destination of full capability? I have listed seven landmarks for the journey (not in the order of importance).

1. **Stewardship:**

We are personally responsible for our own stewardship. Ask, “Where and how should I invest my time, talents, and treasure?” Have you ever noticed how quickly others can identify someone that works? They tend to pile work on workers and give little thought to the person’s priorities, strengths, or time schedule. We have to be the ones to guard our giftedness. Invest well to bring forth the greatest dividends. Not all investments yield the same profits. We want to yield a hundredfold (Matthew 13:3-9).

Robert Slocum in *Ordinary Christians in a High-Tech World* says, “Even if the future is in God’s hands, I have in my own hands the stewardship responsibility for developing my own talents, aptitudes, and abilities.”

2. **Specialize:**

Someone has said that if you do a little of everything, you will end up doing a whole lot of nothing. Life has many general practitioners, but few specialists. Being a specialist is the order of the day. Find something that fits both your gifts and a need in the organization, and give yourself to it. Become a professional. Look for things you can do that no one else is doing (or can do). Not only will you gain a reputation, you will make an impact and establish your ministry.

Paul said, “Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:13-14, NIV).

In *Leadership Is an Art*, Max DePree explains the concept of roving leadership. “Roving leaders have the special gifts, or the special strengths, or the special temperament to lead in these special situations.”

He claims that in many organizations there are two kinds of leaders—both hierarchical leaders and roving leaders. Max gives an illustration of roving leadership. In the church service on Sunday morning, a man slumped over apparently having a serious health problem. What did the leader, the senior pastor, do in this situation? Nothing. But in a few seconds a nurse was at the man’s side. She quickly attended to the man. Who was the roving leader in this situation? The nurse. “Roving leaders are those indispensable people in our lives who are there when we need them.”

3. **Significance:**

Get involved in something that makes a difference in eternity. What are you doing that will outlast you? Have a vision of what the Lord would have you to do. Life is too short just to aim for success. Shoot for significance, make an impact, and leave behind a legacy.

George Bernard Shaw said, “Life is no brief candle to me. It is a sort of splendid torch which I’ve got ahold of for the moment, and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations.”

4. **Strengths:**

Ask, “What am I really good at?” Spend the majority of your continuous improvement time developing your strengths. This is the secret to making a mark of excellence. Spending all your time developing your weaknesses will only allow you to become average. Spend your time doing what you do best, and delegate the rest away. You cannot do everything, and you should not attempt to. Work smarter, not harder.

Bob Buford says in *Halftime*, “My passion is to multiply all that God has given me, and in the process, give it back.”

Erma Bombeck once said, "When I stand before God at the end of my life, I would hope that I would not have a single bit of talent left, and could say, 'I used everything you gave me.'"

5. Success:

It doesn't happen overnight. It is a journey. How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time. Right decisions done repeatedly over time will compound success. Peter Drucker says you should work on things that will make a great deal of difference if you were to succeed. What is success? John Maxwell reveals in *The Success Journey*, "Success is knowing your purpose in life, growing to reach your maximum potential, and sowing seeds that benefit others." Vaclav Havel adds, "The real test of a man is not when he plays the role that he wants for himself, but when he plays the role destiny has for him."

6. Servant:

Maintain a servant's heart. A servant is not only willing to serve, but goes beyond the expectation of others. Biblically a servant that does only what is expected, remains unprofitable. "And does the master thank the servant for doing what he was told to do? Of course not" (Luke 17:9, NLT).

Sometimes it will be necessary to just say no to some tasks in order to do a better job at what you should be doing. Effective leaders learn when to say no. Buford says you should not accept work that you do not want to do, or that you do not have time to do. Unwanted work becomes a chore, and becomes an unpleasant taskmaster.

7. Stop:

Take stock. Take time-out regularly to inventory and reflect on what you have accomplished, and what you intend to accomplish in the future. Measure everything that comes your way according to your vision, passion, giftedness, and personal ministry.

There are many roadblocks on the journey to reaching your full potential, and each one will try to detour you from your destination. A zillion motorists disguised as important work assignments will endeavor to slow you down. Keep your eye on your vision. Watch for the landmarks along the way. Slow down, and occasionally stop to make sure you are moving in the right direction. Get back on the road and keep moving. Your destiny is in sight. Your fullest potential is just ahead.

Lesson in Review

1. According to Robert Slocum, what do we have in our hands? _____

2. Why is it important to specialize? _____

3. What is meant by “roving leaders”? _____

4. Why should we guard our giftedness? _____

5. Why is it important to maximize or develop one’s strengths rather than weaknesses? _____

6. What is success, according to John Maxwell? _____

7. According to this lesson, how should leaders measure potential assignments that come their way? _____

8. What did Bob Buford say in this lesson? _____

9. What is the purpose for one occasionally stopping? _____

10. How can a person determine his or her strengths? What question should be asked? _____

Personal Study Notes

Chapter 9

Ministers and the Message No One Wants to Hear

“Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 15:26).

The first missionaries, Barnabas and Paul, had given glowing, victorious reports of what God was doing among the Gentiles. However, progress cost them risking their lives.

Commendation, appreciation, and honor in the Word of God were given to those who risked their lives.

The most important people within the church are those that are giving their lives to the primary focus of the church: evangelizing the lost. Evangelism is the key to the church's future.

Hazarded is a gambling term that means to take or risk or lay something on the line. These men laid their lives on the line for the name of the Lord Jesus.

Because of their commitment we read words of commendation and appreciation for the sacrifices they made for the cause of the gospel and the name of Jesus Christ.

Someone has said that most churches and movements go through three stages:

- They begin as risk takers.
- They grow to be caretakers.
- They end up undertakers.

A web-based article titled "Our Real Mission" says, "These early disciples were so convinced of the lostness of men and women and the truthfulness of the gospel, and the necessity of missions and evangelism that they risked both life and limb to carry the gospel of Jesus Christ to all." They were "possessed and obsessed by the command of Jesus to take the gospel to everyone. . . . They were consumed and committed to the mission."

This article claims that we fulfill our mission by doing three things:

- We must bring people in.
- We must build them up.
- We must send them out.

General Patton said, "I don't want to receive any message saying we are holding our position. We are advancing constantly. We're not interested in holding anything except the enemy." The church and its ministry should be on the offensive, aggressively, actively winning the world for Jesus Christ.

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18).

In "The Challenge of Our Age," H. C. Van Wormer explains that people risk their lives for many causes:

- The soldier for victory and his country.
- The athlete for the excitement of winning.
- The explorer for gratification of curiosity.
- The artist for fame.
- The sailor for the love of the sea.
- The mountain climber for the thrill of reaching the top.
- The scientist for knowledge and discovery.

Van Wormer writes, "So evidently we are in a day when there is no apparent lack of men and women who are willing to risk their lives in hazardous tasks, and attempt the impossible."

Why should there be a shortage of those that will risk their lives for the gospel? He goes on to write about Paul waiting in the courtyard of a Roman prison while the executioner is grinding the axe to cut off his head. He calls for paper and ink and begins to write:

Timothy, preach the same gospel I have preached. Don't compromise the truth. Endure afflictions . . . be instant in season and out of season; preach the truth at all seasons. Be a good soldier, Timothy.

I am ready to depart. There will be no opening of the jail this time. Rome is my last stop in the heavenly blueprint. I have finished my course. The next stop is Heaven. Good-bye to jails, bleeding, suffering, pain, shipwrecks, and unkind treatment. I am turning my face toward the dawning of God's new day, in God's eternal city, where no sorrow or sighing or pain or suffering shall ever come. Good-bye, Timothy. I won't see you again until the Marriage Supper. Do the work of an evangelist.

The apostles literally preached until it hurt. These ordinary men accomplished extraordinary things for God. But it cost them their lives.

Much of the information that follows came from the Christian History Institute and their article "Whatever Happened to the Twelve Apostles?" They write, "It is safe to say that the apostles went far and wide as heralds of the message of the risen Christ. An early legend says they cast lots and divided up the world to determine who would go where, so all could hear about Jesus. They suffered greatly for their faith."

- Paul was beheaded in Rome.
- Peter was also martyred there, crucified upside down since he did not count himself worthy to die the same way as his Lord.
- Andrew went to the "land of the man-eaters," now called Russia. He was crucified in Greece.
- Thomas went as far east as India. He died there when pierced through with the spears of four soldiers.
- Philip evangelized in North Africa and in Asia Minor. There he converted the Roman proconsul's wife. The proconsul had him arrested and cruelly put to death.
- Matthew preached in Persia and Ethiopia. Some reports say he was stabbed to death in Ethiopia.

- Bartholomew was a missionary in India, Armenia, Ethiopia, and Southern Arabia. He was martyred.
- James ministered in Syria. It is reported that he was thrown down from the temple, then stoned, and his brains were bashed out with a club.
- Simon the Zealot preached in Persia and was killed when he refused to sacrifice to their sun god.
- Matthias went to Syria and was burned to death.
- John led the church in Ephesus. Later he was exiled to Patmos where he wrote the Book of Revelation. He was thrown into a pot of burning oil, but miraculously escaped death.
- James, the son of Zebedee, was put to death by Herod shortly after Passover.

In 1848, John Geddie went to the New Hebrides Islands of the South Pacific. Living among man-eaters, he was in constant danger. He taught them about Jesus. One by one the people gave up their idols. Six years later more than half of the islanders had become Christians and they started evangelizing other islands.

When the missionary died, this was placed on his grave:

When he came here, there were no Christians.
When he went away, there were no heathens.

Erwin McManus in *An Unstoppable Force* said, "If those who prepare for leadership are looking for the safe place, who will lead the church into the dangerous places?"

One persecuted Christian in the twenty-first century said, "I will preach the gospel of Jesus Christ until I die." Can you say amen to that? Soreness, sorrow, suffering, solitude, and sacrifice are words of a message we don't want to hear or eagerly anticipate. Sometimes God causes us to move away from comforts to accomplish His higher purpose and to reach our lost world.

Starting over three hundred years ago, a little group was concerned with lives lost in the Atlantic Ocean, within a mile from land. This little cluster couldn't stand to think of people going down so close to their shores, so they went into the life-saving business. They built little huts of refuge along the shoreline. Their motto was, "You have to go out, but you don't have to come

back!" They took their task seriously and risked all because they prized human life. Over time the US Coast Guard took over the job and adopted the same values. Souls are lost on the seas and in the storms of life. Our commission has not altered. We are still going all out to reach our world.

Please Note: This lesson, written by James Poitras, originally was part of *Acts: God's Training Manual for Today's Church*.

Lesson in Review

1. Who are some of the most important people in the church? _____

2. Explain the word *hazarded* and how it relates to our lives. _____

3. List three things that need to be done to fulfill our mission.
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____

4. "The church should be aggressive." Do you agree or disagree? Explain. ____

5. List three ways, reasons, or examples men risk their lives.
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____

6. What conclusion did Van Wormer reach? _____

7. Prove that the apostles literally preached until it hurt. _____

8. What does an early legend say about the way the apostles decided how they would reach their world? _____

9. Write out the words that were placed on John Geddie's grave. _____

10. What question is asked by Erwin McManus in this lesson? _____

11. Explain the origin of the motto for the United States Coast Guard. _____

Chapter 10

Ministers and Life Management

“Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, “It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” (Acts 6:1-4, ESV).

The early church experienced success and a few things that go along with it: the need to re-evaluate, simplify, specialize, and delegate as the organization grows.

People were griping, “Our needs are not being met.” The Twelve quickly realized they couldn’t do everything required to sustain the church. It was necessary to stop, reflect, and refocus on what God had called them to do. They did and came up with the best solution: “We’ll stick with the main thing.” They did and the church continued to grow. They unveiled an important leadership concept: to accomplish more, do less. What a contradiction. Want to accomplish more? Do less.

The *Daily Walk Bible* defines *specialization* as “the art of learning more and more about less and less.” If we want to accomplish more in life we must specialize. Those that do a little of everything end up accomplishing a whole lot of nothing. An ancient Chinese proverb says, “The eagle that chases two rabbits at one time will catch neither.”

“Besides the noble art of getting things done, there is the noble art of leaving things undone. The wisdom of life consists in the elimination of nonessentials” (Lin Yutang as quoted in *Ready for Anything* by David Allen.)

Many are involved in making “to-do lists” but we also need to make “not-to-do lists.” This is also called “planned neglect.” We plan to neglect certain tasks so we can accomplish important ones.

The apostles knew that focusing on their “main thing” would make a significant difference in advancing the church. Lesser goals make little difference in the health and growth of the ministry and can be delegated to others. What do you do when faced with the need to do more? Right: do less.

D. L. Moody once said, “The trouble with a great many men is that they spread themselves out over too much ground. They fail in everything. If they would only put their life into one channel, and keep in it, they would accomplish something.”

Jesus often referred to His purpose. Jon Walker explains in “Did Jesus Rush through His Week?” “It’s not about getting everything done; rather it’s about doing the most important things! . . . Timing is everything. It means saying ‘no’ to the urgent in order to stay focused on the important. Think about Olympic athletes. They have just as many hours in the day as you and me, but they sacrifice constantly to press toward their goal. They don’t allow their day to be filled with busy-ness because they have a larger purpose in mind.”

God has equipped us with gifts, unique abilities, and a rich reservoir of experiences. There is no one just like you. He expects us to use these resources to advance His kingdom. However, we must understand we have limited resources.

To minimize pride and to maximize team ministry, not all perform the same function nor possess the same gifts. Working together, operating in our areas of strength, propels the church forward.

“Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the

others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us” (Romans 12:4-6, NIV).

Matthew 25:14-29 tells a story about investment. Three servants served their Master. Each was given a gift to invest based on his unique abilities and was delegated responsibilities. Two servants invested their talents; one played it safe and did nothing. The Master was not happy with the third servant and threw him out. We are servants. Our assets are limited but need to be invested wisely.

“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Philippians 4:13). Exactly! We can do everything the Lord wants us to do, but He does not want us to do everything. He has a specific work in mind for us. Besides, the setting of this passage of Scripture refers to how God supplies the financial resources necessary to accomplish ministry. We are limited. He is unlimited.

H. Dale Burke’s excellent book, *Less Is More Leadership*, proved to be a priceless resource in the groundwork of this lesson. He said, “You have only a certain amount of time, energy, giftedness, resources, and money. You’ve got only so much to give, and when it’s gone, it’s gone.” He went on to say, “Leaders, as limited resources, must learn to simplify, reduce, and in fact ‘do less’ in order to accomplish more.”

When Burke asked leaders to describe their feelings about their lives they used three words: I am busy, buried, and behind.

Okay! It’s time for a word-building exercise. Three new words:

- Overload
- Burnout
- Stress

You should avoid these three culprits in your life. They will rob your joy, creativity, and productivity if given half a chance.

Overload may be easier to describe than to define. Steve and Mary Farrar explain in *Overcoming Overload*, “Overload reminds us of the weight of everyday life. We are overwhelmed, overworked, overcommitted, over-anxious, overmatched, and overextended. Our tanks are on empty and we are running on fumes.”

Burke feels we need to make choices to pursue our dreams. It is necessary to off-load (responsibilities not in line with our “main thing”) before we can reload (responsibilities in line with our main thing). Otherwise, we risk overloading. Do you know what happens when you overload electrical circuits? The lights will go out and you will experience power failure.

Burnout comes from unrealistic expectations. According to Robert Trapani, “It occurs when well-intentioned people try to reach unrealistic goals.” We cannot accomplish everything; we need to focus on what God would have us accomplish.

Stress occurs when there are strong emotional demands made on our nervous system. It is when we have more problems than we can handle. Stress is a close cousin to “overload.” Do you ever feel “stressed”? It is a modern term. It is doubtful our ancestors ever went around saying, “Man! Am I stressed!”

How do we prevent overload, burnout, and uncontrollable stress in our lives? Find the main thing, the one thing you do best in life, and stick with it. Once you have found it, stay focused.

“But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal. . . . All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things” (Philippians 3:13-15, NIV).

Lesson in Review

1. Quote and explain a proverb used in this lesson. _____

2. What was the apostles’ response to the Acts 6 problem? _____

3. What is *specialization*? _____

4. Why is specialization important? _____

5. According to this lesson, how do we propel the church forward? _____

6. Describe what is meant by "overload"? _____

7. Describe how we are like the servants in Matthew 25:14-29. _____

8. According to Dale Burke, what choice has to be made in order to pursue our dreams? _____

9. When does stress occur? When does burnout occur? _____

10. How do we prevent overload, burnout, and stress? _____

Chapter 11

Ministers and Motivation

“But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, and kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles’ feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God” (Acts 5:1-4).

This lesson deals with motives. Webster’s dictionary defines *motive* as “the sense of need, desire, fear, etc. that prompts an individual to act.”

No church is perfect. The early church was no different. In the beginning of this lesson we will look at the first recorded sin in the church’s history. It began when the believers agreed that their belongings were not their own but common property. Owners of land, houses, and properties sold them and placed the proceeds at the apostles’ feet. The selling of possessions was strictly voluntary. Profits were distributed to those with needs. As a result, everyone’s needs were met.

Surely, a Little Lie Won’t Matter

Ananias and Sapphira pretended to give all the proceeds from the sale of their property. No one had said they had to give everything. They kept back some of the profits for themselves. Their sin was deception. Not only did they lie to God’s people, they lied to God. They were hypocrites.

Today the story is slightly different. Hypocrites do not necessarily withhold properties; they hold back part of themselves. Yet they say they have surrendered all. God truly knows since He looks on the heart.

“Man sees your actions, but God your motives” (Thomas A. Kempis).

Ananias and Sapphira’s trickery did not fool the man of God. How did he know? Was it revealed on their faces? Did the Holy Spirit reveal it? Someone could have warned them, “Watch out, your motivation is showing.” It was too late. Peter saw their deceit and hypocrisy. It was totally unnecessary. They were not forced to give the proceeds. Failure to do so was not a sin. But they lied to the Holy Ghost. They expected to hear complimentary words from the man of God. They were hoping to gain glory and recognition. Their root sins seemed to be a love for money and a desire for the praises of others. Instead, they both received a hasty punishment for their short-lived attempt to deceive the Holy Ghost.

Their attitude was different from that manifested by Barnabas, the son of encouragement. He sold a plot of land and freely brought the proceeds to the apostles’ feet. What was the difference? It was a difference in motivation. Barnabas was kingdom-minded. He wanted to see the kingdom of God strengthened, extended, and expanded. Ananias and Sapphira were other-minded. Are your motives kingdom-minded or other-minded?

Kingdom-minded or Other-minded?

“Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you” (Philippians 3:15).

The Man Who Refused the Election

“Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, ‘Rule over us, you and your son and your grandson also, for you have saved us from the hand of Midian.’ Gideon said to them, ‘I will not rule over you, and my son will not rule over you; the LORD will rule over you’” (Judges 8:22-23, ESV).

Gideon was called to a position of leadership. He never sought glory for himself. He was kingdom-minded. He took a small army of three hundred men and defeated the enemy. As a result, the people wanted him to be their king. He would not take honor that belonged to the Lord. Gideon reaffirmed that the Lord ruled Israel.

We should not be tempted away from what God has directed us to do for temporary fame and glory. Many are motivated by a quest for power. The three great temptations to man are money, sex, and power. It has been said, "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely." Lucifer was brought down because of a quest for power. It is wrong to seek power, personal glory and/or prestige. Desire for positions of power and working politics to get them has disqualified many from a spiritual ministry. Make a commitment now that you will never be motivated by personal ambitions for power and position. It is easy to spot someone desiring power. His motivation shows!

"God has placed some men above kings as He has given them a mission to fulfill rather than a position to occupy" (Alexandre Dumas).

He Is Greater than I Am

John the Baptist was a bold prophet called to prepare the way for the promised Messiah. After living a solitary life, he enjoyed a large following. Once Jesus came on the scene and started His public ministry, many of John's disciples left him and followed Jesus. John could have been jealous. Clearly this represented a decrease in his power and influence. But he preferred the kingdom. Surprisingly, John the Baptist was overjoyed and confessed, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30).

"John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me" (John 1:15).

Whose Kingdom Are You Building?

King Saul's motivation disclosed his desire to bring honor to himself.

“Early in the morning Samuel got up and went to meet Saul, but he was told, ‘Saul has gone to Carmel. There he has set up a monument in his own honor and has turned and gone on down to Gilgal’” (I Samuel 15:12, NIV).

Even when the man of God revealed Saul’s disobedience, Saul still wanted to protect his honor before the people. He was more concerned about maintaining his reputation than being right with God.

“Then he said, I have sinned: yet honour me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD thy God” (I Samuel 15:30).

In Christian service we must be careful not to try to bring honor to ourselves and build our own monuments (kingdoms). We are building the Lord’s kingdom. Saul was other-minded. David, a man after God’s own heart, was kingdom-minded.

“Then he called for Solomon his son, and charged him to build an house for the LORD God of Israel. And David said to Solomon, My son, as for me, it was in my mind to build an house unto the name of the LORD my God” (I Chronicles 22:6-7).

God is a jealous God and is not willing to share His glory with others.

“I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images” (Isaiah 42:8).

O. A. Battista said that people are often motivated by at least two reasons: “the one they tell you about and the secret one.” This may be the rule, but Christians and effective leaders should be the exception to the rule. We should not have secret agendas.

The Man Who Had Everything—Almost

Naaman had prosperity. He had both wealth and power. He is described as a mighty man and honorable. He had everything a man could ask for, but he was a leper. Money, prestige, position, and knowing people in high places

could not buy him healing. Naaman's wife's godly maid had the answer. She told him to go to the prophet for healing.

Naaman thought he could wield power and influence to persuade the man of God. He sent a letter to the king. The king shouted, "What am I, God, that I can heal leprosy?"

Next, Naaman and some of his men went to see the man of God. He thought Elisha would be impressed by his presence. He just knew that Elisha would rush out to receive him, invite him into his house, call on his God, strike his hand over the leprosy, and heal him. However, Elisha was not like many today. We give the rich sinner the best seat in the place and spoil him with our attention. Elisha just sent a message: "Go and dip seven times in the muddy Jordan River." Naaman was furious.

His servants tried to calm him down, "If he had told you to do some great thing, wouldn't you have done it?" They persuaded Naaman to obey.

As the prophet had promised, Naaman was cleansed of leprosy. He offered Elisha money. Surely he would accept it. Elisha refused and said, "How can I take money for something that God did?" Naaman promised to serve the true God.

Gehazi, My Heart Went with You!

"But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, Behold, my master hath spared Naaman this Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought: but, as the LORD liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him" (II Kings 5:20).

Gehazi had a different motivation. He ran after Naaman and lied to him. He was given two talents of silver, two changes of clothes, and two servants to carry these things to his house. He hid them in the house and appeared before his leader.

Elisha asked, "Gehazi, where have you been?"

Gehazi casually answered, "Nowhere." Watch out, Gehazi, your motivation is showing.

“And he said unto him, Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments. . . ? The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow” (II Kings 5:26-27).

The Man Who Escaped Without a Coat on His Back

Joseph was a young man with a big dream from God. His jealous, hateful brothers sold him into slavery, and he eventually found himself in Potiphar’s household. The Lord was with Joseph and directed his footsteps. He became a prosperous man and the overseer of Potiphar’s house.

Everything was left in Joseph’s hand except one thing: Potiphar’s wife. She had her eye on handsome Joseph and pleaded, “Sleep with me!” But Joseph was in the house to do business and sleeping with his master’s wife was not part of his motivation. She tormented him daily. He kept his flesh under control and replied, “There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” (Genesis 39:9). Joseph remained strong in a situation where many would have failed. He kept his motives and actions pure before God and man.

Wrong motives eat away at a man’s integrity and eventually destroy his testimony and ministry. It does not happen overnight. No one falls suddenly.

Luis Palau, in *A Man after God’s Heart*, relates a story of the Teton Dam in the USA. When this dam collapsed, everyone was stunned. Without warning, the huge structure suddenly gave way, sending millions of liters of water into the river basin. From all outward appearances, it seemed like a sudden disaster. A closer look revealed a hidden fault beneath the water line that slowly weakened the entire structure. It was just a little weak spot, but it was detected too late.

“Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?” (I Corinthians 5:6).

Check Your Motives

It is important to ask often, “Why am I doing this? Are my motives pure? Am I doing this for the right reasons?”

It’s Time to Think

What are some good motives in ministry? What are some bad motives in ministry? Do you have bad motives for the actions you take as you minister?

David prayed, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Psalm 139:23-24).

“The actions of men are the best interpreters of their thoughts”
(John Locke).

As quoted in Richard Edler’s book, *If I Knew Then What I Know Now*, Tom Johnson said, “Do what is right. If you aren’t sure, ask yourself this question, ‘How will my actions, taken in private, look if published on the front page of the newspaper . . . ?’ You never need to lie or cheat to succeed in life.”

Lesson in Review

1. What did Thomas A. Kempis say as quoted in this lesson? _____

2. What was the difference in attitude between Barnabas and Ananias and Sapphira? _____

3. What happens to those who desire power? _____

4. What are the three greatest temptations to man?
A. _____
B. _____
C. _____

5. What did Alexandre Dumas say as recorded in this lesson? _____

6. What did John the Baptist say when his disciples left him and followed Jesus? _____

7. What concern did King Saul express when caught in sin and disobedience by the man of God? _____

8. What did Saul want to build? _____

9. In contrast, what did David want to build? _____

10. How was the way the prophet treated Naaman different from the way most treat rich sinners? _____

11. What happened to Gehazi for being money hungry? _____

12. What do wrong motives eat away? _____

13. What is a "motive"? _____

14. Why did Joseph not commit adultery with Potiphar's wife? _____

15. According to John Locke, what is the best interpreter of our thoughts?

Personal Study Notes

Chapter 12

Ministers and the Temptation Battle

“You are to abstain . . . from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things” (Acts 15:29, NIV).

The Bible has much to say on this subject. Take a look at a small sampling of Scripture passages:

“But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people” (Ephesians 5:3, NIV).

“Shun immorality and all sexual looseness [flee from impurity in thought, word, or deed]. Any other sin which a man commits is one outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is the temple (the very sanctuary) of the Holy Spirit Who lives within you, Whom you have received [as a Gift] from God? You are not your own, you were bought with a price [purchased with a preciousness and paid for, made His own]. So then, honor God and bring glory to Him in your body” (I Corinthians 6:18-20, AMP).

“The body . . . is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body” (I Corinthians 6:13, NIV).

Following are a few excerpts of what others are saying about sexual temptation, impurity, and pornography.

In a *Pentecostal Herald* article G. Keith Sjostrand reminds us, "As society has progressed technologically, pornography is more readily and easily available. This availability (now even on mobile phones) adds to the importance of breaking the habit and reconnecting to God." This requires that we learn how to restrict and control the accessibility. He instructs, "The progression of eye adultery leads to heart adultery (lust) and then to body adultery."

In a *Ninetyandnine.com* article (September 10, 2007), Carol P. Clemans tells of a deacon she counseled that asked, "Why do I have to have the same temptations at church as I do on the job? Do I have to come to church with my eyes shut?" He meant that in his business he dealt with women who expose their bodies. When he comes to church he also deals with women who dress in clothes that are too tight and too short. She explained that tight clothes, short skirts, or dresses barely to the knees are a stumbling block to men. Men respond to sight. Women respond to touch. "Watching women praise singers . . . with tight, too short clothes, moving to the music, is a major distraction to men." She advises women to "always look in the mirror before leaving home, and ask yourself how God would respond to the way you are dressed. . . . We need to teach our daughters (and peers) how to dress modestly This is the first step in sexual purity at all levels."

Dr. James Dobson states in *What Wives Wish Their Husbands Knew about Women*, "When sexual response is blocked, males experience an accumulating physiological pressure which demands release. Two seminal vesicles (small sacs containing semen) gradually fill to capacity; as maximum level is reached, hormonal influences sensitize the man to all sexual stimuli." For most, this buildup takes only about seventy-two hours. The body does have a built-in system of release through nocturnal emissions and spill over into urine.

Daniel Henderson, in *Think before You Look*, calls "pornography the number one weapon of spiritual and cultural terrorism against the moral fabric of our country." The total number of pornographic websites now exceeds 4.2 million and globally over 70 million different individuals per week view at least one of these sites. Spam mail accounted for 58 percent of the world's email in December 2003 (www.family.org). An average of 2.5 billion pornographic email is sent out daily with 42.7 percent Internet users using porn (<http://www.mvnu.edu/palcon/Caring%20for%20Children%20-%20Jane%20Kennard.pdf>, accessed June 18, 2013). Of course, this is only among the worldly and does not affect Christians. Wrong. Promise Keeper men (a renowned men's ministry) reported 53 percent who viewed pornography in the

previous week. Christians who said porn was a major problem in the home were 47 percent of those polled.

To think Internet pornography is a problem only in North America would be a tragic oversight. The same organization gave several top ten reports. The highest revenue for porn was in China. Using search engines the most searches of the word "porn" were from South Africa. The top representation from those searching "XXX" was Bolivia, and those searching the word *sex* were from Pakistan. (Statistics are from *www.familysafemedia.com*). So you see this is becoming a global problem. Unfortunately, developing nations will escalate in being affected as information technology becomes more affordable and accessible. A survey conducted by *Leadership Magazine* revealed 55 percent of pastors and lay leaders confessed to having no one with whom they were able to discuss sexual temptation. Seventy-two percent of clergy responding to a survey said they have been propositioned to engage in sexual activity with someone other than their spouse. Tal Prince of Tapestry of Hope said, "In an anonymous survey conducted by *Leadership Magazine*, seven out of ten lay leaders in the church admitted to visiting adult Websites at least once a week. When pastors were asked the same question, four out of ten said they did the same. If that many of our leaders struggle, what do you think is happening in the pews?"

Raymond Woodward wrote an excellent article for the April 2009 *Pentecostal Herald*. It is called "The Pornography Epidemic." The Greek word *pornographos* originally referred to "writing about prostitutes." Pornography is any "sexually explicit material intended to cause sexual arousal." Men are prone to be tempted visually (Matthew 5:28). Woodward said, "God gave the gift of sex to be expressed only within the intimacy and holiness of marriage for the threefold purpose of procreation (having children—Genesis 1:28), recreation (mutual enjoyment—Proverbs 5:18-19), and identification (bonding physically, psychologically, and spiritually as one flesh—Genesis 2:24). Pornography accomplishes absolutely none of God's purposes . . . Pornography is soul poison! Ever since Adam's failure in the Garden of Eden, men have been plagued with out-of-control appetites (lusts) within their bodies that war against holiness. The Bible has much to say about lust because it destroys our spiritual life." (See I Peter 2:11.)

The question is not "if sexual temptation comes" but "when it comes, what will you do?" This paragraph is being written from a secluded seashore off the coast of West Africa. The backdrop is the booming sound of gigantic waves as they climb, crest, and crash. This is followed by lesser waves gently washing toward the shoreline. It erodes and eats away the sand. Sometimes,

sexual temptation boisterously, and boldly crashes into our lives, drenching us. At other times, it calmly creeps in. Either way, beware because it seeks to crumble or steal away spiritual stability. Run for the shelter of the solid Rock. Don't allow sin to drench or drown you!

Ever consider the destruction, devastation, and/or consequences of giving in to sexual impurity? Such disturbing damage perhaps can best be seen or understood in hindsight or looking back. So let's imagine or create a scenario of what takes place when there is unchecked giving in to sexual temptation.

Here are fifteen consequences of failing (or falling) into sexual temptation:

1. It overrides our conscience and undermines our convictions.
2. It causes ensuing guilt, shame, fear, low self-esteem, regret, dissatisfaction, failure, disgrace, defeat, hiding, cowering, being shunned, becoming embarrassed, sense of lost-ness (because one has lost the battle). It leaves people hurting: self, partner, children, ministry team, friends, and family. Our sin – my sin – directly affects others that I love.
3. When unchecked, it disqualifies one from active ministry.
4. In the ministry it causes both a loss of one's job and one's future, thus removing the opportunity to influence and affect our generation.
5. It represents a loss of all that one has worked for. It brings about the destruction or minimization of all that one has built for God.
6. It brings about – within the secular community – a poor reflection and projection of the ministry, the church, the kingdom of God, and the name of Christ.
7. It severely damages integrity and trust, and instigates a loss of respect from others and of one's self.
8. It brings misunderstanding. No one understands. Tongues wag, yet all face sexual temptation.
9. It fractures and shatters one's relationship with God. Separation comes. Distance is created. Breaks relationship with others.
10. The offender seeks ways to hide or cover his transgressions. There is no hiding place. Sin always finds one out. (See Numbers 32:23.)
11. It brings pleasure for the moment, but displeasure for a lifetime. (See Hebrews 11:25.)
12. It is sin and leads to spiritual death. (See James 1:15.)

13. It motivates rationalization in one's mind. The mind has a tremendous ability to rationalize just about anything. It says, "No one will ever know!" But at least two will know: the person and God.
14. It leads to other sins (to cover this one) like lying.
15. Increasingly giving in to temptation has a domino effect. The Christian life starts falling apart.

The Great Price of Sin

(Psalm 51)

Sin hurts the sinner.	David's whole being was affected: eyes (v. 3), mind (v. 6), ears (v. 8), heart (v. 10), spirit (v. 10), and mouth (v. 13- 15).
Sin hurts others.	Sin can bring tragic consequences to others (James 1:13-16), especially one's family. David's sin led to Uriah's death; Bathsheba's baby died; David's daughter, Tamar, was violated by her own brother, Ammon; Ammon was killed by Absalom. There was a lifetime of sorrow. "From this time on, the sword will be a constant threat to your family" (II Samuel 12:10, NLT). How frightening! I don't want my family to pay for sins I've committed. I don't want them to suffer shame!
Sin hurts God.	Our sins are against God (vs. 4) and make us dirty (vs. 2, 7). Jesus died for our sins (John 3:16). Our selfish sins break God's heart. (This information adapted from Warren Wiersbe's <i>With the Word Commentary</i> .) "You have given the enemies of the LORD great opportunity to despise and blaspheme Him..." (II Samuel 12:14, NLT).

There must be a way to build fences and set up a guard against sexual temptation and intrusion.

1. If you have fallen or faltered, repent! Ask God, "Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a right spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10).
2. Find an accountability partner. Of course, the big question is "Who can one trust that will still keep respect?"
3. Make a covenant. Daily, "I DICTATED a covenant (an agreement) to my eyes; how then could I look [lustfully] upon a girl?" (Job 31:1, AMP, emphasis mine).
4. Pull down strongholds of imagination. Bring thoughts into captivity to the mind of Christ (II Corinthians 10:5).
5. Flee from sexual impurity and sin. (See II Timothy 2:22 and I Corinthians 6:18.)
6. Use an Internet filter to cut out pornography access on your computer. Stay away from sexually explicit magazines, newspapers, videos, and television programs.
7. Concentrate on loving your partner and pleasing God.

"Therefore I always exercise and discipline myself (mortifying my body, deadening my carnal affections, bodily appetites, and worldly desires, endeavoring in all respects) to have a clear (unshaken, blameless) conscience, void of offense toward God and toward men" (Acts 24:16, AMP).

"Train yourself toward godliness . . . (keeping yourself spiritually fit)" (I Timothy 4:7, AMP).

There is a war going on! Gather your spiritual strength. Fight it. Even run from it!

Lesson in Review

1. Using Scripture, show that Christians should abstain from even the hint of sexual immorality. _____

7. A ministerial friend is strongly being tempted to commit sexual immorality. You are asked (by him) for counsel. What will you advise? What components will you include in your counsel? _____

8. What is the great price of sin? _____

9. List five ways to build a fence against sexual temptation.

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____
- E. _____

Chapter 13

Ministers and Their Prayer Life

“Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour” (Acts 3:1).

The Book of Acts began with ministers gathered together in the upper room in an extended prayer meeting. The Holy Spirit was poured out. Souls were won through the anointed preaching of the Word of God. The church was established. Prayer remained a priority in the early church among ministers and members alike. Ministers lead the way in prayer. Prayer is an indispensable priority in ministry.

Ministerial Priorities

Ministers reemphasized their priorities in Acts 6. Prayer was placed first among Ministerial Priorities. Men of God stated their main concerns in the ministry:

- Give ourselves continually to prayer.
- Give ourselves to the ministry of the Word.

What kind of prayers do you think these ministers continually prayed for? Was it just selfish prayers asking for personal petitions? Hardly.

Ministers are involved in many types of prayer:

- Intercessory prayer. It is one of our ways of keeping watch over the flock.

- Praying in preparation for preaching and teaching.
- Praying during visitation and counseling.
- Public or corporate prayer.

God Is Looking for a Praying People

“And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor” (Isaiah 59:16). Here God looked at all of Israel’s sins and recognized that there was no intercessor that would intercede for Israel to turn away from their sins. He looks for intercessors that are willing to “stand in the gap” (Ezekiel 22:30) for a lost world.

Abraham Interceded

“Then the LORD said, ‘The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know.’ The men turned away and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the LORD. Then Abraham approached him and said: ‘Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? Far be it from you to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?’ . . . When the LORD had finished speaking with Abraham, he left, and Abraham returned home” (Genesis 18:20-25, 33, NIV).

Nehemiah Prayed

“When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. Then I said: ‘O LORD, God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and obey his commands, let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for

your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father's house, have committed against you" (Nehemiah 1:4-7, NIV).

Nehemiah fasted for several days but prayed for several months. From this God gave him a vision of how he could minister to the people.

Paul Prayed for His People

"I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers" (Philemon 4).

"We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers" (I Thessalonians 1:2).

"Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers" (Ephesians 1:16).

Jesus Prayed for His Followers

"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:31-32).

"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25).

When Ministers Pray

In the Book of Exodus alone are more than fifty prayer conversations between God and Moses. His famous prayer is recorded in Exodus 32:31-34.

"And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee,

out of thy book which thou hast written. And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, mine Angel shall go before thee: nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them" (Exodus 32:31-34).

God had already decided to kill His people and start again with Moses. Because the leader interceded for the people, God changed His mind. Prayerful leaders have influence with God.

In *Manna from Moses*, Stuart Lassetter says, "Powerful forces are unleashed when a leader travails in prayer before God. The leader has access to God and, like any other child of God, can come boldly into the throne room of God's presence. When a leader will be burdened for the needs of the people, God will listen to his unselfish, intercessory prayer. Tremendous benefits and blessings to the people can be directly attributed to a leader's prayer."

How Do You Measure Up?

Vesta Mangun, in her lesson, "Leadership in Prayer—Indispensable Example," tells us that we can:

- Measure our love for our people by our prayer life.
- Measure our concern for our people by our prayer life.
- Measure our vision for our people by our prayer life.
- Measure our leadership of our people by our prayer life.

How Can We Increase Our Level of Influence?

In *The 21 Most Powerful Minutes in a Leader's Day*, John Maxwell informs us that leadership impact rises as influence increases. Most leaders are anxious to increase their leadership impact. They realize that when there is little influence only little is accomplished. On the other hand, with much influence, much is accomplished. How can we increase our level of influence? How can we make maximum impact and ensure that much is accomplished? One important way for this to be achieved is through leadership involvement in prayer and fasting. (This is not to suggest that a leader does not need to develop

leadership skills.) Following are some ways to more efficiently organize your prayer life (and amplify your level of influence.)

- To remember the various needs of your people compile a “Prayer List.” This list will become your “Prayer Planner.” It will help you be organized in your prayer life.
- Maintain a personal “Prayer Partner.” If married, you should have your wife as a prayer partner. You can also have another person (of the same sex) that you pray with on a regular basis. It is always good to be around people who motivate you to have a deeper walk with the Lord. Such people are “Growth Partners” (they help us grow).
- Have a regular “Prayer Time.” Give God the best time of your day. If you are more alert in the morning, pray in the morning.
- Have a quiet “Prayer Place.” This needs to be a place where you can communicate with Heaven without earthly disturbances. “Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour” (Acts 3:1).

Three things to notice about this Scripture verse:

- Prayer Partners (Peter and John)
 - Prayer Place (Temple)
 - Prayer Time (Hour of prayer, ninth hour)
-
- You may want to have a “Prayer Team.” This would consist of a group of prayer warriors.
 - Research and pray for unreached areas. This could be countries, cities, towns, and communities that are yet to be reached. Be involved in “Prayer Evangelism.” Prayer should precede evangelism.
 - Jesus often asked, “What do you need?” Find out what prayer needs your people have. Take note of the needs and pray for each one (until something happens). Focus in on the specific prayer requests of your people. When you pray specifically God answers specifically.

“People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.” Prayer is a great way to express you care.

- When you see someone that you prayed for, mention, “I prayed for you (today).” When possible you might want to mention the need that you prayed for. It would also be encouraging to send an occasional note to someone you’ve been praying for. Let them know that you care and that you have talked to the Father on their behalf. Establish in the hearts and minds of your members (followers) that you understand and care about their needs.
- Prayer Agenda: When you get together for national, regional, or local board meetings, make sure prayer is a major part of the board agenda. Prayer shows who you are depending on. When you pray, you show that you are not depending on your own abilities. Make prayer a priority!

Harry E. Scism said, “The *powerhouse* for the church is not the *boardroom* but the *prayer room*.”

- Have a regular prayer meeting with your leadership team.
- When a member verbally mentions a prayer need take advantage of the present and pray for them immediately. You are a minister. Take advantage of each opportunity to minister.

Ministers should also be committed to fasting. Fasting is a regular activity of leaders. Each of the three extended fasts (of forty days) recorded in the Bible were completed by leaders (Jesus and twice by Moses.) Paul indicated that he was involved in “fastings often” (II Corinthians 11:27).

Prayerlessness Is Sin

The prophet Samuel considered it to be a sin not to pray for the people that he was leading.

“Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way” (I Samuel 12:23).

Dan Southerland, in *Transitioning (Leading Your Church through Change)*, said, "Those who talk with God . . . hear God best. And those who do not talk with God . . . do not hear Him at all. The number one hindrance to answered prayer for . . . leaders today is prayerlessness. We just don't pray."

"The devil is in constant conspiracy against a preacher who really prays, for it has been said that what a minister is in his prayer closet is what he is, no more, no less" (Vance Havner).

Lesson in Review

1. What are four types of prayer in which ministers are involved?
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____
 - D. _____

2. What are the two ministerial priorities outlined in Acts 6?
 - A. _____
 - B. _____

3. Show, using Scripture references, that ministers being involved in prayer was important in the lives of spiritual leaders in the Bible. _____

4. How can one measure his love, concern, vision, and leadership of his people?

5. What is a prayer planner? _____

6. List five ways one can more efficiently organize his or her prayer life.
- A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____
 - D. _____
 - E. _____

7. According to H. E. Scism, where is the powerhouse of the church? _____

8. According to Dan Southerland, what is the number one hindrance to answered prayer for leaders? _____

Chapter 14

Ministers and Accountability

No man is isolated like an island. There is strength in the brother-to-brother relationship that results from being accountable. *Accountability* simply means to be answerable to someone for your actions. Long ago, the Greek philosopher Plato said, “The life which is not examined is not worth living.” That is certainly true in the ministry today.

Accountability includes:

- Being willing to explain actions
- Being honest and open about motives
- Answering for one’s life and work assigned
- Giving the reasons why something was done or not done
- Being teachable and willing to change
- Being non-defensive in actions

The Bible speaks about accountability.

“Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken” (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12).

“Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend” (Proverbs 27:17).

Another translation, the NIV, says, “As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another!” There is danger in being a lone person, preacher or pastor, and/or leader. Everyone needs a friend to whom they can be accountable.

In his lesson “The Principle of Accountability,” Stephen Judd suggests three biblical areas of accountability:

- Accountability to God (Matthew 12:35-36)
- Accountability to spiritual ministers (I Corinthians 16:13-16; Hebrews 13:7)
- Accountability to one another (Romans 12:9-16; 15:1-2, 14)

The Bible provides many examples of accountability:

- Lot to Abraham
- Joseph to Potiphar
- King Saul to Samuel
- King David to Nathan
- Nehemiah to the King
- John Mark to Paul and Barnabas
- Paul and Barnabas to the church at Antioch
- Timothy to Paul
- Onesimus to Philemon

Stephen Judd also suggests three advantages of accountability:

- One who is accountable is less likely to fall into a trap (Proverbs 13:10, 14, 18, 20; 15:31-33).
- One who is accountable is more likely to see the entire picture (Proverbs 27:17).
- One who is accountable is not as likely to get away with sinful or unwise actions (Proverbs 27:6).

Some Things that Ministers Need

Ministers need to belong.

A leader needs someone to care for him and stand with him with locked arms as he journeys through life. This partner in accountability can “Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep” (Romans 12:15). As someone once said, “Shared joy is double joy; shared sorrow is half a sorrow.”

Ministers need to be understood.

Everyone wants to be understood and appreciated for his or her investments in life and ministry.

Ministers need to learn.

Is there a better way of doing something? Is there an unseen answer to a problem? An accountability partner can help provide another viewpoint. He or she fills the role of a counselor in the leader’s life, providing safety and protection from disappointments when goals are delayed or not reached.

“Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety” (Proverbs 11:14). “Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established” (Proverbs 15:22). It is important for the leader to know when he is approaching danger and the possibility of making a mistake.

Ministers need to grow.

An accountability partner will challenge the leader to spiritual and personal growth.

Ministers need to be accepted.

Accountability partners accept the leader as he or she is; but they do not stop there, they do more! They challenge the leader to become all that God wants him or her to be.

Ministers need an accountability partner.

A leader’s accountability partner could be any of the following, depending on circumstances:

- **Colleague:** The two are in the battle together

- **Mentor:** Serves as a parental figure influencing the leader's development
- **Friend:** Someone who cares about the leader and wants him or her to succeed. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful" (Proverbs 27:6).
- **Protector:** Someone who will not let the leader go wrong. One of the biggest reasons ministers get into trouble is because they do not feel the need to be accountable (answerable) to anyone. "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God" (Romans 13:1).

Accountability partners may not necessarily be a higher power in our lives but the principle would still apply. Each person needs to be accountable or subject to someone else. To be submissive suggests that the leader is bringing himself or herself under the protection of someone else.

Why a Minister Needs an Accountability Partner

Unfortunately, because of human nature, few people build accountability into their lives. Many want to be "their own boss" and in control of their actions. They do not want to answer to anyone and do not want intruders in their personal lives. Their attitude becomes, "mind your own business." This sets a leader up as an easy target for Satan. He sees that the leader is alone and open to failure. The prevailing attitude, that of "independence" (we need no one else because we can do it on our own) is quite contrary to the Spirit life of "interdependence" (we need each other for mutual help, encouragement, and strength—we are part of a body).

As we have already studied several times, the three greatest temptations to the person of God usually fall into these major categories:

- Money
- Sex
- Power

Temptations abound and it is possible for people to fail. One might think:

- "My children won't notice that I have been working so many hours. I'm just doing it to provide a good income and name for our family."

- “No one will notice that this little bit of money is missing from the treasury” (until it gets bigger and bigger and someone notices).
- “Looking at this pornographic magazine won’t hurt anyone.”
- “My wife will never know that I have lusted after another woman or even if I commit adultery.”
- “My desire for power and position is probably the Lord’s way of rewarding me for my hard work.”

At this point, each leader, if totally honest, could probably mention recent personal temptations. People will continue to be tempted in the areas of financial temptations, sexual sins, and abuses of the power given to them, and some will fall. However, talking about these temptations and sharing them with an accountability partner will help the leader be victorious. Accountability can prevent a leader from falling and then wondering, “What happened?” or “How did it happen?” One purpose of having an accountability partner is to prevent a leader from falling. Many failures could be avoided if accountability partners were used.

The purpose of accountability is to be answerable concerning the major areas in our lives. A ministerial principle states, “People do what is inspected, not what is expected.” Proverbs 13:20 (NIV) states: “He who walks with the wise grows wise.”

The Accountability Partner

Traits of an accountability partner

- An accountability partner should be able to keep things confidential.
- Leaders should be able to respect their accountability partner.
- Leaders should feel comfortable in expressing their innermost feelings and problems to their accountability partner.
- Leaders should be able to have confidence in their accountability partner and trust completely in them.
- The accountability partner should have skill and wisdom.
- The accountability partner should be someone who is available.

The Relationship with the Accountability Partner

Accountability is a two-way street. Leaders and their accountability partners serve each other. The following topics and areas can be mutually discussed and commented upon:

- Relationship with God
- Relationship with spouse
- Relationship with children
- Relationship with others
- Use of money (stewardship)
- Use of time
- Temptations one is encountering (stating the problem is half of the solution)
- Ethical behavior
- Areas of personal struggle
- Fulfilling God's calling

Things to keep in mind

- One should share only what is comfortable. No one should feel forced to share things before one is ready.
- Advice, counsel, criticism, or judgment should be offered only when requested.
- An accountability partner should not try to change the other person, but both persons should work together to bring about change in themselves.
- Both should pray with and for each other.
- Behavior that is observed by someone else and is discussed can change. If leaders know they are accountable to someone else, they will be more serious about changing their behavior.
- An accountability partner will challenge the minister to live up to the standards determined for our Christian walk.

Suggestions for Financial Accountability

It is essential to have a system of reporting finances (income and expenses) to the people. This would be true for a local church, the national fund, and any other type of fund. In the case of a local pastor, a trusted person should

be appointed, elected, or chosen to be in charge of the finances that belong to the church; two people should count the tithes and offerings. This will help the pastor avoid the temptation of misusing the money and will remove any mistrust church members might feel. If possible and feasible, two or more signatures should be required on checks.

When the Lord's money is concerned, good stewardship demands that it be used only for its intended, designated purpose.

A leader should be faithful in personal tithes, special offerings, and vows made.

Conclusion

Someone asked Daniel Webster, "What is the greatest thought that can occupy a man's mind?" He said, "His accountability to God." This statement addresses the issue of personal integrity as illustrated in the life of Joseph. The many difficulties he faced in his young life forced him to make some serious choices. He could have stolen money or property, escaped from his master, committed sexual sin with Potiphar's wife, or abused the power given to him. There was no relative or personal acquaintance watching Joseph. No one knew where he came from or anything about his God, but Joseph knew! And he decided to be accountable – accountable to God! (Genesis 39:1-6).

Many stories have been told concerning the Titanic. Many considered this mighty ship to be unsinkable. To the horror of the world, the ship sank during its first voyage on April 14, 1912, and fifteen hundred people perished. The ship hit a large iceberg. An iceberg is a large mass of ice that floats in the ocean with only one-ninth of its total size above water. The rest was hidden beneath the surface, and the unseen part ripped a three-hundred-foot cut in the side of the huge ship.

Like the iceberg, it is below the surface where the dangers in our lives hide. People see only a portion of our lives (making up our image and reputation). The real life is often hidden so that others will not see it. Our secret lives often rip holes in our spiritual lives.

What is unseen and not properly examined can damage, sink, and eventually destroy leaders when they are not accountable in these areas. Accountability partners observe and cause leaders to investigate the hidden areas of their life.

“How are the mighty fallen!” (II Samuel 1:19). A leader will be more likely to fall without an accountability partner. “Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up” (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10).

Please note: This lesson was originally part of the *Leadership Module One*, Leadership Development International, Global Missions, United Pentecostal Church International; and was written by James Poitras.

Lesson in Review

1. List three things that accountability includes.
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____

2. Explain Proverbs 27:17 in light of accountability. _____

3. What are three biblical areas of accountability as suggested by Stephen Judd?
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____

4. List two advantages of accountability.
 - A. _____
 - B. _____

5. Provide four scriptural examples of accountability partners or relationships.
- A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____
 - D. _____
6. List and briefly explain three things ministers need when it comes to accountability.
- A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____
7. Provide two examples of the type of people that could serve as accountability partners.
- A. _____
 - B. _____
8. What are reasons why a person would not want an accountability partner?
- _____
- _____
- _____
9. What are the three areas of greatest temptation to the person of God?
- A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____
10. What are three traits one should look for in an accountability partner?
- A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____

11. What are five topics to discuss with an accountability partner?

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____
- E. _____

12. Why is it important to select someone besides the pastor to care for church finances? _____

13. What question is asked or what statement is made in II Samuel 1:19? _____

Chapter 15

Ministers that God Can Trust

“Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, and hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight” (Acts 9:11-12).

“Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy” (I Corinthians 4:2, ESV).

Everyone looks for someone who can be trusted. American presidential historian Robert Dallek claims that successful presidents exhibit five pivotal qualities. Want to take a guess of what hits the top five list? You are right on. Trustworthiness ranks right up there with vision and consensus building.

One thing for sure, we serve someone who can be trusted and dutifully sets the examples for all of us to follow.

God Can Be Trusted

“It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes” (Psalm 118:8-9).

“Ye that fear the LORD, trust in the LORD: he is their help and their shield. The LORD hath been mindful of us: he will bless us” (Psalm 115:11-12).

“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths” (Proverbs 3:5-6).

“The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe” (Proverbs 29:25).

“They that trust in the LORD shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever” (Psalm 125:1).

“Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise. Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works” (Hebrews 10:23-24, NLT).

“You are faithful and righteous” (Psalm 143:1, NLT). “He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it” (I Thessalonians 5:24, NKJV). “He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself” (II Timothy 2:13, NKJV). “God is faithful, by whom ye were called” (I Corinthians 1:9).

Faithful is an old word meaning the same as ‘trustworthy.’

“But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one. And we have confidence in the Lord about you, that you are doing and will do the things that we command” (II Thessalonians 3:3-4, ESV).

Trust is an integral part of any healthy, growing, lasting relationship. However, it cannot be a one-way street. It works both ways. We trust others. Others trust us. We trust God. God trusts us!

God Wants to Trust Us

Can you be trusted? Are you trustworthy?

Studies have determined the monetary value of mineral and chemical elements found in the human body. Together, their value is less than one dollar. Our most valuable asset is our skin. Based on the selling price of cowhide, the value of an average person's skin is about \$3.50. Total monetary value per person equals \$4.50. However, we consist of more than oxygen, calcium, sodium, iron, zinc, copper, and about fourteen other minerals and chemicals. We are body, soul, and spirit. Simply put, we have eternal value. We are priceless. We are not for sale. We have already been bought by the precious blood of the crucified Lamb. "You are of more value than many sparrows" (Matthew 10:31, NKJV). In worldly thinking sometimes we may be of minimal value and have little to offer. To God we have eternal, unlimited worth and can be trusted to carry out His plan.

God Trusts Us to Fulfill the Great Commission

There are at least five instances of the Great Commission.

- Matthew 28:19-20
- Mark 16:15-20
- Luke 24:47-49
- John 20:21
- Acts 1:8

The Great Commission is a great promise. It will happen. It will come to pass.

An *imaginary* story without biblical basis speaks of Jesus ascending back to Heaven and meeting with the angel Gabriel. Jesus explained how He had died on the cross to save humanity from their sins and had arisen again. He had now returned to Heaven to intercede for those that He had gone to save. Jesus concluded by saying that it was His desire that all people everywhere would hear the gospel message of what He had done for them. Gabriel asked, "What is your plan for getting this done?"

Jesus responded, "I have left the message in the hands of a dozen men." Visibly surprised, Gabriel questioned, "Twelve men! And what if they fail?" Jesus responded, "I have no other plan." With God there is no other plan for reaching the world. He had confidence that His people would take the gospel to the ends of the earth, in every generation.

"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matthew 24:14).

"After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands" (Revelation 7:9).

"And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Revelation 5:9).

God Trusted Job

"Then the Lord asked Satan, "Have you noticed my servant Job? He is the finest man in all the earth. He is blameless—a man of complete integrity. He fears God and stays away from evil" (Job 1:8, NLT).

In my personal spiritual development and devotional reading I never noticed that God repeats basically the same story and the same testimony in two chapters of the Book of Job.

"One day the members of the heavenly court came again to present themselves before the Lord, and the Accuser, Satan, came with them. 'Where have you come from?' the Lord asked Satan. Satan answered the Lord, 'I have been patrolling the earth, watching everything that's going on.' Then the Lord asked Satan, 'Have you noticed my servant Job? He is the finest man in all the earth. He is blameless—a man of complete integrity. He fears God and stays away from evil. And he has maintained his integrity, even though you urged me to harm him without cause'" (Job 2:1-3, NLT).

So sad. In those days, none were like Job. He was the only one who could be counted on to do what was right. What about today? Would God be able to find people that could be trusted? Coming down to you, can you be trusted? I certainly desire to be.

God Trusted Abraham

“And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way. And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him. And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know. And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the LORD” (Genesis 18:16-22).

That is significant. Abraham could be counted on. God trusted him to rightly train and bring up his children, lead his household, and do the right things. Abraham stood before the Lord. He stood upon at least one thing. He could be trusted. No wonder the Lord blessed him and he became the father of many nations.

God Trusted Ananias

Now we come to the New Testament and go to the book of action. “Now there was a believer in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord spoke to him in a vision, calling, “Ananias!” “Yes, Lord!” he replied. The Lord said, “Go over to Straight Street, to the house of Judas. When you get there, ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul. He is praying to me right now. I have shown him a vision of a man named Ananias coming in and laying hands on him so he can see again.” “But Lord,” exclaimed Ananias, “I’ve heard many people talk about

the terrible things this man has done to the believers in Jerusalem! And he is authorized by the leading priests to arrest everyone who calls upon your name." But the Lord said, "Go, for Saul is my chosen instrument to take my message to the Gentiles and to kings, as well as to the people of Israel. 16 And I will show him how much he must suffer for my name's sake" (Acts 9:10-16, NLT).

I am awed that Ananias was chosen. Why not one of the great apostles? They could have been; that is for sure. Nevertheless, here we have a believer, a certain disciple. Not just any believer. He was one that could be trusted. God had so much confidence in him. How can one tell? God spoke to Saul and told him who would be coming to him before God ever discussed it with the person involved. That's trust!

Another example could easily be God telling Cornelius to send to Joppa for Peter (Acts 10). It doesn't stop there. It could go on and on, filling a book rather than merely a lesson.

In these biblical stories it is easy to find points of commonality.

1. Each heard God's voice, obeyed His will, and fulfilled His plan.
2. Each were dedicated, devoted, and lived in obedience and submission to what God required.
3. Each was trustworthy. God trusted them!

God Trusts You

Let's leave ancient accounts and see how you measure up. Can you be trusted?

You may think it isn't a big deal. God does! First Corinthians 4:2 states, "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." The word "faithful" carries the idea of trustworthiness. If you are faithful, it means that you can be trusted; you can be counted on to do what you are asked to do. Paul told Timothy to take what he had learned and teach it "to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (II Timothy 2:2).

Trustworthiness is required. It is indispensable. No question about it. We must be faithful to our Master and to His trust. It is demanded. Our Master's goods are not designed for our own use. In biblical times a steward owned nothing. He merely managed his master's wealth. His duty was to be faithful to his master and trusted by his master. We are stewards of God's wealth, the blessings He has provided to us. Our desire is to please God and to spend His resources, entrusted into our hands, with wisdom and according to the needs and priorities of His kingdom.

The best part of all is God truly trusts us. He proves it throughout His Word in His dealings with the patriarchs of old. In fact, Matthew 6 highlights how much He trusts us, that we will put His kingdom first. He provides three divine assumptions or acts of righteousness. These are God-centered and not self-centered.

"Watch out! Don't do your good deeds publicly, to be admired by others, for you will lose the reward from your Father in heaven. When you give to someone in need, don't do as the hypocrites do—blowing trumpets in the synagogues and streets to call attention to their acts of charity! I tell you the truth, they have received all the reward they will ever get. But when you give to someone in need, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. Give your gifts in private, and your Father, who sees everything, will reward you" (Matthew 6:1-4, NLT, emphasis mine).

Did you see it? God didn't say, "If you give." He said, "When you give." Why? Believers can always be trusted to give. It is God's assumption about us.

Reading on:

"When you pray, don't be like the hypocrites who love to pray publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them. I tell you the truth, that is all the reward they will ever get. But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you" (Matthew 6:5-6, NLT, emphasis mine).

See that. It happened again. He didn't say, "If you pray." He said, "When you pray." God trusts you to be a prayer warrior, to trust Him with your needs, and communicate with Him. It is another divine assumption.

Wait! See it! God never said, "If you fast." He did say, "When you fast." He trusts us to fast. It is a divine assumption!

"And when you fast, don't make it obvious, as the hypocrites do, for they try to look miserable and disheveled so people will admire them for their fasting. I tell you the truth, that is the only reward they will ever get. But when you fast, comb your hair and wash your face. Then no one will notice that you are fasting, except your Father, who knows what you do in private. And your Father, who sees everything, will reward you. Don't store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be (Matthew 6:16-21, NLT, emphasis mine).

Let's review. God trusts us to:

- Pray
- Fast
- Give
- Go

John F. Kennedy once said, "Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country."

An old song says, "I love Him too much to fail Him now." I want to be someone God can trust.

It's not all about what I can get from God and trust Him for. It's more about what I can give back to God and what He can trust me for.

"What is your name?" "My name is James."

"What do you do for a living?"

"I am becoming someone God can trust!"

Lesson in Review

1. According to I Corinthians 4:2, what is another word for *faithful*? _____

2. Prove, using Scripture, that God can be trusted. _____

3. What is one of five pivotal qualities that people look for in a president (that would relate to this lesson)? _____

4. List three instances where the Great Commission is recorded.
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____

5. How do we know that God trusts us to fulfill the Great Commission? _____

6. How is Job described in Job 1-2? _____

7. Why did God trust Abraham? _____

8. How do we know that God trusted Ananias? _____

9. Who would be another example of someone God trusted in Acts 10? _____

10. Describe the role of a servant during biblical times. _____

Chapter 16

Ministers and Faithful Stewardship

Time

What is the priority for our time, and who gives us every second? Each of us has a short life span. When our time is over, we will be judged by what we did for God.

“The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away . . . So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts to wisdom” (Psalm 90:10-12).

Talent

How do we use the gifts God has given (Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 19:12-27)? Jesus used a parable to remind us that our place and service in Heaven will depend on the faithfulness of our lives and service on earth.

“And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given. For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath” (Mark 4:24-25).

Treasure

Where does God fit into our plan of giving? The first of our increase given to God proves we know and appreciate where everything comes from.

“Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Luke 12:33-34).

Temple

Who needs our bodies presented as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1; I Corinthians 6:19-20)? God lives in our hearts, and He wants our bodies to reflect His dwelling place in our lives.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service” (Romans 12:1).

“What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (I Corinthians 6:19-20).

Testimony

How can we show others God’s greatness (I Corinthians 1:5-6)? The way we live is a testimony of God’s power and grace to keep us from sin.

“That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you” (I Corinthians 1:5-6).

Tongue

How can we claim to love God if we do not talk of Him (Psalm 34:13; 39:1; James 3)? What we say can bless or curse and needs to be given to God *first*. “Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile” (Psalm 34:13).

“I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me” (Psalm 39:1).

Please note: Linda Poitras compiled this material.

Lesson in Review

1. Name four areas of life that require stewardship.
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____
 - D. _____

2. What did Paul admonish the Roman saints to do regarding their bodies?

3. Why is time management important? _____

4. What is *guile* as used in Psalm 34:13? _____

5. From your personal perspective, what area of stewardship troubles you the most? _____

6. What do you consider the most important of the areas of stewardship discussed in this lesson? Why? _____

Chapter 17

Ministers and Finishing the Right Race

“However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me – the task of testifying to the gospel of God’s grace” (Acts 20:24, NIV).

Wayne Cordeiro in *Doing Church as a Team* tells of one Olympic marathon that will be remembered for its tragic ending. Two hours and four minutes after the race began, the first runner was sighted. He was way ahead of everyone else as he passed through a tunnel leading to the stadium. The crowd erupted as he came into their view. The runner was exhausted, stumbled, got up, and seemingly lost his sense of direction. He did not know which way to go. The crowd began yelling directions to the runner. Dazed the man ran one way, and then the other. He finally fell and lay there, as the crowd shouted, “Get up! Get up!” He struggled to stand and slowly ran to the finish line. Everyone was shocked when the judges announced that the fastest runner was disqualified. There were two finish lines: one for the sprints and one for the marathon. The “winner” ran to the wrong finish line and collapsed. The runner had finished, but in the wrong lane.

“So he sent his brethren away, and they departed: and he said unto them, See that ye fall not out by the way” (Genesis 45:24).

“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:6-9).

Peter’s final words were, “I am warning you ahead of time, dear friends, so that you can watch out and not be carried away by the errors of these wicked people. I don’t want you to lose your own secure footing” (II Peter 3:17, NLT).

Help Others in the Race

Many have heard of the remarkable Special Olympics story where one runner stumbled and another participant stopped, went back (despite shouting from the crowd, “Go forward”), and helped him up. They crossed the finish line together. The helper was in the lead, about to cross the finish line, when he turned around to help the fallen competitor. A West Virginia University commentary gave this conclusion: “Winners, in my estimation, are those who give their all to a task without losing sight of the deeper meaning of sharing and cooperation.” This story teaches us the importance of sharing, caring, cooperation, teamwork, and compassion.

A similar display of courage transpired in 1992. Derek Redmond (Great Britain) had an opportunity to fulfill his dream of winning the gold. He knelt to begin the 400-meter race. His eyes were fixed on the finish line. Ready, set, go! Derek accelerated past other runners and fell to the ground with a torn hamstring. His dream was shattered; his work wasted. Derek tried to get up and stagger toward the finish line. Derek’s dad, wearing a Nike baseball cap, jumped from the stands and pushed a security guard aside. He rushed to his son, lifted him, and told him, “Son, you do not have to do this.”

His son replied, “Yes, I do!”

“Then we are going to finish this together.” They struggled arm-in-arm through the finish line.

We have an audience of faith heroes watching us run the race. The runner in Hebrews 12 can glance back at examples of faith—those that ran the race before us. He can look upward to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. Be inspired, fellow countrymen, pilgrims on the earth are watching.

“Hold tightly to the word of life, so that when Christ returns, I will be proud that I did not lose the race and that my work was not useless” (Philippians 2:16, NLT).

Keep the Rules of the Race

In the 1988, Olympics Ben Johnson and Carl Lewis were considered the two fastest men on earth. The race was set, the gun went off, and the runners sped down the 100-meter course. Ben Johnson set a new world record. Shortly after the finals, word came from the officials that Ben Johnson had tested positive for steroid use, and was disqualified. He had run unlawfully.

“Follow the Lord’s rules for doing his work, just as an athlete either follows the rules or is disqualified and wins no prize” (II Timothy 2:5, NLT).

A course is marked off with flags. Runners cannot cut corners and shorten the race. We must run the race that is set before us. Paul provided a set of rules in II Timothy.

“Run from anything that gives you the evil thoughts that young men often have, but stay close to anything that makes you want to do right. Have faith and love, and enjoy the companionship of those who love the Lord and have pure hearts. Again I say, don’t get involved in foolish arguments, which only upset people and make them angry” (II Timothy 2:22-24, TLB).

“But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them” (II Timothy 3:1-5, NIV).

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (II Timothy 4:3-4).

An article from the Highland Church of Christ poses these thought-provoking questions:

1. Have you known anyone who broke the rules and did not finish the race?
2. How many of your mates (perhaps, in your Bible school class) started the race with you? Where are they today?
3. Has there been a time when you broke the rules and stumbled badly in the spiritual race?
4. What is making the Christian life difficult for you?

Remember, leader, what one African proverb says: “When the big tree falls down, small trees have a problem.”

Paul warned Timothy not to become entangled with the affairs of this life. We cannot be consumed with the things of the world. Watch for the weights and the sins that will slow you down, cause you to falter, and bring you to a standstill.

“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us” (Hebrews 12:1).

Weights may not be sin, but anything that becomes a hindrance. Throw off anything that would keep you from having the advantage.

This list could include:

1. Laziness (Proverbs 6:10-11)
2. Love of money (I Timothy 6:10)
3. Desire for pleasure and the things of the world (I John 2:15-17).
4. Root of bitterness (Hebrews 12:15-16)

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (I John 2:15-17).

“Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright” (Hebrews 12:15-16).

Sin cripples us in the race. There are two major areas where pastors fall: financial and sexual sins. What are your private thoughts—the ones you would not dare tell anyone. Everyone has an area of temptation.

Steps to keep you from falling:

1. Make a covenant with your eyes (Psalm 101:2-3).
2. Flee fornication and adultery (Proverbs 5:15-18; 6:24-32; 7:24-27)
3. Have a code of conduct pre-established.
4. Read and meditate on God’s Word (Joshua 1:8).
5. Have a life of prayer and fasting (Psalm 51); a fresh relationship with the Lord (Jeremiah 2:13).
6. Keep your eyes on Jesus (and not on others). He is standing there at the finish line (Matthew 25:23).
7. Be accountable to someone.
8. Stay on the altar of sacrifice (Romans 12:1-2).
9. Keep a right spirit (Luke 14:11; Psalm 51:10-12)

We need to take care of our attitude after we no longer occupy a position in the church. If removed from office, how well will you do at running the race?

Please Note: This lesson is originally part of the *Acts: God’s Training Manual for Today’s Church* (Level S) material written by James Poitras.

Lesson in Review

1. What spiritual significance can be derived from the story concerning the runner that finished the wrong race? _____

2. What were the apostle Peter's words in II Peter 3:17? _____

3. Why did Paul marvel (or become astonished) in Galatians 1:6-9? _____

4. What does Philippians 2:16 say? _____

5. What is the benefit of the audience of faith heroes in Hebrews 12? _____

6. Summarize the set of rules Paul gave to Timothy in II Timothy 2:22-24.

7. Provide four examples of weights that could hinder a person in the Christian race.

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____

8. What are two major areas where pastors are tempted to fall?

- A. _____
- B. _____

9. List five things one can do to keep from falling into sin.

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____
- E. _____

Personal Study Notes

Chapter 18

Ministers and Perseverance

Take a sneak peek at the once-blank closing pages of a well-worn Bible. You may find a few invaluable treasures. Scribbled in ink are pivotal, life-stirring words gleaned from anointed preaching or daily Bible readings. There, one gets a glimpse of the owner's priorities; things that count most in life and ministry. An occasional vow or commitment may even be sketched in the fly leaf.

In 1904, William Borden, a young millionaire graduated from a Chicago high school. His proud parents lavished an extravagant gift upon their son, an exhilarating voyage around the globe. While on his tour, young William saw firsthand the deficiency, disease, and disaster experienced by the world's poorest. He developed a desire to make a difference. His family and friends were shocked to receive his message: "I'm going to prepare my life to be a missionary." "Oh, what waste of such great potential," they thought.

Borden took his Bible and wrote two words in the back: "No reserves." He would give everything. His decision was both deliberate and definite. Years later Jim Elliot, the martyred missionary, said, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." An interesting entry in Borden's journal stated, "Say 'No' to self and 'Yes' to Jesus every time." Like the song says, "I'll say 'Yes, Lord, yes, to your will and to your way.'" David P. Nolte advises, "Let us cast off, give up, lay down, and rid ourselves of all that gets in the way of serving Him with no reserves."

The next year, Borden enrolled in a prestigious university and began studies. After graduation, he received several outstanding job offers but turned each one down. His mind had already been made up. He was going to be a

missionary. He took his Bible, flipped to the back, and wrote two more words, "No retreats!"

History tells that when Cortez landed in Vera Cruz to conquer Mexico in 1519, he deliberately burned his eleven ships so his seven hundred men could not retreat. Only one way was left to go: forward! Borden felt the same way.

Borden went on to graduate school. Borden felt called to minister to Muslims in China. En route, he stopped briefly to study the language. During his brief time in Egypt he contracted spinal meningitis. He died a month later at the age of twenty-five. Mrs. Howard Taylor in *Borden of Yale* wrote, "When the death of William Whiting Borden was cabled from Egypt, it seemed as though a wave of sorrow went round the world . . . Borden not only gave of his wealth, but himself, in a way so joyous and natural that it was manifestly a privilege rather than a sacrifice." The last two words recorded in his Bible expressed his relentless attitude. Prior to his death, he wrote, "No regrets!" Dwight Moody once asked a missionary, "Do you have any regrets?" The response, "No, the only regret is for the person who comes to Christ for salvation, but then does nothing for Him."

Borden's commitment is so unusual and unreal in the twenty-first century; or is it? I think not! Many of our missionaries make the same pledge. They go without reserves, have no retreats, and in spite of untold battles and sacrifice have no regrets! Every PIM letter and every missionary report is a result of their relentless resolve.

The life of two such UPCI missionaries, Bennie and Theresa DeMerchant, is captured in their recent book, *Full Throttle*. Forty-four years ago, as a young couple, they literally invaded Manaus, Brazil. They couldn't speak a word of the language and no one in the Amazon Basin knew anything about the Apostolic message. Today, over 650 United Pentecostal churches, forty thousand saints, and thirty-five Bible schools cover the vast jungle. The DeMerchants, like many of our dedicated missionaries, continue in the same gear they have always used, full throttle. They have no reserves, no retreats, and no regrets.

This brings me to a personal reflective question: Do I serve, give, and reach the lost with no reserves, no retreats, and no regrets? I'm certainly striving to do my best. What about you?

Please note: This article was written by Bruce A. Howell, general director of Global Missions, United Pentecostal Church International.

Lesson in Review

1. What motivated Borden to become a missionary? _____

2. Was Borden's decision to be a missionary based on societal needs or a response to the Great Commission? Is there a difference? _____

3. Write a short paragraph about Jim Elliot. (This may require searching the Internet for information.) _____

4. Write a paragraph on Dwight Moody's ministry. (This may require searching the Internet for information.) _____

5. Are you willing to make the same commitment as Borden, Elliot, and the DeMerchants? _____



Missionary Spotlight: **Lloyd and Loretta Moreau**

NEW ZEALAND: LAND OF THE
LONG WHITE CLOUD

By Loretta Moreau

“So you want to be a missionary” one minister asked Lloyd Moreau. His response to that was, “No, but God wants me to be one!” And that started a journey of a lifetime.

In the early hours of a morning in 1966, Lloyd Moreau heard the audible voice of God telling him to pray for His missionary in New Zealand. He got out of bed and looked in the ministerial directory for a missionary there. He could not find one, so wrote to Glen Bogue, the missionary in Australia, to see if he knew who it was. Brother Bogue wrote back saying the UPC didn’t have one there.

Days went by and things began to develop in such a way that Lloyd knew God had called him to go. He finally told me, and I looked at him as if he had eaten too much Mexican food the night before! He asked me to pray about it, as he could not go if I wasn’t called as well. I did pray, and God did a miracle in my life and caused me to be able to say YES to His will.

We were appointed in October 1967 and started traveling to raise our funds for the next four years. This was before the days of PIMs and you really lived by faith once you got to the land of your calling!

We traveled for two years before everything was completed to leave for New Zealand. At last Brother Moreau, our three children, and I were on our way. Eugene was ten years old, Susan was eight, and Steven turned four just a few days before we left America.

New Zealand is a land of three million people and sixty million sheep. We arrived in August 1969. As we were flying over Auckland, we thought how blessed we were to have been called to such a beautiful country.

Not having reservations at any hotel, the airport's "Welcome Committee" finally found a place for us at People's Palace. It's not what you think. We weren't spending your dollars living fancy. It was a hotel run by the Salvation Army and we were all put into one big room with all the "comfort stations" down the hall!



But we were so happy to be there. Within a few months a miracle of its own happened and the government gave us permanent residence status, which meant we could live in New Zealand all our life if that is what we chose to do.

We had some adjusting to do, as is common to all who go to a new country. Breakfast was different for a start: beans on toast,

spaghetti on toast, and a strange tasting sausage! We all just sat and more or less stared at everybody and everything. Next on the list was finding a house to rent. We prayed and grabbed the paper and started looking. One particular place caught Brother Moreau's attention. We called and they agreed to meet us there to have a look.

Now this is where the excitement begins. We had never driven on the left side of the road before, and I sure caught up with my prayer life! We hired a small car (very small car), found a map, and off we went. I have never heard such language or shaking of the fist of the drivers as I did that day. We were on the wrong side of the road most of the way. God protected us and we finally arrived at the house.

Never doubt what God will do for you when you are in His will! The man was in the hospital for a series of surgeries, so his wife was staying with her daughter. The house was fully furnished. As our things were on a ship somewhere in the Pacific Ocean, this was a perfect solution. We became good friends with our landlord and his wife, and some months later they started coming to church. They both received the Holy Ghost and were baptized in Jesus' name!

Having no contacts in New Zealand, we depended on God to start opening doors and helping us to meet the people He wanted in our lives for this time. About three months later we arrived home one day and found a car sitting in front of our house. A young man had come to invite us to minister in a weekend conference they were having. They had heard that an American missionary had arrived and anything American sounded good to them!

This was our first experience of meeting Eddie Rimaha, who was a powerful man among the Maori people, which are the indigenous nationals. God had showed him the truth about Jesus Name baptism, but he knew nothing about the one God message. When Brother Moreau expounded to him the way more clearly, he was excited and asked us to go with him to different meetings and minister. This gave us an open door and we met many people. It was during this time that God began to put His church together.

Brother Eddie loved his tent meetings and had Brother Moreau to minister in most of them. The time came when the Jesus Name baptism message was challenged by some of Brother Eddie's longtime minister friends. In one such meeting, Brother Eddie took a stand with Brother Moreau and asked the ministers that believed this truth to come and stand with him and Brother Moreau. Many of the ministers did and that was the beginning of a wonderful fellowship of like believers. However, during that night we could hear others taking down their personal tents, loading up their cars and driving off. Truth will separate family and friends at times.

We baptized over two thousand people during the first four years we were in New Zealand. It was during this time that we baptized an Assemblies of God pastor. After several Bible studies, God opened his eyes to the truth. He soon joined with us, started a church, and helped others to embrace this wonderful message.

We had the privilege of putting into place the first General Board, the Youth Department as well as the Sunday School Department and the Ladies Auxiliary. We both ministered at General and Ladies Conferences. We had never been happier than working in the will of God.

Being in the will of God doesn't mean that you will do and say everything just right. There are some words and phrases used in America that aren't nice to say in New Zealand! Brother Moreau would hear people gasp and then would look at me when he said something unacceptable. I would whisper

to a lady sitting by me and tell her to let me know what he said wrong so we can put that in our "Do Not Say Again" journal!

Men and women here had a few not-too-nice habits that caused a smile to cross our face and a desire not to stand down wind! On one of the "road trips," Brother Moreau took some of the ministers to share the preaching. In getting ready, Brother Moreau used his spray deodorant and one of the ministers said, "Brother Moreau, I did not know you had fleas!" He was serious, as most men did not use deodorant of any kind! Needless to say, we taught some personal hygiene classes shortly after that.

I cooked many American dinners with fried chicken, chocolate pies, and chocolate cake with white mountain frosting, and used this as a tool to invite people to our home as friends and later to witness to them. People accepted both. God blessed our efforts and touched hearts, and some came to church and were filled with the Holy Ghost and were baptized. Use what is in your hand, or in my case, what was in my cupboard.

Soon it was time to go on furlough. You have heard of deputation, I'm sure. It's a blessing and a curse. We survived and returned to New Zealand for our second term. This term saw the training of ministers, a Bible school started, and more open doors to minister. Brother Ringa Hei Hei traveled with Brother Moreau as part of his leadership training and soon became the first national secretary. By this time, we had over three thousand believers. Brother Moreau and our national leaders had a lot of traveling. Many doors were opening and the hearts of the people were hungry. In the far north where we made many contacts in our first term, we were beginning to see the fruit of our labor. Five churches and eleven preachers were sowing seeds and reaping a harvest.

Celebration time! On our fifth anniversary in New Zealand, we were able to report that we had thirty-eight preachers, fourteen established churches, and thirty preaching points with several of these having ten to fifteen families that did not have a pastor.

Growth brings opportunity for people to experience great things in God. Read this testimony as Tim Hoete tells his experience that took place during our second term.

I was diving off the rocks for lobster and my wife and friends were on the bank watching me. I have been diving there for many years

and never saw sharks so close to me before. As they were swimming toward me, I began to pray. Yes, a sinner like me praying. My whole life came before me and the thing that stood out most was a short, bald-headed preacher that [used] to come and preach that Jesus could do anything. This preacher said that if we ask anything in Jesus' name it would be granted and that there was no other name. So I began to say, "In Jesus' name." The sharks began to circle me and one came right up to me; the third time I called on the name of Jesus the shark turned and swam away. I got back to shore and boasted to my wife about how I had saved myself. Two weeks later I topped a hill that overlooked the sea and was reminded that I promised God I would serve Him if He would deliver me from the sharks. I stopped the truck right there and repented and gave my heart to Jesus. I was baptized in Jesus' name and received the Holy Ghost and am now called to preach the gospel.



Loretta Moreau passing out tracts

Missionaries Robert and Judy Addington became such a blessing to the work of God and they still fly the banner high. At this present time they are the dedicated leaders of the UPCI churches. They pastor a church in Hamilton as well as travel out to our churches to minister. They are loved by the people to whom they minister.

Floyd and Ella Borders were appointed to New Zealand and arrived in 1976. They were a great help in the work and pastored our local church when Brother Moreau went full time as superintendent. Eventually Brother and Sister Borders took ten of our trained workers and went to Christchurch on the South Island. They opened the door there for the gospel and established a work. There is still a witness there and a church that continues to grow today.

The South Island is populated with mostly European people with unique personalities. They are a rugged, hardy people. The summers and springtime can be spectacular, but it can be cold and snowy in winter. South Island is totally

different from the North Island. These are two very beautiful islands in their own way. I love them both!

We had many overseas guests that came during this term and each one played a unique part in ministering to the people. We had some “saints” that wanted to come and visit New Zealand solely for the fishing and hunting. Trout was a specialty here and you didn’t have to have a license to hunt back in those days. This was very attractive to many men. A few wanted Brother Moreau to find work in the church for them so they would have a good excuse to visit here! We all had a good laugh over that.

The first of anything holds a special place of honor. Our general conference in 1974 was special as five national ministers were ordained. It was our first national youth quiz tournament. We had a thirty-six-member youth choir and attendance was close to one thousand people. The local newspaper came and wrote an article about the conference and saw the Sunday School Department in action. We had a wonderful children’s program, and it was loved and appreciated by the conference as the children presented a special song for the people.

Some things you just thank God for. The last night of the conference, my kidney stone decided to make an appearance! Very painful they are to say the least. We had to call a doctor to come to the motel and administer pain reliever and I had to wait another day before we could travel home. As I say, thank God it was the last night of the conference.

As you become busy in the work of the Lord your children grow up right under your nose. It’s always a blessing when they choose to involve themselves in the work and take their place among the people. I have asked my children a few times if they regret us bringing them to New Zealand. They didn’t have the option of saying no to our decision, as they were too young to stay in America. Every one of them said they have no regrets. That makes a parent feel good to know you haven’t put your child at a disadvantage. They could have chosen to return to America when they grew up but considered New Zealand their home.

Our third term was busier than ever it seems. Eleven months out of the twelve, overseas guests stayed in my home. It was a great time of fellowship. Their ministry blessed the work. I have to say that my house had never been cleaner than at this time! It was during this term that Brother Moreau began to experience some health problems. Brother Scism, the general director of Foreign

Missions, recommended a month away to get extra rest. This is where national leaders take their place and carry on the work.

New Zealand sent its first missionaries in 1981. Brother and Sister Joe Howard and baby LaVon went to Tonga to help in the Bible school for six months. It's a beautiful thing when you can see the need in other countries and then offer yourself to further the gospel.

In 1983, Brother Moreau's health deteriorated and he faced death. But God was good, and he came through and was able to finish out the third term and prepare for furlough. We were reappointed for a fourth term before we left New Zealand for our furlough. However, after meeting with the missionary board, they asked us to resign because of Brother Moreau's health. We abided by their recommendation.

The missionary board sent us back to New Zealand to put the work in order under national leadership and to say goodbye to all that we loved and had labored over for the past twelve years. The Maori people have a warm heart, are easy going, and enjoy a good laugh. You couldn't help but love them.

Closing down your life isn't easy sometimes. Bank accounts to close, doctors' reports to organize, a house to sell, and everything else that goes with moving back to America. We left our three children and two grandchildren in New Zealand and boarded a plane for America. I have to admit that was not easy. Then came the culture shock all over again. We had to readjust our life to different living conditions. America had changed while we were overseas. We didn't feel as if we fitted in anywhere.

Having permanent residence status, Brother Moreau and I returned to New Zealand under the Associates In Missions program in 1986 and helped the work where needed. The work under the leadership of Brother Ringa Hei Hei was nationalized around 1984. So we had to work within that perimeter, under national leadership. Brother Moreau died February 17, 1992, and is buried in a beautiful cemetery in the Northland of New Zealand. My three children and I, along with twelve grandchildren and ten great grandchildren, thank God for all His goodness and mercies. I will die and be buried here when the time comes, or I'll go up in the Rapture. I'm not fussy, as either way I'm a winner.

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God: and the dead

in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words (I Thessalonians 4:16-18).

What a blessed hope we have in Christ Jesus!